please read the whole guidance document carefully BEFORE APPLYING

1. **INTRODUCTION**

From 2022 the University has secured a UKRI Impact Accelerator Award which incorporates the previous MRC Confidence in Concept (CiC) scheme. The new scheme continues the objectives of CiC to promote translational research, with awards made to projects which accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development. The scheme also encourages the use of the award to develop academic-industry interactions.

The MRC objective through this Institutional award is to ensure that fundamental science is translated into new therapies, diagnostics and medical devices accelerating the transition from discovery science to the early stages of therapeutic and biomarker development and rapidly de-risk projects across the translational lifecycle, so that they become competitive for substantial funding.

Newcastle University’s UKRI IAA award funds annual project rounds to support investigators to undertake further scientific and technical development of an idea that is close to translation, to establish the scientific and/or commercial potential of a concept.

*NB: The MRC have notified the university that there will be a 1 year costed extension to the IAA-CiC scheme which is allowing us to run this project call. However, the amount of funding which will be provided by MRC has yet to be confirmed and may not be known until the Summer. To allow time for the application and review process and for funded projects to have at least 12 months to run we have decided to commence the EOI stage call in the absence of the funding allocation. We will publicise the award amount as soon as we have been informed. If the award amount has not been notified before the full stage application phase begins, we may take the decision to pause the process.*

1. **ELIGIBILITY, SCOPE AND FUNDING LIMITS**

**Eligibility**: Applications are accepted from Newcastle University researchers and academics (including NHS staff with honorary University contracts), basic scientists, and clinician scientists.

**Scope**: Applications relevant to any area of translational research will be considered. Priority will be given to projects that have the greatest potential for near-term impact and the ability to attract additional investment (i.e. from larger translational funding schemes, such as MRC DPGF and DPFS or NIHR EME and/or through the development of translational industry collaborations). It is desirable that projects also include plans to create/develop new interactions aimed at forming partnerships for future translational funding opportunities, which can include with industry.

Downstream translation is at the core of the call and basic scientists are strongly encouraged to seek collaboration with translational researchers.

The award **will not** fund:

* Entire translational projects
* Administration costs
* Industrial partner costs
* Staff between posts/funding or PhD studentships (bridging)
* Continuation of normal research grants
* Costs related to the protection of IP
* Staff exchange into a Newcastle University spin-out company
* Directly allocated costs, indirect costs or overheads

Whilst the scheme encourages collaboration with industry, applications should not seek to undertake research prescribed by/on behalf of the company.

**Duration:** Projects should be no more than 12 months in duration.

All projects must **finish by 31st December 2026** which marks the end date of the IAA award to the University. Extensions beyond this date will not be permitted.

**Value:** £50k-120k.

1. **APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

There is a two-stage application process:

1. **Expression of interest (EoI)**

EoIs should be submitted on the outline/EoI stage application form to cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk

Details of the following must be included:

* the project proposal, innovation potential, and significance.
* the anticipated downstream translational outcomes and target funding stream and timeline (explaining how the proposed project will enable this and how the project will inform future study design).
* any proposed academic-industry engagement activity and its benefits.
* the ***estimated*** cost of the proposed research and the funding band (£50k-£85k/£86k-£120k). Please note that full costing via NUprojects is not required for the EoI stage to minimise research support work spent on projects which are not selected for full application.

Closing date for EoI applications: **13th June 2025**

Three panel members (clinician scientist/non-clinician scientist/industry representative) review all EoIs and select projects for full application.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of EoIs by **17th July 2025** and successful applicants invited to submit a full application.

1. **Full application**

EoIs should be submitted on the full stage application form which will be provided to those applicants selected at EoI stage to make a full submission.

Each application is reviewed by three panel members (clinician scientist/non-clinician scientist/industry representative) before being discussed by the full panel, which includes non-University staff and has experts in methodology, clinical governance, clinical trial design and delivery and statistics. Panel members will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the contents of IAA-CiC applications are considered in confidence.

Applicants should ensure that titles and summaries of proposed projects are worded in such a way as to protect any commercially confidential or sensitive areas. Details of the following must be included:

| **Content** | **Additional information/support** |
| --- | --- |
| **Translational opportunity** | * The nature, potential benefits, and competitive advantage.
* Translational pathway and outcomes, target funding stream, target strategy, and how the project will inform future study design.
 |  |
| **Project milestones** | * Key milestones throughout the project including go/no-go decisions.
* An intermediate project review will be scheduled with the applicants aligned to one of the key milestones to discuss progress.
 |  |
| **Academic-industry engagement** | * Proposed engagement activity (this can include, for example, short-term people exchanges aligned to the delivery of the project’s objectives or showcases/workshops to develop relationships with potential industry partners to submit joint funding applications/carry out collaborative translational research).
* Existing/potential industry/international involvement.
* Nature of collaboration with project partner(s) (if applicable) and their contribution to the project. *N.B. Collaborative research activities must be carried out in an appropriate contractual framework. Project partners should not expect to acquire IP rights as a condition of their contribution to the project.*
 | BDM*JRO - template agreement* |
| **Ethical review** | * Ethical review requirements and status.
 | [University Ethics](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/researchgovernance/ethics/projectsreview/)JRO (for projects involving NHS patients/facilities) |
| **Intellectual property and commercial potential** | * Results of patent search.
* The BDM must complete a separate section outlining any relevant existing IP and the commercial potential of the initiative.

*N.B. Any new IP arising from the funding will be subject to current research grant conditions, that is, ownership and responsibility for exploitation of any IP rests with the host institution.*  | BDM |
| **Costing** | * Upon invitation to submit a full application, applicants must complete the standard university **Project Initiation Form** ([link)](https://www.cognitoforms.com/NewcastleUniversity1/NewcastleUniversityNuTHProjectInitiationFormV2). This will determine the level of costing required for the project proposal. A full costing will be completed for projects that are recommended for funding.
* The cost breakdown should be provided for directly incurred costs (PI time is not funded), all of which must be explained and justified. Budget lines without a reasonable justification will not be approved and successful applicants may be asked to adjust the budget after the full application panel meeting. Other costs can be outlined, plus any financial contribution from the applicant’s Institute and/or collaborative partner(s).
 | Research OfficerJRO (for NHS costs) |

The full application form must be completed in 5 pages (plus up to 2 pages of preliminary data and a 1-page CV of the PI) and be emailed to cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk by **12th September 2025.**

Outcomes will be notified by **10th November 2025.**

Projects must be completed **by 31st December 2026** which marks the end date of the IAA award to the University. Extensions beyond this date will not be permitted.

1. **Post-Award Management AND Review**

Following confirmation of a project’s funding award, a project set-up meeting will be arranged to review the details of the experiments to be conducted, the stated outcomes, and the milestone go/no go decisions for successful progression through the project. The meeting will be attended by the investigative team, at least one panel member, the CiC programme manager, the BDM, and others as deemed necessary.

All required approvals must be in place before funded projects can start.

A schedule of meetings to monitor the progress of the award, and to ensure opportunities to secure funding for the next stage of development, will also be agreed at the set-up meeting. These meetings will be attended by the PI and project team, the CiC programme manager, the business and translational development managers, and others as required.

Project funding may be withheld, or projects terminated, if:

* awardees do not engage in this process
* milestones are not met
* other changes occur that impact the ability to make a successful application for translational funding.
1. **EVALUATION/REPORTING**

All awardees must provide information at specific points during the project and for several years after its completion (as required by UKRI who fund the IAA-CiC award). Reporting requirements include:

* A short progress report for discussion at the progress meeting(s).
* A project completion report.
* Annual updates on outputs, follow-on funding applications (submitted/awarded), publications, patents (applications/published), impact activities, industrial collaborations, and spin-out companies that are directly related to the project. *N.B This information is required for annual reporting to UKRI as well as for the next funding renewal application.*
* Written case studies (as requested internally and/or by the MRC).

If awardees do not contribute to the reporting requirements, they will not be eligible to apply for IAA-CiC funding in future award years.

1. **ENQUIRIES**

If you have any questions about the scheme, please direct these in the first instance to the IAA-CiC programme manager: cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk.

1. **FLOWCHART**