UKRI IAA Proof of Concept Scheme

Guide for Applicants

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About IAA Proof of Concept

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Support for the very early stage of creating social and commercial impact from research through partnership

Research can remain unexploited because a greater evidential base is required before external partners or academics are able to commit to its further progress and application. The Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) Proof of Concept scheme aims to support the development of an early evaluation prototype or 'demonstrator', initial trials in a particular field, feasibility studies, activity to translate research evidence for use by practitioners, or 'scoping exercises'. Such activities demonstrate the potential of the research for exploitation.

The aims of the scheme are:

- To support the development of the evidential base required to enable the University or user organisations to commit to application/exploitation.
- To enable the University and partner organisations to develop the relationships that will deliver successful exploitation/application.
- To enable partners to plan longer term projects

Funding for proof of concept projects is available via AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, and STFC IAAs. We encourage you to apply for co-funding where appropriate for multidisciplinary projects.

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About Your Project

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Eligibility:

- IAA projects are no longer required to be directly related to previous funded research, but must fall within the remit of the relevant Research Council(s):

  AHRC   BBSRC   EPSRC   ESRC   MRC   STFC

- We welcome applications from early career academics. Fellows may be eligible to apply as PI, please check with your Research Services Team
- Eligible partner organisations:
  - UK-based businesses, or UK sites of international businesses
  - UK charities
  - UK public sector organisations such as the NHS
  - Non-UK based businesses may be eligible where there is demonstrable evidence of the intention for inward investment during or beyond the lifetime of the project (e.g. establishing a UK site, job creation)

Contact the Knowledge Exchange Partnerships team if you have any queries about eligibility

Duration: Typical IAA Proof of Concept projects will be between 3 and 9 months in duration.

Funding Criteria: The partner organisation must contribute actively to the project through the provision of direct and in-kind resources (including finance, facilities, equipment, consumables and technical expertise). You are expected to negotiate a deal which minimises the support necessary from the IAA, and considers the value to the University and partner.

Dates: IAA awards to the University end on 31 March 2025 and no extensions will be permitted. All IAA project spend must be completed by this date. **Project Costs after IAA deadline cannot be covered by the IAA and must be covered by the partner organisation.**

About Your Application

Completing the Application Form:

The Knowledge Exchange Partnerships team can provide active support for your submission. **You are strongly advised to contact us for support before applying, and at least 1 month before the call.**

- Word limits are strictly applied. If you exceed a section word limit your application may be rejected.
- Applications are anonymised for assessment. **Please include the names of academic project partners on the first page and signature page only**. Use the terms "PI", "Co-I" or "PDRA" throughout the rest of the application. Do not include hyperlinks to sites where you may be identified, such as grant awards and research profiles.
- Remember to write your proposal for a non-specialist audience. For specific guidance on completing the different sections of the form, please refer to the IAA Handbook.

Costing:

Eligible Costs: Proof of Concept projects are expected to be costed on a full Economic Costing (fEC) basis. IAA funding can be used to cover the following:

All Estates, Technician IS and Indirect costs are ineligible, and must be allocated as Department Sustainability.

Directly incurred:	• PDRA Costs • Equipment and Consumables (maximum £10k, with justification) • Travel and Subsistence (maximum £5k, with justification) • PDRA training and development (maximum £2k, with justification) • Other costs as required (subject to approval from KE team, with justification)
Directly Allocated:	• Investigator time (maximum 20%) • Technician time (maximum 30%)
BlackDackel Costing Report:	Select appropriate research council as 'funder' with 100% fEC'd income template. This will ensure that inflation costs are included. To produce a submission report, please select 'Report Definition', and select 'Breakdown Full'.
Total Project Costs:	The costs directly associated with the project, in the eligible cost headings (see above). These should include all staff costs, estates, indirect costs, technician IS, travel and subsistence, and consumables
Partner Contributions:	The direct (invoiceable) partner contributions to the total project
In-Kind Costs	These may include staff time, access to equipment, provision of consumables

A direct (invoiceable) partner contribution is mandatory and expected to be at least 10% of the IAA grant requested. The University's IAA panel will consider cases where there is justification for a reduced/no direct contribution. **The maximum contribution from the IAA Proof of Concept funds towards the project costs is £30K.**

Assessment

Applications will be anonymised and assessed by the University's IAA Knowledge Exchange Schemes Panel. Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Potential for impact
2. Quality of the work plan
3. Demonstrable potential for follow-on activity
4. Value for money

The panel will consider:

- The benefits to the partner, the University, and the staff involved
- The likelihood that the project plans will deliver the expected outputs and benefits
- The contribution the University is expected to make relative to the partner (gearing)

Submitting Your Application

Contact the KE partnerships team at least one month prior to submitting your application:

All projects should be costed (fEC) and input onto PURE by your Department Research Services Hub, prior to completion of the application.

Completed applications should be submitted via email to: kepartnerships@manchester.ac.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Manchester aims to have an inclusive environment for all staff and students, by identifying and removing barriers in our practices. As part of UKRI's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion initiative, completing the monitoring form will help us to achieve this, and also help us to meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. While it is voluntary to disclose this information, doing so will enable us to better understand the composition of our workforce/student body and examine our practices fully. The ED&I survey is anonymous and can be accessed on the following link: IAA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Survey

Data we want to capture includes Gender, Age range, Ethnicity, Disability Status and Sexual orientation. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence, and all data disclosed will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. All data is handled in accordance with University Policy and more details can be seen here.

To find out more about the work The University of Manchester is doing to meet the requirements of the Equality Act, please contact equalityanddiversity@manchester.ac.uk or visit: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/data/

Application Checklist

☐ Signed Application Form in PDF format

☐ Signed letter of support from the collaborating partner, confirming their direct and in-kind contribution

☐ Evidence of approval authorised by your Head of Department (e.g. a screenshot of the approval on PURE), to confirm that the proposal is supported by your Department and is in line with Department policy for the costing of collaborative research projects

☐ fEC BlackDackel Costing

☐ We strongly encourage you to complete the research risk profiler tool

☐ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Further Information

FAQs   IAA Handbook