# **Research and Enterprise**

# **EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account – Call for Proposals**

# August 2023 - Call 5

Queen’s University have been awarded an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). Research and Enterprise invites applications for funding for projects relating to impact, commercialisation and external engagement. Call 5 opens on the 4th August 2023 and closes on the 11th September 2023.

We expect IAA funding to add value to existing UKRI support. EPSRC IAA funding should enable multidisciplinary working and collaboration with non-academic partners. It is not a requirement that IAA-funded projects are related to previous UKRI funding. Applications will be open to members of staff in any School within the University that can satisfy the essential criteria:

1. The project must be able to start reasonably quickly.
2. All work and reporting activities must be complete before the **end of September 2024.** Individual project strands have specific timeframes for completion noted herein.

The funding being offered must align to the IAA scheme objectives and the original terms and conditions of this award to support activities and address challenges and opportunities, including those that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 and where demand is surplus to funding available. The following four areas are particular priorities for this additional funding;

1. Working with and through the Alan Turing Institute, the Rosalind Franklin Institute, the Henry Royce Institute and their network of user partnerships.
2. Support for activities which encourage business co-investment and enhance business/academic partnerships.
3. Impact activities which contribute to regional/place agendas.
4. Public Engagement where interaction is key to informing the research impact such as user or patient engagement as a critical pathway to achieving societal and/or economic impact.

There will still be a range of project types possible and flexibility will continue to be applied. In the application applicants will be asked to choose which type of project they wish to apply for. The general points which will need to be addressed in the application are:

* What have you developed or what is the opportunity?
* What funding have you had previously for this work?
* What do you want to do?
* How long will the project take and can it complete before the deadline?
* Will there be any partners involved?
* Are they contributing to the project?
* Who will it benefit?
* What future activity?

Types of projects available in this call

1. Secondments

These can be either outwards, where a QUB member of staff goes to work at the partner company or inwards where a member of the partner company comes to work within QUB. Between £10,000 and £30,000 will be available for each outward secondment and up to £10,000 will be available for each inward secondment.

Secondments are expected to have a duration of between eight weeks and four months and can be full time or part time. QUB will encourage secondments into early stage or spin-out companies where the secondee can maximise impact, either through knowledge exchange activities or supporting business development activities. All secondments will be required to provide a measurable metric as to what would constitute a successful secondment and confirm any in-kind or cash contributions in advance.

1. Collaboration Catalyst

This funding strand will allow researchers to carry out short pieces of work that develop early findings or to carry out preliminary commercial activities. Activities supported will help to assist with the development of full follow-on funding applications (eg Innovate UK) or develop a clearer understanding of the commercial potential of the outputs of the original research project.

Additional weighting will be given to projects that support engagement between businesses and researchers who are either new to Queen’s or existing staff who do not normally engage in Knowledge Exchange activities, but which have clear impact potential. Applications can be made up to a maximum of £10,000 per project. It is expected that these projects may last up to 6 months in duration.

1. Demonstration of Commercial Principle

This activity would allow researchers to carry out early-stage commercialisation activities essential to realising the commercial potential of EPSRC funded research. Unlike other work packages, no partner company will be required - though external validation will still be sought.

Activity will support colleagues develop and strengthen the commercial potential of an identified business opportunity. Funding would support an individual or a small team and would be available for a duration of up to three months. Each project would be able to receive funding which could be spent flexibly, including on salary contribution, consumables, external validation or business model concept development and training. Costs could also be supported to develop a pitch for the technology or to find a potential partner. Applications can be made up to a maximum of £10,000 per project.

1. Enterprise Fellowship

A key challenge for commercialisation and delivering impact is the difficulty in releasing a dedicated individual within QUB to drive the project at the early-stages. These individuals, often have the skills and ability to apply for funding and carry out the work they wish to do but the challenge is that funding is often not contiguous and there is very real risk of them leaving to work elsewhere and of the skills and potential impact being lost. By providing a method to fund specific early career research “star performers” it will be possible to retain them within QUB to carry out further work.

Applications will need to be made by an academic supporting an individual. The proposed individual will need to detail the technology or opportunity they will work on and prepare a personal statement as to why they should be funded through an IAA Enterprise Fellowship. This should cover what their plans are from a personal perspective, how they see the technology or opportunity developing and the further funding sources they will be targeting. The application will have to detail the spending plans, there would be an expectation that the majority would be towards salary costs with some for consumables but some would be allocated towards support activities.

**There is an expectation that the individual who would be funded will have already engaged with either of the Impact or Commercial Development teams.**

Projects that can offer a contribution from other internal funds would be prioritised. It would be expected that outcomes would include securing an external Fellowship, creating a spin out company or becoming an entrepreneur. Assessment will be based on the application form and on the personal statement provided. The target is to support one Enterprise Fellowship with funding of up to £30,000 over a six month period or to support two shorter Fellowships sharing the funding available.

Applications that are looking to extend research projects or that are targeting outputs of only research papers or future research grant applications are unlikely to be successful.

1. Non-commercial Impact

The purpose of this strand is to broaden the type and nature of impact beyond the purely commercial. This is a new strand of funding available for 2022/25 applications and its purpose is to be as flexible as possible. Applications are sought for projects that would primarily focus on societal, policy and environmental impacts. To date there has been a low level of applications stemming from EPSRC grants that have sought to address these types of impact. Applications can be made up to a maximum of £10,000 per project.

It is important to note that the purpose of any of these awards is about the impact that they can have. “Impact” is taken in a broad context and is wider than just looking at the financial return a project could have.

All applicants are recommended to consider Section 8 of the application form carefully and to provide a full response. The potential reach and significance of the impact to beneficiaries should be considered. Reach can be considered in terms of the extent and diversity of the communities, environments, individuals, organisations or any other beneficiaries that have benefited or been affected. Significance can be considered in terms of the degree to which the impact has enriched, influenced, informed or changed policies, opportunities, perspectives or practices of communities, individuals or organisations.

The application process is outlined as follows:

* All applications should be registered on the Research Application System (RAS).  Applicants should work with the relevant Faculty Finance Office to calculate project budgets. **Please be in contact with your Faculty Finance Office at least 5 days in advance of the call deadline.**
* Please use the **(August 2023)** template application form and ensure it has been signed correctly.
* Please identify the type of project that is being applied for.
* In conjunction with the completed application form, all applications must be accompanied by a completed [Innovation Disclosure form (IDF)](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/EnterpriseDevelopment/ServicesforAcademics/HowtoDiscloseyourInnovation/) **if appropriate**.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

EPSRC aims to embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all that EPSRC do. The EDI expectations guide [EPSRC Expectations](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/expectations-for-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/) helps the engineering and physical sciences community to identify and address the specific EDI barriers in their own environment by taking into account differences such as location, discipline, role, and career stage. The EDI [ActionPlan](https://qubstudentcloud.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/int-re/Shared%20Documents/Staff%20and%20Student%20Resources/BUSINESS%20ALLIANCE/EPSRC%20IAA%20Documents%202022%20-%202025/EPSRC%20-%20EDI%20Action%20Plan%202022-2025.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=UTHg5l), is a 3-year plan built on knowledge, research, data, and expertise from across the research and innovation sector.

EDI’s have been introduced into the EPSRC IAA application process, it is also part of the UKRI wide applications for 2022–2025 funding. There is a strong potential to embed EDI considerations into IAA strategies and processes. EPSRC is committed to ensuring activities and research they fund is aligned with the principles of ‘Responsible Research and Innovation.

EPSRC’s role is to promote the formation of a diverse and inclusive research culture to support people in achieving world-class research.

All applications are due to be submitted on **Monday, 11th September 2023 by 5pm.**

Panel assessment will occur swiftly and applicants will be informed as soon as possible.

Signed completed applications should be e-mailed to Joan Grieve at

[iaa@qub.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@qub.ac.uk) with the subject heading: EPSRC IAA