



**NPIF Early Career Researcher
Industry Secondments**

Call specification and guidance for applicants (Call document A)
[Updated 14/08/17, AMB]

Contents

A.1 Introduction..... 2
A.2 Outline of secondment opportunity 2
A.3 Industrial Strategy pillars 3
A.4 How to apply..... 4
A.5 Selection process 5
A.6 Reporting requirements 6
A.7 Additional Support..... 6

Download application form [here](#). The deadline for applications is **5pm on 06 October 2017**.

Applications should be submitted by your departmental administrator/research support officer to esrciaa@socsci.ox.ac.uk. All parts of the submission should be clearly named.

Useful contacts:

Research & Impact Team, Social Sciences Division

- *First line enquiries* | Francesca Richards, Research Impact Officer
T: 01865 614873 | E: esrciaa@socsci.ox.ac.uk
- *IAA operational lead* | Aileen Marshall-Brown, Senior Research Impact Facilitator
T:01865 614881 | E: aileen.marshall-brown@socsci.ox.ac.uk

A.1 Introduction

The Oxford ESRC IAA has been invited by the ESRC to bid for a small pot of funding (£24K) to support social science early career researcher (ECR) secondments to business/industry in areas aligned to the [Industrial Strategy](#) (see outline of the main pillars below in section A.3). The ESRC have accessed this funding from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) announced in the [Autumn Statement 2016](#) (£4.7 billion to enhance the UK's position as a world leader in science and innovation). Note, this is separate funding to the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund¹, with NPIF focusing more broadly on developing research 'talent'. Please note that until we receive a final confirmation from the ESRC on or after 07 September 17 we cannot guarantee funding for these secondments. Updates will be provided as soon as possible.

A.2 Outline of secondment opportunity

This funding opens up opportunities, enabling recently completed Oxford DPhil candidates or existing ECR postdocs at Oxford to develop small secondment projects with a business/industry partner. These secondments projects should be:

- aligned with the Industrial Strategy
- address an industry need
- focus on knowledge exchange
- bring business/industry and ECRs together
- enable the ECR to develop skills in a non-academic setting.

The range of possible KE activities and partners is broad. Secondments can build on research already undertaken, expand existing relationships with business to include social science or help scope new areas of partnerships/research with business.

Projects can address one or more of the 10 pillars of the Industrial Strategy (see A.3) or they can focus on one of the following cross-cutting challenges (or a combination of both):

- **Place** – understanding the role of industry in driving growth across the whole country and understanding regional variation/policies
- **Transforming business practices** – understanding what drives innovation in business and how best to support it
- **Skills** – exploring the skills needed by employers and managers to underpin the modern economy
- **Digital Infrastructure** – understanding the benefits and challenges of digital technologies and innovative use of data.

We want to encourage projects that include substantive user engagement or demonstrate genuine collaboration, co-design and co-delivery; engaging partners in two-way sharing of learning, ideas and experiences with the aim of addressing industry needs in line with the Industrial Strategy. Proposals which undertake primary research, analyse material for/from partners or disseminate findings to them without substantive collaboration are unlikely to be prioritised.

It is expected that the Secondee will work closely with the external partners and contribute their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the partner e.g. by providing innovative ideas for improving policies and processes, by contributing to improved service delivery, capacity building or product/service development or by providing specific expertise for an area they are working on. The partnership should in turn provide reciprocal benefits for the Secondee in terms of gaining practice

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund-joint-research-and-innovation>

knowledge and skills, access to networks/data sources/technology that will feed into future research or collaborations.

Other considerations:

- Projects may start 15 October 2017 and **must be completed by 31 March 2018**. No extensions are allowed.
- **Proposals should not exceed £12K in eligible costs.** Seconded salary costs² and other direct project costs (e.g. travel and subsistence, accommodation) are funded at 100%. Estate and indirect costs are not covered by the grant, nor Academic lead salary. In exceptional circumstances with sufficient justification larger bids (>£12K) will be considered.
- The Seconded (ECR) should be supported/mentored by an established academic in a permanent role who should apply as the Academic Lead.
- ECRs are defined as within 4 years of completion of their DPhil/PhD (unless exceptional circumstances). Those who have submitted their thesis but are awaiting their Viva can apply.
- Activities must be based at least **50% within the [ESRC social sciences remit](#).**
- Secondments do not have to involve full-time working with an external organisation; one day a week over a period of three-six months may be appropriate, or a few shorter intensive visits spread over a longer period, depending on the needs of the project. It should be made clear in the application what time will be spent at the external organisation and how the project will be managed when not on site.
- Applicants are expected to demonstrate in their proposal that there is a genuine commitment from project partner organisations. Clear details of any combination of cash or in-kind contributions to project costs is desirable although not essential.

Examples of activities that are **not** eligible for these schemes include:

- Studentships or internships for DPhil students
- Primary research or research consultancy
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

A.3 Industrial Strategy pillars

The proposed pillars of the Industrial Strategy from the Green Paper, Jan 2017³:

1. **Investing in science, research and innovation** – we must become a more innovative economy and do more to commercialise our world leading science base to drive growth across the UK.
2. **Developing skills** – we must help people and businesses to thrive by: ensuring everyone has the basic skills needed in a modern economy; building a new system of technical education to benefit the half of young people who do not go to university; boosting STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills, digital skills and numeracy; and by raising skill levels in lagging areas.
3. **Upgrading infrastructure** – we must upgrade our standards of performance on digital, energy, transport, water and flood defence infrastructure, and better align central government infrastructure investment with local growth priorities.
4. **Supporting businesses to start and grow** – we must ensure that businesses across the UK can access the finance and management skills they need to grow; and we must create the right conditions for companies to invest for the long term.
5. **Improving procurement** – we must use strategic government procurement to drive innovation and enable the development of UK supply chains.

² We would expect the salary rate of the Seconded to be Grade 7.1 unless already on a higher point and/or scale

³ Extract from p11 '[Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper](#)', Jan 2017

6. **Encouraging trade and inward investment** – government policy can help boost productivity and growth across our economy, including by increasing competition and helping to bring new ways of doing things to the UK.
7. **Delivering affordable energy and clean growth** – we need to keep costs down for businesses, and secure the economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.
8. **Cultivating world-leading sectors** – we must build on our areas of competitive advantage, and help new sectors to flourish, in many cases challenging existing institutions and incumbents.
9. **Driving growth across the whole country** – we will create a framework to build on the particular strengths of different places and address factors that hold places back – whether it is investing in key infrastructure projects to encourage growth, increasing skill levels, or backing local innovation strengths.
10. **Creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places** – we will consider the best structures to support people, industries and places. In some places and sectors there may be missing institutions which we could create, or existing ones we could strengthen, be they local civic or educational institutions, trade associations or financial networks.

A.4 How to apply

Applications should be submitted to the Social Sciences R&I team (esrciaa@socsci.ox.ac.uk) via your departmental or faculty administrator/research support officer⁴ **by 5pm, 06 October 2017**.

Submissions should include ALL of the following components. Please include your name and the title of your project on all attachments.

- Application form
- Letter of support from external partner
- Statement of support from the Head of Department
- A breakdown of costs presented as an X5 admin output
- 1-page CV for early career Secondee applicant

Application Form

Download the application form from the website and complete all the relevant sections, taking into account the selection criteria on which it will be judged (see section A.5).

Letter of support from external partners

- A letter of support (1 side, maximum) from the partner organisation with whom the project is proposed. The organisation should demonstrate an understanding of the proposed activities, their role and contribution to the project.
- The letter should describe how the project will benefit the partner organisation; and outline the support that will be provided to the applicant and the arrangements that will be made to host the secondment. A named individual from this organisation will be required to be responsible for overseeing the project.

⁴ Please check with your department for internal approval procedures and deadlines. Some departments require significant notice to check and submit proposals, so we advise that you seek guidance from your departmental administrator as soon as you are considering making an application.

Statement of support from the Head of Department

- A short statement of support from the **Head of Department of the Secondee** (1 side, maximum) should be provided. NB the Academic Lead should ideally be from the same department as the Secondee but exceptions can be made with appropriate justification outlined in this statement.
- It should explain the benefit of the project to both the applicant and the department/faculty and detail any contributions the department/faculty plan to make to the project.
- It is important for the department/faculty to give support because they will be responsible for providing administrative and HR support to applicants throughout the project.
- This statement must come from the **Head of Department/Faculty** rather than the head of Institute or Centre (where relevant), and should include a signature.

Costing

- A detailed breakdown of the project costs is required. This should be presented in the form of an admin output from the University's costing and pricing software, X5. Please ask your research administrator or finance officer to produce the X5 costing for you (using the instruction in the main 2017/18 ESRC IAA Call Doc B which can be found on [Sharepoint](#)).

A.5 Selection process

Funding will be awarded competitively by a process of panel review. A small selection panel made up of established researchers and professional staff with a track record of KE and impact expertise in the social sciences will make the final decisions, based on their assessment of the applications against the selection criteria outlined below.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by **14 October 2017**. Results will be issued by email. Feedback from the panel review will be available on request.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The ESRC IAA panel aim to support high quality proposals which: (a) show strong potential to accelerate and deliver impact arising from excellent social science research and (b) demonstrate commitment to developing productive partnerships with non-academic partners.

Additionally for this call, proposals will be primarily assessed for:

1. Inclusion of plans for a secondment aligned to the Industrial Strategy and addressing at least one of the pillars or cross-cutting challenges identified in the Industrial Strategy
2. Giving evidence of how the secondment will address an industry need and what the anticipated benefits will be for the industry partner
3. Focusing on knowledge exchange and bringing together business/industry and ECRs
4. Showing that the secondment will further the ECR's skills development in a non-academic setting

The panel will also take into account the following factors when reviewing the applications:

- **Contribution** – Contribution to knowledge for external partners and likely importance of the research expertise to those partners;
- **Design & methods** – Effectiveness of project design and methods, particularly involvement of external partners at all stages of the project (co-design, co-delivery and user involvement in dissemination are encouraged);

- **Usefulness** – Timeliness of the outcomes for external partners and the ability of the project to meet external partner’s needs;
- **Value for money** – Value for money, including demonstrable investment (cash or in-kind) by external partners, if appropriate;
- **Sustainability** – Potential for project to lead to further development of a sustained relationship with external partners and impact in the longer term
- **Management** – Strong management plans for the secondment including how time will be spent at the external organisation and how the project will be managed when not on site.

A.6 Reporting requirements

In order to meet the conditions of their grant, award holders will need to submit periodic reports. Reporting requirements are intended to be light-touch and reports should be brief. Reports will be the key mechanism to collect critical information for reporting to the funders. A schedule of reporting dates will be provided with award offer letters. Award holders (PIs) will be contacted with an email reminder closer to the dates that reports are due for submission. The emails will include a number of questions to help shape your reports and will include: how each activity addressed the NPIF agenda, non-academic partner(s) engaged in secondment activities; and any financial contributions, the anticipated or achieved impact(s) of the secondment.

A.7 Additional Support

Facilitator review | Email a draft version of your application to esrciaa@socsci.ox.ac.uk if you would like feedback and ideas for improving the proposal. It is suggested that you email at your earliest convenience and **no later than 10 working days** before the deadline to ensure adequate time is available for review and revisions. You can also arrange a face-to-face session to talk in more depth about your plans and application drafts by emailing esrciaa@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Get some inspiration for your KE and impact activities:

- [ESRC IAA funded project summaries](#) – short summaries of projects funded to date
- [Social Sciences Division impact case studies](#) – lay summaries of successful impact stories
- [Oxford Impacts case study series](#) - filter to view Social Sciences Division case studies
- [ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize](#) - watch winners’ impact videos
- [National Centre for Universities and Business](#) – read success stories