**Stirling Social Science Impact Acceleration Account**

**Impact Acceleration Funding Programme**

2024-2025 CALL ANNOUNCEMENT

Stirling Social Science IAA is pleased to announce its 2024-2025 call for proposals to support acceleration of social science impact from the research across the University. This is our second annual funding call. We are funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to enable the impact and influence of our social science research to benefit others outwith the University and academia.

The deadline for proposals is **Thursday, 31 October 2024, 5 pm**. Funding is available under a number of different pathways aimed to support impact development from an early exploratory phase to its maturity:

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| **Funding pathway** | **Award size and duration** |
| Rapid Response/Kickstarter Awards | up to £5K, up to 6 months duration |
| Impact Acceleration Awards | up to £10K, up to 12 months duration\* |
| Knowledge Exchange Placements | up to £10K, up to 12 months duration, part time\*\*  |
| Postdoctoral Impact Fellowships | up to £5K, up to 6 months duration, part time  |

\* Applications for funding above £10k can be considered but this must be discussed and agreed with IAA well in advance of submission.

\*\* Awards for up to £20k may be available to extended placements, with a duration of up to 24 months, part-time commitment. These must be discussed and agreed with IAA in advance of submission.

The IAA has allocated around £150,000 for this funding round. We invite proposals for activities including non-academic user engagement, impact acceleration, innovation and commercialisation as well as knowledge exchange and people movement. Please note that IAA cannot fund primary research.

Full Guidance to Applicants and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the [IAA SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/SocialScienceIAA/SitePages/Impact%20Acceleration%20Funding%20Programme.aspx).

**What the IAA is Looking for**

We will support research teams to further accelerate their research **impact and knowledge exchange** and we will also support the upskilling and development of early career and PhD researchers to become impact and knowledge exchange leaders of the future. We want to encourage solution-based and outcome-oriented approaches aligned with the University research missions. The IAA also wants our partnerships with external collaborators to be built on principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as well as responsible and ethical innovation. The IAA funding programme sets out key requirements:

* Eligible applications **must be within the social science remit**, as [defined by ESRC](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/). This includes applications where underpinning research and its outputs are interdisciplinary as long as most of the research and the impacts are within social science. Please note that the underpinning research does not require to be funded by the ESRC, we will support research and impacts from a range of funding sources. The IAA is open to social science researchers across the University irrespective of the Faculty they are based in.
* Applications must be aligned to the **IAA Themes** (published on the [IAA SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/SocialScienceIAA/SitePages/Impact%20Acceleration%20Funding%20Programme.aspx))
* We expect that **at least one external, non-academic collaborator** or beneficiary will be centrally involved in an application. This could be from government, parliament and public sector, business, third sector and social enterprise, or communities, campaigners, and the wider public. They could be situated within a context that is local, regional, national, transnational or global.
* We expect applications to demonstrate potential for enabling and **accelerating at least one (but preferably a range) of non-academic impacts**.

We encourage applications that:

* provide opportunities to build and develop research and impact teams that include academics from a range of career stages: early career (ECR), mid-career (MCR), or PhD (PGR) researchers at Stirling. We are particularly keen to support teams led by women (including at early and mid-career stages) and other minoritised groups (e.g. disabled people; people of colour and international scholars; LGBT+ people). Applicants should feel comfortable being open about their identities in their applications, if they feel this is appropriate.
* benefit and improve outcomes for people who share [protected characteristics](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics) and are commonly disadvantaged.
* promote public scholarship and influential communications, where appropriate. For example, reframing debates, building public engagement and awareness raising.
* encourage co-production with users and beneficiaries of our research, doing so with due regard for their needs and the ethics of enabling participation.
* demonstrate a contribution of matched funding or leveraging of ‘in kind’ opportunities, resources and benefits from partners external to the University. There are no minimum threshold parameters on this.
* demonstrate potential for commercialisation and entrepreneurial opportunities and partnerships, licensing, or new intellectual property (IP) (both for-profit and not-for-profit).

We would like to encourage applicants to think of these issues when they develop their proposals and address as many of them as is relevant and appropriate. There is no expectation that all of these considerations will be addressed within one application.

**Eligibility and Funding**

IAA funding schemes, except postdoctoral fellowships, are open to all academic and research staff from across the University, irrespective of their Faculty, provided the research underpinning the proposed activities and outcomes falls under the remit of the ESRC.

With exception of Postdoctoral Impact Fellowships, PhD students are not eligible to apply to the IAA directly. However, they may be members of the team and funded as Research Assistants and exchange staff, if appropriate.

Applications must demonstrate a confirmed commitment from at least one external non-academic partner. A statement of support from the external partner must be submitted in conjunction with the application. Partners can be based in any suitable (non-academic) external organisation in any part of the world, subject to due diligence requirements. Inward exchange placements and fellowships can involve any relevant employee of a user organisation.

Expenses for items such as travel, accommodation, subsistence, consumables, events etc. will be eligible for inclusion in IAA applications as long as they are appropriately justified. Directly Incurred costs for staff are eligible for inclusion where it can be demonstrated that the activity directly supports the project.

Project costs should be calculated using Worktribe ‘Stand alone budget’ function. Applications to all IAA funding pathways should be submitted via the MS Form. The link to the form, explanation of its elements (applicants’ details and application questions) and the submission process is available on the [IAA SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/SocialScienceIAA/SitePages/Impact%20Acceleration%20Funding%20Programme.aspx).

IAA funding is very competitive with only the highest quality applications funded. Therefore, we encourage applicants to focus on quality, making sure that they present a well-defined project plan with specific impact aims and anticipated outcomes. Applications must include a statement of support from all involved partners and evidence of endorsement from applicants’ divisions and faculties, as appropriate. Applications for Postdoctoral Impact Fellowships should also include a statement of support from the Co-Investigator/Mentor.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

The IAA team has prepared responses to some of the more frequently asked questions. The FAQ document is an extension of this guidance and explains some of the aspects of IAA rules in more detail. The FAQ document is available on the [IAA SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/SocialScienceIAA/SitePages/Impact%20Acceleration%20Funding%20Programme.aspx).

**Contact**

For any queries regarding this call for proposals, please contact IAA team on impactaccelerator@stir.ac.uk. If you have any uncertainty or misgivings about the eligibility of your proposal, including social science fit or costings, we encourage sharing the details of your proposal and discussing with our team before submitting the application.