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**UoE/MRC Impact Acceleration Account 2024-2025**

**Guidance Notes**

**Terms and Conditions**

**Funding remit and scope**

The aim of MRC IAA funding is to support the translation of fundamental science into new therapies, diagnostics, medical devices and technologies to benefit human health.

Funding should accelerate this transition by establishing the viability of an approach, generating a data package that de-risks the project for future funders, collaborators or investors.

Projects should address an unmet clinical or healthcare technology need with a clear developmental pathway towards patients and end users. All disease areas and modalities of intervention are eligible (e.g. therapeutics, diagnostics, devices, digital healthcare technologies, healthcare data solutions). Projects should be milestone led, with clear measurable objectives, requiring active project management for delivery.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with industrial and clinical partners and mentors to ensure that the proposed project addresses real world needs with workable solutions and a project plan that enables the delivery of confidence in concept. Projects that include industrial collaboration and partnerships with direct or in-kind funding support are encouraged and will be prioritised for funding. Please note that IP and results generated during a funded project should reside with the University of Edinburgh.

**The MRC IAA does not fund;**

* Entire translational projects; applicants seeking funding for entire projects should consider MRC DPFS or equivalent schemes.
* Administration costs
* Industrial partner costs
* Staff between posts or funding
* PhD studentships
* Continuation of academic research grants
* Costs relating to the protection of intellectual property
* Purchase of large equipment
* Staff exchange into a spin-out company of the host institution

# Funding level

Direct and directly allocated costs will be funded in region of £30k to £100k for a duration of 6 to 12 months.

## Eligibility

Lead applicants should be University of Edinburgh investigators (salaried members of UoE staff) with an employment contract for the duration of the award. Lead applicants will direct and be actively engaged in delivering the proposed project. Collaborative proposals that bring together researchers from different Colleges/Schools or industry partners, although not a requirement, are actively encouraged. Researchers from other institutions may be included in a proposal as a Co-applicant where the nature of the research makes this necessary. The University of Edinburgh should always be the main beneficiary of the research outcomes e.g. IP, future funding, publications.

Researchers supported on open-ended or fixed-term contracts may apply for grants, and may request funds for their own salary. The Research Councils' conditions of grant awards do not include a requirement to appoint staff on a fixed-term basis. This is a matter for the employer to determine and is not related to eligibility for funding.

Where an applicant is expected to retire during the course of a grant, the proposal must state who will take over responsibility at the point of the grant holder’s retirement.

Individuals may be the Lead Applicant on only one application per MRC IAA application round. However, individuals can act as co-applicants on any number of applications per MRC IAA application round. Please note that the assessment will consider the level of engagement of co-applicants with the research and their capacity to meet these requirements.

**MRC IAA Application to Award Process**

There is a two-stage application process;

**Expression of Interest** – All applicants should submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) form outlining the proposed project and costs by **30th August 2024** to Lorraine Jackson (lorraine.jackson@ed.ac.uk). EoIs should be supported by a named Business Development Executive (BDE). **Please contact your BDE a minimum of two weeks before the submission deadline**. An internal panel will review submissions and only successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of EoIs by late September 2024.

**Full Application** – Full applications will be reviewed by the full MRC IAA panel which includes academic, business development, industrial and investment representation. On invitation to full submission applicants will be forwarded application details and must complete an Intention to Submit form (Roslin Institute should complete the Roslin Concept Note) with the Edinburgh Research Office. Full applications should be submitted with costs prepared by the Edinburgh Research Office. Costs should be approved in accordance with your institution’s standard practice. Full applications will be submitted by **18th October 2024** with outcomes expected by late November 2024. The MRC IAA application process is strictly confidential between the applicants and the funding panel to allow the necessary disclosure of unpatented concepts. **Projects with a 12-month duration must commence no later than 1st April 2025, completion for all projects is due 31st March 2026.**

The MRC IAA panel will recommend projects for funding pending final review. During this process the lead applicant will address any questions raised by the panel and the project plan, milestones and budget agreed the MRC IAA team. Once completed the MRC IAA Panel Chair for will confirm approval of funding. Any ethics and governance approvals and legal agreements (e.g. material transfer agreements, collaborative research agreements) are expected to be in place prior to the project commencing. MRC IAA will not be responsible for any overspend on awards.

**Post award project management & reporting**

**Milestone Review Meetings**

The project team will be expected to have milestone review meetings, coinciding with project milestones. These meetings will be attended by the project lead/team, Business Development Executive, the MRC IAA Programme Lead, Prof Scott Webster and/or MRC IAA Programme Manager, Dr Andrew McBride. At these milestone review meetings, the project team will be expected to disclose data supporting milestone progression in addition to spending totals to date. The MRC IAA Programme Lead/Manager will confirm milestone progression.

**Early termination of a project**

The MRC IAA Programme team reserve the right to terminate projects that have not made sufficient progress, have failed or are judged unlikely to achieve milestones. The decision to terminate a project will only be taken following a full discussion between the project team, the Business Development Executive and MRC IAA Programme Lead. In the event of a project being terminated early there is an expectation that unspent funds will be returned to the MRC IAA fund for reallocation in a timely fashion.

**Final Review Meeting**

Within 1 month of the project concluding the project lead/team will be expected to have a final review meeting attended by the Business Development Executive, MRC IAA Programme Lead and/or MRC IAA Programme Manager. The project team will be expected to disclose data supporting the project outcomes in addition to spending totals. Shortly thereafter the project lead is expected to submit a Final Report summarising the data supporting milestone achievement and project outcomes.

**Annual Reporting**

The MRC IAA Programme team expect you to provide project updates when requested, and provide outcome data annually for **5 years** after the award has completed. This reporting process is essential to supporting the leverage of MRC IAA funding in future years from the MRC. Failure to provide timely reports will result in you being disqualified from submitting applications to future programmes. You may also be expected to contribute to a MRC IAA symposium to present project outcome/status. It is essential that over this reporting period that the MRC IAA Programme team is informed of any pivotal discussion points regarding project progression, termination, deal and significant grant applications e.g. DPFS.

**Intellectual Property Management**

All IP generated during a funded project should reside with and be managed by the University of Edinburgh**.** Where the funded project isassociated with more than one Research Organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, must be set out in a formal collaboration agreement in a way that is proportionate to and appropriately reflects the exact nature of the collaboration. This must be agreed and in place prior to the project commencing. Edinburgh Innovations, the commercialisation arm of the University of Edinburgh, should take the lead in IP management and preparation and execution of legal agreements with project partners and/or service providers.

You should ensure that intellectual assets obtained in the course of the project, whether protected by IP rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy.

**Responsible Innovation**

The University of Edinburgh is committed to ensuring that its research activity delivers beneficial impacts to society. These impacts should reflect responsible innovation that is socially desirable and undertaken in the public interest. Responsible innovation should be considered and embedded in research practices from earliest possible stages. Applicants are therefore encouraged to consider the future directions of the proposed project, anticipating the potential and plausible societal consequences of their research. This includes consideration of the social and political dimensions in which the project operates and the potential impacts on environmental sustainability and social justice.

In practical terms, ensuring appropriate ethics are applied and approvals sought. Ensuring effective management and ethical exploitation of IP to the benefit of society. Proactive safeguarding through appropriate adoption and compliance with biosafety, biosecurity, regulatory and data management and protection measures, practices and legislation. Appropriate due diligence on external project partners, ensuring a shared commitment to responsible innovation. Ensuring, as far as is possible, that the innovation process is open, through appropriate sharing of learned outcomes and best practices with a commitment to transparent decision making. Ensuring the research activity is inclusive by engaging with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders throughout the lifetime of the project to both input to and inform progression.

Responsible innovation is a continuous and evolving process throughout the lifetime of a project and teams should regularly reflect on decisions and consider alternative processes to remain responsive to emerging consequences of their research.

For more information on responsible innovation please refer to; [UKRI (EPSRC) Framework for Responsible Innovation.](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/framework-for-responsible-innovation/)

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Research**

The University of Edinburgh is committed to ensuring that research conducted by the University promotes equality of opportunity, reflects diversity of skills and lived experiences and is inclusive to all. In line with this commitment the MRC IAA accepts applications from UoE salaried staff from all career stages and encourages applications from under-represented groups.

Funded projects should embed EDI from the planning stage, ensuring project teams are inclusive, reflecting the necessary diversity of skills, experience and opinions required to deliver on project objectives. EDI principles should extend to the conduct and execution of the research project including inclusive, respectful and open interactions with all project stakeholders.

For more information please refer the [University of Edinburgh EDI](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity) webpages.

**Data Management**

As data generated during the lifetime of a MRC IAA project may be required to support future funding applications, patents, legal agreements, regulatory applications or commercial due diligence, it is important to ensure implementation of good data management practices. Project leaders are responsible for ensuring consistency and quality in data capture, storage, management and protection in adherence to University and UKRI policy. Further guidance and advice can be obtained from the University Research Data Service;

[Research Data Service](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/research-data-service)

Contact: data-support@ed.ac.uk

[University Research Data Management Policy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/research-data-policy)

[UKRI Common Principles on Data Policy](https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/data-policy/common-principles-on-data-policy/)

**MRC IAA Programme Team**

Professor Scott Webster – MRC IAA Programme Lead (scott.webster@ed.ac.uk )

Dr Andrew McBride – MRC IAA Programme Manager (andrew.mcbride@ei.ed.ac.uk )

Lorraine Jackson – MRC IAA Programme Administrator (lorraine.jackson@ed.ac.uk )

## MRC IAA Application Assessment Criteria

The MRC IAA panel will consider applications against the following criteria;

**Need**

* Does the identified need exist?
* Would meeting this need significantly reduce disease burden and/or provide a valuable commercial opportunity and/or alleviate an important development bottleneck?
* If the need is not significant now, will it become so in the future?
* Will the technology be adopted by the NHS or other healthcare provider?
* What difference does the product make to the patient pathway?
* Is the need met or unmet. If unmet, will it likely be unmet at the time that the proposed solution is in place?
* Has the applicant identified the key competing solutions and their status or are you aware of other similar or complementary research underway elsewhere?
* Has the applicant identified the key competitive advantages of their proposed solution?
* How likely is it that the proposed solution, if achieved, would be widely adopted?

**Rationale**

* Is there a good medical/scientific rationale for the project?
* Is there a reasonable body of evidence to support the proposed rationale?

**Deliverability**

* Objectives:
	+ If successful, will the proposal make a significant contribution to meeting the identified need?
	+ If successful, will it achieve an endpoint that has a reasonable chance of attracting any required additional investment?
	+ Are downstream development hurdles surmountable?
* Plan:
	+ Does the plan propose reasonable go/no-go milestones to judge progression?
	+ Are the preliminary budgets and schedule to reach the milestones appropriate?
	+ What is the likelihood of the project meeting its milestones?
	+ Given the project’s risk and its potential benefits, does the plan offer good value for money?
* Assets:
	+ Has the team identified and secured reasonable access to necessary resources/skills? Note that not all collaborations/out-sourcing agreements need be in place at the outline application stage
	+ Has the individual or group established a high-quality track record in the field?
	+ Are the applicants well placed to deliver the work?
	+ Do the applicants have the necessary project management experience to deliver the plan?

**Intellectual Property**

* Does the proposal have an appropriate intellectual property strategy?
	+ Background
		- Does the team have access to necessary background intellectual property?
		- If not, are the applicant’s arguments for how they will access required background intellectual property persuasive?
	+ Foreground
		- Is the intellectual property generated in the course of the project likely to be protectable and by what mechanism (i.e. patent protectable: will it be novel, non-obvious and useable)?
		- Will the proposed management and exploitation strategy maximize the likelihood that the project will be able to access any required downstream funding to enable the project to meet its identified need?

Please note that the decisions of the MRC IAA panel will not be open to appeal and the University reserves the right to amend the application process.

**Governance**

The review panel has academic, industrial, clinical, investment and enterprise representation. Panel membership will be available to applicants, on request, following the application deadline. Contact: lorraine.jackson@ed.ac.uk

**Appendix A – Business Development & Research Support Contacts**

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| **Business Development Executive** | **Institute/school** | **E-mail** |
| Jane Redford | Edinburgh Neuroscience, Infection medicine | Jane.redford@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Sarah Trewick  | IGC, Usher Institute  | Sarah.trewick@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Alice Barrier  | Roslin Institute  | Alice.barrier@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Jenny Cameron | IRR | Jenny.cameron@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Alex Papachronopoulos | IRR | alex.papas@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Aurora Pinas-Fernandez | CVS | Aurora.pinas-fernandez@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Laura Milne | Usher Institute | Laura.milne@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Lindsey Millar | Edinburgh Neuroscience | Lindsey.millar@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Melissa Jungnickel | Roslin Institute | melissa.jungnickel@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Jamilla Miles | Roslin Institute | jamilla.miles@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Javier Lopez Vidal | Roslin Institute | Javier.lopez-vidal@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Emma Elliott | School of Biological Science & School of Chemistry | Emma.Elliot@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| John Morrow | School of Biological Science & School of Chemistry | John.morrow@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Rachel Harvey | School of Biological Sciences | rachel.harvey@ei.ed.ac.uk |
| Teresa Raventos | School of Chemistry | teresa.raventos@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Susana Direito  | School of Biological Sciences  | susana.direito@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Craig Sheridan | School of Engineering | craig.sheridan@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Lorna Jack | School of Engineering | Lorna.jack@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Claire Pembleton | College of Arts Humanities & Social Sciences | Claire.pembleton@ei.ed.ac.uk  |
| Keith Edwards  | School of Informatics  | Keith.edwards@ed.ac.uk  |

Please contact Edinburgh Research Office on invitation to full submission and submit a CMVM Intention to Submit form or Roslin Institute Concept Note as appropriate and attach costings to your application:

## Edinburgh Research Office

[Research Funding Specialist Contacts](https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-office/winning-research-funding/find-my-research-funding-specialist)