



APPROACH TO RESEARCH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Originator:	Head of Research
Approved by:	Academic Board
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Definitions:

Public engagement:

Public engagement with research describes a diversity of activities including: Participating in festivals; Working with museums / galleries / science centres and other cultural venues; Creating opportunities for the public to inform the research questions being tackled; Researchers and public working together to inform policy; Presenting to the public (e.g. public lectures or talks); Involving the public as researchers (e.g. web based experiments); Engaging with people to inspire them about research (e.g. workshops in schools and colleges); Contributing to new media enabled discussion forums.

Impact:

Public engagement is not impact in itself but can contribute towards creating the conditions of impact.

For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia. This change or benefit needs to be identified and then measured to provide evidence that it has occurred.

Researchers need to ask themselves:

- What is the change I am seeking to make with my research?
- Who are what will benefit from this change?
- What happened as a result of my research?
- What demonstrates the change has taken place?
- What evidence can I collect that measures a change that has happened?
- For REF2029, impact will be assessed in terms of 'rigour, reach and significance' how does my work demonstrate this?

Impact approach

As part of a future research assessment exercise the University will be required to submit a number of impact case studies based on the FTE of researchers in each unit of assessment. It will also be asked to provide a narrative statement about the public engagement and impact activities that has happened and how the University supports them. The quality of the impact case studies and narrative statement will enhance the level of QR funding the University could receive in the next cycle.

This is a plan to develop sufficient quality impact case studies that demonstrate 2*- 4* impact in terms of rigour, reach and significance for the next submission point, which is likely to be 2028 for REF 2029.

Impact case studies pool

A pool of impact case studies needs to be developed from which the best can be selected and there needs to be some flexibility to ensure we have enough depending on the FTE Category A staff. If possible it would be positive to have more than one researcher working each case study.

UoA 32, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory - Estimate a pool of 5 from which 2/3 impact case studies are selected.

UoA 33 Music, Film and Performance - Estimate a pool of 2-3 from which 1/2 impact case studies are selected.

UoA 27 English Language and Literature - possibly 1 case study.

Process

- 1) Review of the research from the annual progress report submitted by the pathways researchers and identify research that could be developed into an impact case study. There needs to be strong underpinning research otherwise there is a danger that the case study would be assessed as unclassified which would affect future funding.

Indicators of 2* could be used although not all the underpinning research needs to be 2*.

- research outputs which have been through a rigorous peer-review process
- evidence of peer-reviewed funding
- reviews of outputs from authoritative sources
- prizes or awards made to individual research outputs cited in the underpinning research
- evidence that an output is a reference point for further research beyond the original institution.

The review and selection of the potential case studies would be carried out by a panel. The panel would comprise the Vice Chancellor, Head of Research, Head of Marketing, Head of Careers, Employability and Enterprise and two researchers.

This panel would be instrumental in helping the case study get reach and significance.

- 2) Selected researchers to be developed so they understand and can demonstrate the following:

- The impact of research is beyond academia.
- Beneficiaries and publics are identified outside academia.
- Activities are designed that measure impact and provide evidence.
- Scope or reach - the impact has local, national or international reach, considers how many individuals, organisations, policies and practices can be impacted on by the research.
- Significance - to what extent a change occurred due to the research? For example, is it 'life changing' or has it led to the creation of a new policy or had a dramatic change on practice or how people perceive a cultural object?
- Is the collection of impact evidence rigorous, ethical, methodologically sound?

- 3) Identified case studies are resourced within the research budget with the aim of developing a total of 9 impact case studies in the pool.

Funding

Examples of activity to be funded:

- Dissemination of research to public/practitioners/policy makers outside academia and evidence collection of changes in public's knowledge and understanding.
- Public engagement activities that address audiences outside academia.
- Travel to work with communities and collection of feedback that shows a change due to the research.
- Meetings with organisations to implement recommendations from research studies.
- Filming/visually capturing research impact.
- Preparation of transcripts, surveys and testimonies that evidence impact.
- External impact training.
- Building relationships with important beneficiaries over time.

Final selection

The final selection of case studies to be submitted would be based on those that are more likely to score the highest in REF 2029. This will be based on the rigour of the evidence collection methods, the reach of the impact and the significance of the impact. The quality of evidence supporting the claims made in the impact study would need to be robust and/or convincing.

Impact case studies not selected would still be mentioned in the accompanying narrative statement and would still be a valued contribution to the submission.