

Accelerated Development Fund Guidance for Applicant

Scheme Overview

QuantIC's mission is to link world-leading quantum technologists with industry leaders and technology users to accelerate innovation in imaging in alignment with industry priorities and societal needs.

The Accelerated Development Fund (ADF) has a total budget of £2M over two calls and is designed to bring new research ideas into QuantIC. Projects will address a demonstrable industrial or societal need and will feed the pipeline of technology to be translated into industrial applications and commercial opportunities.

ADF awards will be a maximum of 24 months and each project will receive a maximum award of £250k (£200k at 80% of) full economic costing.

Since ADF projects are targeted to bring new ideas into QuantIC, projects should clearly demonstrate how they align with and further the Hub's mission and how they integrate with yet differentiate from our existing pipeline.

Leverage of additional funding and resources in the form of institutional support, industrial support etc. is not essential but it is encouraged and will be considered in the evaluation process.

Deadlines, submission and award process

ADF will distribute the full budget of £2m over two calls; one was run in the spring of 2020 and one opening in the spring of 2021.

Each call will be run in two phases: Expression of Interest (EoI) and Full Proposal. All successful EoIs will be invited to a workshop¹ and will be given an opportunity to pitch their idea to the QuantIC consortium and industry partners. Although not mandatory, the workshop will be an excellent opportunity for applicants to meet the extended QuantIC team, receive feedback on their proposal and explore how to further develop their project in alignment with the overall technology development programme of QuantIC.

The call opening date and application deadlines are reported below.

Call Opens:	01/02/21
Expression of Interest submission deadline:	07/05/21
Decision communicated to applicants:	End of June 21
Workshop for successful EoIs:	21/07/21

¹ This workshop is planned to be a face to face event, but may be made virtual if COVID-19 travel restrictions remain in place.

Full Applications deadline: 09/09/21
Outcomes communicated to applicants: Beginning of November 21

Applicants should submit their completed application forms by email to info@quantic.ac.uk by the submission deadlines above. Applications that are received after the deadline will not be accepted. All applicants will receive an email confirming that their application has been received within 24 hours from submission. **If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact Catherine MacNeil on 0141 330 3786 catherine.macneil@glasgow.ac.uk to ensure your submission has been received.**

Please note that the grant offer letter will be subject to terms and conditions.

Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must satisfy all of the eligibility criteria below. We advise applicants to use this section as a checklist before submitting a proposal.

1. You will need to be at a UK Higher Education Institutions that is eligible to apply for grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies.
2. To be eligible as an investigator or co-investigator, you will need to meet the EPSRC guidance that you can find at: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/eligibility/investigators/>
3. Projects need to be in the field of quantum imaging and be aligned and/or enhance the technical along with the industrial and societal impact of QuantIC.
4. Applicants that are currently funded through QuantIC are not eligible to apply.
5. All proposals need to be costed on the basis of full economic costs (fEC). If a grant is awarded, QuantIC will provide funding at 80% of the fEC. The organisation must agree to find the balance of fEC for the project from other resources.
6. Eligibility of costs follows standard EPSRC rules; funding for equipment above £10k is not allowed under this scheme.
7. The maximum award will be £250k (£200k calculated as 80% of the) fEC of the eligible costs sustained by the academic project partners. Larger value projects are eligible, but evidence needs to be supplied that sufficient additional funding to cover all project costs has been secured as a contribution from another funding source.
8. Applicants are required to use the appropriate application form. The form should be written in English and completed in all parts. Applicants must comply with relevant page and word limits. Forms need to contain full financial information. A maximum of 10% difference in the total costs between EoI and full proposal will be allowed.

Please contact info@quantic.ac.uk if you are in doubt regarding your project's eligibility.

Evaluation Process: EoI

All projects will undertake a three stage review process:

A. Eligibility check – all projects submitted to the scheme will be checked for eligibility. Ineligible projects will be rejected and the applicant will be informed promptly. We advise all applicants to contact us if they have any questions on eligibility.

B. Expert review – each project will be reviewed for market potential and industrial relevance by the QuantIC Market Opportunities Panel (MOP) which is populated by industrial experts in the areas of imaging and quantum technology. Projects will also be subject to expert peer-review by the QuantIC co-investigators to ensure the scientific approach is sound, the proposed work is feasible and the resources are appropriate.

C. Panel discussion – Industrial input and expert-peer review will be discussed by the QuantIC Management Board to form a ranked list. A representative from EPSRC will also be invited on the panel. QuantIC will reserve the right to take a portfolio approach to the allocation of funding.

Evaluation criteria for EoI

The Market Opportunities Panel will be scoring projects against the following evaluation criteria:

- A. Potential of the proposed work to deliver industrial and societal impact. For example, does it address one (or more) of the questions below:
 - a. Does the project have the potential to advance commercial state of the art in imaging systems? (and/or)
 - b. Is the project addressing a timely societal issue? (and/or)
 - c. Is the project addressing a long-standing imaging problem with wide implications to other disciplines?
- B. Does the project reflect appropriate involvement of users?
 - a. Do the project design, scope and objectives reflect an accurate understanding of user needs?
 - b. Is the involvement of users appropriate for the project?

QuantIC co-investigators will be scoring projects against the following evaluation criteria:

- C. Sound research concept and alignment with QuantIC, including:
 - a. Soundness of the concept, clarity, pertinence and timeliness of the project;
 - b. Alignment with QuantIC aims and objectives;
 - c. Integration with and differentiation from QuantIC existing pipeline.
- D. Quality, feasibility and efficiency of the implementation, including:
 - a. Credibility of the proposed approach and technical feasibility of the research;
 - b. Appropriateness of the participants within the consortium to carry out the project and to exploit the results;

- c. Value for money and leverage secured by the project.

Applicants will be notified of their outcome by mid June. Feedback will be made available to successful applicants before the workshop and to unsuccessful applicants as soon as practical.

Workshop

All projects that are successful at EoI stage will be invited to a one-day workshop on the 21st of July 2021. Attendance to the workshop can be either in person or via weblink. All successful EoIs will be given an opportunity to present their project to the QuantIC consortium and to the QuantIC strategic industry partners.

Although not mandatory, the workshop will be an opportunity for applicants to discuss their EoI feedback with the academic and industrial assessors and explore how they can further develop their project in alignment with the overall technology development programme of QuantIC.

Evaluation Process: Full Proposal

All projects applications will undergo a three-stage review process:

A. Eligibility check – projects submitted to the full proposal call need to have been invited following a successful submission to the expression of interest call. Unless explicitly authorised, the project budget will have to be within 10% of that submitted in the approved EoI. Ineligible projects will be rejected and the applicant will be informed promptly.

B. Expert review – each project will be reviewed for market potential and industrial relevance by the QuantIC Market Opportunities Panel (MOP) which is populated by industrial experts in the areas of imaging and quantum technology. Projects will also be subject to expert peer-review by the QuantIC co-investigators to ensure the scientific approach is sound, the proposed work is feasible and the resources are appropriate.

C. Panel discussion – Industrial input and expert-peer review will be discussed by the QuantIC Management Board to form a ranked list. A representative from EPSRC will also be invited on the panel. QuantIC will reserve the right to take a portfolio approach to the allocation of funding.

Evaluation criteria for full proposals

The Market Opportunities Panel will be scoring projects against the following evaluation criteria:

- A. Potential of the proposed work to deliver industrial and societal impact.
 - a. Does the project have the potential to advance commercial state of the art in imaging systems?
 - b. Is the project addressing a timely societal issue?

- c. Is the project addressing a long-standing imaging problem with wide implications on other disciplines?
- B. Does the project reflect appropriate involvement of users?
 - a. Do the project design, scope and objectives reflect an accurate understanding of user needs?
 - b. Is the involvement of users appropriate for the project?
- C. Credible approach to the exploitation of results and to the realisation of the expected impacts :
 - a. Is there are clearly identified pathway showing how the project will contribute to the realisation of substantial economic and societal benefits?
 - b. Does the project show an understanding of how the IP and exploitation strategy will influence commercialisation of the technology and ultimately user access?
 - c. What will be the route to market and how will the users benefit from and access the technology?
 - d. Are the timescales realistic and the mechanisms identified appropriate?

QuantIC co-investigators will be scoring projects against the following evaluation criteria:

- D. Sound research concept and alignment with QuantIC, including:
 - a. Soundness of the concept, clarity, pertinence and timeliness of the project;
 - b. Alignment with QuantIC aims and objectives;
 - c. Integration with and differentiation from QuantIC existing pipeline.
- E. Quality, feasibility and efficiency of the implementation, including:
 - a. Credibility of the proposed approach and technical feasibility of the research;
 - b. Appropriateness of the participants within the consortium to carry out the project and to exploit the results;
 - c. Value for money and leverage secured by the project.
- F. Risk and mitigation
 - a. Does the project identify the key technical and risks?
 - b. Does the project identify the key external risks including those related to the exploitation, user engagement and commercialisation of the technology?
 - c. Does the project have appropriate mitigation strategies in place?

Applicants will be notified of their outcome by mid-October. Feedback will be made available to unsuccessful applicants as soon as practical.

Other Important Information

Anyone wishing to appeal a decision should notify QuantIC within a week from receiving the outcome of their application by emailing info@quantic.ac.uk. Appeals will be referred to the QuantIC Strategic Advisory Board. The decision of the QuantIC Strategic Advisory Board will be final.

Applications are submitted to QuantIC in confidence and members of the assessment panel and co-investigators are bound by confidentiality. If there are members of the panel you would wish to exclude from assessing your application, please notify us by email when submitting your application, stating the reason (conflict of interest, direct competitor, etc.).

Contact

For more information and if you have any questions please contact: info@quantic.ac.uk and our team will be delighted to assist.