



AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme:

Highlight Notice for Arts and Humanities-led Research Commercialisation

Awards of up to £50,000 (fEC) for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 12 months

Call opens: 14/02/2023 Call closes: 25/04/2023 Awards start date: 01/09/2023

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Introduction

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), is pleased to announce an opportunity for applications to its Arts and Humanities-led Commercialisation programme. Responding to the UK Government's Innovation Strategy (2021) and UKRI Strategy's (2022-27) focus on world class innovation and maximising impact through commercialisation, this highlight notice encourages the submission of arts and humanities-led follow-on proposals that will enhance the commercial impact of current and previous (within the last 24 months) UKRI-funded research.

In support of the [Government's Innovation Strategy \(2021\)](#), UKRI has made an explicit commitment in its 2022-27 Strategy to maximising research impact by accelerating the translation and commercialisation of research. As part of these efforts, AHRC has committed to growing its investment in knowledge exchange, translation and commercialisation to 10% of our baseline budget by the end of the current government spending review period.

To help support this emerging area, AHRC is working to develop and fund new opportunities to:

- support sustainable impact and innovations for social, cultural, environmental and/or economic impact through commercialisation routes
- explore ways commercialisation can be a pathway to generate increased revenue to support research, translation and knowledge exchange activities independently of research organisation grant funding, helping the research become more financially sustainable
- establish new communities to draw on the strengths of the UK's commercialisation base to expand into this area, ensuring the UK has a world-leading, robust research ecosystem to sustain arts and humanities-led innovation and enterprise

Context: Commercialising Arts and Humanities Research

Much of the world-leading research supported through universities and AHRC has the potential to support governments, communities, individuals, businesses, and public service delivery organisations both in the UK and globally. Arts and humanities research generates an in-depth understanding of local conditions and issues to reveal actionable solutions as well as creating new methods of engaging with the contemporary challenges we face. The knowledge and skills of arts and humanities researchers provides considerable opportunities to develop and enhance commercial products and services that can have a significant and wide-reaching impact on society and the environment, as well as promoting sustainable economic growth.

Commercialisation can provide a route to make research more sustainable, providing researchers with an opportunity to develop their work in a longer-term context and to a broader audience, beyond the cycle of repeatedly renewing funding applications. Commercial partnerships can provide an outstanding platform for knowledge exchange, with academics exchanging and creating insights with businesses, public and third sector partners, as well as their commercial audiences. Research commercialisation is a key component of demonstrating impact and achieving high ratings in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF).

Despite this valuable connection between arts and humanities research and commercialisation, UKRI analysis has shown that opportunities and engagement in research commercialisation for arts, humanities, and social science (AHSS)-led research sits far behind those of natural sciences, technology and engineering disciplines. There are multiple reasons for this disparity, including:

- a lack of both initial seed funding opportunities and long-term funding needed to fully develop spin-out enterprises
- language barriers between academics and commercial partners (both in terms of foreign languages and nuanced sectoral communication), preventing effective communication with mutual benefits
- a cultural view of commercialisation amongst many AHSS researchers as purely profit-driven or too far removed from academia
- too few opportunities for academics (in particularly early career researchers), to develop hybrid commercial skills

This Highlight Notice therefore acts as a first ambitious step in a range of new mechanisms and funding opportunities to address these barriers.

Its three key aims are to:

1. create a diverse portfolio of research commercialisation projects to evidence the potential of Arts and Humanities-led research commercialisation
2. demonstrate and refine a model for identifying, funding, and capturing the impact of these projects to help develop a clearer understanding of the common language around what effective research commercialisation in the arts and humanities looks like
3. provide opportunities for arts and humanities researchers to develop necessary hybrid skills to collaborate effectively with commercial partners

Critically, the outcomes of these projects will help to evidence and refine AHRC's approach to funding, supporting and assessing research commercialisation as we move towards our strategic goal of committing 10% of our core budget on knowledge exchange, translation, and commercialisation activities by the end of the current government spending review period.

Aims and Scope of this Opportunity

The focus of this Highlight Notice is on developing research commercialisation activities that create sustainable social, cultural, economic and/or environmental impacts using arts and humanities methodologies.

This opportunity seeks to encourage innovative proposals for enhancing inclusive engagement with research funded by UKRI through the application of arts and humanities-led methodologies in a commercial context. We are looking to build a portfolio of research commercialisation activities involving a wide variety of collaborations across a diverse range of stakeholders and partners including public, private and third sector organisations, the general public, and community groups. The outcomes and impacts of this call will influence the development of future AHRC commercialisation programmes.

AHRC welcomes proposals that cut across discipline boundaries, including those proposals that work beyond individual Research Council remits. Where proposals extend beyond AHRC's subject remit, the proposal must ensure it brings clear arts and humanities research expertise, and draw on arts and humanities research concepts, methods, practices, ideas and/or approaches in the development of the proposed activities.

Proposals focusing on supporting knowledge exchange with cultural, creative and heritage organisations (such as museums, galleries, libraries, archives, performance groups etc.) and in supporting educational and learning outcomes within societies, are within scope. Proposals focused on wider non-academic groups in the public, private, and non-academic sectors are also within

scope. Proposals primarily focused on academic dissemination (e.g.: conferences, events, or translation of academic outputs), teaching/training in higher education, academic exchanges, research resources/facilities or similar activities) are not within scope for this Highlight Notice.

Activities may be undertaken anywhere globally, working with partners from any country, including diaspora, refugee, displaced, and stateless populations. Whilst there are no geographical priorities, AHRC aims to support a diverse portfolio of Follow-on Fund projects working in different contexts on diverse topics.

Examples of areas within scope

- Providing expert consultative support to a partner organisation (including public, private and third sector organisations) by applying arts and humanities-led research outcomes and methodologies from the original project to: help design a new product, service, or tool; to embed more sustainable and/or effective business practices; engage more effectively with their client base; or address any other commercial challenges
- Establishing or supporting the development of social enterprise in order to address an issue and/or opportunity highlighted by the original research through the application of arts and humanities approaches. This could include the provision of expert analysis, needs assessments and evidencing using methodologies developing during the original project
- Supporting the scaling-up of a concept demonstrated in a specific context during the original project into a more widely applicable tool, service, or product that can be applied by or in collaboration with similar organisations
- The creation of a spin-out company to optimise an opportunity an opportunity highlighted in the original project in order to generate revenue to sustain further research in this area
- Creating a proof of concept based on the original research in order to support the licensing of a product, or the development of a future spin-out company

The above are illustrative examples of the types of research engagement and impact activities that could fall within the scope of this Highlight Notice rather than an exhaustive list. Other proposals seeking to advance the impact of arts and humanities research (including the interdisciplinary research with a significant arts and humanities component) in addressing commercial challenges/opportunities are also welcomed.

Please note that, in line with the overall remit of the Follow-on-Funding (FoF) scheme, the Highlight Notice will only fund proposals seeking to enhance the value and wider benefit of the original funded project. It is not intended to support entirely new research. However, proposals may include an element of research and/or data collection to ensure the original research better addresses user needs and/or to understand, track, evidence or capture the value or impact generated from the proposed impact activities, including issues around the sustainability and/or distribution of benefits (e.g.: in terms of gender, equalities, diversity and inclusion).

Eligibility

Please note that this call guidance is specific to this call and supersedes our standard policies. For any policies and guidelines that are not highlighted here, please refer to the [AHRC Funding Guide](#). The eligibility criteria for research organisations and individuals as published in section 3 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) will apply.

To be eligible, the project must:

- follow-on from a UKRI-funded project (past or present), including through devolved funding (e.g.: Impact Acceleration Accounts, Network+ award)
- OR funded under UKRI-supported schemes such as the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) joint research programme
- be led primarily by the original Principal Investigator (PI) of the research the proposal builds upon. In cases of applications that follow-on from devolved funding awards where the named investigator did not receive an award directly from UKRI, a letter of support should be provided by the PI (or deputy) of the original UKRI grant that made the award
- be led by a UK-based researcher at research organisation eligible to hold AHRC grants under the Follow-on Fund
- involve significant engagement with arts and humanities research/approaches of relevance to AHRC's remit
- involve the application of arts and humanities research or research methodologies to a commercial challenge (such as product design, the creation/development of a social enterprise or spin-out company, consultative support of a non-academic commercial partner or similar activity)
- support innovative pathways to commercial opportunities that have not already been taken account of in the original award. Proposals need to demonstrate how the new pathways to commercial impact opportunities will enhance the value and wider benefit of the original UKRI-funded research project with clear relevance to AHRC's remit
- exploit creative and innovative ideas rather than repeating, continuing or extending existing activities or conducting new research
- be focused towards non-academic audiences and relevant user communities. You should show how you engage with potential users and stakeholders throughout the project.
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Eligible activities that can be supported by grants under this Highlight Notice include:

- activities enabling commercial knowledge exchange
- activities enhancing self-sustaining commercial impact from UKRI-funded research
- activities aiding the development of commercial products, services, or tools through applied arts and humanities research/methodologies
- activities that build upon commercial knowledge exchange and pathways to commercial impact already undertaken. In this instance the proposal must demonstrate clear added value to the activities already undertaken
- building the evidence base on research impacts in order to support the scalability, transferability, inclusivity, sustainability and/or longevity of benefits from research in a commercial environment
- feasibility of studies to test the potential application of ideas emerging from the research in different commercial sectors

The following are ineligible under this scheme:

- proposals seeking support for principally academic outputs (such as an academic paper, conference, or publication)
- proposals that do not include a commercial element and/or collaboration with a commercial project partner(s)

- proposals that do not use arts and humanities-led methodologies to build upon research funded by UKRI, and/or do not include significant commercial research impact activities within the remit of AHRC

Previous applicants or award holders under the Follow-on Fund scheme are welcome to apply as there is no limit on the number of different applications that can be submitted or held relating to the same original project.

International Co-Investigators and project partners are permitted, in line with standard AHRC International Co-Investigators policy. However, international Co-Is are subject to a cap on total international costs of 30% of the total grant value.

Proposals addressing areas relevant to this Highlight Notice may continue to be submitted to AHRC's Follow-on Funding Scheme after 25th April 2023. However, these proposals will be expected to comply with the standard Follow-on Funding eligibility requirements.

Additional Requirements

a. Required characteristics

In addition to the normal requirements and remit for applications to the Follow-on Funding Scheme, in order to be considered under this Highlight Notice, applications **must also demonstrate all of the following characteristics**:

1. A focus on enhancing non-academic impact emerging from UKRI-funded research that engages with a client base to deliver significant economic, social, cultural, welfare and/or policy impacts in a manner that is commercially self-sustaining
2. Contain a clear explanation of how the proposed activities will produce outcomes of significant commercial value for non-academic beneficiaries/users/communities, or in policy, practice, or public engagement. Where appropriate, reference should be made to: participatory research practices; pathways to impact; theories of change that frame the proposed activities; who the beneficiaries are expected to be; how their perspectives have informed the proposal; how ethical issues or risks raised will be addressed; how the impact of the proposed activities will be assessed/evaluated
3. Where possible we expect proposals to capture and critically reflect upon evidence of impact and the distribution of benefits

b. Scheme Requirements and Post-Award Reporting

Unless otherwise stated, the scheme requirements and post award reporting as stated in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

Award holders will be required to submit outputs, outcomes, and impacts that arise from AHRC's funding through the ResearchFish system. Information can be added to ResearchFish at any point once the award has started but award holders will also be required to 'submit' this information to AHRC at one 'Submission Period' each year. Award holders will receive an email with log-in details shortly after their award has started. More details on ResearchFish are available on the UKRI website: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/research-outcomes/>

c. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

AHRC will work with the funded projects from the outset to develop a light-touch monitoring and evaluation framework. Aligning with AHRC's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy, AHRC and the funded projects will co-design a suite of ways to identify benefits and impact, and embed learning to help develop future commercialisation programmes within the arts and humanities. Applicants are encouraged to consider how learning can be captured within the project.

d. Environmental Sustainability

In June 2020 UKRI launched its environmental sustainability strategy, which seeks to embed environmental sustainability across the research sector and work towards net zero futures. Accordingly, we encourage all applicants to actively consider managing the environmental footprint of the proposed activities and welcome proposals that seek to experiment or innovate more environmentally sustainable, as well as inclusive, approaches.

Project Collaborators

Unless otherwise stated in this Highlight Notice, funding will be issued in accordance with the provisions outlined in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) with standard UKRI grant terms and conditions.

Funding of up to £50,000 (fEC) is available for projects between 6-12 months in duration, starting in September 2023.

a. Co-Investigators

A Co-Investigator assists the Principal Investigator (PI) in the management and leadership of the research project. The Co-Investigator (Co-I) can also undertake research activity, although this is not a requirement. The AHRC expects any Co-Is to devote an average of at least 4 hours per week to the project and that time commitment should allow enough time for management and leadership duties on the project. There is no maximum number of Co-Investigators that can be included, but the inclusion of each Co-I needs to be fully justified in the proposal.

International Co-Is are permitted subject to AHRC's standard 30% cap on international Co-I costs (paid at 100 percent fEC). The Justification of Resources document submitted with your application should include individual figures for the total amount of international funding as well as the total amount of UK funding being requested.

Where projects involve international co-investigators or the sub-contracting of significant elements of the funding or research delivery to international partners, **it will be a condition of funding that the UK Research Organisation undertakes appropriate and proportionate due diligence and financial assurance.**

b. Project Partners

A Project Partner is a third-party organisation or person not employed on the grant who provides specific contributions either in cash or in-kind to a project, and proposals should involve Project Partners where appropriate. Project Partner involvement where appropriate. Project Partners provide contributions to the delivery of a project and therefore should not normally seek to claim funds from the project. However, if there are specific circumstances where Project Partners do require funding for minor costs, such as travel and subsistence, these can be included. Any Project

Partner costs should be outlined and fully justified in the proposal and will be subject to the assessment panel.

In acknowledgement that some small third-sector organisations do not have the capacity to co-fund research activities, costs to support partners from third-sector organisations (e.g.: NGOs) are eligible under this call. Cases may be considered where the research impact activities require additional work by partners that fall outside their normal activities, for which a full case for any exceptions should be made in the Justification for Resources. Total costs associated with third-sector bodies' contribution should not exceed 30% of the overall cost of the grant at 100% fEC.

A further condition will be that award holders ensure that **partner organisations have in place contextually appropriate procedures for addressing issues of gender, equalities, diversity and inclusion, research integrity, safeguarding, data protection, fraud prevention and compliance with the other standard terms and conditions of UKRI grants.**

c. Subcontractors

A subcontractor is a third-party person not employed on the grant who is subcontracted by the host organisation to deliver a specific piece of work. This subcontracted work will be subject to the procurement rules of the host RO. All costs supporting the delivery of the subcontract are eligible and will be paid at 80% fEC unless included as part of research costs linked to International Co-Investigators, which can be paid at 100% fEC. These should be outlined and fully justified in the proposal and will be subject to the assessment panel.

How to apply

Unless otherwise stated, the application process and format as published in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

a. Applying through Je-S

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#) no later than **16:00 (GMT) on Tuesday 25th April 2023.**

You must have a Je-S account to apply and you will need to go through the appropriate host organisation submission process. The PI and all Co-Is must be listed and this can take a few weeks to set up. AHRC recommends that if you don't already have an account, you should create one well before the application deadline. To create a Je-S account, visit: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>

AHRC recommends you start your application early. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

Please note that selecting 'Submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. Please remember to allow sufficient time for your host organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date.

Late submissions will not be considered, and you will not be able to apply after this time.

b. Making an Application

This highlight notice offers awards of up to £50,000 (fEC) for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 12 months. It is initially open to applications until **1600 hours on 25th April 2023.**

Proposals relevant to this highlight notice can be submitted at any time before this and will be processed on receipt. Early submission ahead of the closing date of the highlight is encouraged to avoid possible delays in processing if large numbers of applications are submitted close to the end of the highlight period.

If you wish to be considered under this highlight notice ***please do not submit to the standard follow-on funding (Open Call)***. Instead a specific call for this highlight notice will be available for applications in Je-S from 14th February 2023 named 'FoF Commercial Highlight Notice 2023'

You should submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). To prepare a proposal form in Je-S:

- log-in to your account and choose 'Documents' from the menu;
- then select 'New Document';
- 'AHRC' as the Council,
- 'Standard Proposal' as the Document Type;
- 'Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement' as the Scheme;
- 'FoF Commercial Highlight Notice 2023' as the Call/Type/Mode and;
- 'Create Document'.

Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form.

Note that selecting 'Submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. ***Please remember to allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the Call closing date.***

Once the proposal form has been completed, you should upload all attachments required for the scheme (and if applicable, any attachments listed as optional for the scheme), and submit your proposal.

You must ensure you have obtained the permission of any other person named on the proposal form (for example, any Co-Investigators or Project Partners) for:

- the provision of their personal information to UKRI
- the processing of their data by UKRI for the purpose of assessing the application and management of any funding awarded.

You can find advice on completing your application in the [Je-S handbook](#), and **your host organisation will be able to provide advice and guidance on completing your application.**

c. Attachments

The following are a list of attachments that are permitted for this call. Please see Section 4 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for further information about these attachments:

Document	Maximum page length	Naming Convention
Case for Support (mandatory)	7 sides of A4	[PI Surname]_CfS
CVs (mandatory for named researchers)	2 sides of A4	Surname_Initials_CV

Publication Lists (mandatory for named researchers)	1 side of A4	Surname_Initials_Pubs
Data Management Plan (mandatory)	2 sides of A4	Surname_DMP
Justification of Resources (JoR) (mandatory)	2 sides of A4	[PI Surname]_JoR
Head of Department Statement (mandatory for International Co-Is but not required for UK-based Co-Is)	2 side of A4	[PI Surname]_HoD
Project Partner Letters of Support (mandatory)	2 sides of A4	[PI Surname]_PPLoS
Visual Evidence (optional)	2 sides of A4	[PI Surname]_VisEv
Workplan (optional)	1 side of A4	[PI Surname]_workplan

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors. They should be completed in single-spaced Arial 11 font or similar-sized sans serif typeface.

All attachment guidance mirrors that used for AHRC's standard research grants scheme, as outlined in the [AHRC research funding guide](#), with the exception of: Partnership Agreement and Risk Management Statement.

Please ensure your **Case for Support** is structured with headings, for which further guidance is available in the AHRC Funding Guide. **For this opportunity, you must include a paragraph at the start of the Case for Support explaining how your proposal meets the aims and focus of this Highlight Notice.**

Panel recommendations response needs to address the concerns and recommendations of the panel as listed above.

CVs must be provided for all named researchers.

How we will Assess your Application

Unless otherwise stated, the assessment process and criteria as stated in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

a. Call Timetable

Activity	Date
Application form available in Je-S	14th February 2023
Deadline for submissions	25th April 2023
Panel meeting date	June 2023
Funding decisions to be issued	August 2023
Start date of awards	1 st September 2023
End date of awards	On or before 21 st August 2024

b. Assessment criteria

As this opportunity is at the fore of research commercialisation within the arts and humanities, we will use a set of high-level themes to assess your proposal alongside the standard AHRC Follow-on Fund criteria. These themes are applicable to all areas of UKRI research and help create a common language for researchers considering commercialisation of their research. The themes should also help shape your proposal and can serve as a useful tool to help you identify the right steps to commercialize your research. Much of this information will be captured in your attachments, but it may help to consider using the language outlined and highlight these points in your Case for Support.

<p>Theme 1: Opportunity and market analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem and solution (essential) • The product or service and the market fit (essential) • The product or service and company fit (optional) <p><i>You will already be capturing much of this in your Case for Support</i></p>
<p>Theme 2: Project deliverables, costs and resources including the team</p>	<p>This section addresses the specific project deliverables (including supporting information such as a Gaant chart or project plan), the costs required and the resources necessary to the deliver the proposed work successfully.</p> <p><i>You will already be capturing much of this in your Justification of Resources and Workplan</i></p>
<p>Theme 3: IP Management and dissemination of project outcomes</p>	<p>This section aims to describe how the outputs of the projects including any intellectual assets and intellectual property either protected by specific IP rights or not will be managed and what strategies will be developed to ensure good management of project outputs and outcomes including access to potential future investments required.</p> <p><i>You will already be capturing much of this in your Data Management Plan.</i></p>
<p>Theme 4: Route to market</p>	<p>This section should describe how you will move your idea, innovation or output of the original project to the intended market, target audience, or end users.</p>
<p>Theme 5: environmental, social and ethical considerations, and wider impact</p>	<p>This theme is for applicants to consider and describe the wider implications of their project or innovation, and how their project might address wider environmental, societal, and ethical issues including ED&I.</p> <p><i>You will likely be capturing much of this in your Case for Support.</i></p>

c. Assessment process

Your application will be considered by an assessment panel drawn from AHRC's Peer Review College, along with other experts with expertise of relevance to the focus of this programme.

The panel meeting will be held in June 2023.

Your application will be assessed directly at the panel meeting.

There will be no separate peer-review or principal investigator response stage for applications under this funding opportunity.

Contact Information

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

For queries about this call such as eligible activities, costs, or remit, please contact AHRC's Knowledge Exchange, Translation, and Commercialisation team at KETC@ahrc.ukri.org

For queries on using Je-S, such as creating and submitting the application form or Je-S account creation, please contact the Je-S Helpdesk at JeS@je-s.ukri.org