ESRC IAA Accelerating Business Collaboration (ABC)

Seed Fund Call Guidance Notes

# Background and Aims

This seed fund call is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council ([ESRC](https://esrc.ukri.org/)) ‘Accelerating Business Collaboration’ (ABC) scheme. The primary aim of this National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF)- funded scheme is to **build the capacity and capability of early career researchers (ECRs) and PhD students** in the social sciences to engage and create opportunities to collaborate with industry/business, helping contribute to economic and societal development in this region and beyond, taking into account the current context and future challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NPIF seed funding source means **that all activity in this call must involve a business** (see below on the ESRC definition) either as a target audience for activity or as a key partner / stakeholder or beneficiary.

Guidance is provided within this document, but informal advice can and should be sought from the ABC Business Engagement Officer, Mr. Michael Gray ([**Michael.G.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:Michael.G.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk))

# Applicant Eligibility

To align with the primary aim of this scheme, **the PI for applications must be an ECR**. ECR is defined as someone who is normally within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or within six years of their first academic appointment. *We welcome applications from ECRs who are on either open or fixed-term contracts*. Co-I's who can add value to the application across any level of seniority, from PhD student to Professor, are welcome.

Applications are invited from **all academic disciplines** from the University of Glasgow (UoG), provided the research underpinning the activities proposed falls under the remit of the ESRC. Details of the breadth of the disciplines eligible are available via [**the ESRC website**](https://esrc.ukri.org/about-us/what-is-social-science/social-science-disciplines/).

Collaborative projects with other HEIs are welcome but University of Glasgow ESRC IAA funds cannot directly fund the activity of academic colleagues outside of this institution. If collaborative projects are proposed with the University of Edinburgh, joint funding with the UoE ESRC IAA may be possible; applicants should discuss this with the ABC Business Engagement Officer, Michael Gray ([**Michael.G.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:Michael.G.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk)) and the ESRC IAA Administration ([**socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk,%20michael.g.gray@glasgow.ac.uk?subject=ABC%20Seed%20Fund%20Application)).

1. **Cost Eligibility**

All costs below are eligible, but must be appropriately justified in your application:

1. Reasonable travel, accommodation and subsistence costs: in accordance with standard institutional policy.
2. Equipment: Consumables directly related to the project may be eligible for funding, but must be fully justified. Where items of equipment are requested at substantial cost and are to be retained within the School, the School would ordinarily be expected to contribute 50% of the cost of these items.
3. Salaries:
   * ABC funds can be used for ‘top-up’ salary costs to research fellows/research associates on part-time contracts. We can also fund partial salary costs for any external partners where the activities proposed don’t form part of the

organisation’s normal remit/services.

* + RA time can be fully costed into a proposal.
  + Any staff with time costed into the bid must have an employment contract with their institution that is at least 3 months longer than the ABC project.
  + If research fellows or associates are supported by research grants from bodies outside the University, the terms and conditions of their award/appointment must not preclude their acceptance of additional research funding.

1. Other: The Panel will consider applications for costs such as registration costs at events, production of professional materials, room bookings, catering etc.

Applicants should consider co-funding (cash or in-kind) of applications where possible. Applicants are expected to demonstrate in their proposals that there is a commitment from external partner organisations.

Applicants should cost their proposals in liaison with the IAA support team at [**socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk)

# Ineligible costs, activities and applicants

# Post-graduate researchers are not eligible to apply to the ABC seed fund directly, but may be funded as research assistants.

# The ABC seed fund is not intended to fund:

* + - Direct buy-out of time (salary costs) for existing academic or professional services staff
    - Estates and indirect costs
    - Attendance at academic conferences or networking events
    - PhD fees
    - Publisher costs associated with Open Access
    - The preparation of research grant applications
    - Activities already covered by prior ESRC awards
    - Projects with limited potential for knowledge-exchange or impact or likely to achieve primarily academic impact

# Scope of projects

Applicants can bid for up to £6k for individual projects that can focus on (but not limited to):

* + Building/brokering potential partnerships/networks with businesses
  + Enable Knowledge Exchange (KE) with business
  + Short placements or mentoring activity with business
  + Engagement/Impact activities that involve business (either with new or existing partners)
  + Scoping of future research projects involving business collaboration
  + Funding to attend industry conferences and/or trade fairs

**Project activities need to be completed** within the maximum timeframe of the project, **31st August 2021**.

We aim to encourage and support applicants who have ambitious and innovative project ideas through ABC seed fund scheme, where broader academic career aspirations and development of CoSS R&KE strategy can be explored in a risk- encouraged setting.

Successful applicants **will be provided with a strong community of support throughout the project**, including the opportunity for one to one digital meetings with professional development coaches and become part of a peer support network. More details will be provided during the seed fund virtual information session hosted by Michael Gray.

Where appropriate, applicants should contact the University’s IP and Innovation Manager Morven Fraser-Walther ([**morven.fraser-walther@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:morven.fraser-walther@glasgow.ac.uk)) and Business Engagement Officer Michael Gray ([**Michael.g.gray@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:Michael.g.gray@glasgow.ac.uk)) to answer any questions around IP and can also advise on any early stage commercial opportunity.

# ESRC Business Definition

The ESRC define business as:

* + Any organisation which is run for the basis of making a profit. Trade associations, business associations and sector organisations which represent businesses are also included.
  + This also includes social enterprises, which are run both for a social mission and for the basis of making a profit. Member-owned business such as Cooperatives are also included.
  + This definition excludes public sector organisations, charitable organisations, **except** where these organisations have separate commercial subsidiaries/legal entities which are run for the basis of making a profit.

1. **Assessment Criteria**
2. The quality of the underpinning research and its potential for generating economic and societal impact, taking into account the current context of Covid-19 pandemic
3. Potential to increase take-up of research by users
4. Clear explanation of resource utilisation to increase impact, as well as evaluation plans to capture and demonstrate impact
5. Value-for-money
6. Evidence of commitment from business partners through supporting with additional resources (both financial and non-financial)
7. Clear potential to develop sustainable business relationships and capability to work with new funders
8. Alignment with the CoSS Research and Knowledge Exchange 2020-24 strategy
9. Provide clear opportunities for PhD and ECRs to hone their translation skills and experience collaborating with business
10. **Application Terms & Conditions**

* No limits to number of applications from each school or Interdisciplinary Research Theme, but desire is to have a diverse representation of funded projects across School/IRTs
* Applicants required to discuss project with their Head of School in relation to strategy and staffing implications prior to submission
* Applicants should cost their proposals in liaison with the IAA support team at [**socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk**](mailto:socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk)
* It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that all proposed activities are in accordance with the University’s Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Research
* A signature of support for the project should be included from all stakeholder partner organisations. This can be in the form of an email attachment
* Completed forms should be submitted electronically to [**socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk** and **Michael.g.gray@glasgow.ac.uk** b](mailto:socsci-esrc-iaa@glasgow.ac.uk,%20michael.g.gray@glasgow.ac.uk?subject=ABC%20Seed%20Fund%20Application)y the deadline date on the application form
* Applicants will normally be notified of the decision within 10 working days
* Successful candidates are required to attend kick off and wrap-up workshop meetings, and are strongly recommended to make use of peer and mentor support network made available
* **Project activities need to be completed** within the maximum timeframe of the project, **31st August 2021**. Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances
* Any balance outstanding at end of project will revert back to funder. It is the responsibility of successful candidates to keep Research Support Office aware of underspend risk ASAP, where outstanding balance can be potentially reallocated
* Additional audit may be conducted at further intervals after the conclusion of project to track impact leverage over time