Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)

Post Doc Impact Award
Funding Guidance & Guidelines
September 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 Post Doc 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 Details:

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Who is eligible for this funding

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The funding is open to:

- Research Assistants (RA)
- PDRA – Post Doc Research Associate
- PhD students who have completed and been awarded their PhD **prior** to the start date of the project.
- All of the above must have an employment contract that is longer than the duration of the proposed project.

*For the purposes of this document all categories above will be referred to as **Post-Docs**.*
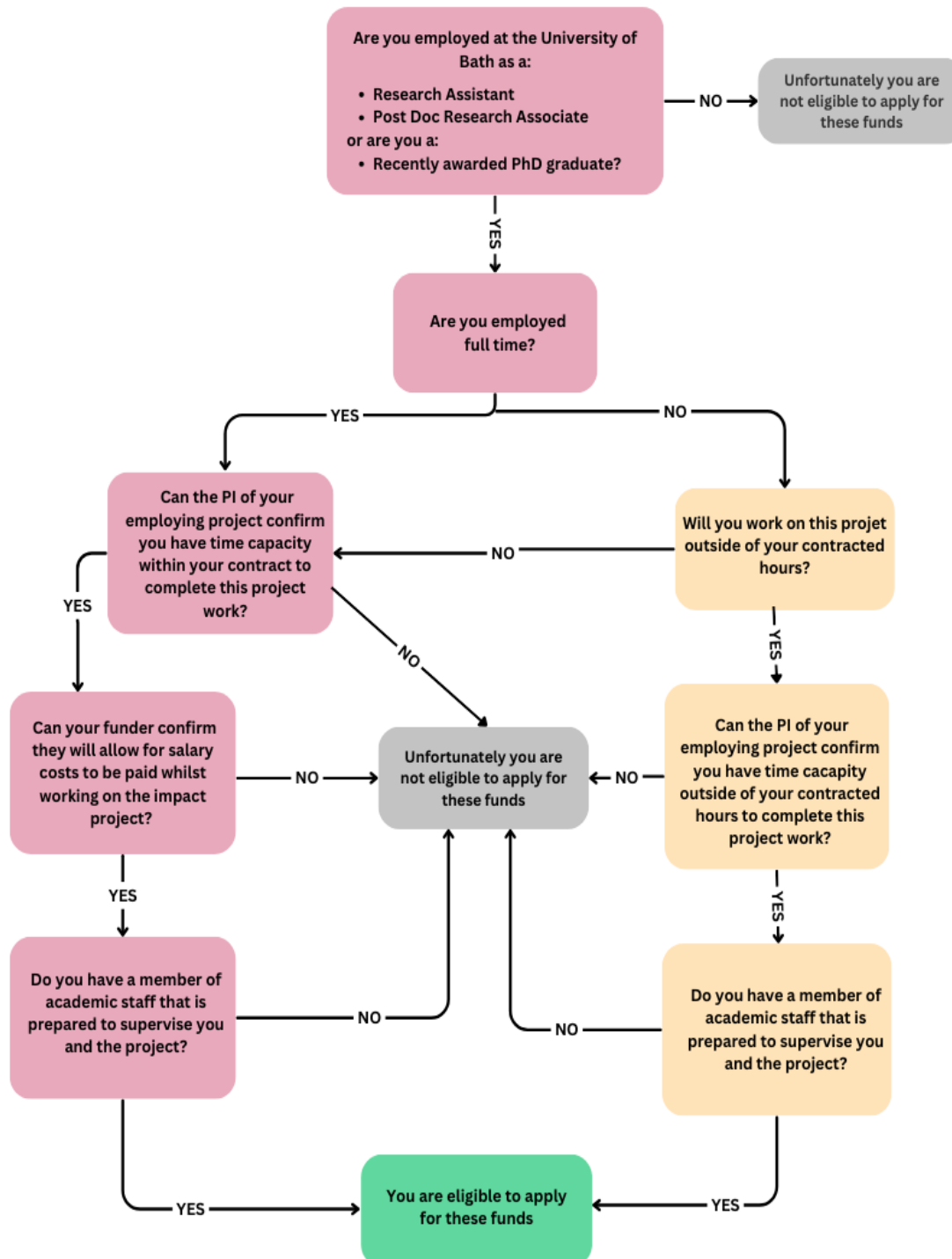
- The Post-Doc will be the named Principal Investigator (PI) for the project and have the responsibilities this entails for the project, (additional tasks would include using PAM; submitting ethics & working with contracts etc).
- All projects must have a Co-Investigator (Co-I) who is a full member of academic staff and is prepared to supervise the Post-Doc for the duration of the project.

Due to the complex nature of Post-Docs being set up as Principal Investigators the following requirements must be adhered to. Please read these requirements thoroughly and contact the ESRC IAA team if you have any questions regarding your eligibility.

Requirements of Post-Doc for funding:

1. If the Post Doc is currently employed at the University of Bath on a research project full-time, the PI for the research project employing the Post Doc must confirm that they have time capacity within their contracted employment to complete the proposed project work.

2. The Post-Doc must check that the external funder of the research project that employs them, will allow salary costs to be paid whilst working on their proposed project within contracted hours of employment.

3. Salary costs **cannot** be part of the proposed project budget if the Post Doc is employed full time on the research project.

4. If the Post doc current role is part-time, their PI and/or Line manager should discuss and confirm on the application form that the Post Doc has the time capacity for the proposed project if the intention is to work on this project outside of employment contracted hours.

5. If the Post doc current role is part time, and the intentions is to work on the impact project within contract hours of employment requirement No. 1 & 2 apply.

6. Only if the Post Doc works part-time and the proposed project work is outside the current contracted hours of employment can their salary costs be included within the budget.

Are you eligible for ESRC IAA Post-Doc Impact funding?

Are you employed at the University of Bath as a:

- **Research Assistant**
- **Post Doc Research Associate**

or are you a:

- **Recently awarded PhD graduate?**

→ NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds

↓ YES

Are you employed full time?

YES → / NO →

YES branch:

Can the PI of your employing project confirm you have time capacity within your contract to complete this project work?

↓ YES

Can your funder confirm they will allow for salary costs to be paid whilst working on the impact project?

→ NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds

↓ YES

Do you have a member of academic staff that is prepared to supervise you and the project?

→ NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds

↓ YES → **You are eligible to apply for these funds**

NO branch:

Will you work on this projet outside of your contracted hours?

→ NO → Can the PI of your employing project confirm you have time capacity within your contract to complete this project work?

↓ YES

Can the PI of your employing project confirm you have time cacapity outside of your contracted hours to complete this project work?

→ NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds

↓ YES

Do you have a member of academic staff that is prepared to supervise you and the project?

→ NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds

↓ YES → **You are eligible to apply for these funds**

(Can the PI... confirm you have time capacity within your contract → NO → Unfortunately you are not eligible to apply for these funds)

Project remit & requirement

- Projects must be underpinned by **existing research** within the ESRC Subject Remit (Subjects within HSS & School of Mgt). Multidisciplinary projects are welcome, most of the project activity (51% minimum) must be within the ESRC Remit)
- Projects must not start until a full economic costing from PAM is produced, Ethics have been approved and any collaboration agreements required are in place.
- Projects must be impactful & deliverable.
- Projects should include external partners/stakeholder. **Appendix 1**
- **RRI principles** should be integral to the project plan. **Appendix 7**
- Projects must consider EDI responsibilities as part of their project plan. **Appendix 2**
- Fundings terms & Conditions can be found in **Appendix 6**
- Project Risks **–** major risks for the project should be considered with suitable mitigation measures considered
- **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)
- 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/

Award Aims

- This is a competitive award to fund projects that demonstrate clear potential for impact that build on research within the ESRC remit, **not** just ESRC funded research.
- To provide opportunities for career and personal development opportunities though Knowledge Exchange and impact related activities within the ESRC remit.

Project Plan	A clear plan for how the impact will be achieved and evidence is required within the application. Section 3on the application form is designed to support you in this process. For information on eligible impact activity please see Appendix 3: Impact Activity
Amount	A total of £25000 of funding is available for: Projects up to a maximum amount of £5,000.
Deadline	**Friday 9 January 2026**
How to apply	Applications will only be considered if: - Application form is completed and signed by HoD

	• Application form is completed and signed by the PI of research project employing the Post Doc, confirming their capacity to complete the project • Accompanying letters of support agreeing to Heads of Terms are signed by any partners of the project. • Applicants must meet with a member of the UoB Impact team. • Applicants submit a fully costed and approved PAM budget (JeS form). Support is available from the Pre-Awards team in RIS. See Appendix 4 • Please note, late applications will not be considered.
Application support	The ESRC IAA team will provide a 'Supported Application Process' for potential applicants. Supported Application Process: 1. Submitting an Expression of Interest form 2. Meetings with ESRC IAA Impact team – in person &/or online 3. PAM costings to be completed prior to application. Members of the RIS Pre-awards team will support you. 4. Impact planning resources available for use 5. Submission of application form & PAM costings by Friday 9 January 2026 **Please note:** • Applications that have not been supported will not be considered • Please allow enough time to schedule meetings with the ESRC IAA Impact team & Pre-Award team
Project 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. • A PAM costed budget for submission with the application form is required. Please see Project Budget & Finances & Appendix 4: Finance, Ethics & Contracts Guidance • If your project includes salary costs, it is essential you seek advice from the RIS Pre-Awards team regarding full salary costings. • Eligible costs can be found in Appendix 7
Assessment Criteria	Proposals will be assessed against the criteria as well as each other. **Appendix 5**

Timeline for Application Process

Call opens	8 September 2025
Expression of Interest Deadline	Friday 17 October 2025
Deadline for support with PAM costings	Monday 1 December 2025
Application deadline	**Friday 9 January 2026**
Application Assessment Panel Meeting	Week beginning 26 January 2026
Successful Applicants	

Earliest start date	Monday 13 April 2026
Latest end date	1 October 2027

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

Appendix

Appendix 1: 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).
- To meet ESRC requirements, all projects working with external partners/collaborates will need to be assessed by the contract's team to establish the nature of the agreement required.
- 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.

Appendix 2: 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.

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: Finance, Ethics & Contracts Process & Guidance

1. If you are new to PAM and never created a budget, please contact your Pre-Award colleague in **plenty of time,** as they can offer you support.

2. **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.

3. 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

Liz Ourmozdi is for Mgt, IPR, Economics, Polis, SPS & Education

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 and submit this with your application.

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.

If awarded the funds the project set up process is:

1. ESRC IAA Issues Award letter

This will be cc to Pre-Awards, Post-Awards, Co-I & Hod. The award letter triggers the project set up process.

2. Ethics registration

You will need to complete the ethics registration using the unique reference number generated in your Pam costing (e.g 24-12345). How not complete your ethics registration:

Ethics@Bath: Work Area - Ethics@Bath Applications

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).

10. 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 5: 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 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.

Appendix 6: 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 7: Eligible Costs

- RA/hourly paid staff salary

- Co-I 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 per week 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.

Ineligible costs

- Primary research
- Training costs
- IP Management
- Equipment with a value of greater than £10K
- Indirect costs

Appendix 8: Resources & Sign posting.

Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI)

These principles should be integral to the project. More details, resources are training can be found below

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

Top Tips for Impact

Apsect 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