UKRI NEWCASTLE IMPACT ACCELERATOR AWARD - CONFIDENCE IN CONCEPT APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2023

PLEASE READ THE WHOLE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE APPLYING

1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Impact acceleration accounts (IAAs) are strategic awards providing funding to research organisations to use creatively for a wide range of impact activities.

The aim of this programme is to speed up the transition from discovery research to translational development projects. It will do this by funding preliminary work to establish the viability of an approach and to rapidly de-risk projects across the whole translational pathway.

From 2022 the University has secured a UKRI Impact Accelerator Award which incorporates the previous MRC Confidence in Concept (CiC) scheme. The new scheme continues the objectives of CiC to promote translational research, with awards made to projects which accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development. The scheme also encourages the use of the award to develop academic-industry interactions.

Newcastle University's 2022 IAA-CiC award is £1,179,900 which will fund annual project rounds over 3 years between 2022 and 2025. This funding will support investigators to undertake further scientific and technical development of an idea that is close to translation, to establish the scientific and/or commercial potential of a concept.

2. <u>ELIGIBILITY, SCOPE AND FUNDING LIMITS</u>

Eligibility
Applications are accepted from Newcastle University researchers and academics (including NHS staff with honorary University contracts), basic scientists, and clinician scientists.

Scope
A pplications relevant to any area of translational research will be considered. Priority will be given to projects that have the greatest potential for near-term impact and the ability to attract additional investment (i.e. from larger translational funding schemes, such as MRC DPFS or NIHR EME and/or through the development of translational industry collaborations). It is desirable that projects also include plans to create/develop new interactions aimed at forming partnerships for future translational funding opportunities, which can include with industry.

Downstream translation is at the core of the call and basic scientists are strongly encouraged to seek collaboration with translational researchers.

The award **will not** fund:
- Entire translational projects
- Administration costs
- Industrial partner costs
- Staff between posts/funding or PhD studentships (bridging)
- Continuation of normal research grants
- Costs related to the protection of IP
- Staff exchange into a Newcastle University spin-out company

Whilst the scheme encourages collaboration with industry, applications should not seek to undertake research prescribed by/on behalf of the company.

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Duration: Projects should be no more than 12 months in duration. All projects must **finish by 31st March 2024** (extensions beyond this date will not be permitted).

Value:
Two bands
- £50k-£85K
- £86K-120k.

3. <u>APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS</u>

1. **Intention to Submit** (ITS)

All applicants must first complete the 1-page Intention to Submit (ITS) form.

If the proposed project is within scope and relevant criteria are met, the applicant will receive a full application form for completion.

 If the project is deemed not to be in scope, feedback will be provided to the applicant.

The ITS form should be submitted to cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk by **15th December 2023**

Applicants are also encouraged to contact Translator in Residence TiR (Dale.athey1@newcastle.ac.uk) and the appropriate Business development manager (BDM).   (If you are unsure as to your BDM the TiR/Project Manager can assist.)

2. **Full application**

Each application is reviewed by three panel members (clinician scientist/non-clinician scientist/industry representative) before being discussed by the full panel, which includes non-University staff and has experts in methodology, clinical governance, clinical trial design and delivery and statistics.

Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will receive a form with some information pre-populated from the ITS, which can be updated accordingly. Applicants should ensure that titles and summaries of proposed projects are worded in such a way as to protect any commercially confidential or sensitive areas.

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Details of the following must be included:

Content		Additional information/support
Translational opportunity	• The nature, potential benefits, and competitive advantage. • Translational pathway and outcomes, target funding stream, target strategy, and how the project will inform future study design.	TiR
Project milestones	• Including go/no-go decisions.	TiR
Risk Assessment	• What are the main project risks? • How will these risks be mitigated ?	TiR
Academic-industry engagement	• Proposed engagement activity (this can include, for example, short-term people exchanges aligned to the delivery of the project's objectives or showcases/workshops to develop relationships with potential industry partners to submit joint funding applications/carry out collaborative translational research). • Existing/potential industry/international involvement. • Nature of collaboration with project partner(s) (if applicable) and their contribution to the project. *N.B. Collaborative research activities must be carried out in an appropriate contractual framework. Project partners should not expect to acquire IP rights as a condition of their contribution to the project.*	TiR BDM
Ethical review	• Ethical review requirements and status.	University Ethics JRO (for projects involving NHS patients/facilities)
Intellectual property and commercial potential	• Results of patent search. • The BDM must complete a separate section outlining any relevant existing IP and the commercial potential of the initiative. *N.B. Any new IP arising from the funding will be subject to current research grant conditions, that is, ownership and responsibility for exploitation of any IP rests with the host institution.*	TiR BDM
Costing	• Upon invitation to submit a full application, applicants must complete the standard university **Project Initiation Form**. This will determine the level of costing required for the project proposal. A full costing will be completed for projects that are recommended for funding. • An *estimated* cost breakdown should be provided for directly incurred costs (PI time is not funded), all of which must be explained and justified. Budget lines without a reasonable justification will not be approved and successful applicants may be asked to adjust the	Research Officer JRO (for NHS costs)

Content	Additional information/support
budget after the full application panel meeting. Other costs can be outlined, plus any financial contribution from the applicant's Institute and/or collaborative partner(s).	

Applicants are encouraged to discuss applications ahead of submission with Dr Dale Athey, Translator in Residence (TiR) , and appropriate Business Development Manager (BDM). Questions may be e-mailed to cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk

The application form must be no greater than 5 pages (plus up to 2 pages of preliminary data and a 1-page CV of the PI) and be emailed to cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk by **14th January 2024**.

Outcomes will be notified by **14th February 2024**.

4. POST-AWARD MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

Following confirmation of a project's funding award, a project set-up meeting will be arranged to review the details of the experiments to be conducted, the stated outcomes, and the milestone go/no go decisions for successful progression through the project.

The meeting may include Translator in Residence, the CiC programme manager, the BDM, or others as appropriate.

All required approvals must be in place before funded projects can start.

A schedule of meetings to monitor the progress of the award, and to ensure opportunities to secure funding for the next stage of development, will also be agreed at the set-up meeting. These meetings may be attended by the PI and project team, the CiC programme manager, the business and translational development managers, and others as required.

Project funding may be withheld, or projects terminated, if:
- awardees do not engage in this process
- milestones are not met
- other changes occur that impact the ability to make a successful application for translational funding.

5. EVALUATION/REPORTING

All awardees must provide information at specific points during the project and for several years after its completion (as required by UKRI who fund the CiC award). Reporting requirements include:

- A short progress report for discussion at the progress meeting(s).
- A project completion report.
- Annual updates on outputs, follow-on funding applications (submitted/awarded), publications, patents (applications/published), impact activities, industrial collaborations, and spin-out companies that are directly related to the project. *N.B This information is required for annual reporting to UKRI as well as for the next funding renewal application).*
- Written case studies (as requested internally and/or by the MRC).

If awardees do not contribute to the reporting requirements, they will not be eligible to apply for CiC funding in future award years.

6. ENQUIRIES

If you have any questions about the scheme, please direct these in the first instance to the CiC programme manager: cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk.

7. FLOWCHART

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Applicants          →    NOT successful
Submit ITS               Brief feedback from
    ↓
SUCCESSFUL          →    Applicant submits    →    Initial        →    NOT successful
Applicant                full application          Assessment          Feedback from panel
receives full            ahead of deadline             ┊
application                                             ┊
                                                   Panel meeting
                                                        ┊
    ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
    ↓
RECOMMENDED         →    SUCCESSFUL with
for funding              amendments
Full costing             Adjustments
completed                agreed
    ↓                         ↓
SUCCESSFUL no       →    Project award    →    Project starts
amendments               set up                     ↓
                         Budget                 Progress
                         Approvals              monitoring
                         Agreement(s)           report/meeting
                                                    ↓
                                                Project ends   →   Annual outcome
                                                Report             report
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