

ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (2019-2023) Guidance Notes

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1. Introduction

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has awarded the Leeds Social Sciences Institute (LSSI) funding through an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) to support Leeds researchers in the social sciences to maximise the impact and influence of their research on non-academic beneficiaries and to foster non-academic stakeholder engagement. The IAA will support a comprehensive portfolio of activities and resources across the social science community which will maximise the potential for impact of social science research and contribute to economic and societal development regionally, nationally and internationally.

The ESRC award is worth £1.3m in total and runs from 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2023.

The ESRC IAA will allow us to build on the successful University funded IAA that the LSSI has coordinated since 2015.

2. Objectives and Definitions

- a) To embed training and development opportunities and build capacity in impact-related skills and understanding.
- b) To coordinate and maximise support for social science impact activity to provide responsive, flexible funding for innovative social science impact projects, and allow researchers at all stages of career development to connect to external partners through KE and secondment opportunities.
- c) To build new and enhanced relations with partners in the industrial and business sectors and to diversify and strengthen relations with organisations in the third sector at regional, national and international levels.
- d) To embed the social science IAA within wider interdisciplinary institutional impact activities and programmes, including those aligned to EPSRC/NERC, the University Themes/Platforms and NEXUS Building.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) for the IAA are listed in Appendix 3

The IAA defines impact in accordance with the UKRI definition of economic and societal impact, which is described at <https://www.ukri.org/innovation/excellence-with-impact/>

The IAA uses the ESRC definition of social science research as listed in Appendix 2 but is not limited to ESRC funded researchers.

3. Eligibility

- a) Project proposals must align to the ESRC's disciplinary remit (see Appendix 2)
- b) Applications are invited from any researcher active in the social sciences who at the point of application, hold a current contract of employment at the University of Leeds which will last the duration of the proposed activity for which IAA funding is applied for.
- c) Early career researchers (ECRs) who have an employment contract as described above are eligible to apply for funding from the IAA. PhD students are only eligible to apply for *PGR Placement Scheme*.
- d) Applications must be led by a named Principal Investigator (PI) within the University, and projects are expected to identify external partners as co-applicants (with named responsible individuals). 'In kind' or cash contributions are expected from the external partners where relevant. *This may include the time commitments of named external co-applicants. PIs are encouraged to provide approximate costings and value of such co-funding and a letter of support from the external partner(s) that itemises all such contributions.*
- e) Other Universities can also be co-applicants to IAA bids but alone do not constitute external partners for the purpose of the IAA. We would expect co-funding from other HE institutions where they are involved in any application; this may take the form of co-funding with another IAA where relevant.
- f) Awards are **not** for the continuation of existing research, bridge-funding nor to keep research officers/assistants employed beyond the term of their contracts. Applications should focus on the development of impact activities and outputs not research itself (see s.4 below). *Applications which read like research grant proposals redrafted for the IAA are unlikely to be successful. Applications should clearly define the development of prior findings and ideas towards impact. Careful thought should be given to the kinds of impacts that are intended, how these might be*

realised and who the key beneficiaries are expected to be. All applications will need well-considered 'follow on' plans as to longer-term developments beyond the funding period.

- g) Existing ESRC (and UKRI) grant holders are able to apply to the IAA, however, it is not anticipated that the fund will support project specific activities which would normally be included in Pathways to Impact, *unless good reasons are provided as to the emergence of new impact-related opportunities which might not have been easily identified at the time the original ESRC (or other UKRI) grant application was made.*
- h) Projects should have the potential to deliver economic, cultural and /or societal benefit to organisations or citizens outside academia.

4. ESRC Expectations and Purpose

The ESRC IAA is not restricted to applications from individuals whose research is funded by the ESRC or other research councils.

The ESRC requires that the IAA funds are to be used flexibly and rapidly to support knowledge exchange and impact and **should include substantive user engagement**; for example:

- a) Building relationships and networks with potential users of research to facilitate co-production of research and maximise impact – i.e. building relationships that might lead to new research and inform the 'pathways to impact' of a future research grant application.
- b) Movement and secondment of people into and from external organisations and user stakeholders.
- c) Support for translation, application and utilisation of existing research findings to enhance their impact and to enable researchers to build networks with potential users of the outcomes of their research, and further work to establish proof of concept for their innovations.
- d) Improve engagement with the public sector, policy sector, civil society, industry (including SMEs and local business) and the public.

To ensure IAAs can be used to fund a diversity of knowledge exchange and impact activity, the following are **ineligible** for support through the IAA:

- a) Large ESRC investments (e.g. Centres, Large Grants, Infrastructure Investments).
- b) New research - i.e. the collection and/or analysis of new data. The awards are not the continuation of research. Applications should therefore focus on the development of impact activities and outputs and not on research. Applications which read like research grant proposals re-drafted for IAA purposes are less likely to be successful than projects which clearly comprise development of findings and ideas toward impact.

While ESRC funding will not be available to support the Leeds *PGR Placement Scheme*, LSSI will continue to run this programme of activity via its own institutional funds.

5. Application and Award Process

There will be up to four open *Calls for Proposals* per academic year. Details of each specific call will be available on the LSSI website and will be circulated via the email research networks and LSSI.

Applicants must ensure they use the latest version of the application form from the [LSSI website](#).

Applicants must have the support of his/her Head of School / Supervisor (depending on the activity scheme) and all applications must be submitted with a letter of support from the external partner, which demonstrates a clear understanding of the planned program of work, the commitments entailed, any co-funding and the expected benefit the project will bring.

Completed forms should be submitted electronically to Hannah Crow - h.e.crow@leeds.ac.uk – the LSSI Coordinator who will also be available to answer specific questions about the IAA funding that are not covered in the published criteria.

IAA applications can be considered in conjunction with other IAA finding schemes such as the EPSRC and STFC IAAs if the application is deemed to be eligible for both schemes. If you wish for your application to be considered for cofunding with other IAA schemes, please detail this on your application.

6. Eligible Costs

All IAA awards can only cover **directly incurred costs** associated with the award (i.e. do not cover Full Economic Costs), which may include the following:

- Reasonable travel, accommodation and subsistence costs - in accordance with the University expenses policy.
- Equipment - consumables directly related to the project may be eligible for funding.
- Salaries - To support existing non-academic staff already employed by the University of Leeds or to recruit new members of staff (on a fixed-term basis), if necessary to meet the skills requirement of the role, providing this can be achieved in an appropriate timescale for the implementation of the project. Projects can be carried out on a full-time or part-time basis. Please ensure the University of Leeds [Recruitment Guide](#) is followed. Please also refer to the University guidance on [naming people on research grants](#).
- Other – such as registration costs at events, production of professional materials, room bookings, catering etc.

Applicants should provide a budget with their proposal and justification for the budget provided on the application form.

The following costs are **not eligible**:

- Academic staff time (however, these costs may be included in applications as internal co-funding)
- Estates and indirect costs
- Building and refurbishment costs

Successful projects will have an account set up for the project costs, please note that this may take up to two – three weeks from confirmation of award. (Please note if a risk review or contractual agreements are required, this should be completed prior to account set up)

7. Impact Acceleration Account Supported Activities

The Fund will support the following strands of activity:

Responsive Mode Impact Fund

Providing funding of up to £15k normally

The purpose of the *Responsive Mode* fund is to provide flexible funding for cross disciplinary projects that demonstrate strong user engagement with potential to impact on policy and / or practice in the private, public and third sectors. The fund will support activities such as building relationships and networks with non-academic partners; the development of activities designed to apply previously completed research to policy and practice issues; the co-production of knowledge; or, policy or evidence seminars /workshops.

All projects must have at least one external, non-academic partner that is making a contribution to the project (either cash or in-kind). External partners could include national and international businesses, public and third sector organisations, or community bodies.

Consideration will also be given to more ambitious and innovative projects which exceed the stated maximum threshold of funding but applicants will need to justify the additional costs in terms of exceptional significance and reach of the intended impacts, the ambitious scale and scope of the project and anticipated follow-on plans and/or the strategic benefits of the external partnership.

Responsive mode projects will be supported for a maximum of 12 months. Applicants will need to specify a start and end date of the project.

Knowledge Exchange Fellowships
Funding of up to £10k per fellowship

The aim of the *Knowledge Exchange Fellowship* scheme is to facilitate interactions between external organisations and the University which build and strengthen relationships and facilitate knowledge exchange.

The scheme will provide academic staff with an opportunity to work with a non-academic partner at their site, or for a non-academic partner to work on a project at the university for up to 12 months on either a full-time or part-time basis.

External partners may include industry, business, public sector/government organisations or third sector organisations. We are keen to support applications that focus on building and strengthening relationships between the University and external partners across the Leeds City Region as well as with national and international partners.

For outgoing exchanges, the scheme supports teaching buy-out to allow researcher to spend time at the partner organisation. It is critical that the sabbatical does not impact on the delivery of the PI's existing commitments and this should be managed with the current sponsor (e.g. via project extension) or Head of School. Match funding would be expected from external partners for secondments which extend beyond 6 months.

For incoming projects, this scheme will provide funding to enable individuals from external non-academic organisations to visit University of Leeds and be embedded within departments or research groups for an appropriate length of time. Visiting Practitioners will be expected to have a planned programme of KE or engagement activity for the duration of their time at the university.

PIs must discuss secondment preparations with their Faculty HR team to ensure correct arrangements are put in place prior to the start of the project, e.g. access to buildings/systems necessary to carry out project.

Collaborations may be either early stage interactions or well-established partnerships. There must be a clear case for further development of the relationship via a KE project.

Fellowships outside the UK are eligible, however all external partners should have a significant presence in the UK, e.g. manufacturing and/or R&D base, and the activity should be able to deliver benefit to the UK. Projects with external partners with no UK presence are eligible providing that the project can demonstrate clear potential for delivery of a net benefit to the UK.

PGR Placement Scheme
A scholarship of up to £1,950 will be awarded based on a 130 hour research placement

The placement scheme offers PGRs the opportunity to undertake part-time research projects within local organisations.

Working in a research capacity with an external partner, the researcher will have an opportunity to engage with the needs of the external organisation and to build the knowledge gained from the placement into their future research plans.

The time commitment for the PGR is estimated at about 130 hours in total, with weekly hours to be agreed with the organisation. Previously, PGRs have phased their projects over a 13 week period at ten hours per week. Where appropriate, the cost of necessary travel will be covered as an additional cost. Projects must be completed within a 6 month period.

Projects might involve:

- Surveying or interviewing users or providers of relevant services to identify ways in which they could be improved
- Evaluating a project or scoping out the potential for a new project which aims to bring social or economic benefits to a particular community
- Gathering evidence, writing reports and responding to government consultation exercises/informing policy making

We invite PGR researchers to submit their own project to be hosted by an external organisation. We require applicants to liaise with the organisation prior to submitting an application to us, and to provide us with written confirmation of the organisation's involvement in the project, as well as details of a contact person at the organisation.

Please note that project proposals shouldn't be directly related to your PhD, the purpose of the placement scheme is to improving a PGR researcher's employability and skills whilst injecting innovative ideas into the host organisation.

Rapid Action Fund

Funding of up to £2k is available (consideration will be given for funding above this maximum threshold if sufficient justification of the exceptional nature of the project and the need for rapid and flexible funding is provided)

The rapid action fund will allow social scientists to react quickly to influence governmental, national and international debate, or respond to tactical, urgent and pressing opportunities in short timescales.

This funding could be used for but not limited to:

- The creation of short term impact projects
- Workshops, events, conferences or meetings that may inform impact
- Travel to meet with national policy departments (this does not include travel to attend conferences)
- Developing and pitching ideas for broadcast media

There will be no official deadline for rapid action fund calls, these will be assessed on a rolling basis by the IAA Coordinator, Award Panel members and LSSI Director. However, applicants are encouraged, where possible, to submit in response to the quarterly *Calls for Application* each year. Funding is only available for a small number of rapid action fund requests per year (no more than six), due to this successful applicants will not be allowed to submit a further application request for this award within that given year.

If successful and dependent on any conditions being agreed, applicants will receive notifications of the award within 15 - 20 working days of the request being submitted.

This funding cannot be used to support existing IAA activity.

Public Engagement Fund

Funding of up to £5k is available (consideration will be given for funding above this maximum threshold if sufficient justification of the exceptional nature of the project is provided)

To stimulate a broad range of suitable approaches to impact, the public engagement fund will seek to support public engagement within the social sciences and promote the public understanding of social science and the impacts of research on cultural life. This fund will aim to promote accessible forms of dissemination and knowledge exchange both face-to-face and through social media.

This funding could be used for but not limited to:

- Deliberative public forums;
- Consensus conferences;

- Participatory performance art/theatre and exhibitions;
- Workshops;
- Online content for a public audience;
- Short documentaries and animations.

One funding call will be released per year for the public engagement fund (dates indicated in the timetable below).

Please note that it will be the responsibility of the successful awardees to organise and administer any events in relation to this fund.

Social Science Internships

A new initiative for the IAA, the Social Science Internships programme will be incorporated into the existing Leeds Institute of Data Analytics (LIDA) Data Scientist Internship Programme.

The programme will provide recent social science masters students (or equivalent) with the opportunity to collaborate with an academic supervisor and an external organisation to complete a specific research task. The academic supervisor will work with businesses or other organisations to devise a research question and project and then provide guidance and mentorship to the intern. The projects will vary dependent on the organisation and academic, but this might include the analysis or visualisation of data (e.g. archival, qualitative or ‘big data’) or the formulation of engagement projects.

An open call for academic project proposals will be circulated in May 2019, the proposals will need to include engagement with an external partner and fully comply with the [LIDA Data Scientist Internship Programme](#) guidance. Successful applicants will then be matched with an intern to complete the project.

Recruitment for internships will be advertised via the University of Leeds jobs pages as training posts (grade 5), interns will be recruited in cohorts once a year (to start in October 2019). All interns will be hosted by LIDA and receive full mentorship and training and development opportunities.

8. Funding Call Timetable 2019 – 2022

Please note that this may be subject to change

Call Deadline	Panel
2019	
Wednesday 6th March	w/c 18th March
Wednesday 8th May (PE Fund Call)	w/c 20th May
Wednesday 11th September	w/c 23rd September
Wednesday 13th November (PE Fund Call)	w/c 25th November
2020	
Wednesday 12th February	w/c 24th February
Wednesday 13th May (PE Fund Call)	w/c 25th May
Wednesday 9th September	w/c 21st September
Wednesday 11th November (PE Fund Call)	w/c 23rd November
2021	
Wednesday 10th February	w/c 22nd February
Wednesday 12th May (PE Fund Call)	w/c 24th May
Wednesday 8th September	w/c 20th September
Wednesday 10th November (PE Fund Call)	w/c 22nd November

2022	
Wednesday 9th February (PE Fund Call)	w/c 21st February
Wednesday 13th April	w/c 25th April
Wednesday 8th June	w/c 20th June

All application forms are available on the LSSI website <https://lssi.leeds.ac.uk/>

Completed forms should be sent to h.e.crow@leeds.ac.uk

The IAA *Award Panel* meets quarterly and benefits from external members representing the public, voluntary and private sectors, as well as representation from academics across five Faculties within the University and Research and Innovation Services (RIS).

The IAA Coordinator will notify applicants of the award panel's decision within 2 weeks of the IAA panel review. The award holder will be required to advise the relevant Faculty Research and Innovation of the awarded proposal. The award-holder will also be required to provide confirmation that the project has been considered by the host department's ethics committee.

To apply for the Rapid Action Fund, please send an application form to H.E.Crow@leeds.ac.uk

Once the approved project has been confirmed, an account code will be assigned to the project, (this can take up to two – three weeks to set up) through which all project related costs should be charged. The award-holder is responsible for managing and reporting on all IAA expenditure and complying with all University of Leeds Financial Regulations.

9. Terms and conditions of funding

By accepting an IAA award, successful applicants are agreeing to the following terms and conditions:

- Successful projects will be listed on the Leeds Social Sciences Institute website
- Award holder's information and application may be shared with other ESRC IAA award holders and prospective applicants.
- Award-holders will engage with LSSI to monitor project progress both during the life of the project and post project to allow the reporting of outcomes and capture of (potential) impact. This will include making non-confidential aspects available to assist with the development of promotional materials.
- Recipients of funding must ensure that the ESRC IAA is credited as providing support for the activity in any outputs.
- PI/RIDM/FRIO are responsible for ensuring all related contracts and agreements are signed by all parties.
- Award-holders will be expected to participate in future capacity building events to share their experience and develop expertise.
- The IAA Coordinator may request information from an award holder on their approved project at any given time.
- The award is non-transferable.
- All expenditure must comply with the University's [financial regulations](#), award holders must ensure appropriate probity in managing the finance and expenditure of awards. The Faculty are responsible for all procurement and payments.
- The project timescales should be adhered to with any deviation being reported to Hannah Crow (h.e.crow@leeds.ac.uk)
- If the PI leaves the University then the funding will cease.
- Award-holders will be required to fully follow the reporting requirement as detailed in section 10 below.

10. Reporting Requirements

All report templates will be provided to successful applicants on confirmation of their award.

Responsive Mode & Knowledge Exchange Fellowships Requirements

- One page interim report will be required to be submitted half way through the project to capture the progress, any to inform of any changes to the original application timeline.
- Two page final report will be required to be submitted within a month of the project completion date, outlining how the objective of the project and the relevant KPIs have been met and future plans.
- Email update to the IAA Coordinator within 8-12 months following completion of the project to inform of any further impacts, follow on grants, further activity.

The IAA Coordinator will additionally follow up with some awardees 18 months after the final project report has been submitted to capture any longer term impacts

All Other Awards Requirements

- Two page final report will be required to be submitted within a month of the project completion date, outlining how the objective of the project and the relevant KPIs have been met and future plans.

All final reports will be reviewed by the IAA Panel who may request further details.

Assessment Criteria

All eligible proposals will be considered and assessed by the Awards Panel against the following criteria:

1. Is the underpinning research in which the proposal builds clearly defined and of the appropriate standard i.e. is it academically rigorous in terms of its methodology, reach and significance?
2. Are the proposals proposed activities deliverable within the timespan defined? Are there clear and SMART objectives for the project? (SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).
3. Are the proposed societal and economic outcomes and impacts of the proposal realistic and appropriate?
4. Is the proposal impact focused, are appropriate mechanisms for identifying impact identified?
5. Are the follow on plans developed and detailed beyond the period of funding? Are they suitably developed based on the level of funding requested?
6. To what extent does the project build new capacity and relationships?
 - Will the proposal develop sustainable relationships with the external organisation?
 - For non-UK partners, is their realistic potential for net benefit(s) to the UK (where relevant)?
7. What is the level of commitment and involvement of the external partner in the project/placement, will there be any financial or in-kind contribution from the external organisation?
8. How closely does the proposal align with the KPIs as indicated in appendix 3?
9. How will the proposal enhance the University's research culture and interdisciplinary environment?

Assessment Methodology

Proposals against different strands of activity are not necessarily expected to be able to meet all the criteria listed above, but the Awards Panel will be seeking to ensure applicants score positively against the core criteria that focus on the deliverability and effectiveness of proposals.

The Awards Panel will encourage an open and expansive appetite for risk and innovation when considering proposals, in balance with the need for securing value for money. This approach has been supported by the ESRC to foster proposals that are novel and whose ultimate success is consequently more uncertain than more traditional and/ or conventional impact and engagement projects.

In all cases, the Awards Panel will provide feedback and recommendations as to how the project/placement could be developed, in some cases the applicant will be invited to resubmit at a subsequent panel meeting. In some instances applications may only be awarded upon confirmation of terms and conditions of funding set by the Awards Panel.

Appendix 2

ESRC Disciplinary Remit

Subject	Topics
Demography and human geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demography • Human geography
Development studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area and development studies
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and social history
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education
Environmental planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental planning
Linguistics*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied linguistics • Comput./corpus linguistics • Phonetics • Psycholinguistics • Sociolinguistics • Languages and linguistics • Linguistics (general)
Management and business studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and business studies
Political science and international studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International studies and relations • Political science
Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology
Social anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social anthropology
Social policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social policy
Social Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social work
Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and technology studies • Sociology
Law and legal studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio legal studies
Tools, technologies and methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social statistics, methods and computing

Source

<https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-funding/discipline-classifications/>

(Accessed 3rd January 2019)

ESRC Definition of social science

<https://esrc.ukri.org/about-us/what-is-social-science/>

Appendix 3

Key Performance Indicators of the IAA

Funding Stream	Output	Impact	Outcome
Responsive Mode Impact Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of collaborative responsive mode projects. ➤ Cash and in-kind contributions from non-academic partners. ➤ Number of joint (academic and other) publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased influence on and/or change in policy development at regional, national and international levels. ➤ Increased commercialisation activity, e.g. proof of concept projects, CPD programmes, prototypes / software etc. ➤ Contribution to wealth creation, social inclusion and civic engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capacity building and skills development of researchers ➤ Number of new collaborative projects / proposals following engagement through IAA funding ➤ Number of academics and non-academic trained
Knowledge Exchange Fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of knowledge exchange fellowships (inwards and outwards) ➤ External and internal match funding either cash or in kind target ➤ Number of joint applications with non-academic partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhanced relations with policy community and greater take up of Leeds research. ➤ Jobs and/or increased turnover, profit and or processes ➤ New business models in non-academic organisations ➤ Contribution to wealth creation, social inclusion and civic engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of follow on collaborations following initial KEF ➤ Increased R&D expenditure of non-academic partner. ➤ Increased influence on and/or change in practice and activities among user communities.
PGR Research Placement Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number PGR Students/Academic Supervisors engaging with the scheme ➤ Number of external partners engaged with the scheme ➤ Number of evidence reports ➤ Number surveys/interviews/protocols developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased skills and knowledge for PGR Students ➤ Policy and or practice change within the External organisation and user communities ➤ Cost Saving for the external organisation. ➤ Increased R&D expenditure of external partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of partners who go on to pursue further collaborations/secondments/placements with Leeds ➤ Investment in further engagement following placement ➤ Jobs and/ or further opportunities within the external organisation

Rapid Action Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased flexibility for Leeds researcher to respond quickly and flexibly to challenges and debates ➤ Number of strategic events/workshops/conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Influence emerging national and international debates ➤ New areas of interaction and exploration with external partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further engagement and/or impact activities following fund.
Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a Public Engagement programme of activities ➤ Number of PE events sponsored by the IAA, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Culture change to imbed public engagement within the social sciences ➤ Number of academics engaged and applying to the PE awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Civic involvement to inform and influence impact and greater public understanding of social science research ➤ Influencing policies, products and services to better reflect public interests