

## **Self-assessment tools<sup>1</sup>**

One way of evaluating your effectiveness in achieving and planning for impact is to review the extent to which your research practice has already consciously, or unconsciously, sparked some connection with one or more potential – even remote – ‘impact channels’. We adopt this as a neutral term to describe a wide range of types of behaviour, relationship and interaction which predispose, or enable, the attainment of impact. **NOTE THAT THESE ARE NOT IN THEMSELVES EVIDENCE OF HAVING ACHIEVED IMPACT:** the aim here is map those areas in which activity in impact channels might produce evidence of impact in future.

The following self-assessment tools can be used to map out, somewhat impressionistically, the main lines of your ‘portfolio of *potential* impacts’ to date. The aim of this tool is to help you get a better sense of where your preparation for impact is strong, where it can be enhanced, and where you might seek to develop new impact channels in future.

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<sup>1</sup> This tool is influenced by, but is not based upon the detailed approach of, the Elsevier REPP model.







## **2. Planning outputs from research with impact**

The second matrix allows a researcher to set out the **likely, intended or possible** outputs for a new project which provide an opportunity for linking to an impact channel. The LSE Public Policy Group's handbook uses the common vocabulary of knowledge transfer/knowledge exchange to map out an outputs scheme<sup>2</sup>. LSE's PPG notes that academics engage with these forms of KT/KE to differing degrees depending upon their discipline. Moreover, many academics – even in the social sciences – are aware of, or use, far more than the 21 categories identified by LSE. This second matrix, then, offers an enhanced version of the LSE model, and seeks to identify a range of outputs in all disciplines in the university. Some will be unique to a discipline or even sub-discipline.

For a new project **identify planned outputs from the project, then the planned impact routes associated with them**. For example, if your outputs include a publicly accessible dataset, what will you do to ensure that it reaches potential users? (publicity for the deposit in user community social media channels?; emails to key potential users making the fact of the deposit and the utility of the data plain?; attending user community events to talk about the dataset? notes on the dataset on research blogs from your research group?)

<b>Output from the research project</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>('Y's' only – how/when will you seek to develop impact from the output?)</b>
A contracted book or monograph		
A chapter in a contracted book or edited collection		
A contribution to a published conference volume		
A research note in an academic journal		
A research article in an academic journal		
An editorial contribution to an academic journal		
A case study for inclusion in, for example, the European Case Clearing House (ecch)		
A technical standards description such as, for example, 'Drafts for Public Comment' of the BSI		
A publicly accessible dataset main available through, for example, the UK Data Archive or Scientific Data		
A publicly accessible data library		

<sup>2</sup> LSE Public Policy Group 'Maximizing the impacts of your research: a handbook for social scientists' [Consultation Draft 3, 2011], Figure 5.7, p. 159.

Software tools released to the public domain without restriction or with limited restrictions (e.g. Creative Commons licenses)		
A work of fine art, including installations, made available through public exhibition		
A work of performance art made available to the public		
A video recording for public access via open platforms such as, for example, YouTube		
A digital sound recording for public access via open platforms such as, for example, <a href="http://podacademy.org">http://podacademy.org</a>		
A sample of biological material such as might be deposited at, for example, <a href="http://www.ncimb.com">http://www.ncimb.com</a>		
A commissioned report or paper for a public or private body, made publicly available (for example, a report for the Home Office)		
A contribution to a policy discussion paper		
A solicited contribution to government policy discussion		
An unsolicited contribution to government policy discussion (e.g. a response to a public invitation to provide evidence to a Select Committee)		
A working paper or 'white paper' of a public, private or third sector organisation		
A contribution to an academic seminar or conference		
A contribution to a professional, industry or sector conference (e.g. those listed in <a href="http://expopromoter.com/events/search/GB">http://expopromoter.com/events/search/GB</a> )		
A delegation visit of experts (for example, membership of a trade mission)		
New or continuing membership of a professional body group in the field of the		

research		
Co-option to any other group in the field of the research		
A museum exhibition catalogue or commentary		
A contribution to an open innovation platform, for example Nine Sigma ( <a href="http://www.ninesigma.com">http://www.ninesigma.com</a> ) or Knowledge Vine ( <a href="http://www.theknowledgevine.net">http://www.theknowledgevine.net</a> )		
A service for industry (such as providing evidence from a new test developed at the university)		
A contribution to a piece of joint research with a commercial, government or third sector organisation		
A contribution to a piece of collaborative research for a company part-funded by government (for example, a KTP)		
Conference posters resulting from the research study		
A presentation or draft paper submitted by members of a research study in response to a Call for Papers issued by organizers of a meeting or conference.		
A presentation given by members of a research study in response to a written invitation issued by organizers of a meeting or conference outside of the main panel sessions (e.g. an opening session)		
A public lecture provided by research investigators		
Supplemental materials provided by research investigators to the organizers of a meeting or conference		
A contribution to an open public course of continuing professional development or publicly available lifelong learning		
A contribution to an online learning course or other form of open learning		



### 3. Impact pathways for policy-related research

Using the HEFCE database of case studies, the Maya Project has set out the most common routes to impact in research related to policy:

Pathway to impact		Health	Societal	Economic	Environmental	TOTAL	As percentage of all pathways used	Percentage of case studies using this pathway
<b>Advisory (i.e. being asked to contribute to government inquiry/report/panel)</b>		10	34	4	10	58	15.0	50.9
Establishing registered charity/organisation/network		3	2	0	1	6	1.6	5.3
<b>Collaboration/forming partnerships</b>	<b>Industry</b>	4	11	5	2	22	5.7	19.3
	<b>NGOs/interested groups</b>	5	8	1	1	15	3.9	13.2
Staff exchange/visits (e.g. work placement in government and/or industry)		0	2	0	1	3	0.8	2.6
<b>Developing online/usable resources, e.g. training materials</b>		1	7	4	3	15	3.9	13.2
<b>Media coverage</b>		4	16	4	1	25	6.5	21.9
Social media, including podcasts		1	2	1	0	4	1.0	3.5
Publications	<b>Academic</b>	25	64	12	13	101	26.2	88.6
	<b>Industry</b>	13	12	2	6	33	8.5	28.9
	<b>Government (e.g. policy briefings)</b>	1	8	0	5	14	3.6	12.3
	<b>General public</b>	1	1	0	2	4	1.0	3.5
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Academic</b>	0	2	1	0	3	0.8	2.6
	<b>Industry</b>	4	9	4	1	18	4.7	15.8
	<b>Government</b>	2	6	3	2	13	3.4	11.4
	<b>General public</b>	0	11	3	0	14	3.6	12.3
Workshops and seminars	<b>Academic</b>	1	0	0	0	1	0.3	0.9
	<b>Industry</b>	1	4	1	1	7	1.8	6.1
	<b>Government</b>	1	3	1	0	5	1.3	4.4
	<b>General public</b>	0	1	0	0	1	0.3	0.9
Large events, including conferences and roundtable events	<b>Organising</b>	1	1	1	1	4	1.0	3.5

These categories may be helpful in reviewing potential routes to impact for social science researchers. Plan your routes by considering whether, at the outset of planning your research, you have considered,

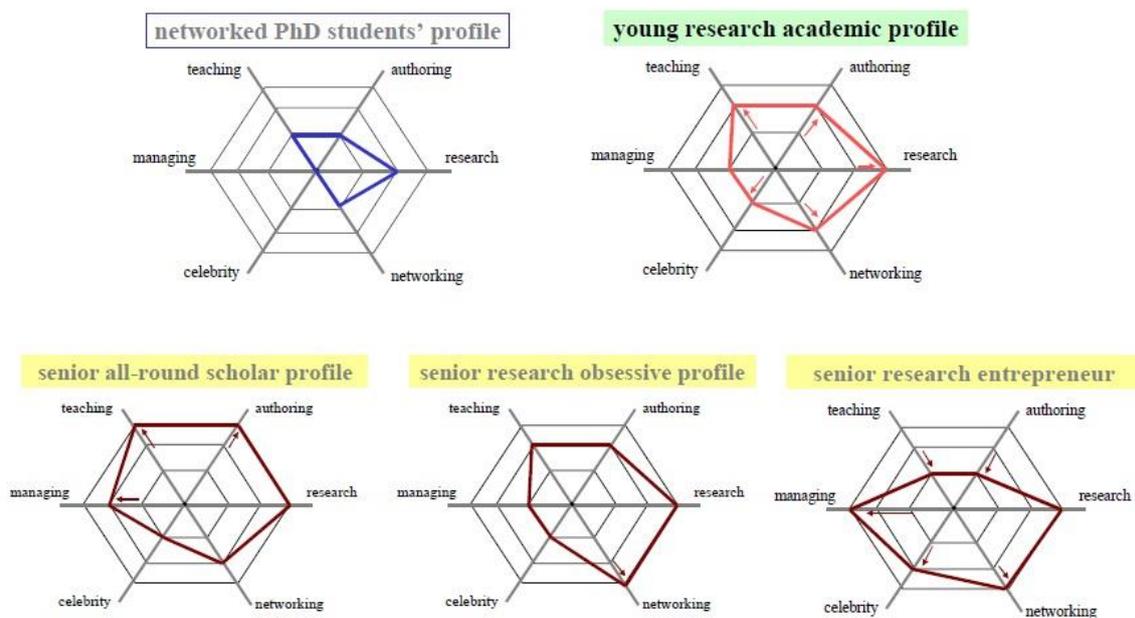
- Which routes are open to you to pursue and plan for now;
- Which routes may need help from others to secure (e.g. PR/Press team; RKTO events officer);
- Which routes are likely to be accessible with serendipity.

#### 4. Team dynamics and impact

Achieving impact from your research is not something that works to a formula: no amount of planning will *inevitably* lead to greater use of your research in ways that lead directly to economic, social, policy, cultural or other forms of impact. Typologies of impact<sup>3</sup> assume that ‘routes to impact’ are equally difficult to pursue, or equally straightforward. As we shall see below, this does not appear to be the case.

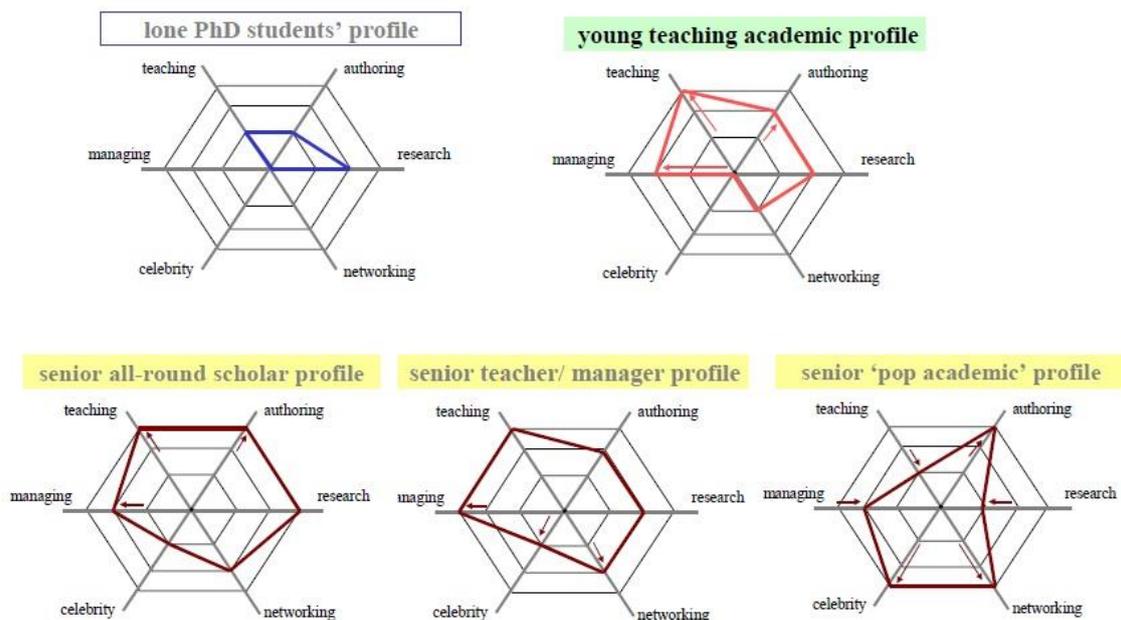
However one very important determinant of success in achieving impact, however, is relatively easy to comprehend and influence, if not wholly control. Your own, and your group’s, orientation toward, and sensitivity to, impact will be heavily affected by stage of your career and its trajectory.

The LSE’s very useful *Maximising the Impact of Your Research: a Handbook for Social Scientists*<sup>4</sup> suggests that the orientations of academic careers may differ depending on the **stage** we’ve reached and the **route** we’ve taken. It helpfully illustrates this by means of some ‘spiders web’ charts (below) in which six ‘orientations’ are shown – reflecting the extent to which roles require engagement with teaching, authoring, personal research, networking, developing a ‘celebrity’ profile as commentator, and managing research.



<sup>3</sup> See the LSE’s ‘living bibliography’ at <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/living-bibliography-impact-of-social-sciences-research-book/> connected with Bastow, S., Dunleavy, P., and Tinkler, J., (2014), *The Impact of the Social Sciences: How Academics and their Research Make a Difference*, (Sage: London); Denicolo, P. (ed.) (2013), *Achieving impact in research* (Sage: London); Cooke, J., and Nadim, T., (2011), ‘Measuring impact under CERIF at Goldsmiths’ available at [http://mice.cerch.kcl.ac.uk/wp-uploads/2011/07/MICE\\_Review\\_PURE.doc](http://mice.cerch.kcl.ac.uk/wp-uploads/2011/07/MICE_Review_PURE.doc) for references.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/LSEPublicPolicy/Docs/LSE\\_Impact\\_Handbook\\_April\\_2011.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/LSEPublicPolicy/Docs/LSE_Impact_Handbook_April_2011.pdf)



The LSE handbook suggests that these orientations may be different depending on whether one's prime focus is a research career or a research/teaching career. The handbook suggests that making explicit these orientations can enhance planning for impact.

For example, a well-balanced research team with lots of 'senior all-round scholar' profiles and no 'senior research entrepreneur' role would devote so much time to authoring that the networking required to induce impact might be weak. Similarly a mixed team of 'young teaching academics' and 'lone PhD students' (typical in arts departments) would benefit from the celebrity and networking talents of 'pop academics' to achieve impact. **REMEMBER IT'S ROLE PROFILE IN YOUR CAREER, NOT JUST CURRENT WORKLOAD, WE'RE TRACKING.**

Use the schematic spider web below and, in your research team or department, **your own metric for each dimension** and have each academic member of staff (whether REF-submitted in 2014 or not) trace their own orientation. Then amalgamate the results for a team configuration. Then ask yourself questions about the results, posing some means of responding to them such as:

If we are...	Can we...to enhance impact from research
Relatively weak on networking	Come up with a team plan to get into networks fast, or use the strongest network as a 'champion'?
Without any 'celebrity' roles	Does it matter? Can we 'make use of' someone else's celebrity to make a splash (e.g. inviting in well known 'pop academics' to influence them to trail our work)
All authoring madly with no time to secure impact	Can we plan a team approach, selecting key 'impact targets' for the team to develop?
Weaker on managing research	Can we make use of collaborations in which management is provided by others (e.g. H2020 consortia) for projects with potentially higher impact?
All at the extreme point of the teaching dimension	Explore routes through teaching activity (e.g. CPD for professionals) to achieve impact based on research in the group?

