Durham University
Institute of Advanced Study

2028/29 IAS Major Project Application

Guidance Notes for online application

Section One: Project Details

To consider and what should be included

- A sizeable Project team (At least two Faculties, and multiple different Departments / disciplinary areas).
    i. The Project Investigator (PI, i.e., the Major Project applicant(s), must be an academic employed by Durham University. One or two PIs can lead the project. If two PIs ae requested, they must come from different Faculties. If the project is led by one PI only, it must be made explicit how they plan to achieve cross faculty, interdisciplinary engagement/collaboration.
    ii. A potential Fellow could also act as Project PI (as a second PI only); however buyout funding is excluded (see Fellowship nomination/further particulars).
    iii. Note that PIs of previous or current Major Projects are ineligible to apply within five years (of their previous or current award). They do remain able to be part of the wider research team on a Project.
    iv. Funding can be sought to provide teaching buyout for the Durham PI(s) for the first three months of the Project. The PIs' department will receive £10,000 to cover a full teaching term. Note, this is only relevant to Durham academics (and not Fellows whose costs are supported elsewhere).
    v. A CV must be provided for each PI. This should be no more than 2-pages for each PI and include relevant information such as education and employment history, relevant recent publications, relevant recent grants, relevant interdisciplinary research or activity.
    vi. For the wider Project team, please give consideration to equality, diversity and inclusion. See: EDI hub - Home

- Consider Impact: does the Project have potential impact, and who might benefit from the Project's research, and how they might benefit? Preliminary ideas and consideration at this stage would be helpful, but do not have to be fully formulated. There is not an expectation that a Project will have potential impact, and this is not a criterion for Project selection/award.

- Describe the planned research, its aims and objectives and planned outcomes in no more than two A4 pages or 1000 words and in language accessible to non-specialists. The criteria for Major Projects are as follows:

    i. Each should have a very explicit focus or topic or question, but preferably one that is demonstrably novel and represents a major potential intellectual breakthrough.
    ii. The project must involve *at least* two disciplinary areas or Departments from different Faculties within the University and be genuinely and creatively interdisciplinary. Applicants should describe how and why an interdisciplinary approach matters.
    iii. Each Project must have a clearly defined outcome indicated in the proposal (this could be a traditional outcome such as a book, an edited volume or

articles in high quality peer-review journals; a conference/workshop; the development of a grant application (in which case please specify the intended funding body and a target date for submission); or the opening and exploration of a new subject, as is appropriate to the disciplines involved and the topic suggested).

- The IAS will consider the following when evaluating Major Project applications:

  i. **Novelty and ambition**: to what extent does the Project open new perspectives and create new inter-disciplinary synergies?
  ii. **Rigour:** to what extent does the Project employ appropriate and state-of-the-art concepts and methods, and/or develop promising new ones?
  iii. **Clarity and quality of objectives**: how clear and realistic are the intended outcomes; what impact will there be on Durham University's research capacity and international competitiveness; how well does it fit with University and Department research strategies?
  iv. **Quality of the proposed research team**: track record relative to career stage, including notable publications, awards, prizes and other esteem indicators, complementarity and suitability to the Project objectives of team members' expertise, evidence of interest in interdisciplinary perspectives; in the case of the PIs, evidence of intellectual leadership/leadership potential.

Section Two: Budget

- The IAS has an annual budget which runs from **1 August 2028 to 31 July 2029.** Major Project costs awarded for the Project year 2028/29 will only become available from **August 2028.** Awards cannot be accessed before allocation. Project expenditure **must** be incurred in 2028/29 only, and any unspent funds cannot be carried forward to the following financial year (i.e. into 2029/30) and must be returned to the IAS. Pre-Project development funds may be allocated in 2027/28, and if allocated these must also be fully spent *that* year (2027/28).

What can be requested in terms of funding?

- Up to two PI teaching buyouts for Durham academics (awarded as Christopherson Knott Fellowships). Each buyout is a maximum of £10,000 for the department.
- Up to £3500 in general research costs, which might include:
  i. Funding for shorter visits of Visiting Scholars (for travel, subsistence and accommodation). Visiting Scholars are not the Fellows associated with the Project, who are funded separately (see note below).
  ii. Funding for hosting conferences and workshops (travel and accommodation for key participants, catering).
    - While we encourage the involvement of post-graduates in workshops and conferences, they should not be used as administrators. It is anticipated that Project PIs will do the academic organisation (invitations, programmes etc.) and we recommend that they get liaise with Event Durham for assisting the logistical work.
  iii. Research assistance in Project development. (The IAS cannot fund research assistance in the carrying out of research Projects, but it is possible to request funding for some assistance in developing the Project).
    - Research assistants can be employed for activities that demonstrably meet the key criterion of supporting the development of the research: for example, scoping work. Applicants must confirm that they have Departmental and HR permission for the person to be employed.

Note: **costs for Fellows *should not be*** included in the Major Project Application.

- If PIs are seeking funding for more substantive elements of the research itself, they are advised to seek Grant Seedcorn funding (or to write these into the Applicant (under 'Please indicate any additional sources of funding available or applied for in conjunction with your Project proposal')

Reporting

At the end of the Major Project term, the Project PIs must provide the following:

- A brief Project report **within two months** of the completion of the **Project term**. This should include a report on all Project activities, collaboration with Fellows, expenditure, and outcomes (to date and anticipated) such as grant applications, publications, and any other outputs. The report should also include a description of the IAS's assistance in the Project's development. A report template will be provided by the IAS.
- PIs must reference IAS assistance in the **Worktribe system** for any grant funding arising from Project (e.g. with external funding bodies such as UKRI etc.).
- PIs will be asked to participate in a Post Project meeting to discuss the outcomes of the Project as a whole. This meeting will also be used to help identify potential for follow-up activities, for which further funding may be available.
- PIs are required to inform the IAS about any publications/outputs arising from the Project, and **make reference to the IAS in the Worktribe system** for any submitted publications arising from the Project (Worktribe allows a URI to be selected). Where possible they should acknowledge IAS assistance in publications, and they should provide the IAS with copies of such outputs.

Other

- The IAS logo must appear on all publicity material relating to the Project.
- Projects will be promoted on the IAS website and in related IAS communications. The PIs are asked to provide relevant material for these purposes several months before the official project start.
- PIs will also be responsible for promoting the Project internally and externally (e.g. to the media, to the general public), as appropriate.