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:

- Co-produced projects/activity which enable research impact
- Working with practitioners to share best practice and/or provide training
- 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 exploring relationships and opportunities developed through events hosted through the Active Engagement Fund, or alternatively it can used as seed-corn in order to generate impacts that can be further developed. 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:
- Can the project reasonably be described as “at least 51% social science”?
- Does the proposed activity have clear aims to accelerate the impact of research?
- Will the proposed activity accelerate the impact of research?
- Does it relate to an identified problem or challenge?
- Has the link to addressing a problem or challenge been fully explained?
- Is the activity appropriate to meeting the aims?
- Are the relevant stakeholders engaged in the project?
- Is the timescale for the activity, and the impact to be generated, appropriate?
- 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, following the funded activity?
What can be funded?

- A budget of up to £10,000 can be requested. The budget should be proportionate to the activity and for costs incurred in undertaking the activity. Requests for funding above £10,000 may be accepted if the Funding Panel agree a sufficient case has been made for an exception to be made to the project funding limit. If you submit a request for more than £10,000 funding please ensure your application clearly explains the exceptional circumstances which support your request.

- 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 your application will include funding for staff please contact iaa@essex.ac.uk to ensure staff costs are correctly costed before submitting your application, (Do not contact REO Pre-Award). If you intend to use funded PhD students please consider any funder restrictions.

- Academic and/or investigator time (salary costs for ASER staff) cannot be funded by IAA.

- Costs related to publishing in journals, including costs to make articles available open access, cannot be funded by IAA.

Reporting

Each award will be subject to evaluation against the criteria above. 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/2Ek8IJI](https://bit.ly/2Ek8IJI)) 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/gcrf](http://www.ukri.org/gcrf) 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 midday 6th of May 2020. Initial decisions from the Funding Review Panel are currently scheduled to be available by 17th June. Some applicants may be asked to revise and resubmit their applications, or otherwise respond to queries from the Panel at timescales to be confirmed.

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, future projects, or additional 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. 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.

6. Please also make sure you are aware of relevant university policies and guidance including financial rules, risk assessment and travel guidelines.

7. 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).

8. All applications should be submitted using the IAA2 online application portal [https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cTjCRpssOVsGPhr] 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