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

MAXIMISE YOUR RESEARCH IMPACT
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.

Each Main Panel will comprise:
- The chair
- Chairs of each sub-panel
- International members
- Research user members

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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Panel A</th>
<th>Units of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Moira Whyte</td>
<td>1  Clinical Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Doreen Cantrell</td>
<td>2 Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Hugh McKenna</td>
<td>3  Allied Health Professions, Biomedical Sciences, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Susan Gathercole</td>
<td>4  Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Paul Elliott</td>
<td>5  Biological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Peter Clegg</td>
<td>6  Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REF2021: Key changes since 2014

Overall quality

Outputs

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

Impact

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

Environment

Environment data and template
(1,912)

60%

25%

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Assessment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of case study:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Summary of the impact  (indicative maximum 100 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Underpinning research  (indicative maximum 500 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. References to the research  (indicative maximum of six references)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Details of the impact  (indicative maximum 750 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sources to corroborate the impact  (indicative maximum of 10 references)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

Moral Imperative.

Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum Scientiarum* 1620.

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.
## WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

The criteria for assessing impacts are reach and significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four star</strong></td>
<td>Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three star</strong></td>
<td>Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two star</strong></td>
<td>Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One star</strong></td>
<td>Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unclassified</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
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 → Distinct and material contribution → Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
Research at HEI(s)

• Conducted by staff while at the submitting HEI(s)- non portable.
  • In the relevant UOA(s).
  • Evidenced by output(s) between 1 Jan 2000 – 31 Dec 2020.
  • Impact must occur between 1 Aug 2013 and 31 July 2020.
  • Whether or not underpinning outputs were submitted to the previous RAEs or REF.

Distinct and material contribution

Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit

• One or more individuals, teams or groups.

• Quality that is equivalent to at least two star. Up to 6 key references (not all research has to be 2*).
• May have been undertaken by Category C eligible staff.
• Can include proxy indicators of quality.
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?

Research at HEI A /UoA1
Research at HEI A /UoA2
Research at HEI A /UoA3

Distinct and material contribution

Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Research at HEI A/UoA1 → Research at HEI A/UoA2 → Distinct and material contribution → Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?

Research by Dr. Z at HEI A

Research by Dr. Z at HEI B

Distinct and material contribution

Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?
Public Engagement.

General expertise
Communication skills
Research

Dr. X engages with the public

Social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
WHAT IS RESEARCH IMPACT?
Change in Policy.

- Professional expertise
- Reputation/standing
- Research

Prof. Z acts as policy adviser

social, economic or cultural effect, change or benefit
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”.

![Bar chart showing the number of case studies for different impact types]
Impact Case Studies: Impact on Health (n=248)

- **CHANGE POLICY**: 80
- **CHANGE PRACTICE**: 77
- **GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT**: 45
- **BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE**: 27
- **DECREASE MORBIDITY**: 5
Impact Case Studies: Research Designs (N=248)

Research Designs Used

- No Design Identified: 42
- RCT: 62
- Systematic Reviews: 45
- Surveys: 40
- Longitudinal Cohort: 9
- Experiment: 5
- Lab Based Research: 5
- Quasi Experiments: 2
- Mixed Methods: 10
- Qualitative Design: 55
- Case Study Design: 20
- Focus Group: 6
- Action Research: 4
- Desk Research: 2
- Phenomenology: 2
- Ethnography: 2
- Delphi: 1

Number of Case Studies
Impact Case Studies: Funding Sources (N=248)

- **NONE NOTED**: 51
- **NIHR**: 40
- **ESRC**: 36
- **DOH**: 34
- **MRC**: 31
- **EU**: 18
- **EPSRC**: 17
- **WELCOME**: 16
- **SCOTTISH GOV**: 11
- **ROYAL SOCIETY**: 10
- **J. ROWNTREE**: 6
- **AHRC**: 5
- **BRITISH ACADEMY**: 3
- **NI GOV**: 3
- **LOTTERY FUND**: 3
- **MS SOCIETY**: 3
- **BURDETT**: 2
- **ALZHEIMER'S SOC**: 2
- **WELSH GOV**: 2
- **BBSRC**: 2
- **AGE CONCERN**: 1
- **RCN**: 1

Number of Case Studies
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

http://www.stephenckemp.co.uk/uoa-3-allied-health-professions-dentistry-nursing-pharmacy-4-impact-case-studies/
Research Impact!

You then struck the intruder with a bound PhD thesis?

Yes, it was research with impact.
Research Impact: Further Information


- [http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/](http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/)
