## University of St Andrews Harmonised Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) 2024-25

## EPSRC and MRC

### Guidance Notes for Applicants

Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) are strategic awards provided to research organisations to allow them to respond to impact opportunities in more flexible, responsive and creative ways. The awards are intended to add value to existing funding and take advantage of new or unforeseen opportunities to facilitate the realisation of impact. The funding can be used to support a wide range of activities that support the scheme aims, including engaging users, forging strategic partnerships or progressing commercial opportunities.

UKRI have removed the requirement that all IAA-funded projects be directly related to previous UKRI funding; however, they still require funded projects to sit predominantly within the remit and aims of the EPSRC and/or MRC. Therefore, **any project supported by the EPSRC Harmonised IAA should be at least 50% within the EPSRC remit, and** **any project supported by the MRC Harmonised IAA should be at least 50% within the MRC remit. For interdisciplinary projects that span both research councils, it will be necessary to include a percentage split.**

### Background of harmonisation of IAAs

UKRI has brought together IAA funding from 5 participating councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, MRC and the STFC) and harmonised Higher Education Institution (HEI) block applications for these as well as the award timelines and processes. Where applicable and appropriate, UKRI has encouraged research organisations to take advantage of the strategic opportunities afforded by the alignment of IAA awards across disciplines. However, it is recognised that opportunities for alignment may not always be obvious or accessible. Therefore, single discipline applications have not been disadvantaged.

Please note: St Andrews is in receipt of EPSRC and MRC Harmonised IAA funds which cover the period **2022 to 2025**.

#### UKRI IAA strategic aims are:

* to strengthen engagement with users to accelerate the translation of research outputs into impacts;
* to support, develop and foster strategic partnerships for knowledge exchange and impact, including across disciplines and sectors;
* to build and maintain an environment and culture which enables effective and ambitious knowledge exchange and impact, including the development of skills, capacity, and capability within research organisations;
* to provide early-stage support for progressing research outputs towards the next stages in the impact pipeline, for example, proof of concept projects, commercialisation, market validation, or activities targeting policy, business and the third sectors;
* to drive continuous improvement in impact by supporting innovation, enabling “fast failure”, and capturing learning through appropriate mechanisms; and

to empower institutions with flexible and adaptive approaches to knowledge exchange and impact, including the ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities.

### St Andrews EPSRC and MRC Harmonised IAAs

There are two IAA funding avenues currently available to St Andrews granted by the EPSRC and MRC. To be singly supported by either EPSRC or MRC the project activities must be at least 50% within the remit of that council. Successful multi-disciplinary projects, which fall into both remits, will also have split funding across the two IAAs. In such cases, **applications must indicate a split between the ESPRC and MRC funding paths** along with a short statement of justification.

**Please note there are two streams of funding for this call. The thresholds of funding for each of the two streams reflect the nature of the work to be undertaken.** Please see the flow chart below.

**Stream 1**: Main Award (between £7.5k - £25k) – This stream is for projects with some proven partnerships in delivering impact, which in the past received some level of impact funding - whether internal, such from the KE&I or IIF, or external, such as UKRI/peer-reviewed funding which included an impact element - and which are not at high risk of failure.

**Stream 2**: Kick-start Award (up to £7.5k) – This stream is for exploratory projects which propose new partnerships, have little or no proven impact record or are defined as higher risk but also have a higher potential of reward for impact.

#### Eligibility criteria:

1. The EPSRC and MRC Harmonised IAA funds are open to the University of St Andrews academic staff, including both research-only and research & teaching staff on fixed or permanent contracts. We actively encourage applications from early career and under-represented researchers.
2. Calls are open to all whose research falls within the [EPSRC-remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/) and/or [MRC-remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/).
3. Interdisciplinary projects delivering impact or translational activities across discipline and faculty boundaries, i.e. across research council remit boundaries, are actively sought. Please note that such projects should be at least 50% within the EPSRC and/or MRC remit and should be submitted by the appropriate EPSRC/MRC remit academic.
4. If there is a demonstrable urgent need, a Harmonised IAA rapid response or contingency application can be submitted to Stream 2 (up to £7.5k) at any time.
5. The Review Panel will have the authority, at their discretion, to redirect proposals to alternate streams or between IAAs.
6. It is recognised that successful awards could lead to subsequent proposals to other impact funding in future.

**Stream 1: Main Awards (between £7.5k - £25k)**

Stream 1 includes up to £40k ring-fenced for applications from early career and under-represented researchers.

**Stream 2: Kick-start Awards (up to £7.5k)**

Stream 2 includes rapid response and contingency applications.

### Deadline for proposals: **27TH FEBRUARY 2024**

* Proposal applications (a) should be reviewed in advance with the relevant Director of Impact & Innovation (DOII), (b) must have the support of the relevant Schools/Departments, and (c) must be submitted with a specific (rather than general) statement of support from the submitting School/Department’s DOII.
* For external partnerships, please provide letters of support where applicable.
* Proposal applications will be assessed by an interdisciplinary Review Panel, made up of members of the EPSRC / MRC Harmonised IAA Steering Groups, as appropriate.
* Decisions will be communicated as soon after Panels meeting as feasibly possible.

The objective of this funding is to increase the impact of EPSRC and/or MRC-remit research by:

* Strengthening non-academic user engagement.
* Supporting Knowledge Exchange (KE) and commercialisation in the early stages by progressing research outputs/outcomes to the point where they would be supported by other funding.
* Strengthening KE and commercialisation through culture and capability development.
* Supporting activities that enable impact and innovation to be achieved in an effective and timely manner, including through secondments and people exchange.

Funding will be targeted towards projects which create impact from EPSRC- and/or MRC-remit research, and which enhance the institution’s impact and innovation, including for REF assessment exercises.

The Principal Investigator applying for Harmonised IAA funding should be from an EPSRC- and/or MRC-remit discipline or be conducting EPSRC- and/or MRC-remit research. Projects must sit within the remit and aims of the UKRI and, for this funding opportunity, must sit **predominantly** within the remit and aims of the EPSRC and/or MRC. Therefore, any project supported by the Harmonised IAA should be, at minimum, 50% within the [EPSRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/) or [MRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/).

### What can I apply for?

**Eligible** costs include any activities or mechanisms to achieve impact, such as:

* Travel and subsistence, consumables
* Researcher/PDRA salaries
* Specialist advice and market research
* Meetings, workshops, conferences and networking events specifically targeted at external organisations and non-academic users of research.
* Provision of training or expertise which will benefit practitioners or other non-academics.
* Practical applications of research to improve the environment, reduce pollution, recycle waste products, or improve sustainability, health, quality of life, understanding of health issues, deliver new treatments or therapies, affect non-academic practice or guidelines, etc.
* Engagement with intermediary groups, such as NGOs, policymakers or local government which will influence subsequent policy and practice.

**Ineligible** costs:

* Costs related to basic research activity, which should be funded through standard grant route
* Costs that should have been anticipated and supported as part of the initial funding (such as public engagement related to a specific grant)
* Undergraduate activities, core PhD, Masters and CPD costs or training
* Equipment with a value over £10,000 per item
* Indirect costs or estate costs
* Late-stage commercial development for which there are other funding sources, e.g. companies, Innovate UK, Venture Capital, Scottish Enterprise, etc.

### Indicative staff costings

Awards will be made following approval by the review panel and subject to FAS confirmation of costs (minor discrepancies are expected due to inflation and travel restrictions, for example). As this application is not being used to request external funds, we encourage you to use the table below for staff costs. If you would like to use Worktribe, **please use the Standalone Projects Tool** (this will ensure that a full application profile is not created unnecessarily on the FAS system)**.**

For staff[[1]](#footnote-1) costs: please use the values below, which are based on a 1.0 FTE member of staff per month; please state the grade and number of months when including staff costs on your application.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Est. Total Annual Salary 2024/25** | **Est. Total Monthly Salary 2024/25** |
| **Grade 4 (e.g. Administrative Staff)** | **£35,601** | **£2,966** |
| **Grade 5 (e.g. Technicians)** | **£42,192** | **£3,516** |
| **Grade 6 (e.g. Research Assistant)** | **£55,250** | **£4,604** |

### Impact types and indicators

As part of the application, impact types and associated indicators (KPIs) will need to be identified. These will be finalised, with input from the Review Panel, at or after the award stage. Please refer to the REF2021, Panel Criteria and Working Methods, Annex A (<https://impact.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2022/01/Annex-A-Impacts-and-Indicators.docx>). The application also asks which UN [Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)) are being addressed in the project.

### Innovation projects

For projects with commercialisation potential, we would expect to fund in Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 3 to 6.



### Conflict of interest:

Applicants are requested to read the Declaration of Interests policy (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/research-external-work/declaration-of-interests-policy.pdf>) and to declare any potential, real or perceived conflicts of interest with their proposed application.

### Conditions of funding:

* For each project, PIs will attend a round-table review with select panel members, key stakeholders (where appropriate) and/or relevant support unit representatives.
* Stream 1 (Main awards) and Stream 2 (Kick-start awards): Funded projects will last up to 12 months with an **end spend date of the 31st of March 2025**
* If there is any change to the expected timings or scope of the project, the PI must contact the Impact Team as soon as possible and complete an interim review form to make these changes clear.
* A record of any activities and impacts which result from the award must be entered in Pure. If there is no information related to the project in Pure when funding is awarded, the Impact Team will open a new impact record and add the application form.
* Pure should be populated by the researcher(s) involved with information on any activities and evidence of impact included as the project progresses.
* Final project reports will be required upon completion of the project (the Impact Team will provide a proforma), and Pure entries must be up to date by the end of the.
* Where applicable, successful proposals are subject to ethical approval.
* Participation at events to showcase the projects and outcomes may be requested.

### Criteria for selection:

#### Essential:

* Clear and measurable milestones with a clear pathway to reach intended impact targets/objectives
* Clarity and realistic plans to generate change or benefit in the long term
* Clear and realistic plans for capturing evidence of activities and changes as they arise (See: our online resource on [Research impact Evidence](https://impact.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/research-impact-evidence/))
* Clearly and adequately addressed principles of [responsible innovation (RRI)](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/responsible-innovation/) and [AREA](https://epsrc.ukri.org/index.cfm/research/framework/)– Please reflect on positive and potential unintended consequences and ensure specific corresponding actions are included in the application.
* Foundation of good quality research conducted, wholly or in part, at the University of St Andrews, which will link to any resulting impact
* Clarity on the planned or intended non-academic target audience(s) or partners
* Clear and realistic plans to engage with external partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders, where applicable
* Clear and realistic plans for capturing evidence of activities or impacts as they arise
* Appropriate levels of costing in support of the application
* Stream 1 (Main awards) must either have some proven partnerships in delivering impact, or t received some level of impact funding in the past - whether internal, such as the KE&I or IIF, or external, such as UKRI/peer-reviewed funding which included an impact element.
* Applications which have been favourably reviewed by other panels and advised to apply to an IAA by the Research Impact team, may be eligible for Stream 1, if advised as such by the Research Impact Team, under this criterion.

#### Desirable

* High quality and/or innovative approach to engagement with users of research
* Delivering impact or translational activities across discipline boundaries through interdisciplinary means
* Long-term development of legacy/relationship building or a sustainable relationship with the wider community, external organisations, beneficiaries, or users of research
* Appropriate and effective Involvement of Eden Campus
* Alignment with the University Institutional Strategy’s ambition of being World-leading, Diverse, Global, and Entrepreneurial working within the context of Social Responsibility strategic objectives
* Contribution to strategic initiatives, e.g., EPSRC and/or MRC strategic themes, future REF case study, etc.
1. **Note that permanent staff salary costs are not permitted**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)