Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)

Accelerating Impact Award
Funding Guidance & Guidelines
Autumn 2025

The University of Bath has been awarded Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) funding worth £1.25m, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028. As part of the award, the University will be running a series of funding calls designed to support projects with strong potential for research impact.

The Accelerating Impact Award is intended to provide essential funding to support activities that maximise the potential for the University's social science research to make a positive impact on society, the economy, and people's lives.

Please read all guidance notes prior to starting the application form.

Contents

Funding Summary:

Remit & Requirements	- Projects must be underpinned by existing research within the <u>ESRC Subject Remit</u> - Projects must not start until the project code is issued by the Pre-Award team. (this will require going through the project set up process) - Projects must be impactful & deliverable. - Projects must include external partners/stakeholders. - <u>RRI principles</u> should be integral to the project plan. - Projects must consider EDI responsibilities as part of their project plan - The funding is open to all permanent members of academic research staff.
Award Aims	- This is a competitive award to fund projects that demonstrate clear potential for impact and build on research within the ESRC remit, **not** just ESRC funded research. - Interdisciplinary* applications for this funding round are actively encouraged. **Please note**: A minimum of 51% of the activity, outcomes and impact must clearly sit within the ESRC disciplines and led by social sciences. - Applications from ECRs are actively encouraged. ***ESRC Interdisciplinary: i**ntegrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, sing a synthesis of approached and often creating a new method or blended disciplinary approach. **ESRC Multidisciplinary definition**: people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their own disciplinary knowledge
Project Plan	A clear plan for how the impact will be achieved and evidenced is required within the application. Section 2 of the application form is designed to support you in this process. For information on eligible impact activity please see <u>Appendix 2: Impact Activity</u>
Amount	A total of £100,000 of funding is available, within two tiers for projects: **Tier 1:** Projects up to £10,000 **Tier 2:** Projects between £10,001 to £20,000
Deadline	**Monday 10 November 2025**
How to apply	Applications will only be considered if: - Application form is completed and signed by HoD - Accompanying letters of support agreeing to Heads of Terms are signed by any partners of the project - A JeS approved budget - Applicants must be able to evidence they have met with a member of the UoB Impact team. Please note, late applications will not be considered.

Application support	Applicants must meet with a member of the IAA team to discuss their idea and the call requirements before submitting their application. **Online** Events: Tuesday 7 October 13:00-14:00 **Email:** Contact the team at impact-acceleration@bath.ac.uk
Project Finances	- The fund is from the ESRC and is subject to the external funder's requirements **despite** its internal distribution. - An accurate budget is expected to be included within the application form. - A PAM costed & approved budget is required with submission of the application form. Project Budget & Finances & Appendix 1: Finance, Ethics & Contracts Guidance - If your project includes salary costs, it is **essential** you seek advice from the RIS Pre-Award team regarding full salary costings.

Timeline for Application Process

Call opens	Monday 8 September 2025
Online Impact Award Info sessions	Tuesday 7 October. 13:00-14:00
Intention to submit form (Pre-Award)	Monday 13 October 2025
PAM Costings Approved by HoD	Monday 27 October 2025
Application deadline	Monday 10 November 2025
Application Assessment Panel Meeting	Week beginning 1 December 2025
Decision announced	Week beginning 8 December 2025
Successful Applicants	
Earliest start date	13 April 2026
Latest end date	31 October 2027

Project Requirements

- **Underpinning research** - The application must demonstrate how it builds on underpinning research funded by the ESRC or within the ESRC remit. The research underpinning the impact project does not need to be carried out by the PI of this project.

- **Impactful and deliverable** - The proposed activities are highly likely to lead to non-academic impact over time. Work packages must be realistic, deliverable on time and within budget. Funds cannot be used to support activities that have already taken place.

- **External collaborators** – In general, projects are expected to involve external partners and/or stakeholders/beneficiaries to maximise potential for impact. Applicants should include a letter of endorsement from each collaborating organisation, outlining the benefits of the project for their organisation, any cash and in-kind contributions they are making to the project, and approval in principle of the 'Heads of Terms' agreement (template letter and 'Heads of Terms' are provided in the Application Pack).
  Note that if your application is successful, it is likely that a collaboration agreement of some kind will need to be negotiated and signed by each participating organisation. This process is managed by the Research Contracts team and can take **3+ months** and must be in place before the project can begin. Please factor this into your planning.

- **A fully authorised PAM costing** will need to be submitted with the application form.

- **The ESRC IAA Awards panel reserve the right to withdraw the award if projects are not operational within 6 months from award date.** (If you are experiencing significant issues with your project set up you must contact the ESRC IAA team)

- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** is a shared responsibility. Applicants are asked to consider EDI in relation to their project – how they will ensure that the project champions EDI, prevent barriers to protected groups and build capacity for inclusive culture. Useful resources can be found on the University's EDI homepage.

- **Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI)** principles should be integral to the project. More details, resources are training can be found in Appendix 4.

- **Project Risks –** major risks for the project should be considered with suitable mitigation measures considered.

- **Longer term sustainability of impact activities** should be considered within the project plan. This can be demonstrated by showing the incremental stages towards achieving your long term impact goals. For example:
  - mechanisms built in for monitoring and evaluation to evidence impact
  - building and maintaining partner/collaborator relationships
  - Ensuring any outputs, e.g. website, digital resources, training models etc, can be sustained beyond university funding
  - building in opportunities for potential scaling up activity

- **Environmental Sustainability,** project plans should reflect the Clime Action principles adopted by the university https://www.bath.ac.uk/legal-information/university-of-bath-climate-action-framework-principles/

Project Budget & Finances

Due to the external funding Body (ESRC) providing the funds, we are obligated to adhere to their requirements. This includes a fully economic costed PAM budget, ethics process and some form of collaboration agreement with external partners regardless of the amount of funds awarded.

The internal process for this is highlighted in fig. 1, details and Guidance can be found in Appendix 1: Finance, Ethics & Contracts Guidance.

Figure 1.

Please note:

- There can be a significant lag time between the start and completion of these processes, it is dependent on the requirements of the project and range from 3 weeks to 3 months.
- **Projects must not start until the process has been completed and the project code has been issued.**
- If your project includes salary costs, it is **essential** you seek advice from the RIS Pre-Award team prior to submitting your budget within PAM.
- The amount of funding requested must be realistic and your application must provide a clear justification for the costs and demonstrate value for money.

Eligible Costs

- RA/hourly paid staff salary
- PI time must be included and is mandated by the UoB. If full costing of this would push your budget over the maximum limit of the award a nominal amount of 1 hour should be included instead.
- Materials and consumables
- Travel and subsistence
- Event delivery and follow-up
- Equipment access
- External consultancy, e.g., for market research or business planning up to 50% maximum of funding requested.
- Other costs, where justified as necessary for the project.

More detailed information about eligible and non-eligible costs for ESRC IAA funding can be found in the [Appendix 2: Impact Activities](#)

Contractual Requirements with partners

To meet ESRC requirements, all projects working with external partners/collaborates will need to be assessed by the Research Contracts team to establish the nature of the agreement required. This can be a time-consuming stage so please plan accordingly.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment panel will be a subgroup of the ESRC IAA Programme Board and comprise a mix of academics, and members of Professional Services.

Proposals will be assessed against the criteria below as well as each other.

Criteria 1: Quality of proposal and planned impact (scored 0-5) [weighting 30%]

The overall quality of the proposal is high. The application sets out clear aims and objectives and a strong rationale for the project including a succinct summary of the problem it addresses and the impact that it is designed to generate. The project outcomes are likely to help contribute to positive social or economic benefits.

The proposed activities build on underpinning research that falls in the ESRC remit. Evidence of the underpinning research is provided either through reference to ESRC funded research awards or reference to research projects supported by other funders. The anticipated impact is relevant and proportionate to the underpinning research.

Criteria 2: Impact potential (scored 0-5) [weighting 30%]

The project has a high probability of generating impact, which would be accelerated with IAA funding. The proposed activities are appropriate to the project goals and likely to lead to the expected outcomes and impact. The application outlines how the project fits with a longer term plan for developing impact and how this might be achieved.

There are well-designed plans in place to evaluate or evidence project outputs, outcomes and impact.

Where appropriate, the application has identified external partners, stakeholders or intended beneficiaries and set out effective means by which to engage with them to mutual benefit and maximum impact.

Criteria 3: Good value (scored 0-5) [weighting 15%]

The amount of funding requested is realistic and the application provides a clear justification for the costs. The amount of funding requested is commensurate with the proposed activities.

Where there are collaborating partners, their contribution is in proportion to what the expected return to them might be.

Criteria 4: Investment risk (scored 0-5) [weighting 15%]

The project team can deliver the project on time and within budget. They have identified potential project risks and what is required to manage such risk. The amount of funding requested is realistic and time-relevant for achieving the proposed outcome before 31 October 2026.

Where applications have identified a postdoctoral Research Assistant who will carry out the project activities, they have been named on the application.

Criteria 5: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (scored 0-5) [weighting 10%]

Applicants have considered EDI in relation to the project, how they will ensure the project champions EDI, prevents barriers to protected groups and builds capacity for an inclusive culture.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or require the materials in a different format: impact-acceleration@bath.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Finance, Ethics & Contracts Process & Guidance

If awarded these are the steps to project set up:

1. **Accept you 'funding award offer' via email** to impact-acceleration@bath.ac.uk .

2. **Complete Ethics review** Ethics@Bath: Work Area - Ethics@Bath Applications

    a. Enter the project title and select the 'Main ethics form' from the drop-down menu. Click 'Create'.
    b. Click on the hyperlinked section titled 'A1: Project title, dates and team' (highlighted above in yellow).
    c. Select the option 'Staff project', then enter the project dates, look up the name of the Lead Investigator and any Bath co-investigators, and click on 'Next page'.
    d. In the section A2, say 'Yes' to question A2.1 and enter the PAM reference
    e. For the next question, tick the first option (*Please tick here to confirm that your PAM reference is correct and that you wish to submit the form so that your PAM costing can progress through the workflow.*) Then click on 'Next page'.
    f. You will be asked to tick the declaration (*I confirm that I will return to this form and complete it in full once the grant has been awarded*), after which a 'Sign' button will be displayed.

Any queries please use the email in the Help section & Export Control guidance here – any queries please use the email in the web page

3. **Contracts**

If a Collaboration Agreement is required, this must be in place before the project can start. The Research Contracts team in the Department of Research and Innovation Services (RIS) will consider what sort of agreement is required for the type of project and liaise with the project team and partners to sign off the agreement. (**Please note:** this process might take 3+ months before the project can start).

4. **RS2**

Once the budget, ethics and a collaboration agreement (if required) are in place, Pre-Award will circulate the RS2 for signature and the budget code will be generated with the funds made available for your project to start. (Please note: This process can take at least 2 weeks).

If there are any recruitment or RA contracts required, you will need to submit your staffing request to HR through Stonefish once you have the project code.

Appendix 2: Creating a PAM budget for your project

Set up your PAM record

You should first set up your PAM record using the step-by-step guidance attached here. This process should take about 10 minutes. Please ensure you **select** the **correct IAA funding scheme** as this will ensure that overheads are not included in your budget. Please also **ensure** you name your project: ESRC IAA – Project title.

1. **Start the PAM costing**

   For populating your costs then please see the guide here - this is where you will include your time (if appropriate for the scheme), researcher time and any non-staff (travel, subsistence etc) costs. If you have any questions or unsure please contact your relevant RIS Pre Awards Officer:

   Caroline Codling is the Pre-Award contact for Psychology and Health c.e.jones@bath.ac.uk

   Liz Ourmozdi is for Mgt, IPR, Economics, Polis, SPS & Education es675@bath.ac.uk

PI and Co-I costings – If you have not included these within your draft budget, please do so as part of the PAM budget process as this is now a mandated as a requirement from UoB. If a full costing of this would push your budget over the maximum limit of the award a nominal amount of 1 hour or less per week should be included instead.

5. **Contact Pre-Award**

   Before you submit for sign-off, please let your Pre-Award contact know that you would like them to check your completed costing to make sure everything is correct.

   Find your departmental Pre-Award Officer for support with completing your costing.

6. **Submit costings for HoD approval**

   The last page of this guide shows how to complete the 'confirmation questions' and submit for HoD approval.

   See further guidance on using PAM

7. **Once the PAM costing and ethics approval has been fully approved**

   Please download the Je-S report as this is what will need to be submitted with the application form.

   How to download the Je-S report

   1. Press the 'export' button at the bottom of your main costing page.

   2. This takes you to a new window. Select 'JeS submission report' and wait for this to load.

Appendix 3: Impact Activities

Activities could include, but are not restricted to:

- Knowledge exchange events with non-academic stakeholders
- Secondments
- Collaborative activities such as workshops, training programmes, or exhibitions
- Activities to inform policy or to engage policymakers
- Activities to improve or strengthen research-user engagement
- Proof of concept, marketing, and commercialisation activities
- The creation of resources to engage stakeholders with research

Guidance on generating impact can be found in UKRI's Impact toolkit for economic and social sciences (ukri.org) and the University's Supporting your Research Impact guide. Examples of the kind of impact your

project may contribute to are outlined below. These are not exhaustive and projects are not expected to generate impact across all these categories.

- **Instrumental:** influencing the development of policy, improving practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour, improving health and wellbeing, contributing to a company's productivity, launching a new product, strengthening existing or developing new processes or systems
- **Conceptual:** contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates and understanding of important social issues
- **Capacity building**: strengthening beneficiaries' technical or personal skills

Appendix 4: Funding Terms & Conditions

Funding is conditional on:
- Compliance with standard ESRC rules for IAA funds:
  Allowable costs
  a. Directly Incurred Costs – hourly paid staff costs, technicians, administrative support costs, travel costs, facilities & tests, consumables.
  Non-allowable costs
  a. Laptops, computers, mobile phones, etc., are not eligible costs unless fully justified in this proposal.
  b. Infrastructure technician
  c. Estates
  d. Indirect
- You are expected to spend all allocated funds within the duration of the project. Any underspend at the end of the project will be returned to the IAA.
- Funding may be withdrawn (at the discretion of the Programme Manager) if all necessary contractual arrangements regarding the Project (including, where relevant, appointment of project personnel) have not been put in place within 3 months of the anticipated start date.
- Funding is non-transferrable and can be withdrawn if the project objectives are not being met.
- Where the spend profile is likely to alter significantly from that in the application, this must be brought to the attention of the Programme Manager.
- The Project activities must be as set out in your application or, where material changes are necessary, must first have been approved by the Programme Manager, your Head of Department and, where appropriate, an authorised representative of each Collaborator.
- In conducting the Project activities, you and your investigative team must comply with the rules and regulations of the University, ethical and regulatory requirements and other relevant laws.
- You must submit a short final project report (in a format to be provided by the IAA Programme Manager) within 3 months of the end date of the Project. If requested, you may be required to give a short presentation to the IAA management team about your project.
- A Pure record for the project will be set up upon approval of the award, and you will be required to report any outcomes and evidence of impact from the project in Pure; note that impact may take several years to achieve after the project end.
- You must acknowledge the support received from the EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account institutional grant at the University of Bath, Ref: **ES/X004651/1**, in all publications, presentations and other media communications concerning the project.

Appendix 5: Resources & Sign posting.

Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI)

RRI Online training

Paper produced by IPR about RRI

RRI tool kit & information

Research Impact Resources

University of Bath Research Impact Tool Kit

University of Bath online tool kit

Aspect Impact Tool Kit

ESRC Impact Tool kit

University of Bath: Supporting your research Impact

NIHR Planning for impact toolkit

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

University of Bath, equality, Diversity & Inclusion web pages

ESRC, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion web pages

Other

Blogs: Knowledge Exchange & research Impact UoB

Podcast: Fast track Impact