

The Impact of Impact: Current Developments in the Research Excellence Framework.



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Ulster University

RCN Research Conference

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Why assess research impact?



What is research impact?



How to ensure your research is more impactful.



Behaviour change in Universities



Analysis of 248 Impact Case Studies pertaining to nursing.



Overview of the REF2021

REF assessed the quality of research in all UK universities, in all disciplines. It will be carried out by 34 expert panels, grouped into 4 main panels.

Main Panel A: **Medical and life sciences**

Main Panel B: **Physical sciences and engineering**

Main panel C: **Social sciences**

Main Panel D: **Arts and humanities**

Each Main Panel will comprise:

- The chair
- Chairs of each sub-panel
- International members
- Research user members

Each Sub-Panel comprised:

- The chair and deputy chair
- Panel members
- Additional assessors (for outputs and impact)

- The Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP).
- The Interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel (IDAP).
- 2 Stage approach to appointing subpanel members.

REF2021: Main Panel A

Main Panel A Chairs		Units of Assessment
Prof Moira Whyte	1	Clinical Medicine
Prof Doreen Cantrell	2	Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
Prof Hugh McKenna	3	Allied Health Professions, Biomedical Sciences, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
Prof Susan Gathercole	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
Prof Paul Elliott	5	Biological Sciences
Prof Peter Clegg	6	Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science

REF2021: Key changes since 2014

Overall quality

Outputs

FTEx2.5= No of Outputs
Maximum of 5 outputs
per researcher
(n=< 191,232)

60%

Impact

Impact case studies
Minimum 2 ICSs up to
19.99 staff - change at
110 staff.
(n=< 6,975)

25%

Environment

Environment data and
template
(1,912)

15%



Across the board this represents a 56% increase in the weighting for impact case studies and 60% of the impact assessment period has already passed (Chris Hewson, Impact Manager, York, Sept 2017).

Outline of an Impact Case Study

Institution:

Unit of Assessment:

Title of case study:

1. Summary of the impact *(indicative maximum 100 words)*

2. Underpinning research *(indicative maximum 500 words)*

3. References to the research *(indicative maximum of six references)*

4. Details of the impact *(indicative maximum 750 words)*

5. Sources to corroborate the impact *(indicative maximum of 10 references)*

Why Assess Research Impact?

We grow no food
on campus.

REF2014 results
showed the benefits
of investment in UK
research.

Universities
perceived as
reservoirs of
knowledge.

Provide
accountability
for public
investment and
produce
evidence of the
benefits.



Encourage the
seamless transfer
of knowledge
from the research
lab to the lecture
hall to society.

Francis Bacon,
Novum Organum
Scientiarum 1620.

Moral
Imperative.

Importance of
Engagement -Sir
Ron Dearing.

REF2021: Research Impact- Changes Since REF 2014

Definitions and guidance

- Criteria of 'reach and significance'.
- Public engagement impact.
- **Impact on teaching within and beyond.**
- No of case studies.
- Continuing case studies.
- HEI - Upfront corroboration.

Consistency with 2014

- Non-portability of impact.
- **2* Quality threshold.**
- Timeframe.



Refinements

- **Underpinning research = bodies of work.**
- Impact template in Environment statement.

WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, environment or quality of life.

- **Processes:** the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, policy, opportunity, performance, practice, or understanding;
- **People:** an audience, families, beneficiary, community, constituency, or individuals;
- **Places:** any organisation or geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.



WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Reach: the extent and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact. (It will **not** be assessed in geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries).

Significance: The intensity of the influence or 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.



IMPACT!

WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

The criteria for assessing impacts are reach and significance

Four star

Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.

Three star

Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.

Two star

Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.

One star

Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.

Unclassified

The impact is of little or no reach and significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit.

REF2021: How Panel Members Assess impact.

Sub panel academic members will work with sub panel research users to judge research impact.

- The 2* threshold criterion involves yes/no judgements. Once it has been passed, it will play no further role in assessing the extent of the impact.
- **Assess the 'reach and significance' of the impact on a scale from 0-4.**
- Make an overall judgement about reach and significance, rather than assessing each one separately.

Research-Impact Time Lag: Learning from History.

Identification of the ineffectiveness and disuse of Hypochlorite solution as a desloughing agent.

• 5-10
Years

Identification of the effectiveness and use of thrombolytic therapy as a treatment of Acute MI.

• 20-30
Years

Identification of the effectiveness and use of citrus juice in the prevention of Scurvy.

• 264
Years



REF2021 – Continued Impact Case Studies

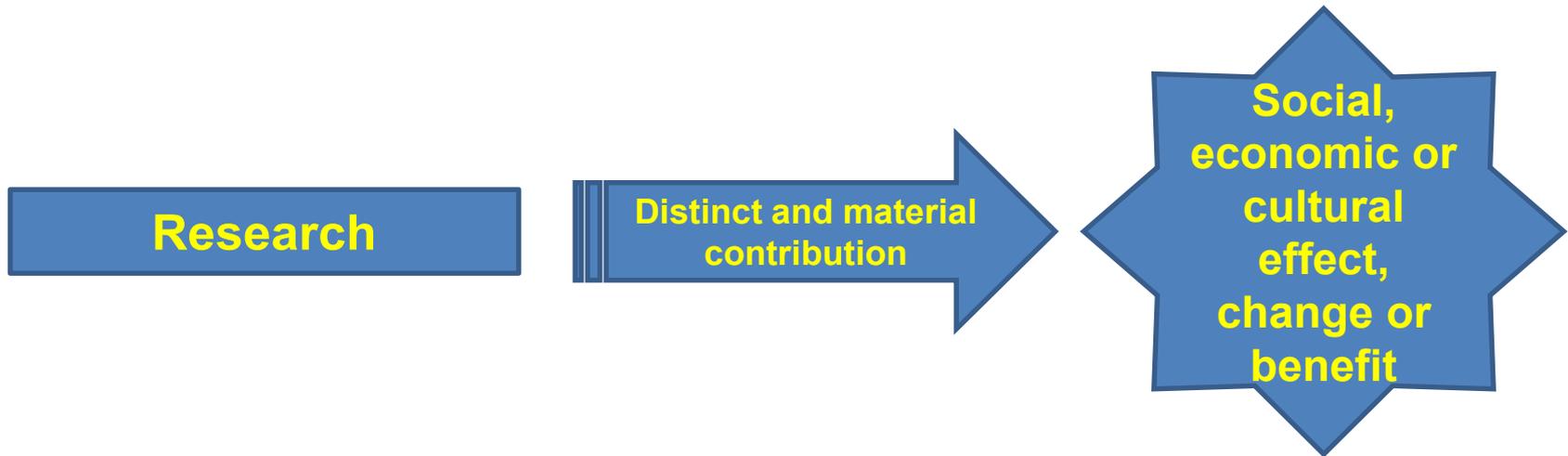
The continued case study does not describe any new research having taken place that has made a distinct or material contribution since the 2014 case study.

There is significant overlap with the 2014 case study in terms of impact types and beneficiaries.

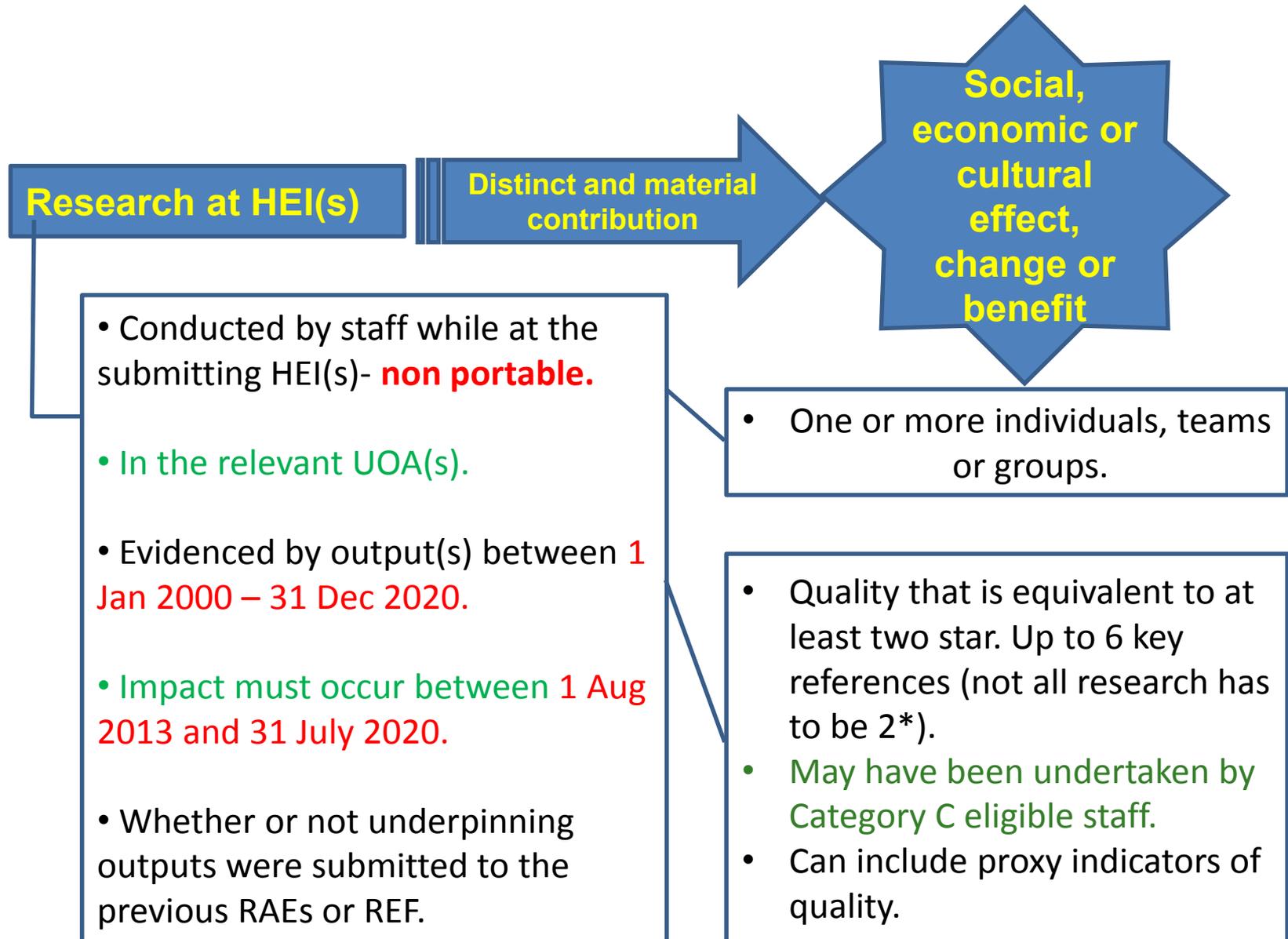


Main Panel A encourages the submission of new case studies, which will reflect the acknowledged vitality and vibrancy of the UK HEIs' biomedical, health and life sciences sector. In addition, those continued case studies that describe significant and developing impact within the current assessment period will be considered, recognising the long lead-in time for certain biomedical and life sciences impacts.

WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?



Research Impact timeframe:



WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Research at an HEI(s)

Distinct and material contribution

Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit

No particular 'model' of impact generation is assumed- May be direct, indirect, linear, non-linear, diffuse, planned, unplanned, etc.

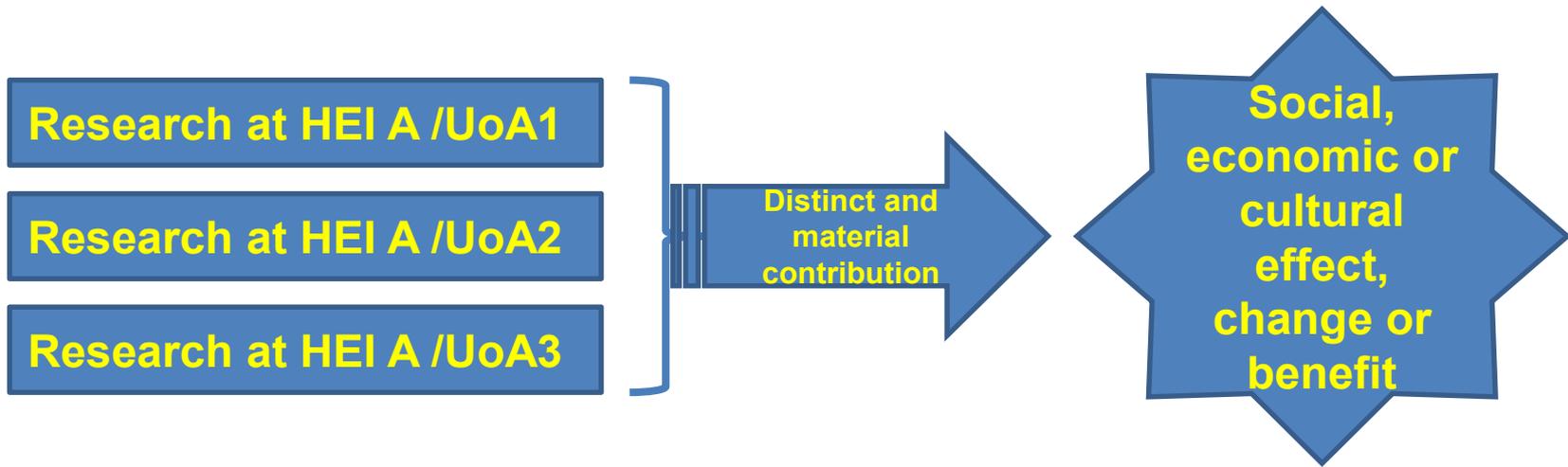
May be a body of work produced over a number of years or may be the output(s) of a particular project.

Case studies will allow for the inclusion of measures or metrics/indicators of impact.

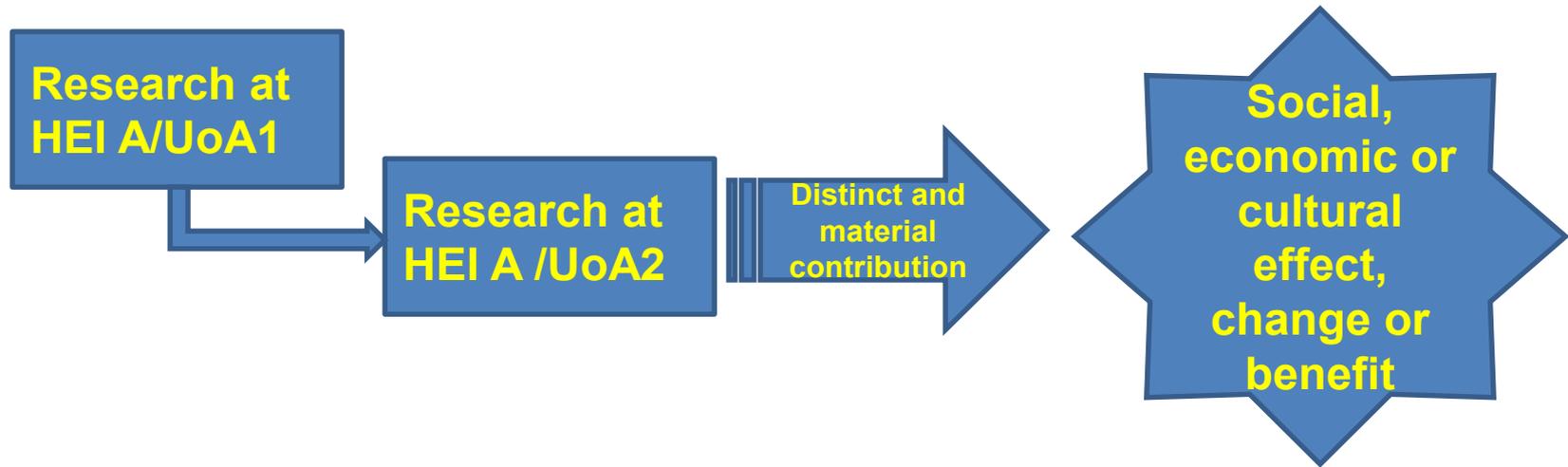
Submitting HEI need not have been involved in 'exploiting' the research.



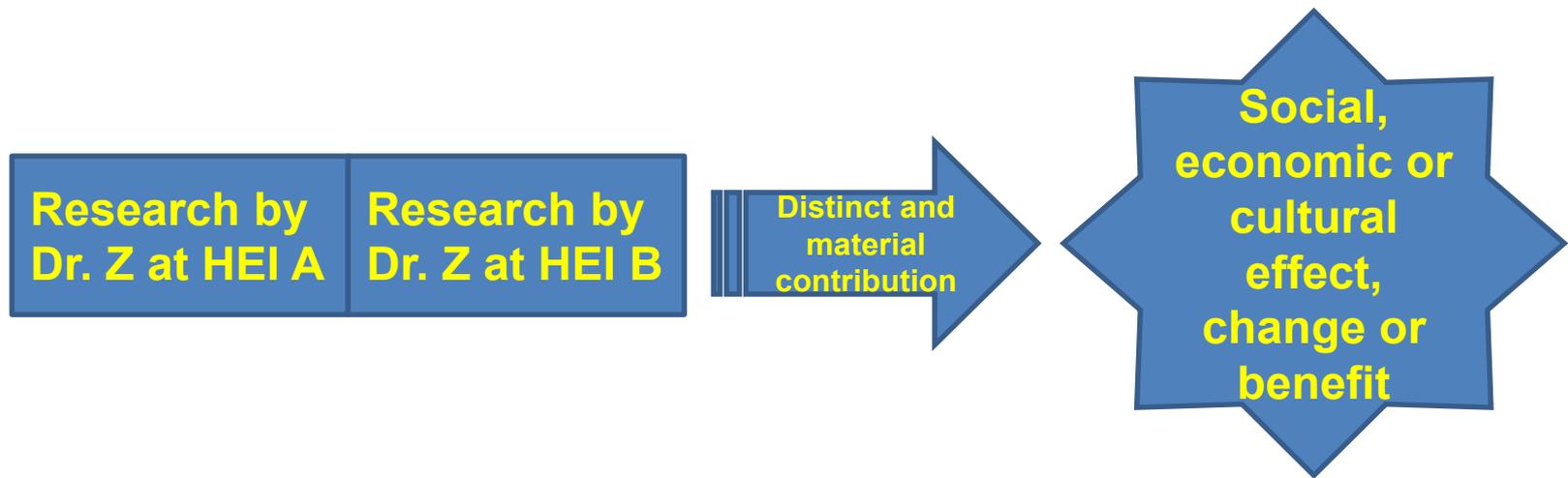
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?



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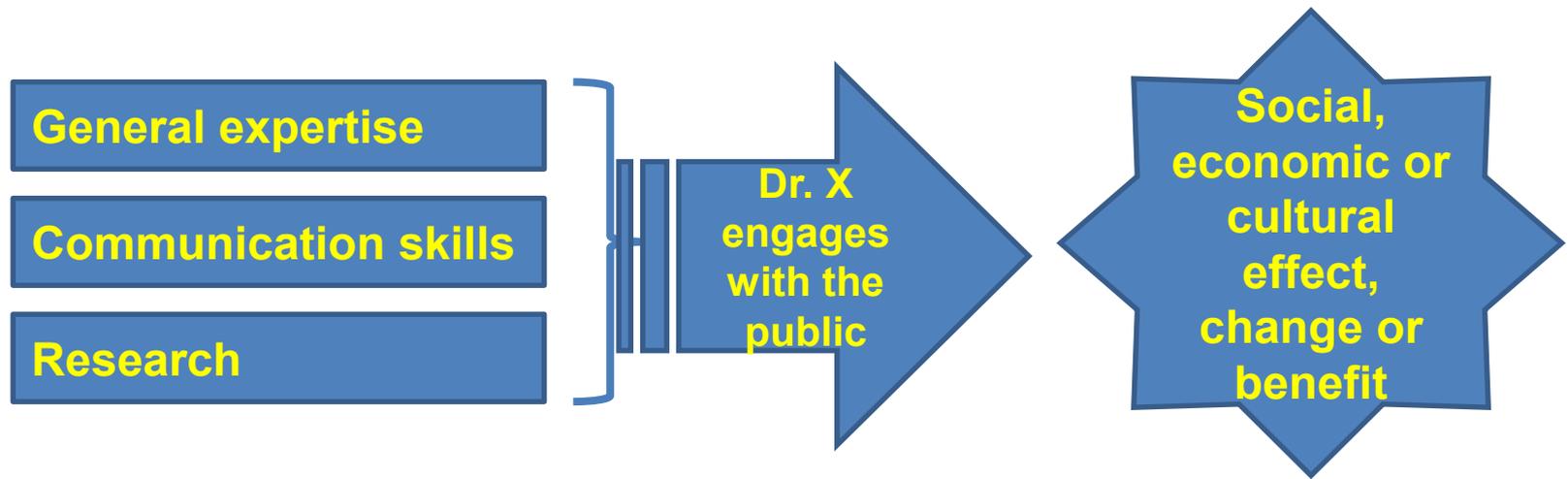


WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?



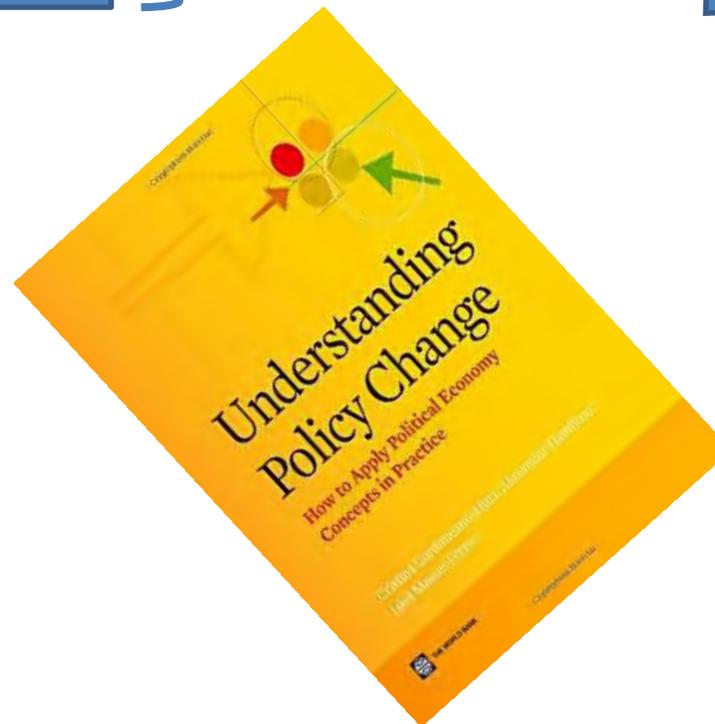
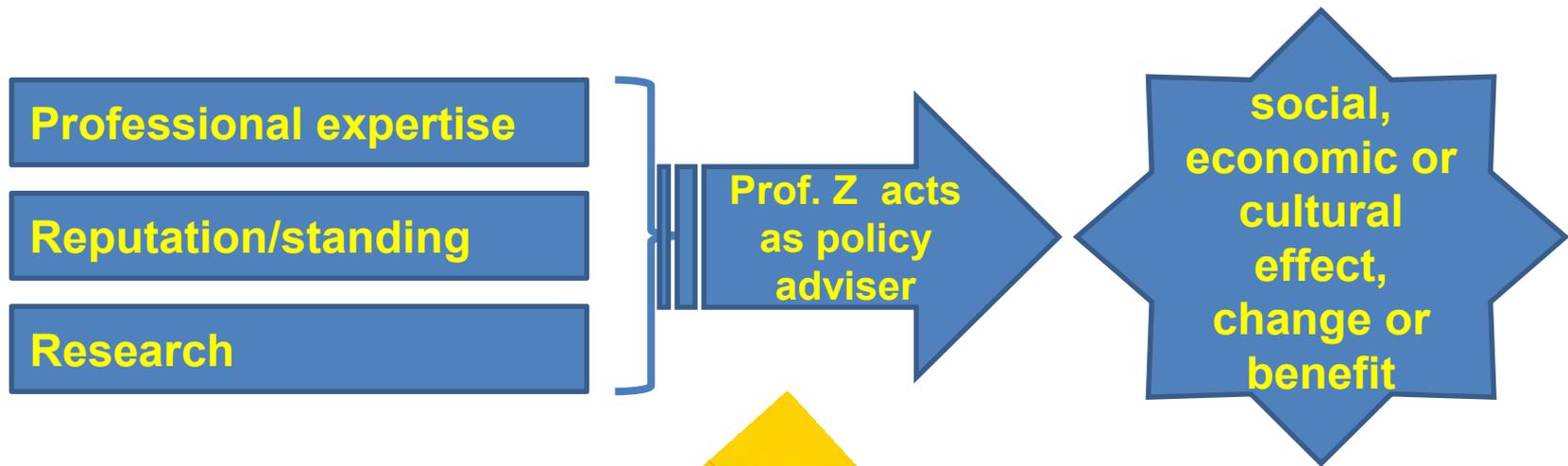
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Public Engagement.



WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Change in Policy.



Must be no disjoint between **impact and its underpinning **research****



Ensuring that your research is impactful

Passive.

- Research is done.
- Disseminated.
- It may or may not be found and used by others to have impact.

Active

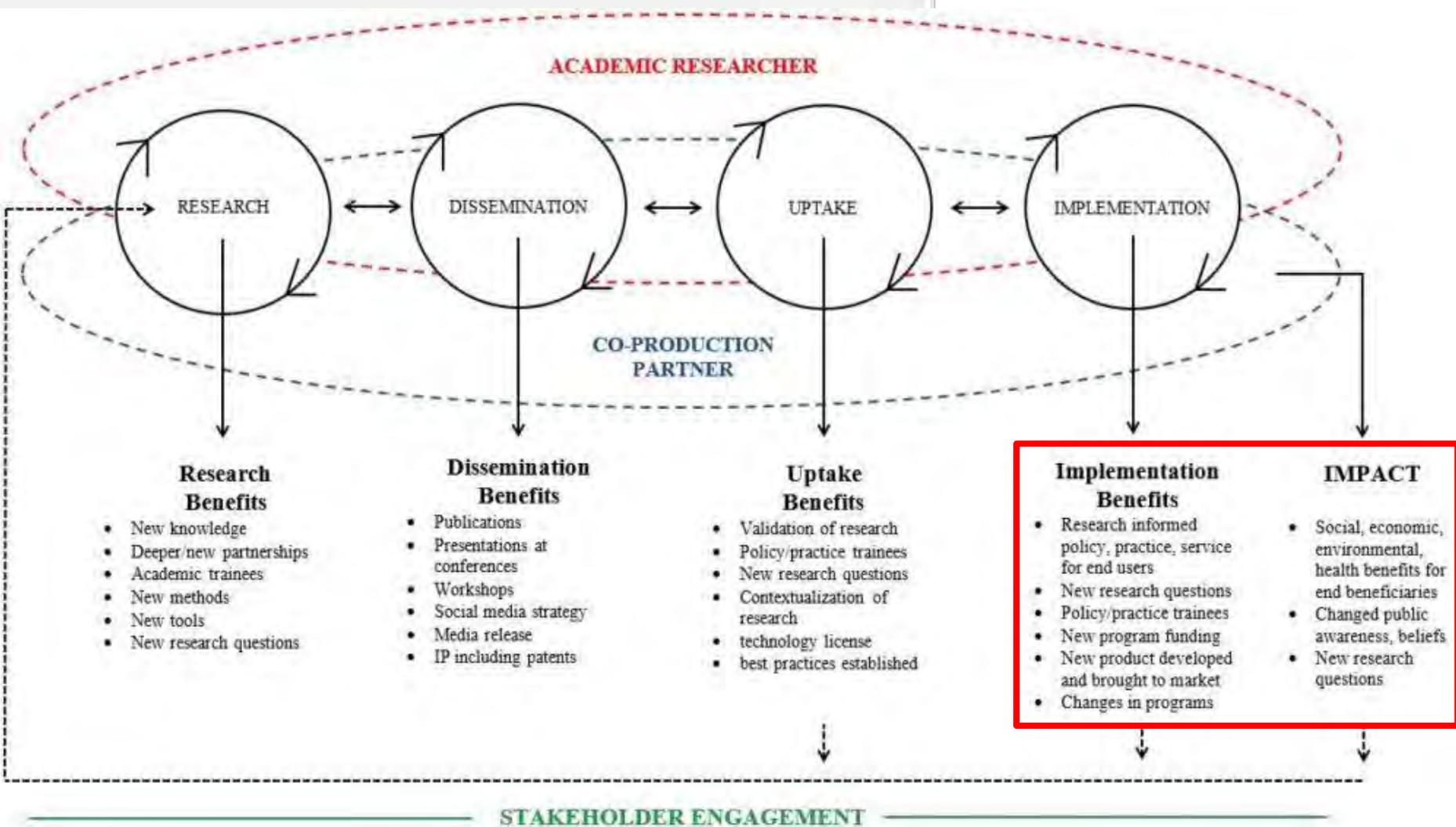
- Research is done.
- Identify some potential impact partners.
- Work with them to develop impact.

Proactive

- Involve stakeholders from Design to Dissemination to Development.
- Work with them to map out the journey to impact.
- Research 'with', rather than 'about', 'for' or 'on'.



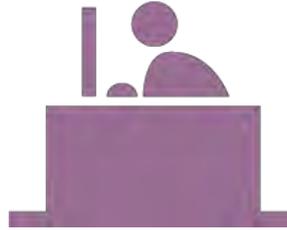
Ensuring that your research is impactful



Behaviour change in Universities



Setting out
an impact
strategy



Fixed-term
posts
becoming
permanent



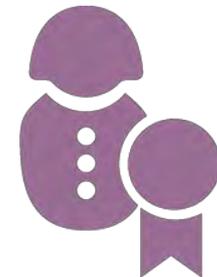
Implementing
systems to
store evidence
of impact



Capturing evidence
of impact on an
ongoing basis



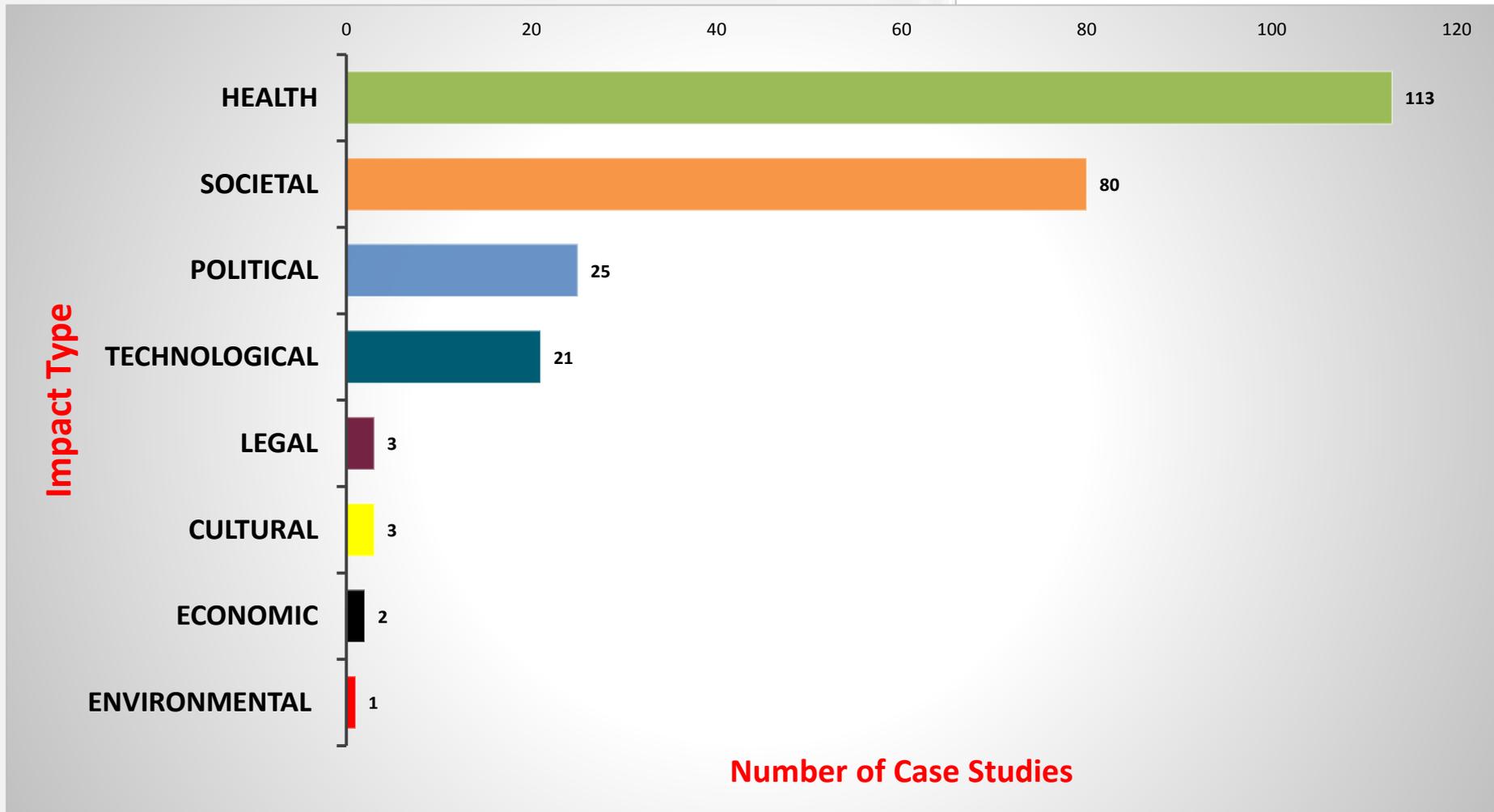
Building a plan
for impact into
projects



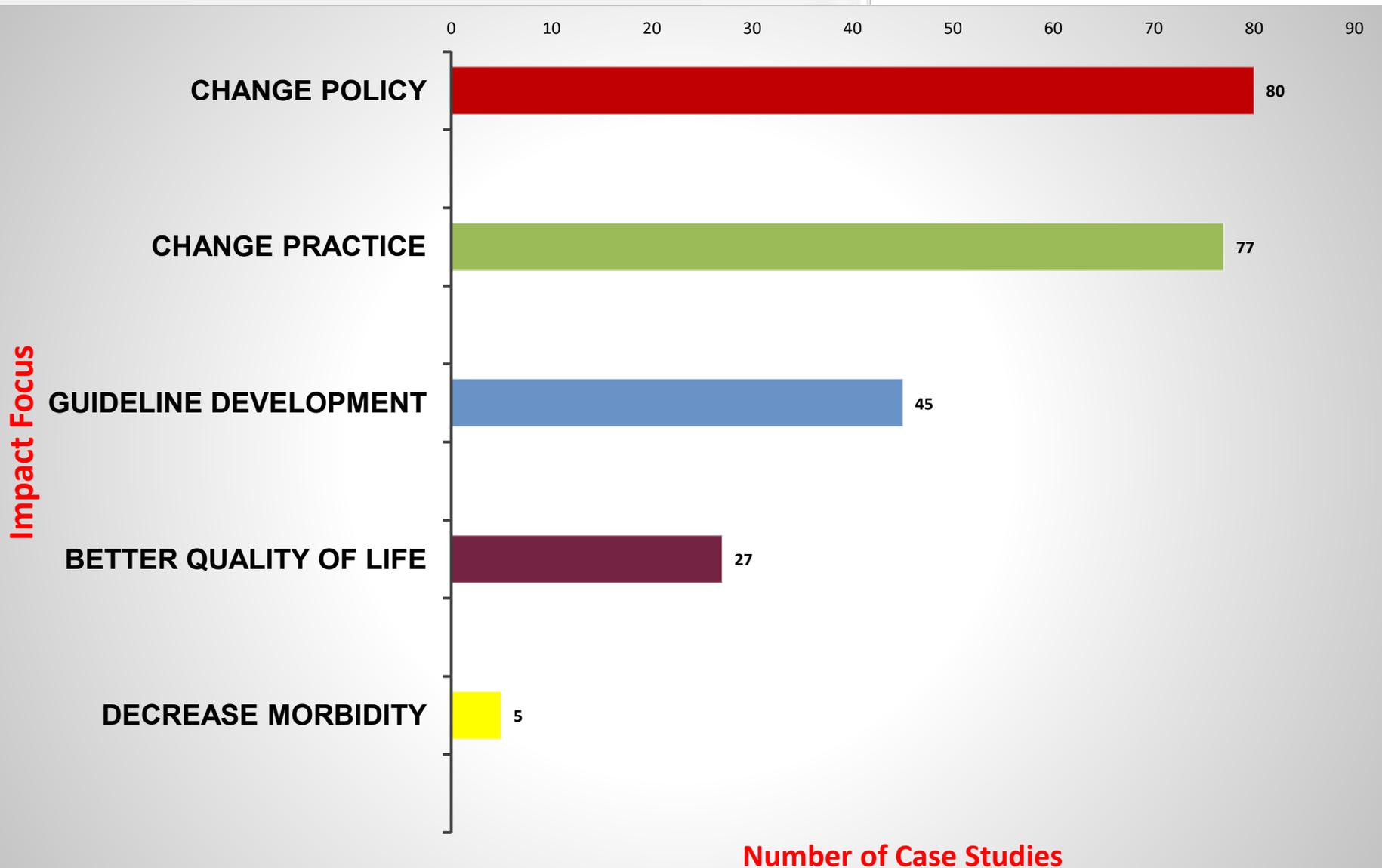
Inclusion of impact
as a criterion for
promotion

Impact Case Studies: Focus of Impact (n=248)

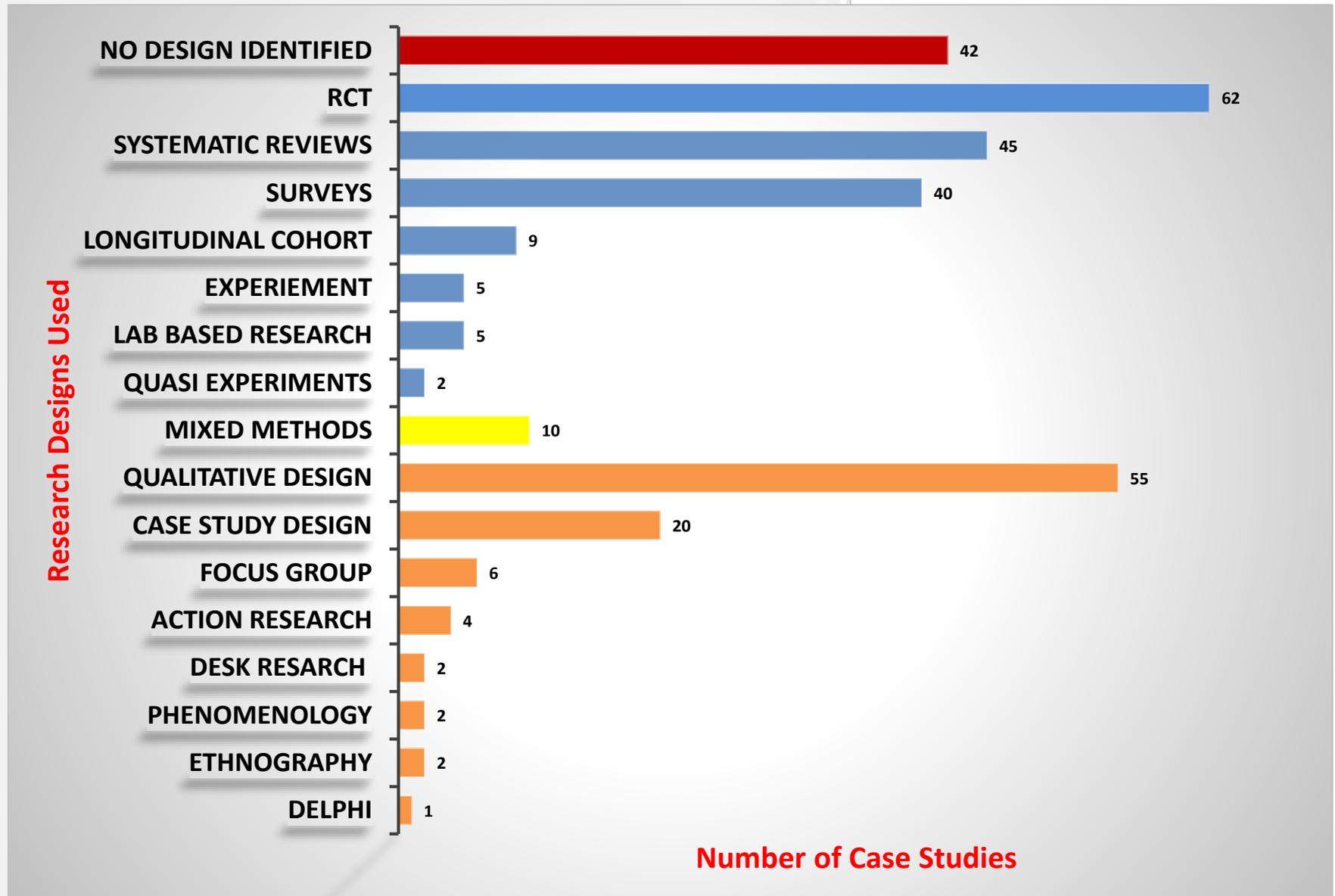
The definition of impact: *An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life”.*



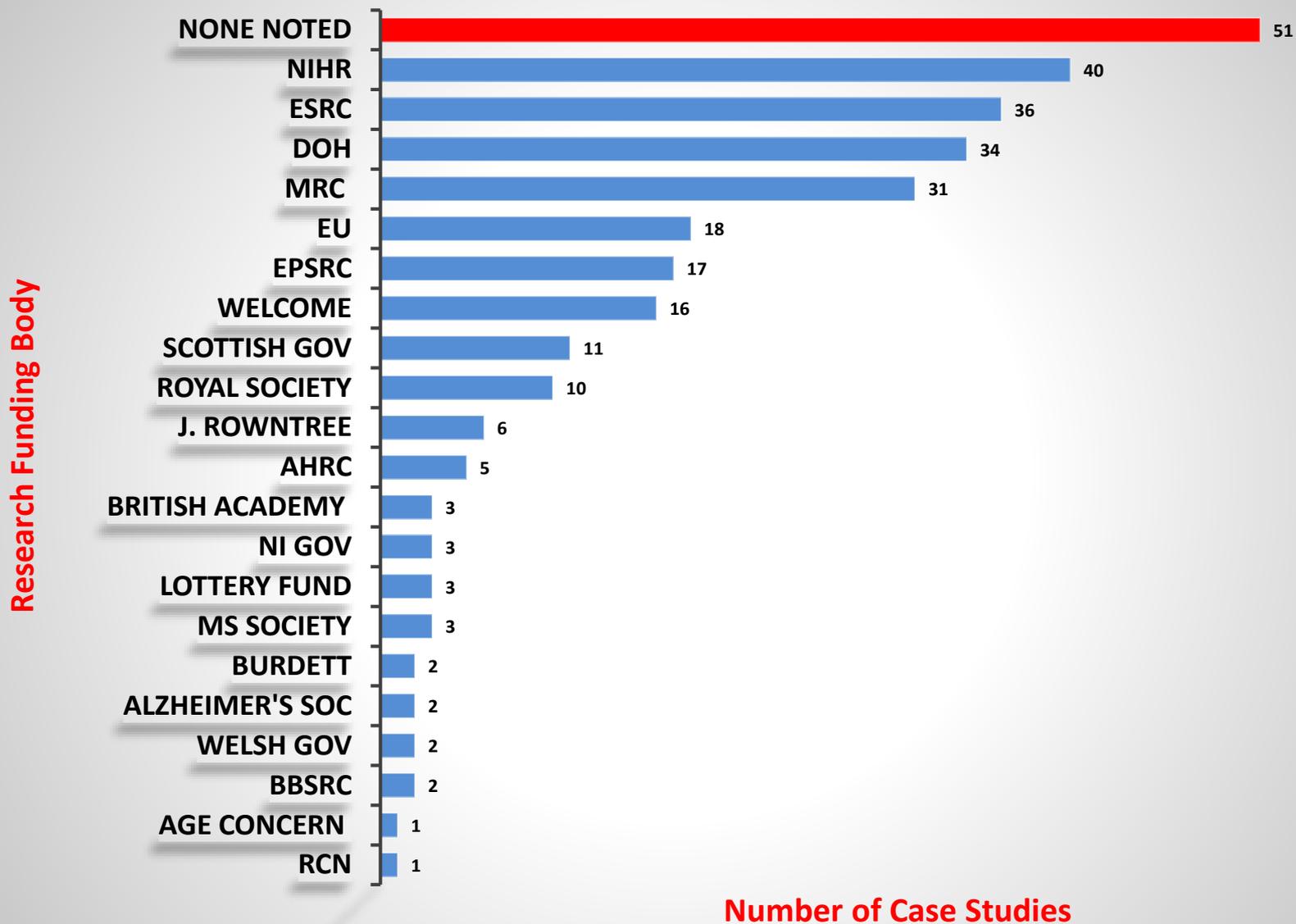
Impact Case Studies: Impact on Health (n=248)



Impact Case Studies: Research Designs (N=248)



Impact Case Studies: Funding Sources (N=248)



REF2014: Ten 4 Star Impact Case Studies- UoA 3

- Widespread change in practice from nil by mouth to feeding within 24 hours after surgery aids recovery and reduces complications
- Transforming care for cancer survivors
- Innovative Technologies for Stroke Rehabilitation
- Organ and Tissue Donation: supporting the decision-makers
- Improving care for children born with cleft lip and palate in the UK and beyond
- Supporting regulatory approval of poorly soluble drugs for HIV and Hepatitis C
- Delivering public health services through community pharmacy
- Commercialisation of fluorescent ligand technologies for advancing receptor pharmacology and drug screening
- Influencing policy and practice in non-medical prescribing (NMP)
- Millions of people worldwide and leading companies benefit from novel approach to developing and evaluating products designed to protect against tooth-wear and dentine hypersensitivity

Research Impact!



Research Impact: Further Information

- <http://www.fasttrackimpact.com/single-post/2015/10/16/How-to-write-a-winning-research-impact-case-study>
- <http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/>
- <https://www.atn.edu.au/siteassets/publications/atngo8.pdf>
- <https://academic.oup.com/rev/article/23/1/21/2889056/Assessment-evaluations-and-definitions-of-research>