UKRI IAA Pilot Fund Scheme
Guide for Applicants

About IAA Pilot Fund

Support for collaborative projects that progress ideas on the path from research towards innovation and demonstrate the potential for social and commercial impact 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) Pilot Fund 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 allow for short-term, placement style activities (both inward and outward to the University) to support knowledge exchange.
- To enable partners to plan longer term projects.

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

About Your Project

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 or 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: IAA Pilot Fund projects will typically 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 2026 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 limit, your application may be rejected.
- Applications are anonymised for assessment. **Please include the names of academic project partners on the third 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: Pilot Fund projects are expected to be costed on a full Economic Costing (fEC) basis. IAA funding can be used to cover the following:

Cost Type	Allowable Costs
Directly Incurred	- PDRA costs - Equipment and Consumables (max. £10K each, with justification) - Travel and Subsistence (max. £5K, with justification) - PDRA training and development (max. £2K, with justification) - Other costs as required, subject to approval from KEP team, with justification
Directly Allocated	- Investigator time (minimum 5%, maximum 20%) - Technician time (maximum 30%)

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

Term	Description
BlackDackel Costing Report:	The PI and any Co-I's must be named on the costing. Select appropriate research council as 'funder' and use the **'Standard Template 100% FEC'**. The UoM IAA Award is awarded without UKRI Indexation, therefore this template will ensure inflation costs are included, and will not be double counted
Total Project Costs:	The costs directly associated with the project, in the eligible cost headings (above). These 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 the partner's staff time, access to equipment, provision of consumables, explained within a supporting letter.

For inward placement activities, the IAA funds may be used to support reasonable University of Manchester support costs, e.g. academic or PDRA time, equipment access and consumables (purchased through the University). The external partner is expected to fund the costs related to placement activities of the researcher within their organisation and make a direct and in-kind financial contribution to the project.

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 Pilot Fund scheme is £30K towards the project costs.**

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

Submitting Your Application

Contact the [Knowledge Exchange 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 IAA application.

Completed applications are 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 the [equality and diversity pages on Staffnet](#).

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](#)