**EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)**

**Innovation Associate**

**Pilot Guidelines and Application Form**

**Project funding for Early Career Researchers to create impact from research. Deadline to apply 14 Nov 2025 by 12noon.**

# Purpose

The EPSRC IAA is offering support for Early Career Researchers, directly or through their supervisors or line managers, to undertake defined and specific activities to pursue an innovation and economic impact opportunity in support of the [UK Government’s Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy/industrial-strategy-sector-definitions-list). The University of Edinburgh is supporting innovation as a career path and has the ambition to increase staff active in innovation and commercialisation, as outlined in the Research and Innovation Strategy 2030. EPSRC has provided the funding for this short-term initiative to support innovation in the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors.

# Remit

The Innovation Associate award will support specified translational activities to develop a route to economic impact in support of the [UK Government’s Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy/industrial-strategy-sector-definitions-list) through innovation and commercialisation. The proposed activities must build on existing underpinning research in the [EPSRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/).

Examples of supported activities include:

* Translational research that progresses a novel commercial innovation or economic impact opportunity.
* Spending time in a non-academic organisation to support commercial innovation or economic impact.
* Expansion of scale and reach of economic impact from an existing innovation or impact programme.

# Projects must have a **clear economic impact or commercialisation focus** with anticipated impact from the applicant’s underpinning research and how this aligns with broader career objectives clearly identified. New basic research such as that covered by responsive mode grants from UKRI cannot be supported.

# Scope

The Innovation Associate scheme supports staff time and relevant project costs (see project costs below). We are planning to make up to six awards.

The award maximum is £25,000. To simplify costing, this is split over:

* Maximum £20,000 for salary (see below for costings of grade 7 staff per month for 1 Dec 2025 to 31 March 2026 as costed by ERO)
* Maximum £5,000 for other reasonable costs

Maximum project duration is 4 months, projects must start promptly, and the last possible project end date is 31 March 2026, no extensions will be available.

# Eligibility

The opportunity is open to University research-active staff working within the [EPSRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/) who identify as Early Career Researchers[[1]](#footnote-2) and have a compelling commercial innovation or economic impact opportunity. **PhD students cannot be funded.**

The EPSRC IAA is 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 all early career researchers and any subject area within remit working on research with a compelling opportunity for commercial innovation or economic impact.

* The proposed project must aim to support economic impact in support of the [UK Government’s Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy/industrial-strategy-sector-definitions-list)
* To be eligible, proposed activities **must sit to at least 50% within the remit and aims of EPSRC.** [Check the remit of EPSRC here.](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/)
* Proposals involving a partner organisations require a [letter of support or email statement from the partner organisation](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/project-partners-letter-of-support/) detailing the purpose of their involvement and what difference it will make: why the project is important to them.
* Applicants must discuss with their PI before submitting.Independent researchers are required to discuss with their line managers.
* If the Early Career Researcher applicant’s existing employment contract currently ends before 31 March 2026 their PI/line manager will be the formal award holder responsible for grant spend and reporting.
* All proposals must include a supporting statement from an appropriate School representative (PI/line manager) confirming that the applicant has approval to undertake the work and, if needed, agreement to act as award holder.
* All proposals must be discussed and signed off with your relevant Business Development contact prior to submission, and a dedicated section on the application form must be completed by them.

# Application procedure

Applicants are invited to apply to the scheme by the deadline of 14 Nov 2025 by 12noon. Decisions will be made by the end of November

Applications are completed using the application form below.

All applications must be **submitted by uploading to the following Microsoft Form:** <https://forms.office.com/e/Jjckusd6ns>

The following documents must be uploaded for the application to be complete:

* Application form
* Letter of support or email statement from supporting School representative (PI/line manager)
* If applicable: Letter of support or email statement from a partner organisation

# Responsible Innovation

The University of Edinburgh is committed to maintaining the highest standards of research integrity in all aspects of its research. There are specific University guidelines on research integrity. By applying to the call, applicants confirm that they are aware of and comply with the high standards expected, which in addition to the specific guidelines also includes the University’s commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the University’s sustainability policy, including its [travel guidelines](https://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/topics/travel/sustainable-travel-policy-2021).

For impact acceleration projects, responsible innovation is also a key commitment. Responsible innovation is the alignment of impacts with societal benefit and public interest and 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 in order to promote desirable and avoid undesirable impacts. Teams should regularly reflect on assumptions, integrate diverse sources of knowledge into decision making, and consider alternative approaches to remain responsive as the understanding of impacts develops. 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 groups. For further guidance please also refer to the [EPSRC framework for responsible innovation](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/framework-for-responsible-innovation/).

# Project costs

* Applicants are required to follow School research application procedures when applying for this funding and successful projects are to be costed in Worktribe thus creating a Worktribe record.
* **Permitted costs** that IAA funds can be requested for are **directly incurred costs** and **directly allocated costs except estate costs**. Indirect costs cannot be funded.
* In addition to the cost rules summarised above, for all other costs standard EPSRC grant cost eligibility rules will apply

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| --- | --- |
| **Eligible costs** | **Ineligible Costs** |
| Directly incurred and directly allocated costs | Estates and indirect costs |
| Applicant salary cost | Any partner organisation time |
| Consumables | Equipment costs above £10,000 |
| Travel and subsistence costs incurred by University of Edinburgh staff (to pursue innovation or impact) | Travel or subsistence costs incurred by any partner organisation  Academic conferences & collaborations |

100% direct salary costs 1 Dec 2025 – 31 March 2026 as provided by ERO:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grade point | Per month | 4 months |
| 7.1 | 4,386.20 | 17,544.80 |
| 7.2 | 4,515.12 | 18,060.47 |
| 7.3 | 4,648.15 | 18,592.60 |
| 7.4 | 4,785.08 | 19,140.33 |
| 7.5 | 4,926.24 | 19,704.97 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **APPLICATION DETAILS**  Further details requested in the online submission form. | |
| [Industrial strategy sector](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy/industrial-strategy-sector-definitions-list) | Choose an item. |
| Applicant title and name |  |
| Applicant contract end date |  |
| Project title |  |
| Start date |  |
| End date |  |
| Amount requested |  |
| Supporting School representative |  |

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| **ABSTRACT** |
| 1. Please provide a non-technical summary of what you are trying to achieve and why. (150 word limit) |
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| **RATIONALE AND VIABILITY** |
| 1. What is the rationale for the project? Explain the need/opportunity, and your motivation and objectives for the project to begin to address. Considering the guidance on Responsible Innovation, please outline the public benefit that you anticipate. (300 word limit) |
|  |
| 1. Describe tour relevant expertise, the underpinning research, the evidence for the project (scientific case) and its fit with the [EPSRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/our-research-portfolio-and-priorities/) (300 word limit, up to 5 references allowed in addition). |
|  |
| 1. How will you achieve the project objectives? Please outline the work plan. (300 word limit). |
|  |
| **OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS** |
| 1. What are the anticipated next steps after the project? What impacts do you ultimately anticipate achieving? (300 word limit) |
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| **STRATEGIC FIT** |
| 1. How does the project fit with the [UK Government’s Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy/industrial-strategy-sector-definitions-list) and your career aspirations in innovation and impact? What further opportunities does it enable? (200 word limit) |
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| **COSTS** |
| 1. Please justify the resource requested, referencing the project plan above and funding table below. (150 word limit) |
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| **IP AND ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**  ***The relevant BD/TT contact must fill in this section. Please ensure you have discussed this well before the submission deadline.*** |
| 1. Where appropriate please describe the IP position, the strategy for Background and Foreground commercialisation and any issues to be considered. (250 word limit) |
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**FUNDS REQUESTED**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW BASED ON APPLICANT’S GRADE AND OTHER COSTS.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resources** | **Justification of Resources** | **Total Cost (£)** | **Contribution** | | | |
| **IAA** | **Company Cash** | **Company In Kind** | **Other Funder** |
| Grade and months of PDRA staff time |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *[Any other requested costs (add lines as needed)]* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Totals** | |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Note from UKRI on identification of an early career researcher: There is no hard-and-fast definition of what constitutes an early career researcher, but they have often been defined as a researcher within eight years of their PhD viva or within six years of their first academic appointment. However, we recognise that these definitions do not recognise the wide range of career paths possible for researcher, and so UKRI considers anyone who identifies as an early career researcher to be one. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)