

IAA FAQs

ESRC Knowledge Exchange

Impact Acceleration Accounts

What is an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)?

IAAs are institutional awards that have been introduced to deliver funding mechanisms for social science knowledge exchange and impact activities at a local, research organisation, level.

Why has the IAA model been adopted to replace Knowledge Exchange Opportunities?

IAAs, as a model for supporting KE and impact generating activities, are being used or piloted by a number of Research Councils (including ESRC); by adopting this funding model we are building on that knowledge and best practice. Providing funds in this way will empower institutions and enable non-centralised decision making and relationship building. Better support for local and SME focused activity will be enabled. This approach also responds to the often interdisciplinary nature of KE including collaborations with other research disciplines. The move to IAAs will reduce the time between application and decision and allow for more responsive, flexible and creative knowledge exchange activity. It will enable Research Organisations to provide funding for a range of KE activity in the way that best suits their institutional strategies and opportunities.

How will the funds be used?

The funds will be used flexibly and rapidly to support knowledge exchange activities, including people exchange, facilitation of coproduced research, and KE specialists/champions. Funds can be awarded through IAAs for KE activity relating to any area of social science research, and is not restricted to that funded by the ESRC or as part of funding from other Research Councils.

How have the IAA funds been allocated?

IAA funds have been allocated to the top Research Organisations for ESRC research funding. This is to ensure the greatest potential opportunities for accelerating impact.

Institutions provisionally allocated ESRC IAAs and invited to submit business plans are:

- Oxford
- Bristol
- Exeter
- UEA
- Durham
- LSE

- Cardiff
- Glasgow
- Essex*
- Nottingham
- UCL
- IoE
- IFS
- Bangor
- Edinburgh
- Warwick
- Sussex
- Sheffield
- Manchester
- Birmingham
- KCL
- Imperial
- Cambridge
- Southampton
- Newcastle
- York

How will the IAAs be awarded?

Research Organisations with provisional IAA allocations will be required to submit business plans which will be assessed by a specially developed ESRC Panel. Once established, IAAs will be subject to an on-going monitoring and evaluation process. Institutions hosting IAAs will be responsible for ensuring appropriate peer review and quality benchmarking of applications made for IAA funding.

Will postgraduate students be able to access IAA funds?

Those on studentships, ESRC funded or otherwise, are not eligible for IAA funding and IAA funds must not be used to fund studentships. However, IAA funding can be used for KE training that may include students (linkages with ESRC Doctoral Training Centres will be welcomed) and we expect IAAs to support early career academics as well as those later on in their careers.

Will large ESRC investments (such as centres, large grants and Infrastructure Investments) be able to access IAA funds?

In order to ensure that IAAs can be used to fund a diversity of knowledge exchange activity, ESRC-managed investments will not be eligible for IAA funding during their ESRC award period. Legacy activity for these investments, once their ESRC funding has come to an end, can however be supported by IAAs, for example for the maintaining of websites or the continuation of networks.

Will KE activity associated with social science research not funded by the ESRC be eligible for IAA funding?

KE associated with excellent social science research is eligible for funding from the IAAs regardless of how the research was originally funded. Therefore research funded by other Research Councils and funding bodies will be eligible.

Why has the KE Opportunities scheme been closed?

Application data for the Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme indicates that the scheme is not attractive as a primary mode of funding KE activities within ROs. Despite being recently revised to make the scheme more open and flexible, application numbers have been dwindling.

How would you advise institutions not hosting ESRC IAAs to gain funding for KE?

'Pathways to Impact' is the main mechanism through which knowledge exchange activity associated with ESRC research will be funded. Applicants to our schemes are encouraged to include fully costed Pathways to Impact within their applications. The ESRC will continue to fund knowledge exchange in areas of strategic relevance through other, more directive mechanisms.

When is the final deadline for submitting Knowledge Exchange Opportunities proposals?

16.00, 31 March 2014 will be the final deadline for submitting proposals to the Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme. As the scheme is open dated proposals can be submitted at any time up until this date.