Queen's University Belfast
AHRC Impact Acceleration Account
FAQs 2022-26

What is an Impact Acceleration Account?

An IAA is a block award made to research organisations to accelerate the impact of academic research. They are awarded by research councils, in this case by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The AHRC IAA provides funding mechanisms **for arts and humanities impact activities and knowledge exchange**. IAAs allow research organisations to respond to impact opportunities in more flexible, responsive and creative ways.

How is impact defined?

RCUK defines research impact as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy'. According to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), impact is an effect on, change or benefit – beyond academia – to:

- the economy
- society
- culture
- public policy or services
- health
- the environment
- quality of life

Impact

Impact includes, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit:

To:	of:	in any geographic location, whether:
attitude awareness behaviour capacity opportunity performance policy practice process understanding	audience beneficiary community constituency organisation individuals	locally regionally nationally internationally

Impact also includes the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.

Making an impact through excellence in research and innovation is central to what we do at Queen's. It is our purpose and responsibility to take on major global challenges, and to find answers that will help to build a better society. Applications should reflect school, faculty and institutional research priorities, such as those contained in the Strategy 2030 in reference to

Research and Innovation, for example aligning projects with UNSustainable Development Goals.

What support is available through the IAA?

- **Leading Impact Fund:** This fund will support researchers to carry out longer-term pieces of work to accelerate the impact of their research (Awards of up to £15k are available). The type of work supported via this scheme may include a co-production project, creating an impact-related toolkit or running an impact-related forum with external partners. Creative approaches to impact are welcome.
- **Rapid Impact Fund:** This fund will be open all year and provides short-term, small amounts of money (usually between £500- £1,000) to enable researchers to respond quickly to opportunities for impact, for example, giving evidence before a panel, producing a short guide, or running a workshop.
- **Fellowships and Practitioner Appointments:** Fellowships will enable early career researchers, mid-career and senior academics to apply and validate their research in an external environment. Practitioner Appointments will allow staff from external organisations to spend time with researchers in the University. These opportunities will encourage skills and knowledge exchange and will support the development of long-term working relationships. Fellowships/appointments will usually be for a maximum of six months on a flexible basis.
- **Building Partnerships:** The IAA will support the development of regional, national and international partnerships. This will enable researchers to build/strengthen relationships with external organisations in order to share their research and work together to create impact.
- **Commercialising Arts, Cultural and Humanities Enterprises (CACHE):** This fund will allow researchers to carry out early-stage commercialisation activities needed to realise the commercial potential of Arts and Humanities research. It will support researchers to develop and strengthen the commercial potential of an identified opportunity. Funding will be available for an individual or a team and will be flexible to support consumables, market validation, product development, training, business model concept development, finding a potential partner or developing a pitch.
- **Training for impact**: Courses and training workshops will be advertised throughout the year.
- **Policy, public and community engagement**: The IAA will support public lectures and policy clinics for academics to share research and ideas on major social, cultural and economic challenges. The Queen's Policy Engagement blog is also a place for research analysis and commentary. If you have a blog post you would like to share, or an idea for a public lecture or policy clinic, please contact qpol@qub.ac.uk.

More information on all these schemes is available via iaa@qub.ac.uk (please include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line)

How much support is available?

- **Leading Impact Fund:** Awards of up to £15,000 are available.
- **Rapid Impact Fund:** Usually around £500 - £1, 000 each. Applications will be open until funds are exhausted.
- **Fellowships and Practitioner Appointments:** A sum of £5,000 is available for each partnership/appointment.
- **Building Partnerships:** A maximum of £3,000 available per partnership.
- **Commercialising Arts, Cultural and Humanities Enterprises (CACHE):** A maximum of £10,000 per proposal.

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

Applications are welcome from members of staff across the University who are involved in arts and humanities-related research, as well as external organisations working on initiatives relevant to arts and humanities. Applications based on multi-/inter-disciplinary research with a substantial arts and humanities element are also eligible.

The fund is open to researchers at all stages of their career and we would particularly encourage applications from researchers who are new to Queen's or new to impact. Please note that, for the purposes of administering the award, the person named as Principal Investigator should be a permanent member of staff. If you are not a permanent member of staff but wish to apply, please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk (and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line) for advice.

Applications for Practitioner Appointments are welcome from external organisations.

Can postgraduates access support through the IAA?

Where appropriate, PhD students may be eligible for fellowships with external organisations. These fellowships will be supported by a senior academic mentor.

Do I need to be a previous recipient of AHRC funding to apply?

No, you do not need to have been a previous recipient of AHRC funding in order to be eligible to apply, but there must be existing research in an arts and humanities discipline.

How do Queen's staff apply?

Applications to the AHRC IAA will be made through application forms. These can be submitted for the Rapid Impact Fund at any time. Applications can be found on our Sharepoint site http://go.qub.ac.uk/7rkbc

For Queen's staff a Research Application System (RAS) entry and/or Research Grant Application Summary (RGAS) form are required for awards made under the Leading Impact, Partnerships, Fellowships, and CACHE funds

Pre-application conversations are strongly encouraged. Please contact Kevin Fearon or Lynne Gault at iaa@qub.ac.uk (and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line)

How can external organisations apply?

External organisations are welcome to apply for Practitioner Appointments: Up to £5,000 is available to cover the organisation's cost while one of its staff members spends time with Queen's staff. Externals can access the application form via the website https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Our-impact/impact-acceleration-accounts/AHRCIAA/

The amount applied for should be **inclusive** of VAT.

If you are interested in applying, please contact Kevin Fearon or Lynne Gault at iaa@qub.ac.uk (please include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line).

Prior to submitting an application, representatives from external organisations are required to secure agreement with the relevant Head of School or other senior manager at Queen's. For assistance in identifying the right person, please contact iaa@qub.ac.uk

How are decisions on awards made?

Decisions for the Rapid Impact Fund will be made by the Chair of the AHRC IAA Steering Committee. In most cases, decisions will be made within five working days of submitting an application.

Decisions on the other awards will be made by members of the AHRC IAA Working Group, normally within 3 weeks of submission. The Working Group is composed of academic and support staff from Queen's and representatives from external organisations: the list of current members is included as an appendix to this guidance. Feedback on unsuccessful applications will be available on request. Please note that the decision of the review panel is final.

What costs are eligible for funding?

The AHRC IAA can support directly incurred costs. These include:

- salary costs for Research Assistants, Research Technicians etc.
- consumables such as professional materials
- promotional materials, such as digital toolkits, video content, infographics, blogs, podcasts and briefing papers
- small pieces of equipment directly related to the project - speak to the project team first
- venue bookings and catering
- travel and subsistence

In the case of external suppliers, applicants should check whether VAT will be charged and should cost this in if applicable. We recommend that you discuss these rates with your school office in order to identify the most appropriate rate and method of payment.

Please note that total funding being transferred to international partners **must** be less than 30% of the overall funding requested. If an international partner is providing a service, please ensure that any relevant VAT costs are included. These will not be covered at a later date.

Where funds are transferred to external organisations, a contract will be required. Due diligence will be undertaken on all partners. Contact iaa@qub.ac.uk for advice.

What activities are not eligible for funding?

- primary research
- activities that can be supported through other standard routes
- estates and indirect costs

- infrastructure and capital expenditure (other than small pieces of equipment directly related to the project as mentioned above)
- patent filing or similar costs associated directly to registering intellectual property rights
- training or activities aimed at undergraduates or Masters students
- large AHRC investments such as Centres, Large Grants and Infrastructure Investments during their AHRC grant
- article processing charges associated with academic publication

For information on internal funding opportunities which may be able to support these activities see: Internal Funding

What counts as primary research?

Primary research involves a researcher collecting data directly – for example, by carrying out interviews, surveys or focus groups. Primary research is not eligible for funding under this scheme.

However, these methods may be used to measure the impact of the initiative. In addition, these methods may be used when the intention is not open-ended research, but outcome-orientated (such as carrying out interviews in order to produce a policy report, or focus groups to co-produce a new intervention).

Secondary research (research using data that has already been collected) is eligible for funding as long as it is clearly aimed at achieving impact beyond academia.

How can awards for Fellowships and Practitioner Appointments be used?

Awards for Fellowships and Practitioner Appointments can be used to cover directly incurred costs, as described above. For Practitioner Appointments, it may include salary costs of external staff.

Do awards count as research income?

Awards made under the Leading Impact Fund, Partnerships and Fellowships and CACHE Funds count as research income.

Awards made under the Rapid Impact Fund and Practitioner Appointments do not.

Are award holders required to complete a RAS entry and/or RGAS form?

A Research Application System (RAS) entry and/or Research Grant Application Summary (RGAS) form are required for awards made under the Leading Impact, Partnerships, Fellowships and CACHE funds

Will the AHRC IAA support conference attendance?

The AHRC IAA may support attendance at practitioner conferences *if the impact can be evidenced*. Attendance at standard academic conferences is unlikely to be supported.

For information on internal funding opportunities which may be able to support conference attendance, please see: Internal Funding

Can I apply for more than one award?

It is possible to apply for more than one award but, depending on demand, it is unlikely that a researcher/team of researchers will receive more than one award per stream per year.

If I received an AHRC IAA award in the past, am I eligible to reapply?

Yes, provided your second project is different to the first and new impact is anticipated, you can apply to the AHRC IAA again. Second-time applicants will be expected to have fulfilled all requirements of the previous award.

Am I eligible to reapply if I was unsuccessful with a previous application?

Yes, applicants who have been unsuccessful with previous applications are welcome to reapply. Where possible, feedback will be provided by the panel to help strengthen future applications.

What kind of contribution is expected from partner organisations?

Where possible leveraged funding or in-kind contributions from partner organisations will be sought. This may include a cash contribution, access to data or archives, use of space, or contribution of time or services. We recognise that it will not always be possible to obtain leveraged support.

Can I apply for co-funding with other award schemes (e.g. the Agility Fund)?

Yes, if your project is eligible under the AHRC IAA guidelines, you may be eligible for co-funding with other schemes. Please notify us at iaa@qub.ac.uk (and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line) if you are interested in co-funding.

What reporting requirements are required?

Award recipients will be required to collect evidence of their impact. It is up to applicants to consider how impact can best be evidenced, but it may include numbers of participants, survey data, participant interviews etc.

Award recipients will be required to complete reporting forms on their activities, outputs and impact. These will be discussed with recipients when awards are issued. Support for reporting can be arranged by contacting the AHRC IAA Team (and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line)

Evidence of impact should also be uploaded to Pure.

What is the maximum duration of the award?

The maximum duration of funding awards will usually be 6-12 months. The maximum duration of Partnerships and Practitioner Appointments is six months. However all activities and spend must be completed by 31 December 2025.

Please direct any additional questions to iaa@qub.ac.uk (and include 'AHRC IAA' in the subject line)

Appendix

AHRC IAA Working Group Membership

The current members of the AHRC IAA Working Group are:

Membership

Name	Area
Anna Bryson	School of Law QUB
Janice Carruthers	Dean of Research, AHSS, QUB (Chair)
Marilina Cesario	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Hannah Crowdy	National Museums NI
Alice Dubois	Research and Enterprise, QUB
Kevin Fearon	Research and Enterprise, QUB
John Garry	School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics QUB
Kathryn Kavanagh	Research and Enterprise, QUB
Keith Lilley	School of Natural and Built Environment, QUB
Leon Litvack	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Jane Lugea	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Cahal McLaughlin	School of Arts, English and Languages, QUB
Donal Phillips	AHSS Faculty, QUB
Peter Stephenson	Research and Enterprise, QUB