

Section D3: Assessment criteria: impact

Introduction

81. This section should be read alongside 'guidance on submissions' (in particular, Section 3, Annex A, Annex C and Annex G), which sets out the generic definition of impact for the REF, the requirements for submitting impact case studies and a completed impact template, the associated eligibility guidelines, and the generic assessment criteria and level definitions. The sub-panels will assess impact in accordance with this framework.

82. This section provides information which adds to and complements, but does not replace, 'guidance on submissions' with the intention of assisting institutions in developing their submissions for this new element of research assessment.

83. Research across the arts and humanities (understood in their broadest definition) has consequences for individuals and groups in the UK and internationally, challenging imaginations and enriching lives economically, culturally, spiritually and educationally. The impact of such research is powerful, pervasive and ubiquitous, influencing civil society and the quality of life. Impact may be the

result of individual or collective research (or a combination of these), including collaboration with researchers beyond the UK. The impact of research may be foreseen or unforeseen. It can emerge as an end product, but can also be demonstrated during the research process. Impact takes place through a wide variety of mechanisms. The links between research and its consequences may be direct and causal, or diffuse and non-linear. It may effect change or enrichment for local, national or international communities, groups or individuals. Consequently public engagement may be an important feature of many case studies, typically as the mechanism by which the impact claimed has been achieved. The sub-panels will take all these factors into account as appropriate when weighing the evidence provided.

Range of impacts

84. Table D1 is intended to illustrate some of the wide variety of areas in which impact from research across Main Panel D may be found to have a positive influence on the quality of life of individuals and communities locally, nationally and internationally. **These are indicative only**, and in practice much of the impact will cross boundaries between them or go beyond them. Case studies are not expected to be classified in this way by submitting units.

Table D1 Indicative range of impacts

Civil society	Informing and influencing the form and content of associations between people or groups to illuminate and challenge cultural values and social assumptions.
Cultural life	Creating and interpreting cultural capital in all of its forms to enrich and expand the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals and groups.
Economic prosperity	Applying and transferring the insights and knowledge gained from research to create wealth in the manufacturing, service, creative and cultural sectors.
Education	Informing and influencing the form or the content of the education of any age group in any part of the world where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.
Policy making	Informing and influencing policy debate and practice through interventions relating to any aspect of human or animal well-being or the environment.
Public discourse	Extending the range and improving the quality of evidence, argument and expression to enhance public understanding of the major issues and challenges faced by individuals and society.
Public services	Contributing to the development and delivery of public services or legislation to support the welfare, education, understanding or empowerment of diverse individuals and groups in society, including the disadvantaged or marginalised.

85. **Examples of impact.** The following list offers submitting institutions some examples of impact that derive from research across the broad range of subjects covered by arts and humanities (and beyond). It is provided to stimulate ideas about the kinds of impact that could be developed into case studies where they meet the definition of impact set out in Annex C of 'guidance on submissions'. The examples below are indicative only and do not articulate the expectations of any one sub-panel:

- Generating new ways of thinking that influence creative practice.
- Creating, inspiring and supporting new forms of artistic, literary, linguistic, social, economic, religious, and other expression.
- Contributing to innovation and entrepreneurial activity through the design and delivery of new products or services.
- Contributing to economic prosperity via the creative sector including publishing, music, theatre, museums and galleries, film and television, fashion, tourism, and computer games.
- Informing or influencing practice or policy as a result of research on the nature and extent of religious, sexual, ethnic or linguistic discrimination.
- Research into the languages and cultures of minority linguistic, ethnic, religious, immigrant, cultures and communities used by government, NGOs, charities or private sector to understand and respond to their needs.
- Helping professionals and organisations adapt to changing cultural values.
- Contributing to continuing personal and professional development.
- Preserving, conserving, and presenting cultural heritage.
- Developing stimuli to tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience.
- Influencing the design and delivery of curriculum and syllabi in schools, other HEIs or other educational institutions where the impact extends significantly beyond the submitting HEI, for example through the widespread use of text books, primary sources or an IT resource in education.
- Contributing to processes of commemoration, memorialisation and reconciliation.
- Contributing to a wider public understanding of basic standards of wellbeing and human rights conceptions.

- Informing or influencing the development of expert systems in areas such as medicine, human resources, accounting, and financial services.
- Influencing the methods, ideas or ethics of any profession.
- Providing expert advice to governments, NGOs, charities and the private sector in the UK and internationally, and thereby influencing policy and/or practice.
- Engaging with and mediating between NGOs and charities in the UK and internationally to influence their activities, for example in relation to health, education and the environment.
- Contributing to widening public access to and participation in the political process.

86. HEIs are reminded that impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector (whether in the UK or internationally) **are excluded**. Other impacts within the HE sector that meet the definition of impact for the REF **are included** where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI. (See 'guidance on submissions', Annex C.)

Case studies: evidence of impact

87. An impact case study for the purposes of the REF is necessarily a written submission (see 'guidance on submissions', paragraph 147b and Annex G). The sub-panels see the narratives in the case studies as a crucial part of the text; they will link the underpinning research to the impact or benefit claimed, and they will be the main contextualisation in each case study for the types of evidence of impact provided.

88. It is fully accepted that not all potential evidence might be available to submitting institutions. The integrity, coherence and clarity of the narrative accompanying each case study will be essential to the panels when forming their judgements, and key claims made in the narrative should be capable of corroboration.

89. The main panel recognises that some of the evidence in case studies may be of a confidential or sensitive nature. The arrangements for submitting and assessing case studies that include such material are set out in Part 1, paragraphs 58-59.

90. While it is expected that narratives will differ according to the nature of the impact claimed, case studies should clearly articulate the relationship between the underpinning research and the impact. This is likely to be evident in the nature and extent of external engagement and dissemination, as well as in the types of individuals, groups or organisations