

How is my career linked to research impact? For over five years now, the UK's Research Councils have been making funding available through various channels for activities that foster knowledge exchange and the transfer of knowledge from academic research to organisations beyond academia, to the benefit of society and the economy.

In plain language, this might include working with external partners to share the outcomes of your research, but it might also mean taking the skills and knowledge you have gained and putting them at the disposal of your future employers. The smooth transition of highly skilled people with cutting edge knowledge between academia and the private, public or third sector, fits clearly within this objective.

You can use these funding streams to ready yourself for a career beyond academia, gaining the skills and experience you need to tailor the focus of your CV and begin to build a network of contacts in fields where your particular knowledge is valued.

Make the most of 'Pathways to Impact': Pathways to Impact statements are now a required part of any RCUK grant application. They provide an opportunity to request funding to carry out activities that you yourself identify as being a good way to foster impact from your research project. If you are working on a grant proposal, or are part of a project team doing so, then you should consider how you can use the Pathways to Impact to benefit you as well as your research. For example, you could include:

- Training and/or experience in transferrable skills that you think might be useful in future, e.g. web design, project management, stakeholder management, events management.
- Public engagement and communications activities or events that help you gain confidence and learn how to present yourself well.
- Contact with external stakeholders working in the fields or sectors you may be interested in moving to. This could be anything from phone conversations to conversations at trade events to secondments or close collaboration – all are useful in making connections, building your network and better understanding the priorities and perspectives of potential future employers, be they big businesses, voluntary organisations, local and central government or SMEs.

Do bear in mind, though, that the activities you describe must also be appropriate and relevant to the research project. Research Councils will not fund such activities unless you can show how they are likely to deliver impact for the project as well as benefits to yourself (although giving researchers transferrable skills is a valid impact in its own right).

Impact Acceleration Accounts and other 'follow-on' funding. Most UK research councils have developed Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) to help research institutions deliver impact from their research by funding knowledge exchange activities that take up where the initial research grant leaves off. There are a number of different funding streams for this kind of activity that are gathered under the banner of IIKE (Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange). These funds are managed and administered through your Faculty Knowledge Exchange teams:

[Science KE Team](#) | [Engineering KE Team](#) | [Healthcare KE Team](#) | [SSPIKE](#) | [Arts Enterprise](#)

Often money is requested from these funds for an RA or PGR to spend some time embedded in a partner organisation or working on a follow-on piece of collaborative research. The kind of experience these projects offer can be invaluable, and we have already seen cases where the PDRA has later been taken on by the partner. Could your project offer this? Could you discuss potential opportunities with your supervisor or PI?

If you know of a recently completed (or soon-to-complete) research project in your field that is at a suitable stage for some kind of collaborative project with an external partner then have a look at the [IIKE funding pages](#) and see if you can become involved in a project that will bring you closer to your next career step.