Impact Acceleration Account Grant – Frequently Asked Questions

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

Q. What is the goal of the IAA grant?

A. The goal of the IAA grant is to amplify the impact of SOAS research in the areas of *migration, displacement, minorities, and marginalisation*. It supports impact-focused activities that build on ongoing or recently concluded research, driving meaningful change in these areas through collaboration with non-academic partners.

Q. How do you define impact?

A. The SOAS IAA follows the definition used by the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Impact is defined as "an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, *beyond academia*."

Please note the emphasis on external engagement: impact must occur in a non-academic context. This means that projects which primarily work with or impact upon university students, including SOAS students, are not eligible for the IAA grant.

Q. How do you define knowledge exchange vs impact?

A. Knowledge exchange is a mutually beneficial exchange between researchers and research users (also known as stakeholders). The subject of the exchange can be knowledge, experience, ideas, intellectual property, evidence or expertise. Stakeholders might be businesses, policymakers, communities, NGOs, creative practitioners, or institutions.

Please note that knowledge exchange is not equivalent to impact; knowledge exchange activities are a pathway to achieving impact.

Impact activities are geared toward realising greater impact, effect, or benefit on the population affected by the themes of research or on society at large.

For more information, see [Vitae's guide](#).

Q. How specific does the intended audience/stakeholder group for my project have to be?

A. Successful impact is most effective when there is a clearly defined target audience and stakeholder group for your planned activities. The "general public" is too broad – think about who your ideal audience would be, and what you hope would change for them as a result of engaging with your impact project. You can then identify stakeholders that are connected with that ideal audience, and work with them on your IAA project.

Q. How can I measure the impact achieved by my IAA project?

A. There are many ways in which to measure impact. The most appropriate method(s) for your project will depend on the nature of the work you're undertaking.

Options include:

- Questionnaires
- Data (e.g. visitor numbers, revenue generated for stakeholders, etc)
- Testimonials from stakeholders
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Policy changes

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative is best. [Better Evaluation's Rainbow Framework](#) provides an in-depth guide which you may find useful.

Q. I have an idea for a project, but I don't have a non-academic partner. Can you help me find a suitable organisation to partner with?
A. Applicants are responsible for building their own relationships with external organisations. If you don't have a pre-existing partner, we recommend spending the coming year researching potential stakeholders and organisations that align with your research project. You can then apply to the IAA grant with your chosen partners in the Spring of 2026.

Q. What sort of information should I include in my IAA application?
A. The assessment panel are primarily interested in what your planned impact activities are and why they are important. An impact project application is distinct from a standard research funding application – the focus is on action and outcome, rather than the academic background. This means that you should keep discussion of the research underpinning the project to a maximum of 100 words. We do not require references, footnotes or epistemologies. Instead, outline who you are partnering with, why your project is important to them, what it will enable (i.e. your intended outcomes), and how this will be measured.
Please be sure to explain any acronyms used in the first instance.

Eligibility
Q. I would like to apply for funding to carry out research or fieldwork which will then generate impact. Is this eligible for funding?
A. No. The IAA grant can only support impact generating activities, not the academic research that underpins them.

Q. I have ideas for two different projects. Can I submit more than one application?
A. Yes, you can submit as many applications as you wish. However, in order to ensure a fair spread of resources across SOAS, it is unlikely that one applicant would receive funding for more than one project.

Q. Are media outputs (such as podcasts and films) or events (such as festivals, talks or roundtables) eligible for IAA granting?
A. Media outputs and events can be pathways to achieving impact, but do not achieve impact on their own. Projects utilising these outputs and events must clearly define their intended impact, demonstrate how they will be used to engage with specific groups or demographics, and outline how the impact will be measured.

Q. I would like to apply for funding to produce a report or a paper, which will then generate impact. Is this eligible for funding?
A. Reports and papers can be pathways to achieving impact, but do not achieve impact on their own. To be eligible, reports must be co-produced with non-academic partners and should propose ways to engage influential stakeholders with the report's findings. Additionally, your project should outline how the impact will be measured.

Q. If I have previously received IAA granting am I eligible to apply again?
A. Yes. There are no restrictions on previous award-holders.

Q. Are group projects with multiple project leads eligible?
A. Yes. However, you must nominate a named lead who will take ownership of all project administration.

Q. I am a PhD student who worked for SOAS in the past, but I don't currently have a contract. Am I eligible for IAA granting?
A. Yes. All current SOAS PhD students are eligible to apply for the IAA grant, regardless of whether you currently have a contract.

Costs and Budgeting

Q. If I am successful, when will I receive my funding?
A. We aim to have all project cost centres set up by 27 June 2025 at the latest. However, this does depend in part on awardees completing their part of the setup admin promptly.

Q. Can IAA grants be used to buy out my time?
A. No. Buy outs for SOAS staff are not permitted under any circumstances.

Q. Can IAA grants be used to hire research assistants or admin support?
A. Yes. You can allocate funds for support costs. However, due to the tight time limit for spending IAA grants, you can only hire support roles on temporary contracts. Please note that the IAA team cannot assist with the hiring process for advertised roles.
Pay scales for the 2023/2024 academic year can be found here. As an example, Graduate Teaching Assistants at PhD level are typically appointed at the bottom of the Grade 6 scale.

Q. Can non-academic partners be reimbursed for their contribution?
A. Yes. If the partners are contributing to the project. A collaboration agreement must be in place, and they can be reimbursed for agreed costs (e.g. time, resources, organisation, etc). Please do note that all costs should be listed in GBP in your application.

Q. Can IAA grants be used to purchase equipment?
A. Yes, if the equipment cannot be supplied by SOAS and if it's essential to your project. However, the equipment costs must be proportionate to your project and should not represent a large portion of your budget.

Q. Can IAA grants pay for honoraria?
A. No. SOAS financial regulations do not recognise or permit honoraria. If you would like to compensate individuals who contribute to your project in some way, you will need them to submit an invoice and pay them that way. Please note that they will be responsible for any tax implications. Travel and subsistence can be reimbursed.

Q. How accurate and detailed does my budget need to be?
A. Your budget should include every anticipated expense and an accurate cost. E.g. "Trip to Mali - £5000" is not sufficiently detailed; more appropriate is "Return flights to Mali - £1500. Accommodation for 10 days - £1000" etc.
Please follow the SOAS expense regulations for guidance on costs.

Other

Q. What is the application deadline?
A. The application deadline is midnight on Wednesday, 23 April 2025.

Q. What administrative tasks are associated with an IAA project?
A. All awardees will be asked to set their project up on Worktribe. You are responsible for all communications with your project partners. If you engage any external suppliers or consultants (e.g. designers, facilitators, translators, etc), you are responsible for obtaining the necessary paperwork from those individuals and for ensuring the appropriate financial processes are followed.

If you choose to hire research or admin assistants, you are responsible for completing all recruitment paperwork and for managing the hires once in post, including approving timesheets. You are also responsible for all administration relating to expenses, both those incurred by yourself and by any non-staff members associated with your project.

Other project administration tasks may arise. You will receive guidance on all project administration tasks from the IAA team. Please note that IAA projects must follow all relevant SOAS regulations associated with finance and human resources.

Q. I would like to apply for funding, but if successful I won't have capacity to fulfil the administrative tasks associated with the project. Can the RKED office offer admin support?
A. No. IAA projects are self-administered, and in receiving funding you agree to fulfil all administrative tasks yourself. If you require additional support, you can include the cost of hiring a fixed-term admin support role into your project budget. Please note that as award holder, you take responsibility for the hiring process.

Q. Can you offer feedback on my draft application?
A. The IAA team, in partnership with RKED, is offering the "Designing an IAA Impact Project" workshop on 19 March 2025. During the workshop prospective applicants are encouraged to bring their draft application for feedback. Register here.

Q. I'm finding it difficult to fit everything within the word limit on the application form. Is there any flexibility on the word count?
A. No, the word count limit will be strictly enforced to ensure fairness. Applications exceeding the limit will be cut off for the assessment panel. We encourage you to keep your application concise and to the point.