Impact Accelerator Fund 2024-2025

Programme funding and purpose

The University of Essex has achieved Quality Related (QR) funding based on its performance in the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) evaluation exercise. The University has allocated some of this funding for competitions to support impact projects ahead of REF2029. This support includes the Impact Accelerator Fund.

The Impact Accelerator Fund is a competition intended for Essex academic staff from any School or Department to undertake projects that will realise impact for potential submission to the REF2029. The Fund will consider applications for **up to £10,000** per project.

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'. Think of impact as measurable benefits accruing beyond academia and caused by your research. Please consider how you will measure and evidence the impact your project generates.

Please note that dissemination of research is not considered to be impact by itself. The Fund prioritises impact over 'early-stage' engagement, co-production, and relationship building. It will only support the 'early-stage' activities if they are part of clear, plausible, and well-scheduled impact plans. Any co-production plans must articulate their engagement processes and impact objectives with clarity. The Fund does not support primary research.

The competition prioritises projects that can support potential Impact Case Study development ahead of REF2029.

For advice on research impact, please contact your [Research Impact Officer](#).

All funds awarded **must be spent by 30 June 2025**.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to all REF eligible University of Essex academic staff.

Which costs are eligible?

Most direct project costs are eligible. Indirect costs are not eligible. Travel costs are only approved if they are explicitly related to impact generation.

Example eligible direct costs include Research Assistant salaries, workshops, travel, prototyping, equipment, activities related to co-produced research and data collection,

engagement with stakeholders, and Impact training and development events. <u>Teaching buyout and Open Access publishing charges are not eligible.</u>

Research Assistant salaries are paid on the University salary scales. Be aware that costs given in the published University salary scales do not include the University's contribution to the employee's National Insurance and pension. These costs must be paid from the project budget in addition to the base, taxable pay. Please email impact-programmes@essex.ac.uk for an accurate salary costing. **Do <u>not</u> contact the REO Pre-Award team for costings.**

Any projects with an overseas element or supplier may have to pay 'Reverse Charge VAT'. Any overseas goods or services brought into the UK will be subject to VAT paid by the customer, not the seller. It is called 'Reverse Charge' in this situation because sellers are usually responsible for paying VAT in domestic transactions. The Reverse Charge VAT is paid at the normal rate, usually 20%. The payment will be part of your project's direct costs and needs to be budgeted for.

An example of Reverse Charge VAT would be consultancy work undertaken overseas for an Essex academic who then writes a report based on the work. If the base cost of the work was £2,500, the project would also need to pay 20% Reverse Charge VAT into the University's HMRC VAT account (so in this case, 20% of £2,500 is £500). The total cost to the project would then be £2,500 plus £500 = £3,000. For more information, email tax@essex.ac.uk.

How to apply

The competition opens on 11 October 2024.
The deadline for applications is **5pm on 11 November 2024**.

Please complete the application form before submitting it by email to impact-programmes@essex.ac.uk. Queries and requests for indicative costs can be directed to this email address. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of senior academic and REO staff. Outcomes are expected to be communicated December 2024.

Post Award processes

Successful proposals will receive a seven-character departmental cost code to spend against. The code will only function to 30 June 2025. No spending is permitted after this date. There is no facility to roll unspent funds into the next financial year.

Award holders must report on their projects at a half-way point. They must also provide an end-of-project report. The end-of-project report will be for submission by the end of July 2025. Both the half-way and end-of-project reports must explain how the funding is contributing to REF2029 potential Impact Case Study development. The REO will provide templates for these reports.

Award holders can raise queries and request support by contacting their Departmental Management or by writing to impact-programmes@essex.ac.uk as needed.

If your project involves human participants, it may need ethical approval before a cost code can be issued. See the University's guidance on obtaining ethical approval for research involving human participants. You will be responsible for obtaining ethical approval for your project. Please contact reo-governance@essex.ac.uk for additional advice.