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ResearchBite – Realising your Research Impact, now and for the future

Aberdeen
**Grants
Academy**

Research &
Innovation

Dr Ruth Banks
Research And Innovation



Welcome – ResearchBite Realising impact



- Explore how impact fits into the research cycle
- Steps to building an impact narrative: best practice guide
- A demonstration of tools available to help you plan your first steps towards creating an impact narrative

Aberdeen Grants Academy

The Aberdeen Grants Academy supports researchers who are pursuing external funding.

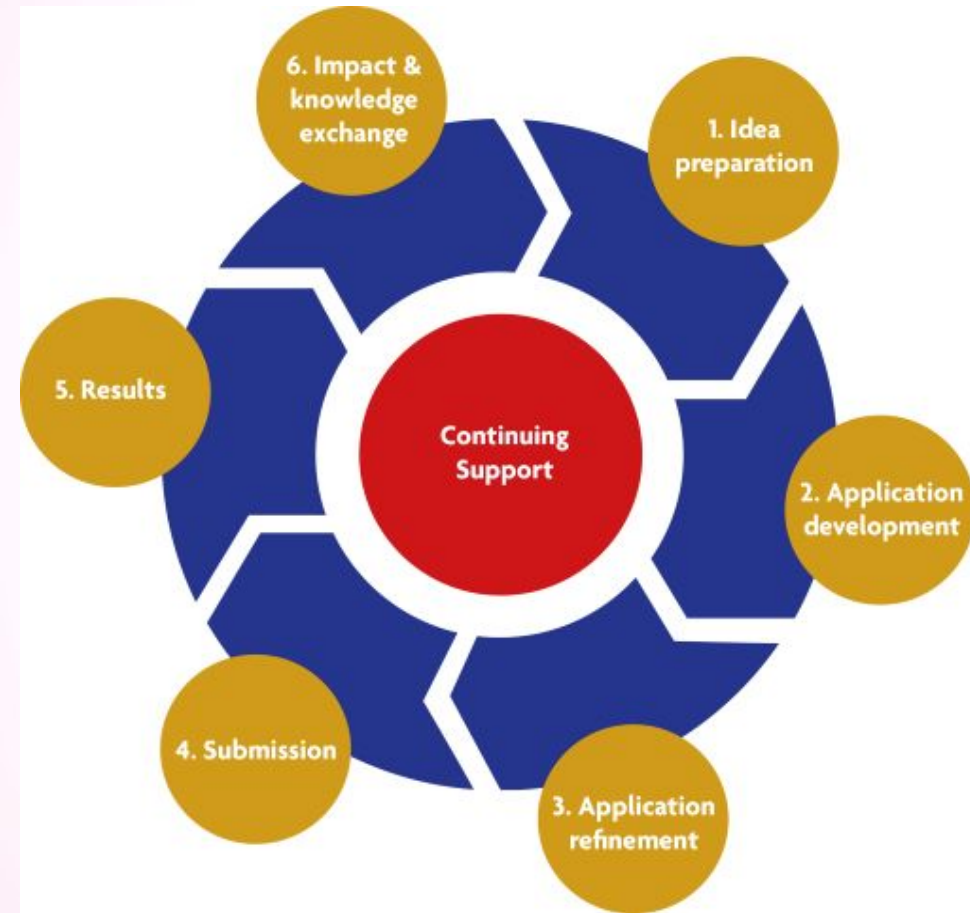
In partnership with Schools we provide support and guidance from the conception of ideas, through development and refinement of an application, to delivery of the project and realising the impact.

For more information please contact us at:

grantsacademy@abdn.ac.uk

For more information on the calendar of events and other information see our StaffNet pages

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/grants-academy-5862.php>



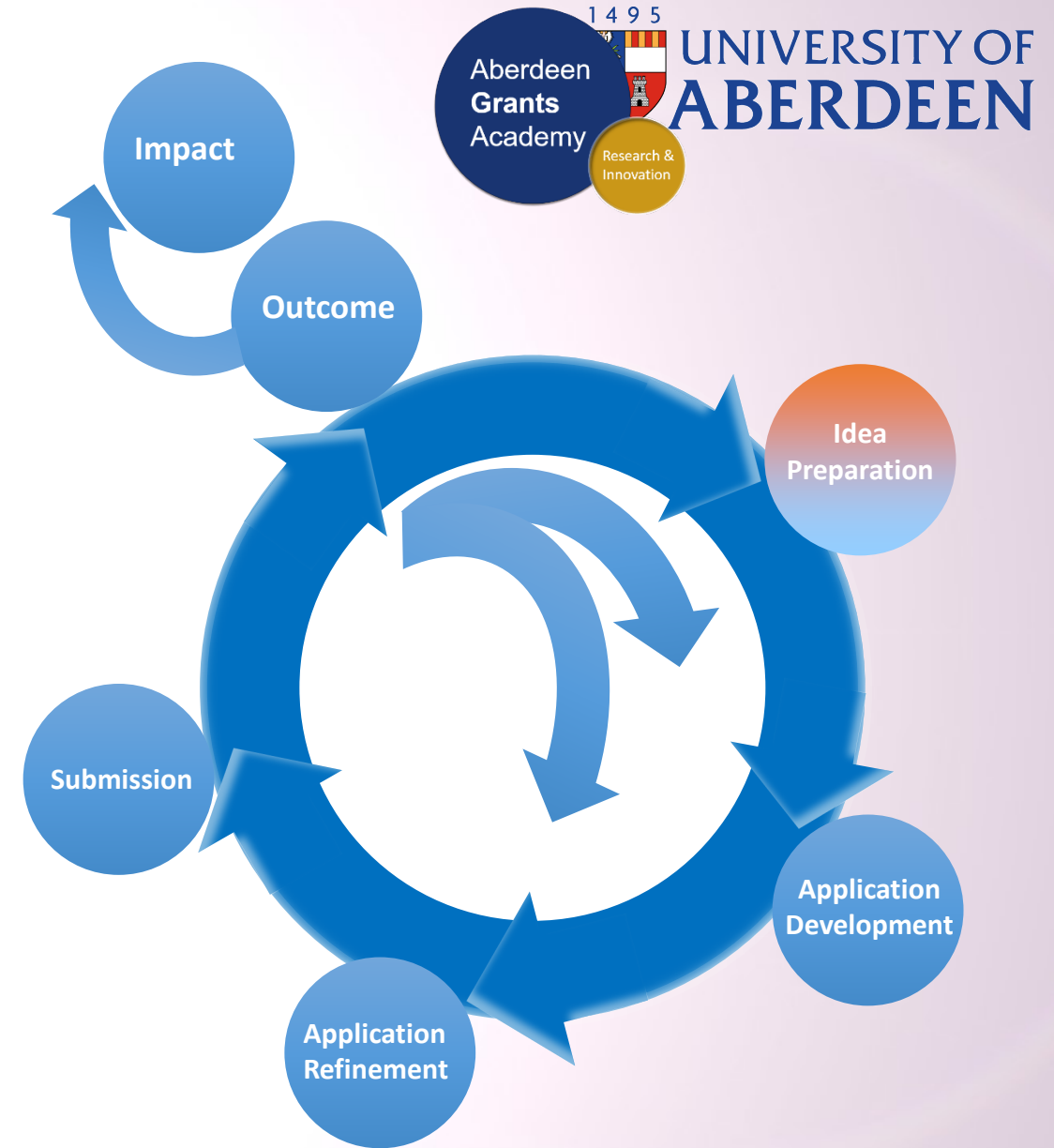
Grants Academy Aims



- Offer a comprehensive **programme of development**, directly linked to our strategic objectives.
- Significantly **enhance our research environment**, which will directly impact our REF submission.
- **Enhance career prospects** of all researchers, but particularly those at earlier career stages who may need more assistance to build their external research grant portfolio.
- Offer the ability to be better prepared for opportunities and **enhance our ability to respond to calls**.

Goals of the Grants Academy

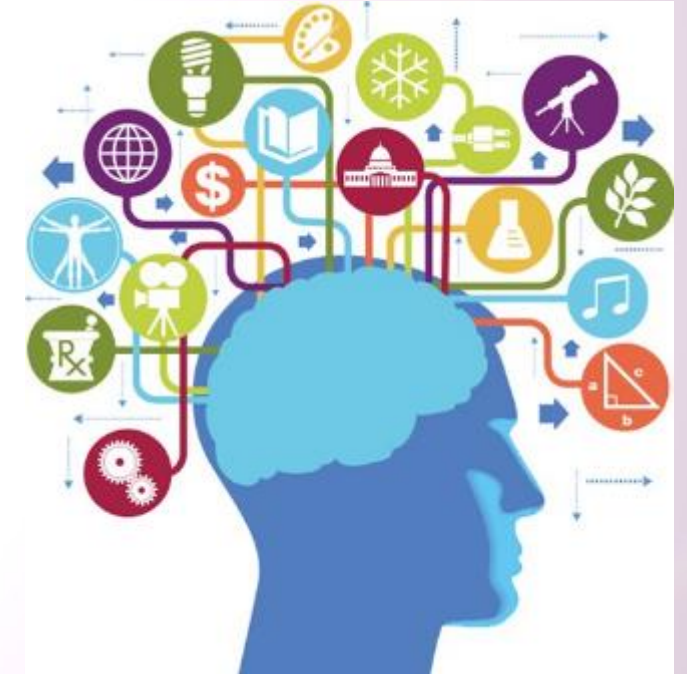
- Support at **ALL STAGES** of the research grant life cycle: *conception of ideas, through development and refinement of an application, to research delivery and realising impact of the research we undertake.*
- **Measurable increase in the quality and quantity** of research grant applications.
- Sharing best practice and training.



How the Grants Academy Works



- Developed as a series of interwoven elements including sandpits to support the development of ideas and projects, grant writing workshops, rebuttal support, support for delivery of outcomes and outcomes management and more.
- Relevant to today, supports:
 - Effective horizon scanning
 - Facilitation of early ideas development
 - Supporting interdisciplinary working



Grants Academy Supports ...

The University of Aberdeen under the Aberdeen Grants Academy manages several internal funding opportunities to pump-prime research and knowledge exchange activities.

Deadlines are announced through-out the year for the various streams, but we also welcome adhoc applications and questions at anytime.



Global Challenges Research Fund Internal Pump Priming (GCRF-IPPF) 

Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support fund (ISSF) 

Core Facilities Voucher Scheme 

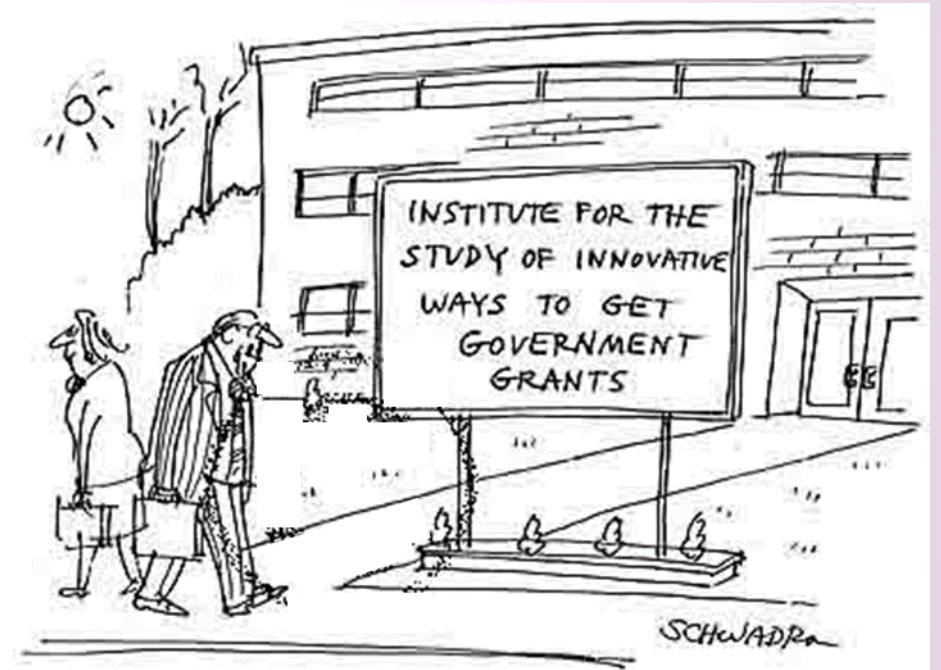
REF2021 Impact Support Award (RISA) 

Research Enhancement Scheme 



To consider before seeking funding?

- What's the **big question**?
- Why is it **important**?
- Does it fit **RCUK (or charity) strategy**?
- Why are **you** the person(s) to address it?
- Why should it be done **now**?
- Do you have a research **strategy**?
- What is **novel**?
- What will the **impact** be?



Impact

noun

have a strong effect on someone or something

Definitions of impact in academia:



- **Research Excellence Framework (REF)**

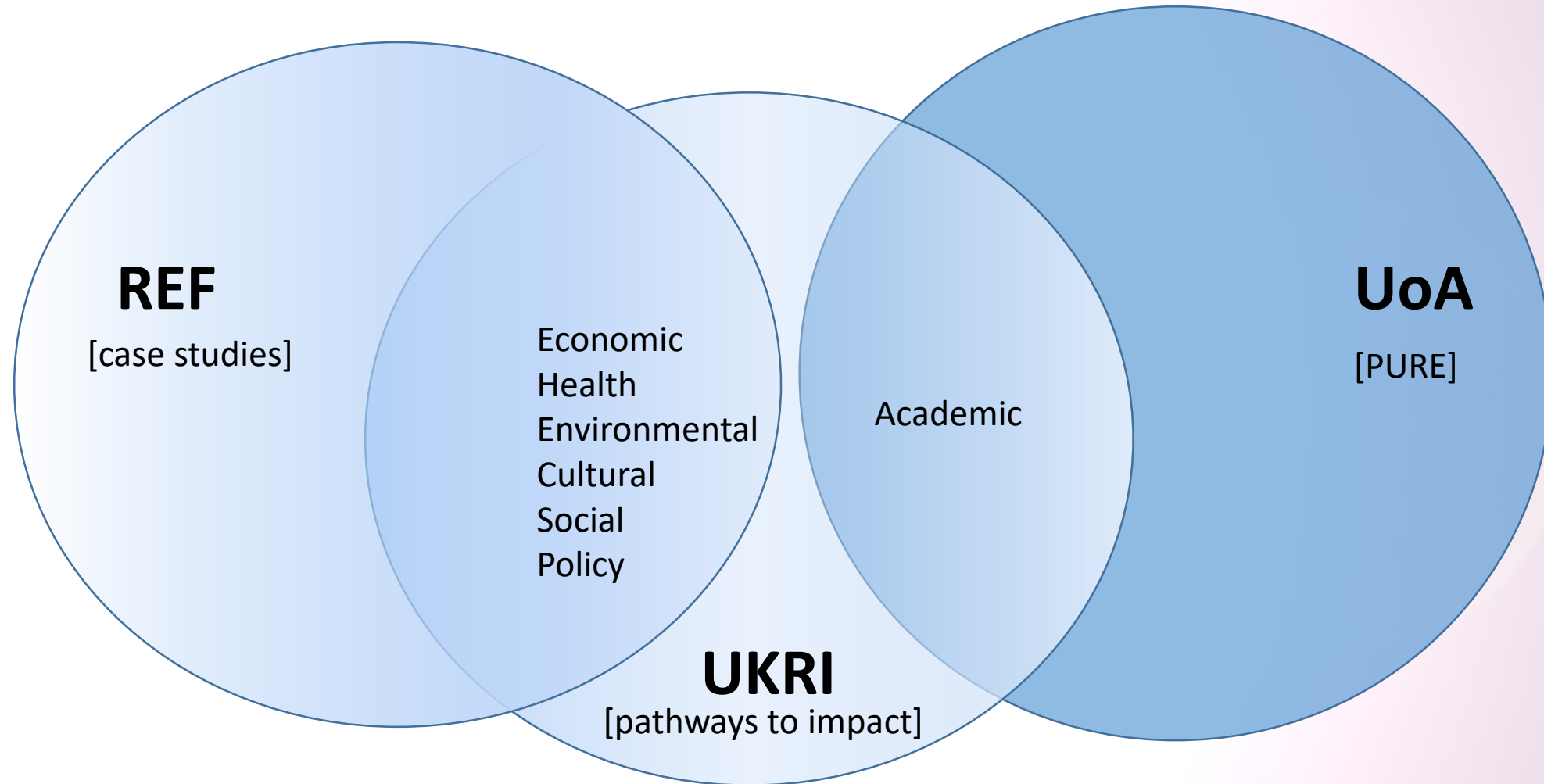
“an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, **beyond** academia.”

- **UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)**

“the **demonstrable** contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.”

- academic impact
 - societal and economic impact
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Impact definitions in focus



Why does impact matter...?

Why does impact matter?

- Spending public money means demonstrating the benefits of that investment to society = **accountability**
 - Research can be improved by engaging with a broad range of potential beneficiaries = **quality**
 - Shortening time to benefits, and increasing the impact we know our investments have = **maximising benefits**
 - It enhances UK attractiveness for research and innovation investment = **reputation**.
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Types of impact

The type of impact your research might have is specific to each project and like research, impact is wide ranging and varied. Some examples include:

- Cultural impact
- Economic impact
- Environmental impact
- Social impact
- Impact on health and wellbeing
- Policy influence and change
- Legal impact
- Technological developments



Planning your pathway to impact.

Your route pathway to impact is designed to encourage you to explore from the outset 'who' (beyond academia) could potentially benefit from the research and to consider what can be done to increase the chances of the research influencing real change.



Pathways to impact

“Pathway to impact” is the phrase coined by RCUK (now UKRI) for the section of the grant application that deals with impact. UKRI don’t expect you to know for certain what your impact will be, but they expect you to have a plan of activities (a bespoke ‘route’) by which possible, well-informed impact could be achieved.

Charity funding and independent funding calls may infer a link to impact by requesting how you would ‘widen reach’, ‘encourage research uptake’ or ‘create substantial change’

Key (and sometimes confusing) terms.

Input

the financial, human and material resources needed to deliver your activities

Output

products, capital goods and services which result from an activity

Outcome

the likely or achieved outcomes which are immediately observable as a result of your activities (i.e. target audience behaviour, awareness attitudes or knowledge)

Impact

the primary and secondary (positive or negative) long-term effects which result (entirely or in part; directly or indirectly) from your activities or intervention.

Knowledge exchange

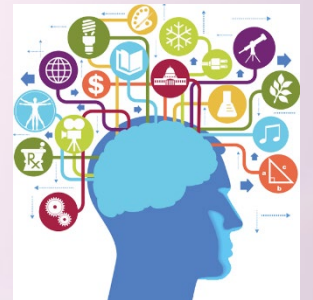
- Knowledge exchange (KE) is **not** a form of impact, but it is critical to enable impact creation
- KE includes any activity that involves researchers and non-academic partners, users or stakeholders sharing the knowledge produced by research.



Public engagement

Public engagement (PE) can be used as a route to impact:

- PE is a form of dissemination (and in some cases knowledge exchange)
- Areas of the public sector may be one or more of your beneficiaries
- PE increases exposure of your research and increases its relevance to public sector
- PE is a form of accountability (transparency in research process)



Step 1: Knowing your stakeholders

- **Beneficiary:** people, groups, communities or nations who will benefit from the impact of your research
 - **End users:** groups, people or companies who will take up your research and use it to bring about change
 - **Stakeholders:** Anybody who has a stake in the outcome of your research – perhaps because it will benefit them, or because they are involved in up-taking, using or translating the research into a real- world outcome
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There is no 'right' way to create impact.

- The *route* to impact will differ according to research area:
 - Co-production of research (working closely with research users) may or may not be possible, depending on area of research and/or stage of research
 - Impact indicators will differ across disciplines and according to stakeholders
 - Projects may stay at a conceptual stage of long periods of time – be realistic about what you can achieve within the timeline of your proposal
 - You may struggle to assess your contribution to the 'big picture', it's important to understand attribution versus contribution
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What is a 'Pathway to Impact' statement?

- UKRI splits these impacts into: (A) academic benefits; and (B) (non-academic) economic and societal benefits.
 - The **Impact Summary** describes the benefit you are hoping to bring about through your research – the **what** and the **who**.
 - **Pathways to Impact** describe **which activities you are going to undertake** to ensure that the potential benefits from your research actually come about – the **how** (i.e. what you plan to do throughout your project to allow beneficiaries to learn about your research, use it and contribute to it).
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Approaching your 'Pathway to Impact'

			Where to describe this in your proposal:
Impact from your research	ACADEMIC	Beneficiaries	'Academic Beneficiaries' section (and 'Case for Support' section)
		Benefits	
		Pathways	
	(NON-ACADEMIC)	Beneficiaries	'Impact Summary' section
		Benefits	
		Pathways	'Pathways to Impact' section

Step-by-step breakdown

Impact Summary

- Beneficiaries
- Link impact objectives to beneficiaries
- Overarching goal ('big picture')

Pathway to Impact

- Introductory goal summary
- Impact track record (optional)
- Impact activities
- Advisory panel/network
- Impact management (support mechanisms within institution)

Examples available here: (<https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/>)

Impact Summary

Apart from academics in your research field...

- who might benefit from your research and how might they benefit?
- who might use your research and how might they use it?

The 'Impact Summary' is meant to provide a short description of the [non-academic] beneficiaries and potential impacts. **While your research may not have many obvious or direct impacts, maximise potential impacts where they do occur.** Be specific, don't make claims for impacts that you don't consider appropriate for your research.

Remember: Don't write very broad statements about the value of generic research to society and the economy.

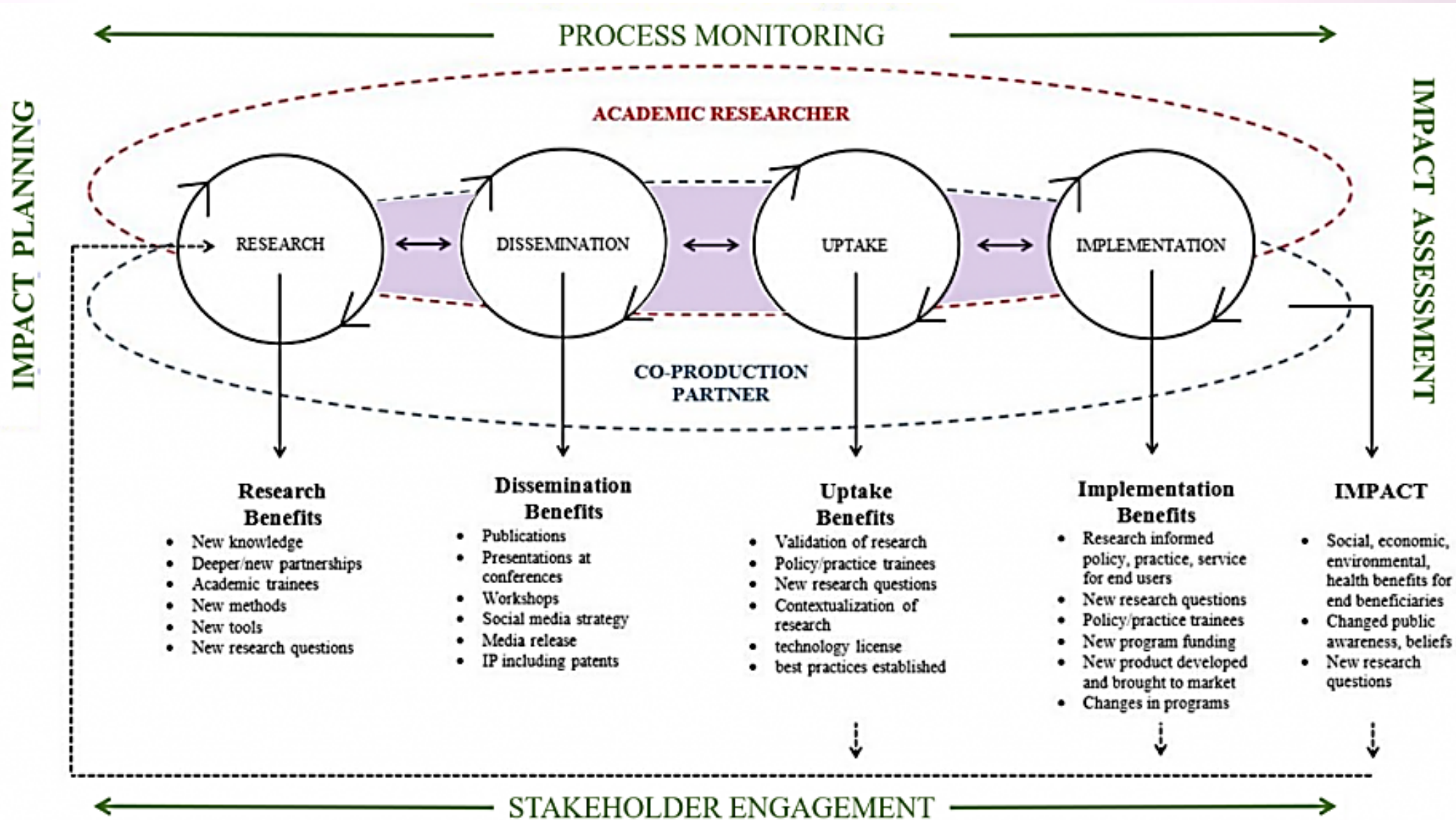


Tips

- Try to be as specific as you can regarding possible beneficiaries or users of your research.
 - Write about the routes to impact you intend to use, where appropriate show that you consider them to be a process of knowledge exchange
 - Make sure your planned routes to impact are well-informed and developed for your relevant beneficiaries/audience.
 - Consider a timescale for impact (when you might undertake activities and who will be responsible for organising them)
 - Include the costings for routes to impact. If possible mention how you intend to monitor, evaluate and gather evidence of impact.
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Examples

<p><u>Benefits to society (be specific on sub-set e.g. local community, children, general public etc.)</u></p>	<p><u>Benefits to world (and ideally UK) economy (be specific on particular sector/ area if possible e.g. public sector, private sector companies):</u></p>	<p><u>Benefits to people (be specific on who will benefit):</u></p>
<p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness among of .. - Increasing public engagement with research - Improved understanding of the world we live in - Risk reduction in decision-making - Environmental sustainability/protection - Improvements to quality of life/health/well-being - Improving social welfare or national security - Enhanced effectiveness of organisations (public services or businesses etc.) - Contribution to evidence-based policy-making - International development - Enhancing cultural enrichment 	<p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust forecasts to address uncertainty and allow for better planning - More efficient use of energy - Commercialisation/use of software/technique - Enhancing the research capacity, knowledge and skills of businesses and organisations by producing people skilled/trained in ... - Increase international reputation of UK universities by being world-class centre of ... thus attracting overseas postgraduate students and academics - Attraction of inward investment (e.g. R&D funding) to university/UK - Contribute to the 'information infrastructure' of the UK ('big data' etc?) - Efficiency/ reduce costs for doing particular task - Creation of a new (spin-out) company - Risk reduction in decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training to create skilled people/workforce - Training/development of skilled PhD/PDRA - Training/development of skilled MSc/Undergrad - Raise awareness among ... about ... - Outreach/ increasing engagement with research (schoolchildren, public) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of jobs - Contribution to knowledge economy - Empowerment, decision-making - Capacity building



Pathway to impact statement

Think about the potential beneficiaries that you described in your 'Impact Summary':

- what are you going do to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to benefit from your research?
- i.e. how are you going to ensure that they are aware of your research and can use your research?
- detail the activities that you are going to arrange to engage with the potential beneficiaries and when they are going to happen
- how are you going to evaluate whether it's been useful?



Impact indicators

- Indicators are used to measure impact (indicators are specific observable, measurable characteristics of change that demonstrate progress towards a short-term outcome or long-term impact)
 - Outcomes are often much easier to come up with because they are about more immediate changes you are seeking and are often more attainable within the frame of a proposal.
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Planning your impact strategy

Monitoring	Evaluation	Impact Assessment
Measures ongoing activities	Measures performance against objectives	Assesses change in peoples lives: positive or negative, intended or not
Main work during implementation	Main work in middle or at end of project/programme cycle	Can be included at all stages and/or can be used specifically after the end of programme/ project
Focus on interventions	Focus on interventions	Focus on affected populations
Focus on outputs	Focus on outcomes	Focus on impacts
'What is being done?'	'What has happened? Did we achieve what we set out to achieve?'	'What has changed? For whom? How significant is it for them?'

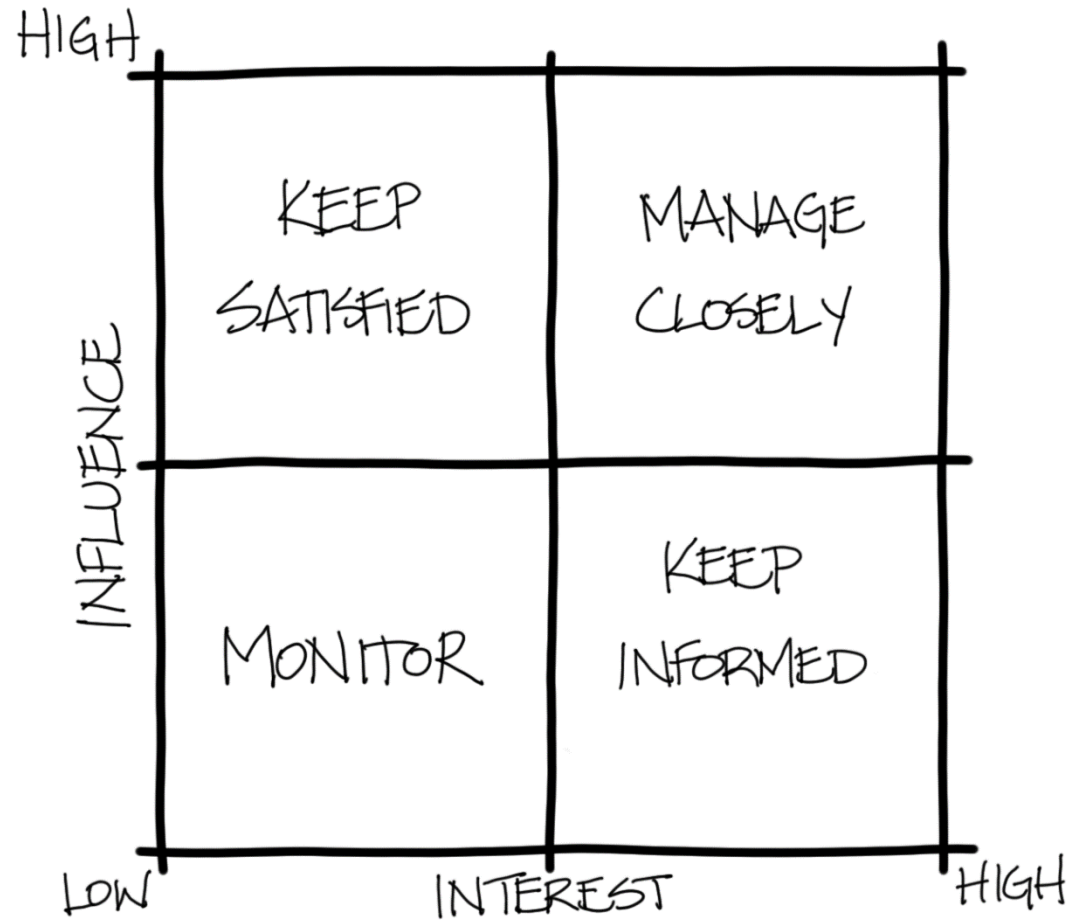
Tips

- ‘Pathways to Impact’ should set out **what you are going to do** to realise the potential impacts.
 - Link to the beneficiaries and benefits that you described in your ‘Impact Summary’
 - Include a clear description of deliverables and milestones including timings, personnel, skills, budget, deliverables and feasibility wherever possible.
 - Aim to make impact activities integrated throughout the project if possible, rather than just being bolted onto back of the project.
 - If engagement with other academics forms part of the critical pathway to economic and societal impact, it can be included in the pathways to impact.
 - **Focus** on the potential outcomes.
 - Include (but don’t rely on) evidence of existing engagement with relevant beneficiaries.
 - You can often request resources for pathway to impact activities as long as they are project-specific and justified (check the terms). e.g. cost of publishing materials for a non-specialist audience (leaflets etc.)
 - You can present your ‘Pathways to Impact’ section in ways other than text, e.g. in a table of short, medium and long-term beneficiaries.
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Examples

- Identification of potential stakeholders (industrial link/business, public sector group, GCHQ etc.)
 - Developing relations with industry partners for commercial development and exploitation (build on links your department/university already has if you are unsure)
 - Stakeholder engagement (e.g. workshop at start of project scoping views/needs, followed by update meetings and ending with dissemination event – make sure to include evaluation)
 - Advisory group/panel of potential beneficiaries to periodically review and advise on research direction
 - Secondments to companies/ exchange
 - Policy briefings or other activities to influence policy e.g. evidence-giving to Select Committees
 - Websites/webpages/wikis and interactive media that engage the public
 - Create a brand: media/Social Media/ (e.g. books, blogs, Twitter, webinars, radio interviews, TV appearances, podcasts)
 - Running training seminars (to PhD/PDRA audience, or audience of people outside of area of research), public lectures, online forums, 'Conversations On'
 - Public engagement/ road shows/ science festivals (should be specific to your research, not generic)
 - Workshops/ non-academic conferences (for those not directly in area of research)
 - Software development
 - Articles in professional newsletters/magazines
 - Exhibitions/ artwork/ installations/ plays etc.
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Getting started: Stakeholder mapping



The University	Shareholders	Government
Senior executives	Alliance partners	Trades associations
Your co-workers	Suppliers	The press
Your team	Lenders	Interest groups
Customers	Analysts	The public
Prospective customers	Future recruits	The community
Students	Key contributors	Key advisors

Summary

- Impact is a measureable change resulting from your research contribution - it's reach, scope and nature is based on the research outcomes
 - Knowledge exchange is a key *route* to impact
 - Dissemination is one-way communication – you don't learn by always doing the talking!
 - Knowing who your beneficiaries and stakeholders are at the beginning of the impact planning process is crucial
 - Your stakeholders may change as the project continues so stay flexible
 - Focus on setting realistic targets
 - Effective measurement and evaluation are key (mixed qualitative & quantitative)
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Historic photographs of bygone era added to museum collection



A Scottish museum's internationally significant collection of photographs has been expanded and preserved for future generations, thanks to Interface's connections.

Dumfries Museum houses an extensive collection of photographs taken by German photographer Dr Werner Kissling between 1935 and the 1970s. Many show images of crafts people and agricultural workers from New Zealand to the Western Isles of

Scotland at work, some practising crafts which have since died out.

Dr Kissling was a German aristocrat who was born into great wealth but ended up living as a tenant of a bedsit in Dumfries. He left the German diplomatic service whilst posted to London in 1931, unwilling to work for a Nazi government. Instead, he pursued academic research in the UK even after anti-Hitler activities cost his family their fortune.

He made the first ever film to use spoken Gaelic and is regarded as one of the great photographers of the Western Isles.

In 2018 a suitcase of Dr Kissling's personal possessions was donated to the museum. When Mari Findlay from Interface approached the museum to tell them of the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities opportunities, Siobhan Ratchford, the Curator, was able to provide Dr Kissling's


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PhD student Kirsty Kernohan, who is studying anthropology at University of Aberdeen, created over 500 new catalogue records for the museum's collection and developed a record identifying Kissling collections in other institutions, available for future research by public and experts.

Useful contacts

Business Engagement



<https://interface-online.org.uk/>



<https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/>

Policy Engagement



<https://spice-spotlight.scot/>



<https://spre.scot/>



https://twitter.com/post_uk?lang=en

Public Engagement



<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/>

Questions and Contact Information



Research and Innovation

Showcase your research

REF2021

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R&I works closely with colleagues in the University's Schools and has detailed knowledge of their research interests and expertise. Dedicated resource is provided to each of our Schools.

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