**UoE/ UKRI IAA Harmonised Call 2025**

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**Guidance Notes**

**Terms and Conditions**

**Funding Scope**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has brought together Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) funding from the participating councils and harmonised the application and awards timelines and processes. Where appropriate, UKRI is encouraging research organisations to take advantage of the strategic opportunities afforded by alignment of IAA awards across disciplines.

In light of this, the University of Edinburgh is running a harmonised funding call to fund impact or translational activities that cross remits of the BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, and MRC (defined below).

Projects should:

* Strengthen engagement with research users and beneficiaries in order to accelerate the transition of research into impacts.
* Support, foster and develop strategic partnerships for knowledge exchange and impact, including across disciplines and sectors.
* Progress research towards the next stages in the impact pipeline, for example: proof of concept, commercialisation, market validation, and activities targeting policy, business and the third sectors.

Funding available:

We are typically looking to fund projects in the range of £20k to £60k. Only direct costs will be eligible for projects up to a maximum of 12mths duration.

In all cases the projects must include collaboration between 2 researchers representing expertise within two separate [council remits](https://www.ukri.org/councils/) (out of the BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, and MRC). Projects should address a clearly identified unmet societal need, challenge, or opportunity by combining research from the listed council remits. Applicants must demonstrate that the team represents expertise from two different council remits **and** demonstrate how the different areas of expertise contribute directly to the proposed project activities in order to address the identified issue.

* EPSRC remit – Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council remit covers engineering and the physical sciences. It funds research into chemistry, engineering, information and communications technologies, materials, mathematical sciences and physics.
* MRC remit - Medical Research Council IAA supports the translation of fundamental science into new therapies, diagnostics, medical devices and technologies to benefit human health. Funding aims to accelerate this transition by supporting preliminary work to establish the viability of an approach to support onward development.
* BBSRC remit - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council supports research in areas including plants, microbes, animals (including humans), and tools and technology underpinning biological research. Its remit does not include human disease.
* ESRC remit - The Economic and Social Science Research Council supports research in economic, social, behavioural and human data science, across a broad range of disciplines. These include the following disciplines: area and development studies; demography; economic and social history; economics; education; environmental planning; human geography; international relations; linguistics; management and business studies; politics; psychology; science and technology studies; social anthropology; social policy; social statistics, methods and computing; social work; socio legal studies; and sociology.

Projects that fall within the remit of a single council should be submitted to the corresponding funder-specific IAA and will not be considered for Harmonised IAA support. **Applications claiming contributions from more than two council remits will not be considered.**

## Eligibility

Applicants should be any University of Edinburgh based researcher (salaried members of UoE staff) who can demonstrate that they will be directly and actively engaged in delivering the proposed project. The proposed team must include at least two researchers representing expertise within two [council remits](https://www.ukri.org/councils/) (out of the BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, and MRC). Early Career Researchers (PDRA and above) are eligible to lead or collaborate with permission from their line manager provided their post outlasts the project. Projects must seek to deliver impact with real world application, not solely comprise basic science.

The University has a long-standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and to promoting a positive culture, which celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and ensures fairness. In line with this commitment, the Harmonised IAA call accepts applications from research-active staff at all career stages from diverse disciplines and encourages applications from under-represented groups.

Researchers supported on open-ended or fixed-term contracts may apply for grants and may request funds for their own salary. The Research Councils' conditions of grant awards do not include a requirement to appoint staff on a fixed-term basis. This is a matter for the employer to determine and is not related to eligibility for funding.

Individuals may be the Lead Applicant on only one application per Harmonised IAA application round. However, individuals can act as co-applicants on any number of applications per Harmonised IAA application round. Please note that the assessment will consider the level of engagement of lead and co-applicants with the research and their capacity to meet these requirements.

Applicants must submit an [Expression of Interest](https://forms.office.com/e/ptf50nvfG5) by 3 September.

## Research integrity and responsible innovation

Research integrity and responsible innovation are expected to be core considerations for all proposals. For the purposes of the Harmonised IAA these are interpreted as follows:

1. **Research Integrity:** Compliance with legislation, regulations, and guidelines
2. **Responsible Innovation:** Alignment of intended impacts with societal benefit and public interest[[1]](#footnote-2)

**By submitting an application, applicants confirm** that they are aware of and comply with the appropriate legislation, regulations and ethics guidelines. This includes but is not limited to: ensuring appropriate ethics are applied and approvals sought; proactive safeguarding through adoption and compliance with safety and security measures, practices and legislation; performing appropriate due diligence on any external project partners; appropriately embedding the University’s equality, diversity and inclusion principles internally in the team as well as in interactions with research subjects and stakeholders; and, appropriately embedding sustainability principles in line with the University’s sustainability policy including its [Sustainable Travel Policy](https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/operations/travel/sustainable-travel-policy).

**Applicants must demonstrate in their application** how they ensure the alignment of intended impact with societal benefit and public interest. The University of Edinburgh is committed to using its research to achieve beneficial impacts for, and with, society. These impacts should be socially desirable and in the public interest, while also accounting for potential impacts on environmental sustainability and social justice. Responsible innovation should be considered and embedded in proposals from earliest possible stages as well as throughout the lifetime of a project. Applicants are encouraged to consider the future directions of the proposed project, anticipating the potential and plausible societal consequences. Teams should regularly reflect on assumption, integrate diverse sources of knowledge into strategic decision making, and consider alternative processes to remain responsive as the understanding of impacts develops. Projects can collaborate with external partners and engage end-users to understand needs and realise impact to the benefit of society, including effective management and ethical exploitation of IP. Teams should consider the perspectives of stakeholders and end-users, engaging with them as appropriate, to ensure a broad understanding of how desirable different impacts will be for different public and stakeholder groups. Prompts to make considerations along these lines have been embedded in the application form and a responsible innovation observer will be invited to attend the panel review meeting.

**Harmonised IAA Application to Award Process**

The application process is intended to provide project teams with the opportunity to refine concepts into fundable projects that will, if successful, either lead to follow on funding or be designed to create impact more directly and accelerate the impact development process.

The application to award process will include the following steps:

1. Lead Applicant/Project leader who participates in an outline review of their project proposal with a Business Development Executive or Knowledge Exchange/Impact contact who will provide guidance on the project plan, team composition and completion of the application.
2. Lead applicant submits an [Expression of Interest](https://forms.office.com/e/ptf50nvfG5) by 3 September and applicants are provided with advice from IAA fund managers relative to the project’s eligibility.
3. An online advice session to discuss your project proposal with the Harmonised IAA programme team will be available the first week of October.
4. Project representative meets with local research office to discuss project plan and seek costings and necessary approvals ahead of application submission. Lead Applicants are responsible for ensuring that local procedures for funding application submissions are followed e.g., completion of intention to submit forms to the Edinburgh Research Office in advance of the Harmonised IAA application submission deadline.
5. Submission of completed form by 3 November (subject to change)\*.
6. Receipt of submission
7. The panel will review and select projects that could be funded directly or identify key questions to be addressed by the project team with the Harmonised IAA programme team.

**\*Note: UKRI has announced additional funding for the Harmonised IAAs for 2025/26 but will only communicate funding amounts after the summer. Once exact funding amounts are communicated the full submission deadline will be confirmed, with a minimum 4-week notice.**

**Completing the Harmonised IAA Application Form**

The Harmonised IAA application process is strictly confidential between the applicants and the funding panel to prevent the disclosure of unprotected concepts.

The Harmonised IAA application form consists of eight sections. The form **must** be completed in partnership with your Business Development and/or Knowledge Exchange/Impact representative who will be a named contact on your application.

* The Lead Applicant will normally be expected to take the lead on defining the need that the proposal seeks to address and the proposed solution for this need, the project’s rationale and the project plan.
* The Business Development Executive contact will normally be expected to take the lead on assessing the competitive environment and intellectual property strategy, if applicable. If funded the Business Development Executive will support the project team.

**Section 1: Project Summary**

* 1. **Title**: *Please provide a concise title for your proposal.*
  2. **Abstract**: *Please provide a summary of the need/challenge/opportunity you are seeking to address, your proposed solution, the rationale for why your proposed solution is likely to meet the targeted issue and your development plan.*
  3. **Project Duration and Cost**: *Please enter the proposed project start date, the proposed duration of award and costs should be calculated to ensure projects can be delivered with the resources requested. You are required to enter detailed cost breakdown in Section 8.*
  4. **Research Council Remits**: *Please describe the different applicants’ research detailing how this represents two different research council remits.*
  5. **Project interdisciplinarity:** *Please demonstrate how the different council remit areas of research contribute to the activities proposed in the application.*

**Section 2: Applicant Details**

**2.1 Lead Applicant**

*This is the individual who takes responsibility for the intellectual leadership of the project and for the overall management of the project, including the convening of regular project meetings with the project team to review project progression. He/she/they will be the main contact for the proposal.*

**2.2 Co-applicants**

*Academic individuals who are making a significant contribution to the planning and/or delivery of the proposed work but not on a contracted/out-sourced basis.*

**2.3 Collaborators**

*External partners who are undertaking work on a collaborative/contracted/out-sourced basis. This includes partners who are making a significant contribution to the strategy, planning and/or delivery of the proposed work but not on a contracted/out-sourced basis.*

*External partners will, in general, be expected to meet their own costs. The contribution (cash and/or in-kind) of their organisation to the project should be listed as a partner contribution in section 1.3.*

**2.4 Identify applicants involved in previously funded UKRI projects.**  *Include brief details on applicant, funding research council, project reference, current status and outcomes.*

**Section 3: UoE Business Development or Knowledge Exchange/Impact Contact**

* 1. **Business Development or Knowledge Exchange/Impact Contact**: *Applicants* ***must*** *discuss their proposal with their relevant Business Development/ KEI Contact. Please see the list of appropriate points of contact in Appendix A.*
  2. **Lead Business Development Executive or Knowledge Exchange/Impact contact Supporting Statement**: *To be prepared by the lead BDE/KEI contact to comment on the project proposal including evaluating project feasibility, IP management, suitability of project partners and onward development prospects.*
  3. **External input and mentoring into your project**.

*Identify any external partners providing input or mentoring on project concept, design or execution, giving brief details of the extent of that contribution.*

**Section 4: Need/Opportunity/Challenge**

* 1. **What is the need/challenge/opportunity you are seeking to address? Who is affected by it? How have you identified this issue?**
  2. **What is your proposed solution to addressing this issue?**
  3. **What is the advantage of your proposed solution compared to other alternatives?**
  4. **What impacts do you ultimately anticipate if the project is successful? Considering the guidance on responsible innovation, please explain how these impacts will create public benefit.**

**Section 5: Rationale and Interdisciplinarity**

* 1. **What is the rationale and supporting evidence for why your proposed solution will meet the targeted need?** *Give sufficient details of past and current research to show that your aims are scientifically justified.*
  2. **Relevant references (maximum of 5)**
  3. **What is the rationale for taking an interdisciplinary approach (combining research from different research council remits) in developing the solution?** *Describe what essential elements research from within the two different research council remits contribute to the solution.*

**Section 6: Deliverability**

* 1. **What is the project’s current status and its primary objectives?** *Project teams must include information regarding previous funding of relevant research. There may be terms and conditions associated with the funding that may include commercial restrictions.*
  2. **How will the project achieve its objectives?** *Summarise the project work plan including two-three key progression milestones (one being the project end). Detail how responsibilities are divided between lead and co-applicants.*
  3. **Identify and justify the skills and resources needed to deliver the plan**. *Are these resources secured/available? What unique skills and resources are brought by team members representing different research council remits?*
  4. **How will the project be managed to ensure progression and delivery of objectives*?*** *Outline measures that will be adopted by the project lead to monitor and proactively manage project progression e.g., regular project meetings that bring together the interdisciplinary project team to report on progress and identify and mitigate risks to project delivery.*
  5. **How will the project continue post UKRI support to enable it to meet its ultimate aims?** *Outline the anticipated route to continued impact in line with the ultimate aims. What sources of subsequent funding/potential partners are available to you? What criteria will need to be met in order to access these funds/partnerships and how will the planned programme of work help to meet these criteria?*
  6. **If you have any engagement with an external partner on this project, have they contributed to the milestones, and would the final milestone be a suitable achievement for their continued involvement?** *Do you know if they would contribute to the funding required for progression?* *Please elaborate on partner engagement to date and to what extent they have influenced development of the project and associated milestones. What is the likelihood of their contributing funding towards future development?*
  7. **Considering the guidance on Responsible Innovation, how will you ensure appropriate engagement with relevant stakeholders and end-users?** *Describe the identified stakeholders and end users and detail how you plan to engage these, or how the proposed project will be used to develop the understanding of stakeholder and end user groups and devise a plan for engagement.* *Explain how the knowledge of these groups will shape the development of your project.*

**Section 7: Intellectual Property commercialisation (if applicable)**

*Intellectual property encompasses inventions, computer software, data, databases, technical know-how and trade secrets as well as ‘creative works’ such as teaching materials, books or learned articles, artistic or musical works, sound recordings, films or broadcasts, works protected by design right, trademarks. The* [*University Policy on IP commercialisation*](https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/uoe_policy_on_commercialisation_of_ip.pdf) *does not include ‘creative works’ (unless part of an invention) and these forms of IP are not covered by this section.*

* 1. **Does the proposal have freedom to operate, or does it require access to background IP? If access is required, what IP does the proposal need access to, and can this be secured on reasonable terms?**
  2. **Detail any University of Edinburgh IP which underpins the project.**
  3. **What new IP is the project expected to produce?**
  4. **How will project generated IP be managed and exploited to support meeting the targeted need?**
  5. **Non confidential disclosure of the product idea or supporting data can affect the ability for the project to be adopted by a subsequent funder or investor. You are asked to comment on extent of disclosure and any future intention to disclose during the duration of the project**.

**Section 8: Project Duration and Cost**

Please include estimates of the duration and costs you anticipate will be required to reach each milestone and any project partner contribution. Enter the expected total project duration, cost and estimate the Harmonised IAA contribution, based on 100% of the requested costs. Costs for sub-contracted work should be clearly justified and identified in the application. Submitted costs should be broken down into categories (e.g. labour, materials, travel) and must be approved by the Edinburgh Research Office (contact details in Appendix A), who will advise on how to manage any cost exceptions. Applications with no official costs attached will be rejected. Costs should be approved in accordance with your institution’s standard practice.

Maximum project duration is 12 months, and the last allowed end date is 31 January 2027. Due to the time limited availability of funding there will be no possibility of extending projects beyond this final end date.

**Reporting post award**

**Milestone and Responsible Innovation Review Meetings**

The project team will be expected to have milestone review meetings, coinciding with project milestones and one Responsible Innovation (RI) peer learning session. The review meetings will be attended by the project lead/team, Business Development Executive and/or Knowledge Exchange/Impact contactand any relevant Harmonised IAA programme team members. At these milestone review meetings, the project team will be expected to disclose data supporting milestone progression and relevant RI considerations in addition to spending totals to date. The Harmonised IAA programme team will confirm milestone progression. The RI peer learning session will include a presentation of the approach and relevant RI considerations for the other award holders in the cohort and will be required for milestone progression.

**Early termination of a project**

The Harmonised IAA programme team reserve the right to terminate projects that have not made sufficient progress, have failed or are judged unlikely to achieve milestones. The decision to terminate a project will only be taken following a full discussion between the project team, the Business Development Executive or Knowledge Exchange/Impact contactand Harmonised IAA programme team. In the event of a project being terminated early there is an expectation that unspent funds will be returned to the Harmonised IAA fund for reallocation in a timely fashion.

**Final Review Meeting**

Within 1 month of the project concluding the project lead/team will be expected to have a final review meeting attended by the Business Development Executive and/or Knowledge Exchange/Impact contact and Harmonised IAA programme team. The project team will be expected to disclose data supporting the project outcomes in addition to spending totals. Shortly thereafter the project lead is expected to submit a Final Report summarising the data supporting milestone achievement and project outcomes.

**Annual Reporting**

The Harmonised IAA team expect you to provide project updates when requested and provide data on outcomes annually for **5 years** after the award has completed. Failure to provide timely reports will result in you being disqualified from submitting applications to future programmes.

**Data Management**

As data generated during the lifetime of a Harmonised IAA project may be required to support future funding applications, patents, legal agreements, regulatory applications or commercial due diligence, it is important to ensure implementation of good data management practices. Project leaders are responsible for ensuring consistency and quality in data capture, storage, management and protection in adherence to University and UKRI policy. Further guidance and advice can be obtained from the University Research Data Service.

[Research Data Service](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/research-data-service)

Contact: data-support@ed.ac.uk

[University Research Data Management Policy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/research-data-policy)

[UKRI Common Principles on Data Policy](https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/data-policy/common-principles-on-data-policy/)

**Submission Process**

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all eligible applicants. The University has a long-standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and to promoting a positive culture which celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and ensures fairness. Applications are encouraged from **research-active staff at all career stages and from diverse subject areas.**

**Please email your application and costs as a PDF to** [**Harmonised.IAA@ei.ed.ac.uk**](mailto:Harmonised.IAA@ei.ed.ac.uk)

**The deadline for applications is 3 November 2025 subject to further notice**

You will receive notification that your application has been received.

**Harmonised IAA Programme Team**

## Harmonised IAA Application Assessment Criteria

The Harmonised IAA Review Panel will consider outline applications against the following criteria.

**Interdisciplinarity**

* Does the team represent research from two different research council remits?
* Does the application demonstrate that both areas of research provide essential contributions to the proposed activities?
* How novel is the combination of contributions from both areas of research?

**Need/Challenge/Opportunity**

* How strong is the evidence for the identified need?
* Would meeting this need significantly benefit society?
* If the need is not significant now, will it become so in the future?
* Will the impact be realised directly or by/through an external partner?
* What difference does the project make to an end-user?
* Is the need met or unmet. If unmet, will it likely be unmet at the time that the proposed solution is in place?
* Has the applicant identified the key competing solutions and their status or are you aware of other similar or complementary research underway elsewhere?
* Has the applicant identified the key competitive advantages of their proposed solution?
* How likely is it that the proposed solution, if achieved, would be widely adopted?

**Rationale**

* Is there a good scientific rationale for the project?
* Is there a reasonable body of evidence to support the proposed rationale?
* Is there a good rationale for combining expertise from disciplines spanning different research council remits?

**Deliverability**

* Objectives:
  + If successful, will the proposal make a significant contribution to meeting the identified need?
  + If successful, will it achieve an endpoint that has a reasonable chance of achieving continued impact, including by attracting any required additional investment?
  + Are downstream development hurdles surmountable?
* Plan:
  + Are the preliminary budgets and schedule to reach the milestones appropriate?
  + What is the likelihood of the project meeting its milestones?
  + Given the project’s risk and its potential benefits, does the plan offer good value for money?
  + Does the plan adequately address stakeholder and end-user knowledge and needs?
* Assets:
  + Has the team identified and secured reasonable access to necessary resources/skills from different disciplines? Note that not all collaborations/out-sourcing agreements need be in place at the application stage.
  + Has the individual or group established a high-quality track record in the field?
  + Are the applicants well placed to deliver the work?

**Intellectual Property**

* Does the proposal have an appropriate intellectual property strategy?
  + Background
    - Does the team have access to necessary background intellectual property?
    - If not, are the applicant’s arguments for how they will access required background intellectual property persuasive?
  + Foreground
    - Is the intellectual property generated in the course of the project likely to be protectable and by what mechanism (i.e., patent protectable: will it be novel, non-obvious and useable)?
    - Will the proposed management and exploitation strategy maximize the likelihood that the project will be able to access any required downstream funding to enable the project to meet its identified need?

A Responsible Innovation observer will also be invited to attend the panel session and highlight any relevant considerations.

Please note that the decisions of the Harmonised IAA Review Panel will not be open to appeal and the University reserves the right to amend the application process.

**Governance**

The Harmonised IAA Review Panel has academic and business development representation. Panel membership will be available to applicants, on request, following the application deadline. Contact: [**Harmonised.IAA@ei.ed.ac.uk**](mailto:Harmonised.IAA@ei.ed.ac.uk)

**Appendix A – Business Development, Knowledge Exchange/Impact & Research Support Contacts**

**Business Development Contacts:**

**Please visit** [**Business Development team | Edinburgh Innovation**](https://uoe-edinburgh-innovations.ed.ac.uk/for-staff/commercialisation-routes/business-development-team)

**Knowledge Exchange & Impact Contacts:**

**Please visit the** [**Engagement for Impact Hub – Where to go for support**](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/EngagementforImpactHub/SitePages/Make-an-Impact.aspx#where-to-go-for-support)

Please contact Research Support for project costings and attach costings to your application:

## Edinburgh Research Office

[Research Funding Specialist Contacts](https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-support-office/about-us/research-funding-specialists)

1. [UKRI definition of Responsible Innovation: ‘Responsible innovation is a process that takes the wider impacts of research and innovation into account. It aims to ensure that unintended negative impacts are avoided, that barriers to dissemination, adoption and diffusion of research and innovation are reduced, and that the positive societal and economic benefits of research and innovation are fully realised.’](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/responsible-innovation/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)