

UKRI IAA Commercial Development Fund

Guide for Applicants

About IAA Commercial Development Fund

Initial market and competitive landscaping, and technology evaluation to drive spin-out and licensing opportunities

Enterprise and entrepreneurship are essential to allow research within the University to realise its potential impact, and lead to renewal of the economic and social base. Delivered by the University of Manchester Innovation Factory, who are responsible for driving the commercialisation of Manchester's innovations and intellectual property, the fund will provide the essential first stage of initial market and competitive landscaping, technology evaluation and partner engagement to drive spin-out and licensing opportunities.

The aims of the scheme are:

- To support the development of the evidential base required to drive spin-out and licensing opportunities
- To enable the University and Innovation Factory to secure further investment for commercialisation of University IP

Funding for Commercial Development 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.

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](#) [STFC](#)
- We welcome applications from early career academics. Fellows may be eligible to apply as PI, please check with your Research Services Team

Contact the [Knowledge Exchange Partnerships team](#) if you have any queries about eligibility

Duration: Typical IAA Commercial Development projects will be between 3 and 9 months in duration.

Funding Criteria: With the expected significant demand for the IAA Schemes, combined with unavoidable limits on funding, evaluation will take place on a competitive basis with evaluation considering Potential for impact; Work Plan; and Follow-on.

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.

About Your Application

Completing the Application Form:

*The University of Manchester Innovation Factory can provide active support for your submission. **You are strongly advised to contact the Invention Discovery Team for support before applying, and at least 1 month before the call. Please email: duncan.henderson@uominnovationfactory.com***

- Word limits are strictly applied. If you exceed a section word limit by more than 10%, your application will 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.

Costing:

Eligible Costs: Commercial Development 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. Patent filing fees are also ineligible.

Directly incurred:

- PDRA Costs
- Equipment and Consumables (maximum £10k, with justification)
- Travel and Subsistence (maximum £5k, with justification)
- Other costs as required (e.g., external market assessment fees)

Directly Allocated:

- Investigator time (maximum 20%)
- Technician time (maximum 30%, with justification)

Project cost headings that require justification must be included within the budget page at the point of submission. If costs are included without justification, justification will be requested as part of a conditional approval, or removed during the grant offer/award process.

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

The maximum contribution from the IAA Commercial Development fund towards the project costs is £50K.

Assessment

Applications will be anonymised and assessed by the University of Manchester Innovation Factory UKRI IAA 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

The panel will consider:

- The benefits to 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 impact opportunity

Submitting Your Application

Contact the Invention Discovery 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:

paula.dhoot@uominnovtaionfactory.com

Application Checklist

- ☐ Signed Application Form in PDF format
- ☐ 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

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/>