

Fast Track Engagement Fund

A University of Sussex ESRC IAA funding scheme

About

The University of Sussex holds an Impact Acceleration Account from the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), which commits over £1M to support the acceleration of impact of social science research amongst non-academic audiences. The fund was granted in 2019 and ends on 31 March 2023.

The ESRC indicates that “economic and societal impact is the demonstrable contribution that excellent social and economic research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations”. In order to support such impacts, the Fast Track is designed to provide short-term, quick turn-around funds for Sussex faculty to generate additional impact from their research. It will provide **support for engagement with external, non-academic stakeholders**.

The scheme will support engagement that builds and strengthens relationships, and which seeks to accelerate the impact being generated from research projects. This might involve building relationships to understand users’ needs and co-produce grant proposals, supporting relationships between grant-funded activities, and continuing impact after a grant has ended.

Funding could be used for a range of activities, including but not limited to:

- *Developing policy recommendations and documents with an external partner*
- *Collaborative meetings or events meant to address joint issues between academics and non-academics*
- *Developing and delivering research-based training for external partners*
- *Support from the short-term employment of a research assistant to enhance impact (e.g. stakeholder mapping, dissemination to meet specific collaborator requirements)*

The upper limit of funding applications is **£3,000**. Funding will normally be for a period of up to six months.

This fund is not intended to underwrite conference organisation or other initiatives with a primarily academic audience. If applying for a researcher to support the project, please appoint at appropriate grade, and contact the Sussex IAA to help with costing.

Eligibility

- Funds are available to staff who are employed to undertake research, including early career researchers.
- The lead applicant(s) should be employed by the University of Sussex with a contract of employment that does not end before the proposed project end.
- Activities should be conducted with non-academic partners.

- Applications and activities can be in conjunction with other universities, but we will be unable to fund activities which are not led by the University of Sussex applicant. If another university that also has an [IAA](#) is involved, we would expect contribution from their IAA as well.
- Underlying research must fall within the [ESRC remit](#), and be of excellent quality, but you do not need to have ESRC funding to apply.
- Unfortunately, we are not able to directly fund:
 - PhD students
 - Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)
 - Those not employed to directly undertake research
 - Impact activities that have already been costed into a 'Pathway to Impact' in an ESRC grant

Requirements & review criteria

- Evidence of need by non-academic partners (evidenced by letter, invitation, etc.)
- Evidence of how the proposed activity fits within a planned, sustained and strategic approach to engagement.
- Demonstration of additionality (that no other sources of funding are available).
- Research falls within the [ESRC remit](#).
- Applicants are required to discuss their application with their Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange (DRKE). This is so that there are co-ordinated efforts coming from the schools. Evidence of support from the DRKE is required. If you are a DRKE, or if your DRKE is unavailable, please refer to your Head of School.

Application guidelines:

- Please consider each section on the application form as it relates to all other sections. All sections together can be considered to constitute a project plan and could contribute to your [Theory of Change](#), if you use it.
- Q1: IMPACT. Please state the overall objectives of the application and the intended impact. Please state why the activities are needed and how the activities will meet 'real world' problems. What change are you trying to influence? What would be the overarching ideal change you would like to see happen?
- Q2: UNDERPINNING RESEARCH: Please describe the links to your research, and the social science underpinnings.
- Q3: ACTIVITIES & COLLABORATION:
 - a) Please indicate how the activities address the aims and impact identified in question 1
 - b) Please identify the external partners you are collaborating with to effect the change described in Question 1, why they are involved, their role & their contribution to the project.
 - c) Please layout a timetable of activities
- Q4: FIT WITH BROADER PLANS AND ADDITIONALITY:
 - a) Fit with strategic engagement plan – please indicate how this project fits within your impact planning more generally
 - b) Demonstration of additionality - please indicate how this funding would demonstrate additionality, in terms of activity and funding. Please note we cannot fund anything that has (or should have) been listed in a Pathways to Impact section of an application.

- c) Fit with ESRC remit – please indicate how this fits with the ESRC remit, see Discipline Classifications here <https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-funding/discipline-classifications/>
- **OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES:** Please clearly identify the outputs or deliverables of the activities you will undertake. These will be the results of the actions you complete. Please identify the intended outcomes, or those things you believe will change, due to the activities and outputs you undertake. This would be what you anticipate happening short-term, medium- and long-term. Please consider all stakeholders involved and whether outcomes are reliant on other factors.
 - **BUDGET.** Please state the budget in full, and further explain the need for the items, demonstrating additionality (that no other sources of funding are available) and value for money. Please also state if you have any other match-funding. We strongly encourage applicants to explore obtaining co-funding or matched funding (cash or in-kind). This will help demonstrate commitment from an external partner, extend the reach and significance of the impact activities, and contribute to sustainability of initiatives.

Eligible costs

Applicants can request funds for a variety of activities, including travel, accommodation, consumables, etc. We are not able to offer teaching relief. If applying for a researcher to support the project, please appoint at appropriate grade (and check against [rate of pay](#) documents), and we will help you assess the final costs. Estate and indirect costs are not eligible.

Funds cannot be used for purchase of items of equipment worth £10,000 or more. Please check the University of Sussex [Purchasing Goods & Services](#) and [Procurement and Commercial Services](#), for example if you are intending to purchase equipment or arrange payments for anyone or anything outside the university.

Elements to consider

- Please consider any risks that you might encounter as part of your project
- Please consider [data protection issues](#)
- Please ensure that the underlying research and associated activities are in accordance with [University ethics policies](#)
- Please check the [University of Sussex Procurement Policy](#)
- In normal circumstances, we expect projects to take no longer than 6 months.
- The award is non-transferable
- Sussex will retain any assets attained through funding, unless otherwise indicated
- We ask that successful applicants be willing to participate in future events or meetings, particularly for the purpose of sharing experience and building capacity
- The information and application of those who successfully receive ESRC IAA will be shared with the ESRC and others.

Reporting

Successful applicants will be expected to submit a very brief report on progress and outcomes to date. Reports will be expected after six months (or at the end of the funding period if this exceeds six months).

Follow-up reports may be requested after the close of the project to understand ongoing impact.

Dates

This is an open call, applications can be submitted at any time.

For further information and to apply

Please contact Nora Davies (n.davies@sussex.ac.uk, 01273 678178), ESRC IAA External Partnerships Manager for more information.