

EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account

Doctoral Impact Scheme: Guidance

Context

In recognition of the often long lead time between research 'discovery' (research outcomes) and related impacts, the EPSRC has awarded Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) grants to 33 universities since 2012, including the University of Oxford. The IAA provides support for activities that will reduce that lead time, and help to accelerate the impact (beyond academia) from past, current or future research that falls within the EPSRC remit.

Doctoral Impact Scheme

The University is operating a Doctoral Impact Scheme, funded by the EPSRC IAA, with the aim of supporting and encouraging new DPhil graduates to maximise the impact of their (or related) research beyond academia through engagement with non-academic partners in industry, healthcare, government agencies, third-sector organisations, charities, local and regional government, etc.

Eligibility

DPhil students are eligible to apply for the scheme if:

- their research is within [EPSRC research areas](#) (students do not need to have received EPSRC funding)
- they have passed their Confirmation of Status examination
- they are within two terms of submission of their thesis

Industry-funded students (e.g. iCASE or fully funded) need to seek confirmation of the intellectual property situation from [Research Services](#), before considering an application.

It is a requirement that the DPhil viva be completed successfully before the proposed project can commence.

This scheme cannot fund additional academic research. EPSRC-funded DPhil students who are interested in follow-on funding to support academic impact should refer to the [EPSRC Doctoral Prize scheme](#).

Purpose and use of funding

Awards can comprise up to six months' salary (at the first point on the University salary scale 07S¹, including pension and NI contributions) and direct project support costs. Travel or accommodation costs may also be requested, depending on the location of the non-academic partner. It is expected that requested costs will not exceed £30k. Applications for awards of greater value are permitted, but must include an exceptionally strong and specific justification as to why the project could not be completed within the expected limit.

It is expected that the majority of the project will be spent at the external partner, but that a proportion of the project (e.g. the final 20%) will be spent at the University, writing up a project report and delivering a short webinar or similar, which may be used as exemplar case study material. However, projects that do not fit this schedule will be considered for funding, if such an arrangement can be justified in the application.

¹ <https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/salary-scales>

The earliest proposed start date for Doctoral Impact projects is 1 January 2021, and all projects must be concluded by **31 March 2022**. No extensions are possible.

Project proposals should be very focussed, with the emphasis on creating impact (beyond academia) from the original DPhil project (or related research). Examples might include: transferring a method developed during the DPhil to an industrial setting, transferring knowledge to support the implementation of software into industry, or supporting a sector/governmental policy change.

Implications of the Covid-19 pandemic: Applicants should ensure they have factored in the impact of the Covid pandemic when they plan their projects, e.g. due to restrictions on people movement, or limited access to facilities or resources. Applicants should be aware that while the IAA wants closer engagement with non-academic partners, and end users to be interested in the end-product, their proposals will need to balance this against the limited time and cash available to non-academic partners. [**updated 19 Aug 2020**]

How to apply

IAA staff are happy to review and provide feedback on draft applications prior to final submission. Please submit your request in advance of the application deadline to epsrciaa@mpls.ox.ac.uk.

Applications should be made through the online Internal Research Awards Management System (IRAMS) which can be accessed at <https://irams.ox.ac.uk/> using your Single Sign-On (SSO) details. Once you are logged in, please choose the correct scheme from the list to start your application. If required, IRAMS guidance in the form of quick reference guide (QRG) documents for applicants, departmental approvers and administrators can be found on the [Research Support pages](#). **Please note that some departments may have set an earlier internal deadline**, so please check with your local research support team and prepare your application well in advance of the date advertised above. Applications must be reviewed online by departmental approvers and, where approved, submitted for review by the Partnerships Committee before the deadline.

Please note that submissions that clearly exceed the word limits indicated will *not* be considered. Letters of support from the partner organisation are welcome at the time of application, although not necessary. However, awards will be conditional on receipt of a satisfactory letter of support which clearly details that what the partner will contribute to the project is in line with the information provided in the application. If applicants wish to include a letter of support at the time of application, it should be uploaded as part of the case for support template in a single document. Separate documents will not be accepted by email at the time of application.

If assistance is required to identify an appropriate industrial partner, applicants should contact the relevant [Technology Transfer Manager at Oxford University Innovation](#), the [MPLS Industrial Research Partnerships team](#) or the [MSD Business Development team](#) for support.

Applications should be led by the supervisor, who must be an employee of the University for the duration of the project, and who will assume responsibility for ensuring that the award is used within the terms of the grant.

Supervisors will be required to clearly state the benefits for the awardee, and how they will support the awardee during the project. In addition to the supervisor, awardees should identify a 'project mentor' who is not the awardee's line manager or supervisor and is, ideally, external to the University. The role of the mentor is to help extend awardees into areas that are less familiar to them, thus applications should detail what added value the mentor will bring to the awardee. Any potential conflicts of interest (for the supervisor, the project mentor and for the DPhil student) must be declared and a satisfactory management plan detailed in the application.

It is anticipated that termly calls for applications will be issued, the dates for which are available at <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/epsrc-iaa>. Around 3-5 awards will be made, and the scheme will close once all the funding has been allocated. This may result in the scheme closing before the last scheduled call; please refer to the aforementioned website for information.

For queries regarding the Doctoral Impact Scheme please [contact epsrciaa@mpls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:epsrciaa@mpls.ox.ac.uk) or call (2)82462
For examples of funded Doctoral Impact Projects see [DI1](#), [DI2](#), [DI3](#)
For outputs from Doctoral Impact Project DI1 see 'UseLimeMortar' <https://uselimeortar.com/>

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by the non-specialist EPSRC IAA Partnerships panel. The decisions of the panel are final, and the panel reserves the right to make awards at a lower level and/or for a shorter time period than that requested in the application.

Partnerships Panel

Prof Blanca Rodriguez (Computer Science) – Chair
Prof Ian Griffiths (Mathematical Institute)
Prof Susie Speller (Materials)
Prof Felix Leach (Engineering)

Quality assessment criteria (not listed in any priority order)

- Potential scale of the impact - *could be financial or social*
- Risk involved in the project - *high risk not necessarily a negative if potential impact is large*
- Timescale to impact - *will this project reduce the lead time to impact?*
- Likelihood of impact
- Clarity of plan to achieve the project aims
- Good value? *Impact per £*

Terms of employment

Doctoral Impact award holders will be employees of the University, not students, and therefore the affiliated department will need to issue a contract to the candidate once the offer of award is confirmed.

Overseas students are eligible to apply, providing they meet the eligibility criteria. In this event, visa arrangements may need to be considered as employment will be subject at all times to meeting the requirements of the UK Border Agency and the provision of original documentation to establish the right to work and remain in the UK in advance of the start date.

Timeline

Partnerships Fund and Doctoral Impact Fund

- Call opens early-mid August 2020
- Application deadline by noon, 7 October 2020
- Panel meeting mid-November 2020 (Partnerships Fund and Doctoral Impact Fund)
- Outcomes mid-December 2020 (tbc)
- Project completion 31 March 2022