Research Engagement Toolkit

Resource and Development eBook

Getting Started with Impact

2022-23

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Contents

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Welcome

This booklet is ***Getting Started with Impact*** and provides further information and details on ways in which to embed real-world impact from the outset of your research projects to ensure maximum benefit to your publics and stakeholders.

Aims of this eBook:

- Specifically focuses on how to get started with impact, with links to templates
- Provides information about the training & development and internal funding available
- Encourages reflection and self-evaluation throughout the development process
- Sign-posts to useful internal and external resources, tools, tips and techniques
- Promotes goal setting and development of confidence and capability

Essential information at a glance:

We have a dedicated Research & Enterprise Staff Hub space with further impact information and resources.

Please go to:

[UoS Staff Hub (sharepoint.com)](sharepoint.com)

Additional links and resources have been provided throughout this booklet to continue your development journey.

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Overview: Research impact at Salford

The University of Salford considers research impact not as a means to an end, but as a public good in itself, and our researchers have a duty to demonstrate impact from their research. This is particularly important for research which is publicly funded, but is relevant for all of our research. Impact is central to the University's Industry Collaboration Strategy, and inherent in our focus on the connected, co-created and transformational research which informs the **Innovation Strategy 2021-2026**. Our vision is to be *recognised as a global leader of challenge-led research and solutions-focussed enterprise, delivering responsible innovation for economic, environmental and social impact.*

'Impact' is defined in the broadest sense, encompassing positive benefits for academic research, business and wider society, across any type and size of organisation, and for individuals and communities at a local, national, or international level. The Innovation Strategy seeks to expand the existing impact framework to enterprise and engagement activity for effective monitoring and management, ensuring measurable added value to partners and wider society.

This guide links to information, resources and support to enhance your impact development journey and is split into an *Introduction* and *three key sections*:

1. Section 1: Identifying your beneficiaries
2. Section 2: Generating 'pathways to impact'
3. Section 3: Capturing and evidencing impact

Additional resources and reading are also provided at the end of this guide.

> *Tip:*
>
> A link to the Innovation Strategy 2021-26 can be found on the Staff Hub (sharepoint.com) under 'Research & Enterprise'

Introduction: Getting started with impact

Within the wider research environment it is becoming increasingly important to consider the real-world impact that your research is likely to generate and to build this in to your projects from the outset. This means focussing on the impact of your research beyond the purely academic.

The rationale for doing so is:
- **To create a level of accountability** for the use of public expenditure and to provide a return on investment (ROI) for funders
- **To enhance public dialogue and engagement** and to uphold our Civic University responsibilities by engaging with and supporting our local community and economy
- **To attract further funding** to scale up activity with a view to generating greater benefit to the wider world
- **To demonstrate the reach and significance** of our external impact and to enhance our University's reputation as a centre of research excellence.

The following sections provide some tips on where to start in identifying your beneficiaries, how to engage in impact-generating activities, and how to capture and evidence the impact that your activities may have.

> *Tip:*
>
> The online Document Library on the R&E section of the Staff Hub provides relevant templates and guidance to support these activities, as indicated in each of the 3 sections

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Section 1: Identifying your beneficiaries

Reach and significance

When measuring impact, **Research England** considers there to be two main indicators to take into account:

Reach, which is understood as *the extent and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact*. This puts the impact into context. It is not a geographical measure: it is the extent to which you are reaching a wide range of the stakeholders that you are trying to influence, whether at a local, regional or national level.

Significance, which is understood as *the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or well-being of the beneficiaries*. This relates to the 'depth' of your impact and how important it has been to your stakeholders.

'Publics' and 'stakeholders'

In understanding what the reach and significance of your impact might be, the first step is to identify who your **key beneficiaries** are. These are also known as your 'publics' or your 'stakeholders' and may refer to organisations, groups or the general public.

When you are embarking on a new research project, whether funded or unfunded, it is worth starting by completing a **publics/stakeholder analysis**.

This will help you to understand:
- Who are your key stakeholders/publics/beneficiaries
- Their level of interest in your research
- Their importance to your research
- How easy they are to reach and influence
- What kind of influence (positive or negative) they could have on your research

In an externally funded research grant application, for example, you will be expected to name your key non-academic beneficiaries and to demonstrate how they will be involved in and benefit from your planned research activity.

When you apply for **Ethics Approval** for your research project, remember to factor in consent for the collection of impact evidence from study participants and other stakeholders. Evidence collection is likely to take place <u>after</u> your project has ended.

[Document Library](#) ***Key Resources:***

Publics and Stakeholder Analysis template
Research Impact & Ethics Policy Note

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Section 2: Generating 'pathways to impact'

Engaging with your beneficiaries

'Pathways' or 'routes' to impact involve undertaking activities to engage with your non-academic beneficiaries throughout your research project and beyond. This is a means of disseminating your findings, gathering feedback and driving further action to achieve your impact goals.

Your beneficiaries could include stakeholders such as policy makers, charities, local councils, practitioners, patients or simply the general public.

Think about the **types of activities** that would be best suited to your different stakeholder groups and also **at what stage of your research** you should engage with them.

Types of activity could include:
- Focus groups
- Workshops
- Citizen science
- Patient and public involvement (PPI)
- Collaborative research
- Research festivals
- Public engagement events (e.g. public lectures, exhibitions)
- Social media strategies (e.g. Twitter/Facebook campaigns, blogs)
- Interactive websites

Delivering these activities may require your team to **build capacity to develop the requisite skills**, for example, undertaking media training, public engagement masterclasses or writing for a lay audience workshops. *See the 'Other Resources' section of this toolkit for further guidance.*

Completing an **Impact Project Planning template** can help you to think about your impact goal(s), your target beneficiaries, the best tools to use to engage with them, how you will measure this engagement to know that it has been an effective impact pathway, what kind of resources you may need to realise this and the associated timescales for completion.

Having planned your impact, the next step is to set up an **Impact Action Plan** with our R&E team so that your impact can be tracked during and after the research project is completed in order for you to effectively capture and evidence the change as it occurs.

Document Library **Key Resources:**

Impact Project Planning template
Impact Action Plan template

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Section 3: Capturing and evidencing impact

How do you know that your research has made a difference?

Once you have started to see the outcomes of your 'pathway to impact' activities and the benefit or change that these are generating, it is important to capture **external (independent) evidence** or 'proof' of this impact so that you can demonstrate to your funders and stakeholders why and how your research is so significant.

In order to capture impact effectively, it needs to be tracked, evaluated and evidenced on an ongoing basis. It is important to understand:

- The **focus** of the assessment: what type of impact are you trying to measure?
- The **timeframe** for assessment: remember that while some impact could be generated while the research is ongoing (e.g. action research), in many cases impact takes a number of years to develop beyond the lifecycle of the original project
- The **goals and indicators**: how will you know whether you have achieved impact?
- **Stakeholder involvement**: how integral are they to the outcomes of your research?
- **Lessons learned**: evaluate the process to see how successfully you captured evidence – Should you have started the process earlier? Did you use the most effective tools to capture impact? Did you meaningfully engage with your stakeholders?

Impact can be evidenced in a number of different ways, including:

- **Testimonials** or **quotes** from key beneficiaries that clearly reference your research as the reason for the change
- Independent **citations in the media** that directly reference the impact of your research
- Documented **amendments/updates to codes or guidelines** that directly cite your research as a reason for the change
- **Audience feedback/surveys**, preferably before and after events, to capture any changes and which can be followed up over time as a longitudinal measure
- **Business performance measures** that provide quantitative evidence of positive change that derives from your research intervention (for example, enhanced sales figures, new or improved products, processes or services)
- **Closing skills gaps** through capacity building within organisations.

If your research project is demonstrably achieving real-world impact, an **Impact Case Study template** can help you to document the external changes, the evidence to support this and the research outputs that underpin this.

Impact case studies help to showcase the way in which your research has benefitted the wider world to both internal and external audiences. Case study examples are posted across our internal and external web pages, and some are submitted to the **Research Excellence Framework (REF)** to demonstrate how research at Salford makes a difference.

Document Library **Key Resources:**

Impact Case Study template

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Other resources

Impact funding

Internal opportunities to apply for funding to assist with impact generation are available to staff throughout the year:

Research Impact and Public Engagement (RIPE) fund

Up to £5K in funding can be applied for to support research impact for an existing project, research development or research dissemination and public engagement activities.

Applications should align to one or more of the following themes:
- **Strengthening interaction** – seeking to nurture and build upon relationships with non-academic partners, aligning with the University's Industry Collaboration strategy
- **Broadening research** – expanding the reach and influence of research outcomes, in addition to introducing greater partner contribution into the design of future research
- **Promoting social benefit** – demonstrating how the application of research-based knowledge might lead to practical and focussed solutions at a range of scales.

There are two funding calls per year, in September and January.

Innovation Strategy Fund

Our vision is to be recognised as a global leader of challenge-led research and solutions-focussed enterprise, delivering responsible innovation for economic, environment and social impact. To support this vision, R&E provides additional funding through the **Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)** and **Quality-Related Research (QR)** funds.

Funding supports projects worth **over £15K**.

The scheme funds the following types of activity:
- Development of CPD to upskill business to innovate
- Pump-priming collaborations to lead to new research activity
- Knowledge transfer secondments to/from business
- Activities which focus on developing entrepreneurship and enterprise
- Network development to generate new research or enterprise activity
- Feasibility studies to explore new research to lead to external funding proposals

There are two funding calls per year.

A separate **Innovation Strategy Discretionary Fund** is available to pump-prime small projects and initiatives that contribute to the Innovation Strategy. It aims to support early project ideation, including proof of concept or proof of market and facilitate the development and strengthening of industry partnerships.

Funding is allocated in values of **between £2.5K and £15K**.

Applications can be made at any point in the year.

Other resources (cont'd)

Impact training

A comprehensive schedule of training and development activities is delivered through staff and PGR programmes and managed through Research & Enterprise.

All staff training activity is linked to the **Academic Career Framework**, supporting academic staff to progress in their careers at Salford.

Training and support covers these main areas:
1. **Developing grant proposals** - from initial ideas to submitting a grant application
2. **Disseminating your research** - publishing and open access for effective dissemination
3. **Research impact and engagement** - ensuring your research has real-world benefits
4. **Ethics** - ensuring ethical compliance in your research and engagement activities
5. **PGR supervision** - ensuring our students receive the highest quality support
6. **Enterprise & working with business** - realising the commercial benefits of research and exchanging our knowledge with the business community

Separate training is available to both PGRs and staff and includes induction training for new starters and delivery of material at both School level and centrally.

Tip:

Links to all current funding and training relating to impact can be found on the Staff Hub (sharepoint.com)

Example case studies

Research with Impact blog site

Our outward-facing *Research with Impact* blog pages contain videos and podcasts relating to impact case studies that were submitted to the REF2021 exercise, as well as examples of additional short impact case studies that showcase the way in which internal impact funding has been spent on impact-generating activities aimed at making a real difference to people in our community and the wider world.

Our latest case studies can be viewed at: https://blogs.salford.ac.uk/research/

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) site

Established in 2005, our KT Partnerships Office has become the focal point for KTP development and support activity. The Salford KTP team offers an end-to-end support service, with a delivery model seen as the national 'gold standard' for KTP management. KTP is one of the UK Government's most successful knowledge transfer programmes, generating considerable impact for the SMEs involved.

Our latest KTP case studies can be viewed at: R&E KTP Case Studies (sharepoint.com)

External UKRI site

Launched in April 2018, UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the UK Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). UKRI brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK.

One of the aims of the UKRI is to deliver social, economic, cultural and knowledge impact to the wider world.

Examples of impact case studies from across the sector can be viewed at: https://www.ukri.org/our-work/delivering-economic-impact/

Tip:

Links to other external impact case studies can be found on the Research Impact pages on the Staff Hub

Contacts

Research and Enterprise

For all impact enquiries, requests to set up an Impact Action Plan, or assistance with the impact aspect of a grant application, please contact:

Emma Sutton (REF, KEF and Impact Manager, R&E) at
research-impact@salford.ac.uk

For more specific impact training enquiries, please contact:

Davina Whitnall (Researcher Development Manager, R&E) at
d.c.whitnall@salford.ac.uk

Stephen Ling (Researcher Development Officer, R&E) at
s.m.ling@salford.ac.uk

Schools

For enquiries specific to your School around training, development and mentoring activities, please contact your **School Impact Lead**.

A complete list of current Leads can be found at:

Staff Hub – School Impact Leads (sharepoint.com)

Tip:

A comprehensive list of staff in R&E and an organigram can be found on the Staff Hub (sharepoint.com)

Further reading, references and practice

A range of external resources can be accessed to provide further advice and guidance on impact:

Fast Track Impact

The most comprehensive impact website is Fast Track Impact, a consultancy run by Professor Mark Reed, and which provides a range of resources for researchers, students and research professionals to help develop impact in their work. Professor Reed has also delivered a number of training sessions here at the University over recent years, primarily in relation to developing impact case studies for the purposes of the REF.

Resources range from podcasts, blogs and vlogs, a media impact guide and toolkit, to templates and free online training to assist with different types of impact need.

All information can be found at: https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/

Vertigo Ventures

Vertigo Ventures is an organisation that seeks to embed impact reporting globally in order to contribute to a more sustainable world. It closely links its activity with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and co-launched the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings in 2018 as a way of measuring success against these goals.

Impact resources include a blog, case studies, events and surveys.

All information can be found at: https://www.vertigoventures.com/

UK Parliament

For further assistance with developing research impact through UK Parliament, a dedicated area of their website has been created. This provides resources including 'how to' guides, information on how and why to engage with parliament, training and events, as well as more detailed information from the **Knowledge Exchange Unit**, which seeks to support the exchange of information and expertise between researchers and the UK Parliament.

All information can be found at: https://www.parliament.uk/ and search 'Research Impact'.

More detailed guidance on policy impact and working with the University's Public Affairs team can be found in the separate **'Working with Government and Influencing Policy' toolkit**.

Tip:

A link to external impact resources can be found on the Research Impact pages on the Staff Hub

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Exercise: 5 minutes to focus on your goal

Reflect on your goal
Consider what you want to do and why? What are your next steps?

What I need to think about……

People to talk to…….

Things to do……….

Key dates and deadlines

We encourage you to explore the training and development opportunities on the Staff Hub Development Calendar and on the Advantage booking system. Please consider any forthcoming milestones, deadlines and PDR dates to help target or progress your development. This space has been provided to identify a list of the key dates, deadlines and development opportunities to help you focus on and move closer to your goal.

Date	Details

Stay in touch….. for further information and contacts, please go to: **Staff Hub (sharepoint.com)**