

# **Research Impact Strategy**

# UWE Bristol Research Impact Strategy

## Background

Research with Impact is at the heart of [UWE Bristol Strategy 2020](#). We are a 'partnership university':

- undertaking research that meets the needs of a healthy, sustainable economy and society;
- informing real-world teaching and learning and enhancing the student experience;
- building upon existing working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders as well as developing new partnerships regionally, nationally and internationally.

We embody the increasing emphasis from government, funding bodies and HEFCE on achieving real world impact. Nationally, there has been a drive for researchers to consider the potential benefits of their work beyond academia. Increasingly, research funders require plans for research impact to be embedded in proposals for research. Research Councils expect a [Pathways to Impact](#) statement while European research programmes, such as Horizon 2020, normally require a [plan for the dissemination and exploitation of the project's results](#).

For HEFCE, impact is defined in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 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. Impact includes, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:

- the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding;
- of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals;
- in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally."

Impact in the context of the REF must be underpinned by research of the quality stipulated by HEFCE.

At UWE Bristol we already achieve outstanding impact - as evidenced by our [outcomes from REF 2014](#). Many of our leading researchers have developed and sustained excellent on-going relationships with their external collaborators to achieve impacts from their research judged to meet the highest level, defined by HEFCE as "outstanding in terms of their reach and significance". Areas where [our research has already made a difference in society](#) range widely and include clinical practice, conservation, manufacturing, healthcare technologies, public policy, and business practice.

National and international thinking on impact is evolving rapidly and we need to be fleet of foot in responding to developments. It is increasingly influencing not only our profile and reputation but also the amount of resource we receive as a result of our performance in the REF and support from funding bodies. Nevertheless, at UWE Bristol, we are keen to ensure that a research impact culture extends beyond the REF and that as much of our research as possible is focused on being of value to society (leads to impact), as well as feeding our curriculum.

It is intended that this UWE-wide Research Impact Strategy is a living document and is operationalised in Faculties and Professional Services through their own Implementation Plans.

### **Vision**

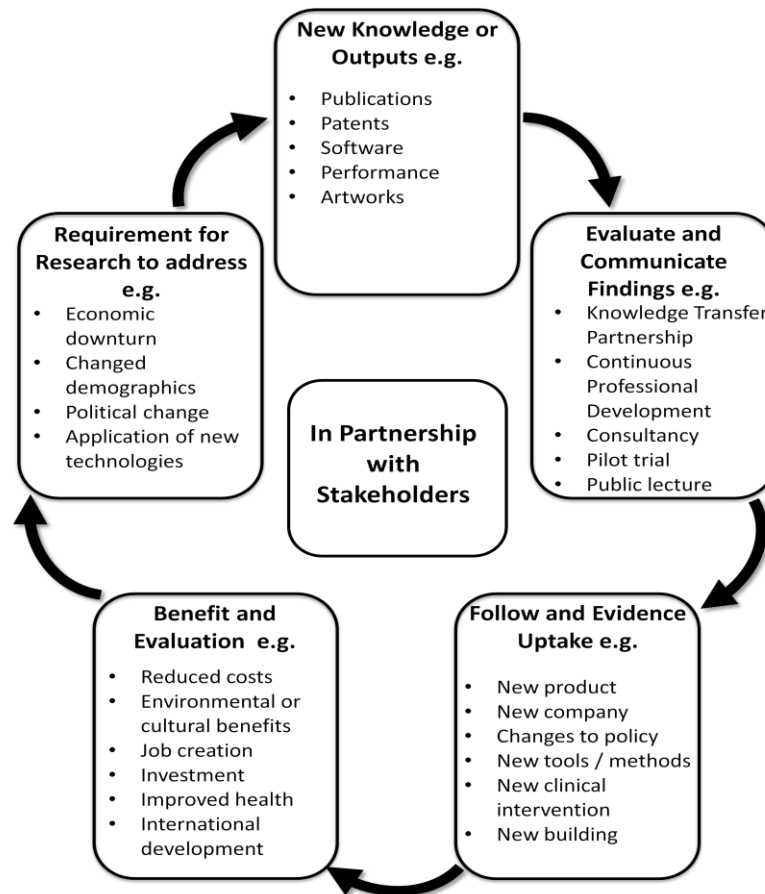
Impact will be underpinned by a track record of internationally excellent and world leading research undertaken at UWE Bristol. It will build upon and be integral to our strong, focused research priorities and our wealth of engagement with external organisations. There will be a strong focus on economic, health, environmental and social impacts that are outstanding in terms of their reach and significance.

All researchers will truly engage with various stakeholders over the life cycle of their research programmes, from identifying the need for research and formulating research questions, to co-creation of new knowledge, evaluating and communicating the research findings, following and evidencing the uptake and resultant benefits in society, and evaluating the outcomes. This is summarised as the 'Research-Impact Cycle' below. UWE Bristol will become increasingly recognised as a leading 'research-engaged' university nationally and internationally.

Much of our research and its resultant impact will be facilitated through our strong relationships with international, national and regional organisations .

Enabled by nurtured and sustained relationships with external organisations, the reach and significance of the vast majority of our research impacts will be recognised to be outstanding. Two-way flow of information and dialogue between ourselves and our stakeholders to inform and shape our research activity will routinely lead to the translation of our research into practice or application,

## The Research-Impact Cycle



and enable research to reflect the needs of stakeholders. Our approach to research leading to impact, as well as our impact case studies and on-going activities associated with impact, will also inform our taught programmes and enhance the experience of our students through knowledge exchange projects, student projects, internships and placements and curriculum development with external research partners.

### Aims

- To build upon current understanding and achievements to become the leading Alliance university nationally for research impact as evidenced by the outcome of REF 2020
- To be a leading research-engaged university that fully embeds a research impact culture into research and partnership activities, including with business and public bodies, through the volume and quality of interdisciplinary research and engagement across all faculties;
- To ensure that research impact feeds teaching and the student experience;

- To use our research impact to raise the profile and attractiveness of UWE Bristol with potential students, staff, external partners and the public.

## **Objectives**

### ***Induction, development and culture enhancement***

- To ensure that research impact is embedded into staff induction, probation, personal development review (PDR) and progression processes, including for relevant staff in the Professional Services, and research student induction and progression processes;
- To ensure that all researchers who may be returned to the REF understand and operationalise the HEFCE requirements for an impact case study;
- To support researchers to plan for impact alongside conception of the research project and to maximise impact as and when it occurs, through a written pathways to impact statement;
- To promote the concept of the development of impact from an individual research area as a team (rather than simply individual) effort that requires succession planning
- To promote active engagement of academic staff and researchers with external stakeholders;
- To establish mechanisms for UWE Bristol researchers (staff and research students) and those from research user organisations to move between organisations, e.g., through secondments, visiting roles, non-executive directorships;
- To develop a shared understanding of different types and value of research impact (e.g., economic, environmental, societal, health, policy, cultural, well-being), that is independent of research discipline;
- To develop understanding and share awareness of best practice concerning measurement and evidencing impact;
- To ensure that researchers, including research students, and relevant Professional Services, e.g., Research, Business and Innovation (RBI) and Marketing, are supported in impact activities through a central programme of appropriate workshops and other development that is managed through RBI;
- To support researchers to embed research outcomes and impact case studies into taught programmes including project work;
- To ensure that good practice in research impact is shared and celebrated, including through stakeholder-sponsored impact awards.

### ***Building capacity and influence regionally, nationally and internationally***

- To share with and learn from other higher education institutions (HEIs) and research organisations engaged in research impact;
- To build knowledge mobilisation expertise at UWE Bristol;
- To be part of the impact thought leadership nationally and internationally including through HEFCE, the Research Councils, Innovate UK, JISC (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee), the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), the Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA), the Association for University Research and Industry Links (AURIL) and the University Alliance;
- To actively contribute to the international research impact debate and thinking.

### ***Engagement and partnerships***

- To establish a community of practice for Faculty Impact Champions and others involved in impact, facilitated by RBI, to share good practice and thinking;
- To aid researchers to initiate, nurture and sustain meaningful relationships with stakeholders to help achieve impact;
- To support researchers to work closely with stakeholders at the early stages of research planning to maximise the potential impact of the research;
- To understand how existing collaborations map onto UWE Bristol research strengths and vice versa;
- To develop and enrich partnerships with external organisations through research impact;
- To promote collaborative research that involves the research user as an active partner;
- To build research impact into existing activities and events (e.g., conferences, public lectures, business events, continuous professional development (CPD), innovation projects wherever it makes sense to do so;
- To facilitate discussions between researchers and users of research, including, e.g., representatives of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), innovation and knowledge exchange partners and employers of research students who are registered part-time, thereby enabling a research-engaged culture;
- To enhance communication of research findings to stakeholders through, e.g., the media, online contexts, and face-to-face events

### ***Processes***

- To evaluate available products and ensure that appropriate systems and processes to facilitate research impact are in place, including for collection of relevant information, such as evidence of impact;
- To ensure clear reporting lines for research impact within faculties and between faculties and the university;
- To develop and implement an effective and transparent process for identifying and developing the best impact case studies for REF 2020+.
- To monitor and evaluate activities leading to research impact, as well as impact itself, to ensure a culture of learning and continuous improvement.

### ***Resource and Capability***

- To ensure that research impact activities are appropriately resourced, including researcher time and support from the Professional Services, including support for external engagement events;
- To undertake a review of our impact capabilities in relation to this strategy;
- To monitor and respond appropriately to the evolving external agenda in relation to impact;
- To ensure that best possible research impact outcomes are achieved as evidenced by the results of REF 2020 by providing strategic direction and targeted resource.