

Arts and Humanities Impact Fund (AHIF)

Scheme Guidance Notes

In the absence of AHRC funding for research impact, the Arts and Humanities Impact Fund (AHIF) aims to enhance the non-academic impact of arts and humanities research at the University of Cambridge. It supports 'on the ground' impact and knowledge exchange activities, which enable researchers at all levels to engage with the public, private and third sectors, and provides a sustainable support structure within the University to promote wider and more effective engagement with external non-academic organisations. Impact activities can be undertaken at any point in the research life cycle, from planning stage through to post-completion, and support might be required to explore new areas of impact or to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. For this reason, the AHIF provides two schemes:

The Impact Fund:	Awards in the region of £5,000 to £10,000, covering 100% of directly incurred costs but not indirect costs.
The Flexi Fund:	Typically, small awards of up to £2,000 to support opportunities arising at short notice that require an immediate injection of funds.

Aims

The purpose of the AHIF is to support and promote the following types of activity:

1. **Activities to broaden the experience of engagement with business, NGOs and the public and third sectors.** This can cover deepening and strengthening relationships with existing contacts as well as establishing new contacts.
2. **Collaboration with public, private and third sector organisations**
3. **Developing and promoting new engagement methods to help promote best practice across arts and humanities knowledge areas.**
4. **Short projects to define routes to impact,** liaising with partners and finding the resources to enhance impact activities will be eligible. This would include, but is not limited to, holding a workshop to scope interest with a suite of external organisations that would ideally lead to a further impact project.
5. **Innovative and unusual projects** leading to impactful outputs and outcomes.

Activities could include stakeholder or practitioner workshops, policy or evidence symposia/for a, policy briefs/select committee attendance, participative workshop formats, development of open access websites or databases, public performances and exhibitions, development of professional education courses, and secondments.

The fund will support costs including staff costs (but not PI time), venue hire, equipment, catering costs, travel expenses, accommodation, IT provision, software development and licenses. It will not cover research seminars or lectures with academic speakers and a mainly academic audience, academic conferences with no clear Knowledge Exchange component, academic publications, or buy-out of time for staff already employed by the university.

Eligibility

The AHIF supports projects based on all arts and humanities research that generally falls within the remit of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).¹ Applications should be made to either the AHIF or to the Social Science Impact Fund (SSIF), not both. Please discuss your application with the AH and SS Impact Facilitators to determine which scheme is the most suitable for your project.

Applications are invited from researchers active in the arts and humanities who hold a **current contract of employment** as a **senior independent researcher** – at the point of application – with the University. Relevant non-school institutional staff (such as from Museums or Libraries) on academic-related contracts are eligible to apply (—award holders will normally be at the level of University Lecturer or equivalent, or holding a senior Fellowship). CTOs may apply with the endorsement of a hosting department, confirmed by a letter of support from the relevant Chair of Faculty/Department. Research staff (including research associates and JRFs) may not normally apply, except with the written support of their Faculty or Department, and if a senior independent researcher participates in the project as Principal Investigator and award holder. Postgraduate students are **not** eligible to apply.

All applications must be approved by the respective Head of Department/Faculty, and applications to the Impact fund must be approved before the scheme's closing date. Impact activities should be completed in accordance with all relevant University Guidelines, Policies and Procedures, including, [Financial Regulations](#), [Data Protection](#), [Research Integrity](#) and [Risk Assessment](#); heads of faculties/departments should be satisfied that these obligations have been met before approving applications.

Application Process

Grants for the **Impact Fund** will be awarded as a result of two rounds of competitive bids within the University in 2020/21 (Michaelmas and Lent Terms). Up-to-date information on funding calls can be found at the AHSS Research website. There is up to £35,000 available per call and we expect to fund between 4 and 6 projects. The fund covers direct costs. It does not attract ICC. Applications to the Impact Fund are to be submitted via the [digital application form](#). The **Flexi Fund** is intended as a rapid response source of funding and applications are accepted on a rolling basis via [a separate form](#).

Applicants must also inform their Head of Faculty/Department and Research Grants Administrator at the earliest opportunity to ensure that internal approval procedures are completed. Once completed, applications are to be signed off by the Head of Department through the mechanism provided in the digital application form **before submission or before the closing date of the respective call**. We encourage **interdisciplinary and cross-departmental bids** but in such cases there must still be a designated lead applicant and an expression of support from each of the departments involved.

¹ <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/research/subjectcoverage/>. Other research councils such as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC) run Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAA) with regular internal funding calls at Cambridge. Please check if you are eligible to apply for these if your research falls within their funding remit. For ESRC IAA funding at Cambridge see <http://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-funding/internal-funding-opportunities/institutional-sponsorship-grants/esrc-impact>.

Applicants are strongly urged to consult the AH Facilitator (AHImpact@admin.cam.ac.uk) to discuss their proposal prior to submitting.

Assessment criteria & evaluation

Awards will be made available to fund work which will significantly increase the probability of the ideas and findings generated by the research having an impact on the private, public and third sectors.

Collaborative, innovative and co-funded projects are encouraged. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Quality of underlying research:** the research underpinning the impact project should be of high quality.
- **Quality of the impact development plan: including clear objectives and milestones** over the life of the project and criteria against which medium and long-term successes may be gauged.
- **Identification of the target audiences/constituencies for the project** and their potential involvement in the activity to be supported.
- **Evidence of how the project will be managed** to ensure that it works toward impact.
- **Added value:** the application must describe how the AHIF grant will be expected to develop or enhance the prospect of impact (and be additional to existing Research Council or other funding for impact activities).

Desirable but not essential criteria:

- **Co-funding of activities** to be supported by the Impact Fund is encouraged, but not required. When activities are aimed at developing impacts targeted at specific organisations, then a clear statement of any commitment in kind or in terms of co-funding by those organisations should be provided.
- **Multi-/Inter-disciplinary approaches** can be helpful in addressing challenges related to the execution of impact, and so are encouraged where appropriate.
- **Innovative and unusual projects** leading to impactful outputs and outcomes.

The bids will be evaluated by a cross-departmental Steering Group comprised of experienced arts and humanities researchers and cultural practitioners. Decisions on bids to the Impact Fund will be made within 2 months of the call closing and projects must be completed within 12 months of the award. Bids for testing experimental or innovative approaches are welcomed.

Please note: The awards are not for the continuation of research. Applications should therefore focus on the development of impact activities and outputs and not on research. Applications which read like research grant proposals re-drafted for AHIF purposes are less likely to be successful than projects which clearly comprise development of findings and ideas toward impact.

In keeping with the [Cambridge Green Challenge](#), applicants are encouraged to choose travel options with a [lower carbon impact](#), where practical, and to consider whether alternatives such as the [UIS Videoconferencing Service](#) might be an option to minimise the number of journeys taken.

** In response to the current challenges caused by **COVID-19**, applicants are also encouraged to consider ways that their research could address new needs emerging at this particular time. **

Progress and Final Reports

Progress updates from funded project holders will be required after 3 months, or half way through the project, whichever is sooner. Periodic reviews of the expenditures associated with projects are completed on a regular basis by the School team and all PIs are asked to ensure that invoices are submitted to the relevant financial teams on a timely basis. Any underspend or ineligible costs will be reclaimed by the School. Interim updates shall be brief (approximately 250-400 words) and will outline progress against the milestones agreed by the members of the initial evaluation panel. A Final End of Award Report will be required at the end of the project and will be assessed by the Impact Fund Steering Group and the award-holder's Head of Faculty/Department. Significant changes to the project plan should be discussed with the AH Impact Facilitator and included in the reports.

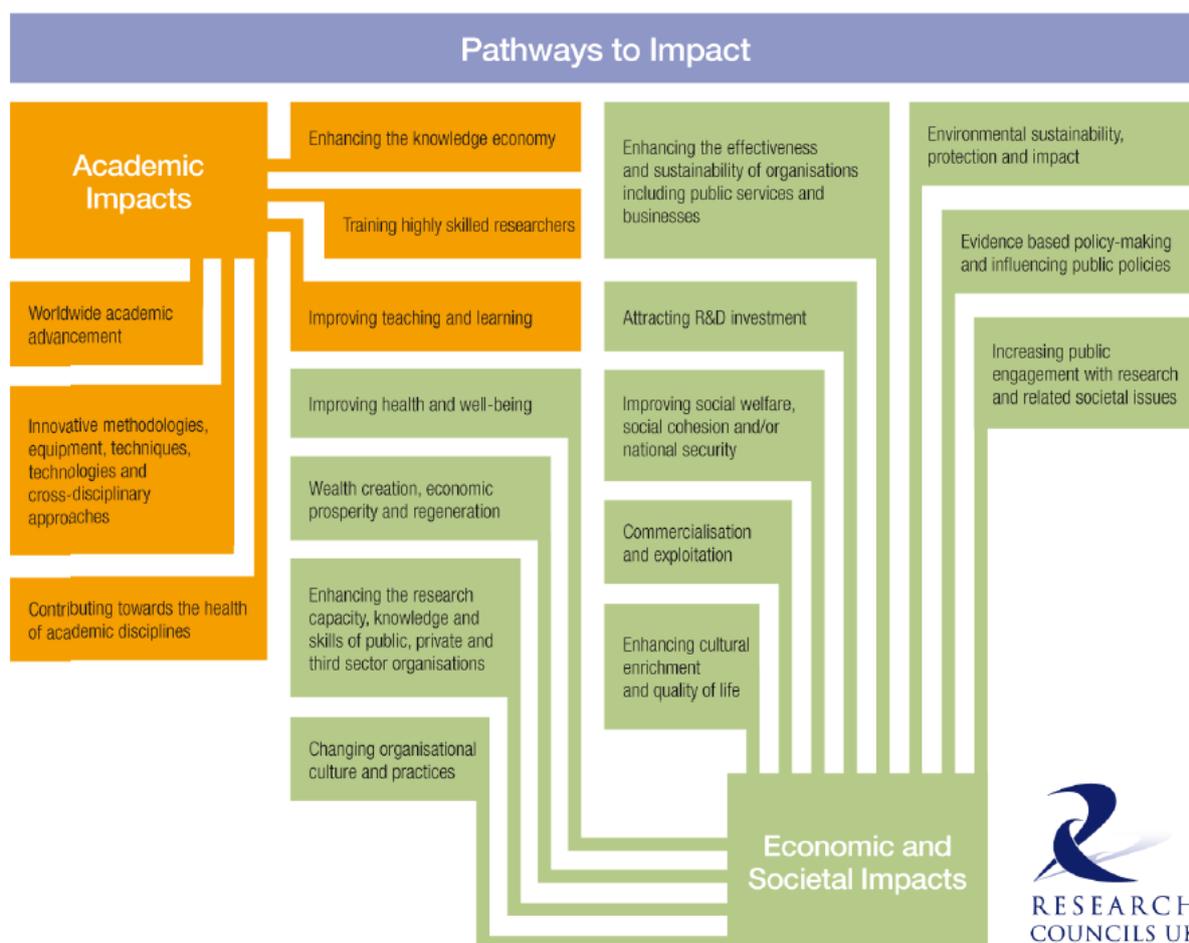
Resources

The following resources might be useful:

<https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/impact> [The [Pathways to Impact planning tool](#) may be particularly helpful]

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/what-is-impact/>

<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/>



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