ESRC Impact Acceleration Account 2 – Guidance Notes

Impact Fund

What is the Impact Fund?
The Impact Fund provides up to £10,000 to support projects that develop productive, sustainable relationships with collaborators and research users in the private, third, or public sector. The fund is a flexible means of enabling a wide range of activities and we envisage a wide range of creative proposals. Some potential uses of the fund may include, but not limited to:

- Working collaboratively to produce a proposal for a large research grant
- Co-produced small-scale research projects
- Working with practitioners to share best practice and/or provide training
- Exploiting local networks (e.g. to develop Regional Economic Intelligence and Project Evaluation Services)
- Expanding existing provision (e.g. to develop the Law Clinic into a Business and Legal Advice Clinic)
- Sharing of data and expertise with a partner organisation

These guidelines are for IMPACT activities only.

Up to £10,000 is available for activities to support the generation of impact.

Aims of the fund
The main aim of the Impact Fund is to ensure that we foster and capture the widest range of impact opportunities and follow-on activities generated by our academics and by users of our research. The fund can be used as a means of exploiting relationships and opportunities developed through events hosted through the Active Engagement Fund, or alternatively it can be used as seed-corn in order to generate impacts that can be further developed and exploited. Our intention is for the fund to be a flexible means to enable the building of relationships with a broad range of collaborators and research users.

IMPACT activities: Events and activities supported by the IAA2 will target specific audiences from the public, commercial, and third sectors and will take place either on our campuses or at other appropriate venues in the UK when organised jointly with external partners. Any events should be targeted at particular audiences with invitations being sent to relevant organisations and individuals. The fund will not be used to support dissemination events directed solely at the general public although, where relevant, events may be open to the public. Up to £10,000 is available for each project.

Selection criteria and eligibility
The fund is open to University of Essex academic staff working in areas eligible for ESRC funding (https://esrc.ukri.org/about-us/what-is-social-science/social-science-disciplines/). This includes staff in Science & Health and Humanities Faculties who have projects addressing relevant topics. We will also provide funding to support cross-disciplinary projects involving staff working in areas outside of the social sciences. Staff working in ESRC-funded centres (e.g. Understanding Society), are not permitted to apply for IAA funds.

The fund is open to all UoE academic staff on ASER contracts. All successful applicants will be required to complete a report at the end of their activity to assist with the evaluation and reporting to the ESRC.

IMPACT FUND evaluation criteria:
- Does the proposal have clear aims?
- How does it relate to a problem or challenge?
- Is the event appropriate to meeting the aims?
- Are the collaborators and audience identified and suitable?
- Has the link to addressing a problem or challenge been fully explained?
- Timeliness: why is it necessary that the event takes place when it does?
- How effectively will the target audience be reached?
• How likely is it that impact will be generated?
• What would be the likely reach and significance of this impact?
• How appropriate are the follow-up plans?

**Reporting**

Each award will be subject to evaluation against these criteria. Project leads may be required to report on progress against agreed milestones during the award, but must submit a final report within a month of the end of the activity.

A project case study will be required for reporting and promotional purposes and Research and Enterprise Office (REO) staff will be available to assist in its production.

**International activities**

If your project involves countries which are in receipt of Overseas Development Aid (those on the OECD DAC list [https://bit.ly/2Ek8lLj](https://bit.ly/2Ek8lLj)) you should make sure that your project aligns with GCRF goals and is ODA compliant. It should

- Address a significant problem or development challenge, as described in the GCRF challenge areas [www.ukri.org/gerf](http://www.ukri.org/gerf) and UN Sustainable Development Goals [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/)
- Directly contribute to the sustainable and inclusive prosperity of people in developing countries.
- Ensure the primary benefits of all activity accrue to developing countries (benefit accruing to non-developing countries is of secondary consideration).

These elements should be clearly reflected in your application, which may be passed to the GCRF@Essex fund for consideration. In this circumstance you would be asked to complete a supplementary application form about the ODA compliance. No applications for Impact funding can be made directly to GCRF@Essex.

**Timetable**

Applications should be made by **20 November 2019**. We expect decisions to be made before the Christmas break.

**Advice for the application**

1. If your project has been developed jointly with external partners please include them in the contacts list. Information about all collaborators – regardless of the nature of the connection – should be included in section 4.
2. Follow-up activities (section 5) relate to follow-up related to your project/event, for example meetings or collaborations.
3. Longer-term strategy (section 6) should consider the future activities which might result from your project for example impact case studies or funding applications.
4. To complete section 7 please refer to the list of ESRC Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts in the Appendix at the end of this document. Do not worry if there is overlapping content between this section and other parts of the application. Please answer the questions fully.
5. Costs for University of Essex casual staff may be included at: Grade 7 for postgraduates or Grade 8 for postdocs. This can be used for research assistance or teaching buyout. If you require salary costs for casual staff please contact [iaa@essex.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@essex.ac.uk). Do not contact REO Pre-Award. Academic time (salary costs for ASER staff) is ineligible for funding.
6. Ensure your budget is realistic and under £10,000. If your project requires more than £10,000 you should contact [iaa@essex.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@essex.ac.uk) first to see if it is worth making an application.
7. You should take the risks and mitigations section seriously: it may include risks related to research, travel or which accrue only to those with whom you are collaborating. Please be aware that your project will be reviewed for ethics concerns, and may have to go through University of Essex ethics review before funding can be released.
8. Please also make sure you are aware of relevant university policies and guidance including financial rules, risk assessment and travel guidelines.
9. Completed applications should be passed to your department’s Director of Impact and Head of Department, who are asked to comment on the proposal and approve the application (an electronic signature is fine).
10. All applications should be submitted using the IAA2 online application portal
(https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cTjCRpssOVsGPhz) with a Word attachment by the end of the deadline
day. If you experience any problems with the system please contact us.

If you have any queries please email iaa@essex.ac.uk.

Appendix: ESRC Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts
The ESRC has set a number of KPIs for the overall Impact Acceleration Account project and each funded project must report
on various measures of Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts. Please make sure you have considered how to address each question
in the planning of your activity as you will be required to report on these criteria.

a. Numbers and type of academics & researchers involved: at Essex and at other HEIs; mix of career stages; mix of
discipline.

b. Numbers and types of external partners: numbers involved; whether new or existing; involvement of end users;
whether public, private, third sector etc.

c. Assessment of success: use of entry/exit surveys and interviews; generation of satisfaction scores; end-user reports;
testimonials etc

d. Additional impact or exploitation: attribution of UoE contribution to local, national or international policy through
reports, White/Green Papers, Select Committees etc; end-user reports; testimonials; contribution stories; collaborative
Knowledge Exchange; commercialisation/generation of IP; technology development; evidence of
practice/productivity change; development of new business models.

e. Additional benefits: academic articles and scholarly publishing; follow-on projects such as collaborative research,
contract research, consultancy etc; leveraged funding , in kind, or cash from UOE internal funds or activities or other
external partners; training or CPD for researchers or other external partners; anything else