

Imperial College London

UKRI Impact Acceleration Account – Call 5



Background

Imperial holds a UKRI Impact Acceleration Account for translational activities to further develop the outputs of academic research towards having an impact in end-user communities. The UKRI Impact Acceleration Account (with contributing funds from each individual Research Council BBSRC, EPSRC, MRC), replaces the individual funding streams previously provided by the EPSRC and BBSRC Impact Acceleration Accounts and the MRC Confidence in Concept Scheme.

IAs are devolved institutional funds intended to unlock the impact of the research-base. They support a breadth of impact activities that allow funding to be used in flexible, responsive and creative ways. IAs provide research organisations with agility to make decisions about how to invest funding in ways that best suit institutional strategies and opportunities. The awards add value to existing funding and take advantage of new or unforeseen opportunities in order to facilitate the realisation of impact.

The UKRI Impact Acceleration Account provides Imperial with funding to:

- Strengthen engagement with users to accelerate the translation of research outputs into impacts
- Bridge the gap between discovery research and de-risked applications for translational funding schemes and other externally funded later stage translational activities, for example, industry funding, Research Council Follow On Funds, seed funding for spinouts and startups, InnovateUK, MRC Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS) or similar.
- Support, develop and foster strategic partnerships for knowledge exchange and impact, including across disciplines and sectors
- Build and maintain an environment and culture that enables effective and ambitious knowledge exchange and impact, including development of skills, capacity and capability within research organisations
- Provide early-stage support for progressing research outputs towards the next stages in the impact pipeline, for example:
 - proof of concept and prototype projects to raise Technology Readiness Level
 - commercialisation
 - market validation
 - activities targeting policy, business and the third sectors
- Drive continuous improvement in impact by supporting innovation, enabling 'fast failure', and capturing learning through appropriate mechanisms
- Enable flexible and adaptive approaches to knowledge exchange and impact, including the ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities.

Call for Proposals

The Imperial College London UKRI IAA invites applications for translational activities to one of four strategic themes:

- Innovation for a Healthy Society
- Innovation for a Sustainable Society
- Innovation for a Smart Society
- Innovation for a Resilient Society

We encourage applicants to approach these strategic areas in a broad way. If unsure, please contact iaa-queries@imperial.ac.uk.

Please note that multidisciplinary applications are strongly encouraged.

For Round 5, projects will be limited to twelve months in duration.

That is potential co-funding for projects, yet to be confirmed. In previous rounds this has included Rosetrees Trust, NIHR Imperial Biomedical Centre, and Yuhan Corporation.

Key considerations for all UKRI IAA applications

- Is the project at the correct stage for UKRI IAA funding? If in doubt, discuss this with the UKRI IAA contacts (details below) before progressing with your application.
 - Our IPC teams and the various Translators and Entrepreneurs in Residence will also be of help (details below)
 - We encourage PIs to consider whether their project could be funded by another scheme, e.g. activities that could fit within a responsive mode proposal would be considered out of scope for the IAA; activities that could be funded by later stage translation schemes may be too developed for IAA support.
- The UKRI IAA should be used to support new impact from previous/current research activity. Translational activities planned as part of a research grant must be funded from that grant.
- Projects must be completed within 12 months and have defined and realistic milestones. Due to the timeframe involved, we would expect staff to have been identified prior to submission.
- If ethics approvals are needed, they must be in place *before* the project start date.
- IP/market competitiveness and freedom to operate should be established with the relevant Imperial Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation (IPC) contacts.
- Translational aims and routes to the clinic/market must be clearly defined.
- Costs must reflect the needs of the project and be fully justified.
- All projects are expected to complete by their declared end date. Short no cost extensions may be awarded in exceptional circumstances by the UKRI IAA contacts if there is appropriate justification.

Eligibility

Applicant

The call is open to Department-approved applications from academic and research staff from Imperial College London or Imperial AHSC, who have a contract with the College, which extends to at least the end of the proposed project. Please note, that while research staff are eligible to apply as PI, they should name a supervisor (academic staff member) on the application form who can function as a named PI within Imperial's grant system. An IAA award should not take staff time away from existing funded research unless the funder has given permission. Research staff may be paid from an IAA project of which they are PI or Co-I.

We strongly encourage applications as PI from early career researchers, female scientists, and scientists from a diverse set of backgrounds who are currently underrepresented in this scheme.

Multiple IAA awards

Applicants may submit a maximum of one project as PI, there is no limit on participation as a Co-I. Additionally, individuals should normally only hold one IAA award as PI at any one time. PIs submitting a proposal when they already have an active IAA project, or have completed a previous IAA project, must provide detail within their application regarding how the new proposal is significantly different from the other awarded project, or provide justification for why additional IAA support for the same/similar activity is required.

Remit

Projects must be in the remit of one or more of EPSRC, MRC, BBSRC (impact does not need to derive from prior support from these funders).

Activities

The award will support activities including, but not limited to:

- Early-stage commercialisation/market assessments;
- Proof of concept projects;
- Optimisation and validation studies;
- Development of prototypes;
- Workshops, seminars, or symposia;
- Engagement events with end user audiences to refine market scope and potential impact of the research outputs (may include policy organisations and third sector organisations);
- Networking and collaborations to develop impact;
- Inward and outward secondments;
- Employment of specialist staff (e.g., case study writing, software development)
- Other dissemination activities, including appropriate (non-academic) publications;
- Training.

Ineligible activities include:

- Patent filing or similar costs associated directly to registering intellectual property rights;
- Activities for which the primary or sole purpose is public engagement;
- New research;
- Activities primarily for publishing in academic journals;
- Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, masters degrees.

The UKRI Impact Acceleration Account does not provide funding for activities for which the primary purpose is public engagement. However, we recognise the value that public engagement can bring to projects and therefore engagement activities alongside other impact activities could be supported, providing they are linked to the research area and have a clearly defined purpose and audience.

Funding and grant rules

- Projects must be costed with full economic costs, but the final awards will only provide 100% of directly incurred costs or directly allocated costs related to the use of facilities
- Projects must be completed within 12 months, and have defined and realistic milestones
- There is no maximum budget, but projects will typically cost £60K-£80K dependent on the proposed activities. Expected costs would cover staff time for the duration of the project, plus consumables, travel etc.
- Imperial IPC Faculty teams will cover costs of protecting arising Intellectual Property

- (IP) in line with the normal policies
- Expenditure that occurs before and after the project dates is not allowed. Funds cannot be used to meet the costs of an activity that will fall beyond the actual end date of the project
- Funds cannot be spent on capital items i.e., individual items of equipment which cost more than £10,000

Application and selection process

Application

- Applications close **24 April 2024 1700**
- Applications must be submitted via the [online Qualtrics form](#).
- There are two parts to the application:
 - Part A is an online form to collect basic information for the project details
 - Part B requires documentation to be uploaded
- There are opportunities throughout the application to save your proposal and return later. Select “save and exit” when prompted – you will receive an email with a unique link for your application and the content submitted to date. When you return to the application, you should update the selection to “continue” to progress beyond where you previously left.
- Once you have completed your application you will receive a further email containing the content of your submission – please check that this reflects your expectations prior to the deadline as there will be no opportunities to update after that point.

Part A

Applicants will be asked to complete summary information about the Project team, including collaborators, the project, and provide details around ethics, Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), and IP considerations. Note the following clarifications:

- Start date for Round 5 applications should be September to December 2024; PIs should consider time that may be required to recruit staff when choosing a start date.
- Details of external collaborators – this can include partners involved in the proposed activities, or stakeholders/end-users of the proposed activity. All collaborators named in this section must provide a letter of support.
- Sections on RRI and data management must be given a considered response – these will now be included in the review process and taken into account as part of the funding decision.
- Intellectual Property – note that members of the Industry Partnership and Commercialisation (IPC) teams in Enterprise will be in attendance at Panel meetings, therefore where relevant ensure they have been consulted and this section of the form is completed in full. You should not include letters of support from IPC within the application.

At the end of Part A, you will be asked to upload additional documents in Part B of the online Qualtrics application.

Part B

At a minimum, all applicants must submit documents 1, 2, and 4. If external collaborators have been named in Part A (see details above), document 3 is also required. **Please include the PI’s surname at the beginning of all file names.**

1. Project plan form ([form available here](#)) - **mandatory**

- *Please complete this form in full. Incomplete forms will not be considered.*
 - *Figures and tables are permitted for illustrative purposes*
 - *Where justification for concurrent/sequential IAA projects is required, please complete the relevant section.*
2. The approved Worktribe generic submission report (see details below) - **mandatory**
 3. Letters of support from all named external collaborators - **if applicable**
 - *Please upload all letters of support as a single combined PDF file. Letters are not required from internal collaborators or IPC.*
 4. Applicant characteristics form - **mandatory**

Instructions for Worktribe

The Worktribe generic submission report approved by your Department must be uploaded to the online portal as part of the application (and please state your Worktribe PA number on all correspondence):

- Full FEC costing must be prepared with the support of appropriate superusers (Faculty of Engineering: pre-award team, other Faculties: departmental superusers). Please ensure you contact your relevant costing support teams prior to the appropriate deadlines for your Faculty. Please also ensure that you have your costs finalised and the Worktribe completed at least 24 hours before application submission deadline so that P codes are generated and can be entered on the Qualtrics form.
- Superusers should complete a Worktribe project for all IAA applications
 - Project title should start "UKRI IAA -"
 - Select 'Internal Scheme' as the project type and 'UKRI' as the funder (Note: these **MUST** be selected so that after departmental approval the costings are not routed to Research Services/JRO for bid submission).
 - Select '100% DI costs' as the Scheme and 'Grant - FEC Award' as the Activity Type
 - Guidance on costing an application on Worktribe can be found on the [Worktribe guidance pages](#).
- Submit the Worktribe project for departmental approval.
- Research Services and/or JRO secondary approval is not required for applications to the UKRI IAA - ***all IAA projects will divert to the Research Office if the correct categories above are used.***
- The generic submission report should be exported for PIs to upload with their application
- Although indirect costs must be included in the budget, only directly incurred costs and directly allocated costs related to facilities will be supported (at 100%).

For all applications, if potential staff have already been identified for positions on a project, please provide details on both the Worktribe costs **and** the application. This will enable faster recruitment and contract amendment, reducing potential delays in starting.

Approvals

All applications require approval from the Head of Department or their delegate via Worktribe.

Review and Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the panel conveners to ensure they are allocated to the most appropriate Theme, based on the project description and the justification for panel selection provided by the applicant. Theme applications will be allocated to one of three panels:

- Panel A: Healthy Society applications
- Panel B: Smart Society applications

- Panel C: Sustainable and Resilient Society applications

Applications will be reviewed by members of the allocated theme review panel, and applicants will be invited to respond to reviewers' questions before the review panel meeting as required.

Projects will be assessed on:

- Added value with respect to impact
- Strength of rationale for translation to impact
- Quality of science
- Un-met need
- Potential commercial opportunity or other (non-academic) impact
- IP position
- Likelihood of project leading to the development of a proposal for follow on funding to be submitted to a UKRI translational opportunity, e.g., InnovateUK or MRC DPFS; or other external next stage funders.

If ethics and/or Home Office approvals are required for the projects, priority may be given to those applications that already have these in place.

PIs will receive any additional queries **w/c 20 May 2024** and rebuttals must be returned **w/c 3 June 2024** (exact dates for return will be confirmed by the panel convener when sending out reviewer comments). Rebuttals that are not returned by the deadline will not be sent to the panel ahead of the funding meeting.

The theme selection panels will meet in mid-late June 2024 to make funding and ranking decisions (panels comprise a chair, research community members, an IAA budget lead (Faculty Vice Dean for Research), and external panel members).

Final outcomes based on the theme selection panel decisions, budget availability and allocation across theme panels will be made by the central Funding Panel (comprising the UKRI IAA Lead (Vice-Provost Research and Enterprise) and Individual IAA budget leads (Faculty Vice Deans for Research)). This group will meet early July 2024.

Award notification & commencement of work

Applicants will be notified of the outcome in July 2024.

Award letters will be provided with details on how to access funds. Note that the Research Office will set up budgets of all successful proposals and provide project numbers to PIs.

Projects will be able to commence from **September 2024**. Latest start date should be December 2024.

Project reporting and management

Projects will be reviewed at mid-point and on conclusion as part of an active monitoring process. Applicants that are successful in receiving an award will be required to provide the following information at each review:

- What the funds have been used for;
- How the funds have increased the impact of the initial research;
- Outputs and outcomes obtained (including publications, conference presentations,

products developed, patents filed, events held, collaborations established, additional funding/investment generated, media mentions);

- Envisaged future applications of the outputs and outcomes obtained, including the potential for further research and development.

In addition, information from these reports will be used to complete reports required by the funders.

Contacts

- **General queries:** iaa-queries@imperial.ac.uk
- **Theme contacts:**
 - Innovation for a Healthy Society – Kimberley Trim (k.trim@imperial.ac.uk)
 - Innovation for a Sustainable Society – Dania Grant-Serroukh (d.grant-serroukh@imperial.ac.uk)
 - Innovation for a Smart Society – Mark Bambury (m.bambury@imperial.ac.uk)
 - Innovation for a Resilient Society – Mark Bambury (m.bambury@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Industry collaboration and Imperial IP-related queries:**
 - FoE: Marika Reay (m.reay@imperial.ac.uk)/ Francesca Pietra (f.pietra@imperial.ac.uk)
 - FoM: Vjera Magdalenic-Moussavi (directorIPC.medicine@imperial.ac.uk)
 - FoNS: Viraj Perera (v.perera@imperial.ac.uk)
 - Business School: Julian Sikondari (j.sikondari@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Costing queries:** Faculty of Engineering: pre-award team, other Faculties: departmental superusers