

Examples of evidence and indicators of impact

Tables cut from the document “Panel criteria and working methods – the final guidance document to REF 2014”

These lists of indicators were developed by the main panels for Medicine (A), Science and Engineering (B), Social Sciences (C) and Arts and Humanities (D) respectively. As you will see there is a great deal of overlap between the four – but each focuses on the types of impact that are appropriate and likely to occur within each of the disciplines.

Panels A, B and C included a note on impact from public engagement:

Case studies which include impacts that derive from engaging the public with research must:

- a. At least in part, be based on specific research or a body of research carried out in the submitted unit, and explain clearly which particular aspects of the research underpinned the engagement activity and contributed to the impact claimed.
- b. Include evidence of the reach of the impact. This should extend beyond simply providing the numbers of people engaged and may also, for example, include:
 - information about the types of audience
 - whether there was secondary reach, for example from follow-up activity or media coverage
 - other quantitative indicators such as evidence of sales, downloads of linked resources, and/or access to web content.
- c. Include evidence of the significance of the impact. This should include a description of the social, cultural or other significance of the research insights with which the public have engaged. Examples of the evidence that might be provided for this include:
 - evaluation data
 - critical external reviews of the engagement activity
 - evidence of third party involvement, for example how collaborators have modified their practices
 - user feedback or testimony
 - evidence of sustainability through, for example, a sustained or ongoing engagement with a group, a significant increase in participation in events or programmes or use of resources.

Panel C: Social Sciences

- Citation in a public discussion, consultation document or judgement.
- Citation by journalists, broadcasters or social media.
- Citation by international bodies such as the United Nations, UNESCO, IMF and so on.
- Evidence of citation in policy, regulatory, strategy, practice or other documents.
- Evidence of debate among practitioners, leading to developments in attitudes or behaviours.
- Public debate in the media.
- Parliamentary or other democratic debate.

- Visitor or audience numbers, or number of participants (for example, in the uptake of CPD).
- Media reviews.
- Measures of improved inclusion, welfare or equality.
- Independent documentary evidence of links between research and claimed impact(s).
- Documented evidence of influence on guidelines, legislation, regulation, policy or standards.
- Documented change to professional standards or behaviour.
- Satisfaction measures (for example, with services).
- Use in scrutiny or audit processes, such as Select Committees.
- Incorporation in training or CPD material.
- Outcome measures, including measures of outcomes for beneficiaries.
- Quantitative data relating, for example, to cost-effectiveness or organisational performance.

Panel D Arts and Humanities

Quantitative indicators

- Publication and sales figures both in the UK and overseas, audience or attendance figures (including demographic data where relevant), broadcasting data and other forms of media, download figures, or database and web-site hits over a sustained period.
- Funding from public or other charitable bodies.
- Evidence of use of education materials arising from the research (where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI).
- Tourism data, including audience figures and visitor numbers at exhibitions, events, performances.
- Growth of small businesses in the creative industries. Generation of new products. Sales figures and income generated. Employment data (for example, evidence of jobs created).

Critiques or citations in users' documents

- Citations in reviews outside academic literature. Independent citations in the media, including in online documents. Reviews, blogs and postings. Programme, exhibition or catalogue notes. Prizes. Translations. Recorded feedback.
- Inclusion in teaching materials or teaching bibliographies. Replication of work in structure of courses.
- Evidence of uptake of research in documents produced by public or commercial bodies; citations in policy documents and reviews, or other published reports on policy debates.

Public engagement

- Information about the number and profile of people engaged and types of audience. Follow-up activities or media coverage. Evidence of sales, downloads of linked resources or access to web content.
- Descriptions of the social, cultural or other significance of the research insights with which the public have engaged. Evaluation data. User feedback or testimony. Critical external reviews of the engagement activity. Evidence of third party involvement, for example how collaborators have modified their practices, contributions (financial or in-kind) by third parties to enhance services or support for the public, or evidence of funds from third parties to enhance or extend the engagement activity. Evidence of sustainability, through, for example, a sustained or ongoing engagement with a group, a significant increase in participation in events or programmes, continuing sales, downloads, or use of resources.

Policy engagements

- Evidence of influence on a debate in public policy and practice through membership of or distinctive contributions to expert panels and policy committees or advice to government (at local, national or international level).
- Formal partnership agreements or research collaboration with major institutions, NGOs and public bodies. Consultancies to public or other bodies that utilise research expertise.
- Evidence of engagement with campaign and pressure groups and other civil organisations (including membership and activities of those organisations and campaigns) as a result of research.
- Changes to professional standards and behaviour.

Independent testimony

- Acknowledgements in annual reports or other publications of NGOs, charities and other civil society organisations. Testimony of experts or users who can attest to the reach and/or significance of impact. Third-party evidence of changed policies, practices, processes, strategies.

Formal evaluations

Professional evaluations of exhibitions, performances or other outputs. Formal peer reviews of funded impact-relevant research. Studies on the social return on investment.

Panel A: Medicine and related areas

- Citation in a public discussion, consultation document or judgement.
- Citation by journalists, broadcasters or social media.
- Citation by international bodies such as the United Nations, UNESCO, IMF and so on.
- Evidence of citation in policy, regulatory, strategy, practice or other documents.
- Evidence of debate among practitioners, leading to developments in attitudes or behaviours.
- Public debate in the media.

- Parliamentary or other democratic debate.
- Visitor or audience numbers, or number of participants (for example, in the uptake of CPD).
- Media reviews.
- Measures of improved inclusion, welfare or equality.
- Independent documentary evidence of links between research and claimed impact(s).
- Documented evidence of influence on guidelines, legislation, regulation, policy or standards.
- Documented change to professional standards or behaviour.
- Satisfaction measures (for example, with services).
- Use in scrutiny or audit processes, such as Select Committees.
- Incorporation in training or CPD material.
- Outcome measures, including measures of outcomes for beneficiaries.
- Quantitative data relating, for example, to cost-effectiveness or organisational performance.

Panel B: Science and Engineering

Economic impacts

- Business performance measures, for example, sales, turnover, profits or employment associated with new or improved products, processes or services.
- Licences awarded and brought to market.
- Jobs created or protected.
- Investment funding raised from UK and/or non-UK agencies (venture capital/Business Angel, and so on) for start-up businesses and new activities of existing businesses.
- Evidence of critical impact on particular projects, products and processes confirmed by independent authoritative evidence, which should be financial where possible.
- Priority shifts in expenditure profiles or quantifiable reallocation of corporate, non-profit or public budgets.

Impacts on public policy and services

- Documented evidence of policy debate (for example, in Parliament, the media, material produced by NGOs).
- Documented evidence of changes to public policy/legislation/regulations/guidelines.
- Measures of improved public services, including, where appropriate, quantitative information; such information may relate for example to the quality, accessibility or cost-effectiveness of public services.
- Documented evidence of changes to international development policies.
- Measures of improved international welfare or inclusion.

Impacts on society, culture and creativity

- Visitor or audience numbers and feedback.
- Critical reviews in the media and/or other professional publications.
- Evidence of public debate in the media or other fora.
- Evidence of sustained and ongoing engagement with a group.
- Measures of increased attainment and/or measures of improved engagement with science in non-HE education.

Health impacts

- Evidence from clinical trials.
- Measures of improved patient outcomes, public health or health services.
- Documented changes to clinical guidelines.
- Evidence of take-up and use of new or improved products and processes that improve quality of life in developing countries.

Impacts on practitioners and professional services

- Traceable reference to inclusion of research in national or international industry standards or authoritative guidance.
- Traceable references by practitioners to research papers that describe their use and the impact of the research.
- New or modified professional standards and codes of practice.
- New or modified technical standards or protocols.
- Documented changes in knowledge, capability or behaviours of individuals benefiting from training.

Impacts on the environment

- Sales of new products or improvements in existing products that bring quantifiable environmental benefits.
- Traceable impacts on particular projects or processes which bring environmental benefits.
- Evidence of generic environmental impact across a sector, confirmed by independent authoritative evidence.
- Documented case-specific improvements to environment-related issues.
- Traceable reference to inclusion of research into government policy papers, legislation and industry guidance.
- Traceable reference to impact of research in planning decision outcomes.
- Policy documentation.