Guideline for completing impact sections in your RCUK grant application

Research Councils UK defines impact in the following ways:

Academic impact
The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

Economic and societal impacts
The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom,
- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy,
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

Checklist for Completing the Academic Beneficiaries, Impact Summary and Pathways to Impact

Pathways towards academic impact are expected to be outlined in the **Academic Beneficiaries** and appropriate Case for Support sections. An exception to this is where academic impact forms part of the critical pathway to economic and societal impact.

The purpose of the **Impact Summary** and **Pathways to Impact** are to encourage researchers to consider the potential impact of their research from the outset and to ask for information about activities which could maximise the potential impact of your research beyond academia.

The Checklist should be used alongside the **Je-S Helptext** and Research Council specific guidance.

Academic Beneficiaries *Maximum of 4000 characters (including spaces and returns)*	Y/N

Academic Beneficiaries should address the following questions:
 	
- **How the research will benefit other researchers <u>in the field</u>?**
   o Identify the potential academic impact of the proposed work
   o Explain any collaboration with other researchers and their role in the project
 	
- **Identify whether there are any academic beneficiaries <u>in other disciplines</u> and, if so, how they will benefit and what will be done to ensure that they benefit**
 	
- **Types of Academic Impact:**
   o Enhancing the knowledge economy – new knowledge and scientific advancement
   o Worldwide academic advancement to address issues of importance in other countries or globally
   o The development and utilisation of new and innovative methodologies, equipment, techniques, technologies, and cross-disciplinary approaches
   o Contributing towards the health of academic disciplines – developing expertise and knowledge in new or declining disciplines or multi-disciplinary areas
   o Delivering and training highly skilled researchers	

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Impact Summary	
Maximum of 4000 characters (including spaces and returns)	

The Impact Summary should answer the two questions:
• **Who might benefit from this research?**
    o Individuals
    o Organisations
    o Communities
    o Public Sector
    o Business & Industry
    o Third Sector (Voluntary Org, Charity, Social Enterprise)
    o General Public
    o Schools
    o Other
• **How might they benefit from this research?** The following list provides an indication of the potential range of impacts that can be generated from research:
    o Enhancing cultural enrichment, quality of life, health and well-being
    o Contributing towards evidence based policy-making and influencing public policies and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level
    o Shaping and enhancing the effectiveness of public services
    o Transforming evidence based policy in practice and influencing and informing practitioners and professional practice
    o Improving social welfare, social cohesion and/or national security
    o Changing organisational culture and practices,
    o Contributing toward environmental sustainability, protection and impact reduction
    o Enhancing the research capacity, knowledge and skills of businesses and organisations
    o Contributing to increasing public awareness and understanding of science, economic and societal issues
    o Contributing toward wealth creation and economic prosperity i.e. the creation and growth of companies and jobs; enhancing business revenue and innovative capacity
    o Enhancing the efficiency, performance and sustainability of businesses/organisations including public services
    o Attracting R&D investment from global business
    o Contribution to regeneration and economic development
    o The commercialisation and exploitation of scientific knowledge, leading to spin out companies, and the creation of new processes, products and services
    o Training of skilled people for non-academic professions	

Pathways to Impact *The attachment should be a maximum of **2 sides of A4,** minimum sans serif font size 11 and entitled "Pathways to Impact"; the Proposal must include A Pathways to Impact attachment.*	
What will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to	

engage with your research?

- **How will you engage with them and when?**
  - Identify and actively engage relevant users of research and stakeholders at appropriate stages
  - articulate a clear understanding of the context and needs of users and consider ways for the proposed research to meet these needs or impact upon understandings of these needs
  - outline the planning and management of associated activities including timing, personnel, skills, budget, deliverables and feasibility
  - include evidence of any existing engagement with relevant end users

- **What activities are appropriate for developing the impact you hope to have?**
  Activities that can be used to exchange knowledge with target audiences and help foster impact include:
  - Having an advisory group with key users on board
  - Face to face meetings and targeted events involving knowledge users, like public lecturers, public debates, exhibitions, road shows science festivals, university public open days, conferences, seminars and workshops
  - Translation of research in an accessible and tailored format for user communities i.e. policy briefings, articles within professional newsletters, journals and magazine, promotional flyers for professional conferences and events; the creation of a website/web-pages, interactive media, podcasts, video reports or webinars
  - Easily accessible reports or attractively designed research summaries
  - Interaction with broadcast media, press briefing/releases, press conferences/interviews, radio/TV appearance, as well as use of digital communication channels such as blogs, Twitter, etc.
  - Formal financial and/or in-kind collaboration(s) and partnership (s) to enhance the application and co-production of knowledge, equipment/materials, secondment, training, consultancy, access to facilities and/or other resources, other
  - Learning and development opportunities which are project specific and will enhance the economic and societal impact of the research
  - Education outreach and associated materials
  - Formal people exchange mechanisms such as placements and secondments of research or user community personnel to enhance the application/coproduction of knowledge
  - Specialised staff employed to undertake communications and exploitation activities, technical experts to write publications, web pages and user-friendly interfaces
- **Pathways to Impact attachment should**:

  - Be project-specific and not generalised
  - Be flexible and focus on potential outcomes

What is the difference between the two summaries on the Je-S form and the Pathways to Impact document?

The summaries may appear in the public domain so need to be written in non-technical language. Their focus is on the beneficiaries, both academic and non-academic, and what the impacts will be

for them. The Pathways to Impact document is part of the case for support, so will be used by reviewers. It should cover what you will actually do - activities such as networking events, workshops, publications, public engagement and training. You should design your Pathways to Impact activities so that they align and are integrated with the research.

And the difference between the Impact Summary and Academic Beneficiaries?

The **Impact Summary** should cover potential economic and societal impacts. The questions you should address here are: Who might benefit from this research beyond academia and how? In contrast, the **Academic Beneficiaries** section is the space to set out how your proposed research will contribute to knowledge both within the UK and internationally. How will it benefit other researchers in your field and in other disciplines?

What if I think Impact doesn't apply to my research?

Impact has been described very broadly, and it is the expectation that everyone will be able to write something, but if you feel you can't, then you can use the Pathways to Impact to explain your reasoning. Your arguments will be reviewed with the rest of the proposal.

How does Public engagement fit?

For RCUK purposes, public engagement is a valid and important route to impact and may be included as one element of your Pathway to Impact. Engaging the public with your research can improve the quality of research and its impact, raise your profile, and develop your skills. These activities should be related to the research within the grant and should not be generic science outreach.

What about users and other collaborators?

Potential users of the research can play a key role in helping you write the Pathways to Impact, and then in contributing to the project during its lifetime, both with resources and with intellectual input. For instance they can contribute to the development of research questions, advise on opportunities for using any results or outputs, and could commit resources to follow-on activities.

If you don't have contacts with users before the project, don't forget you can use Pathways to Impact resources and activities to help you find them, for instance through networking meetings, seminars and so on.

The RCUK position and expectations document on the RCUK website outlines considerations that funding recipients would be expected to undertake: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/policies/

Further background information on Pathways to Impact is available on the RCUK website: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/

Please contact Research Impact Officer, Dana Vilistere RBDO (dvilistere@brookes.ac.uk, x 4197) if you have any queries about how to complete impact sections in your RCUK application.

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Additional Sources and Resources

Je-S Handbook

RCUK's Pathways to Impact main page

RCUK Impact Requirements Frequently Asked Questions

Fast Track Impact - Impact planning tools and examples of 4* impact case studies