

Impact Acceleration Accounts: Understanding Outputs, Outcomes and Impact

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) defines impact 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”.

IAA awards are intended to foster innovative routes to impact. In the application form you are asked to consider the outputs and outcomes your project will deliver, and the impacts that will result. During and after your IAA project, you will be asked to report on these. In this document we explain the differences between outputs, outcomes and impacts, with examples, and appropriate sources of evidence.

1. Outputs: What you produce

Outputs are the direct products of the activities you undertake during the project. They are usually tangible and quantifiable. Outputs typically occur during the timeframe of the project. Evidence for outputs is largely quantitative. Record the number and type of outputs during the project to facilitate reporting later on.

Examples of Outputs:

Publications and Documents:

Evidence can include DOIs, references or hyperlinks.

- Joint academic/industry publications and conference proceedings
- Manuals or guides
- Standard Operating procedures or methodologies
- Consultancy/technical reports
- Policy briefing report
- Book or book chapter
- Other grey literature

Commercial:

- Licensing agreements
 - *Record number and value*
- Market assessments completed
- New trademarks registered

Partnership/user engagement activities:

- No. of contributions to conferences/trade shows
 - *Provide evidence such as conference proceedings or URL*
- No. of outward secondments
- No. of inward secondments
- No. of collaborative academic/partner projects.
- CPD programmes developed or training delivered
- In-kind contributions from partner organisation
 - *Record the value*
- Direct cash contributions from partner organisation
 - *Record the value*
- Inward visits from partner organisation representatives, and outward visits by the academic to the partner organisation
 - *Record the number and duration*
- Networking events organised
 - *Record number and attendance*

New technology/knowledge:

- Patents filed
 - *Provide patent application no. as issued by the UK IPO (or the EPO, or USPTO, or WIPO)*
- New records of invention
- New trademark or copyright
- Prototypes
- Tool kits / test beds or methodologies

- Databases / models / software or App produced
- Diagnostic tools developed
- New materials and new applications for materials

Creative outputs:

Record attendance and reach where appropriate for external-facing activities. Provide URL evidence where possible

- Public engagement activities
- Performances
- Exhibitions
- Compositions
- Zines and published media
- Web and social media outputs
- Broadcast media: films, podcast

2. Outcomes: What you achieve

Outcomes are the results of your activities. These can be planned or unintentional and may arise in the short-term or extend beyond the duration of the project. Evidence for outcomes may be quantitative or qualitative, and you should work closely with the partner organisation to capture examples. Keep evidence such as records of meetings and communications that evidence knowledge transfer, funding and investment details, documentation of processes, analytics and archives from online activities, and feedback from events.

Examples of outcomes:

Economic/Commercial:

- Spinouts/social enterprises/joint ventures established
 - *Provide company number(s) as recorded by Companies House, and URLs where appropriate*
- Income generated through commercialisation activities (e.g. consultancy or licensing)

- Additional business or commercial R&D investment in the University over and above the original IAA project
- Investment from companies or venture capitalists in commercialisation/spin out
- Permanent employment created as a result of initial IAA placement, jobs created or safeguarded.
 - *In particular, consider the career outcomes/future employment for secondees and others working directly on the project.*
- Scale-up of products or processes User Engagement and Partnership:
- Further collaborations with partner organisation beyond the initial IAA
- Projects continuing beyond initial engagement, further grant applications submitted
- Extent and reach of CPD
 - *Record the numbers of attendees and any feedback, course completion rates*

Knowledge and Influence:

- Engagement of non-academic audiences
 - *May be evidenced by numbers of attendees at events, social media views/impressions, feedback received*
- Media interview, press release, press conference or other response to a media enquiry
 - *Note times, dates and provide URLs where possible*
- Citation in policy documents
 - *Provide references and URLs as appropriate*
- Evidence given to a government review
 - *Give details and URL as appropriate*
- Contribution to new or improved professional practice
 - *New standard operating procedures, best practice or new techniques and processes adopted*
- Prizes received (academic or industrial/sector-related)
 - *Provide URLs /press-release where possible*

3. Impact: What you affect

Impacts are long term outcomes which affect the society and culture, health and quality of life, the economy or the environment. They include wealth creation and improvements in social or environmental conditions. You should include long term beneficial changes to the partner and University, and reputational benefits. Consider the University of Manchester's core goals, including social responsibility and sustainable development.

Evidence of impact may include independent statements from partner organisations or policy makers, policy documents, sales records, financial and employment records, media archives, numbers of software downloads, evaluation reports and feedback. Evidence may be quantitative or qualitative.

Examples of impacts that may arise from the outputs and outcomes listed above:

- Number of jobs created or safeguarded as a result of IAA supported activities.
- Increased R&D expenditure by partner organisation
- Increased turnover, profits and exports of new products/processes by partner organisation
 - *Collect quantitative information from partner organisation*
- Cost savings/efficiency gains for partner organisations
 - *Collect quantitative information from partner organisation*
- New business models in partner organisations
 - *Collect testimonials/documentation from partner organisation*
- New products/processes launched
 - *Provide URLs for products and quantify sales/implementation of processes where possible*
- Policy change
 - *If possible, provide case studies, collect statements and reference policy documents*
- Benefits arising from change of practice or long-term behavioural change
 - *Specify the nature of the change and the benefits gained*
- Environmental impacts: Waste reduction, energy efficiency gains, increase in

sustainability, circularisation of life-cycle, reduction in carbon footprint.

- *Collect quantitative information*
- Social/societal impacts such as increase in engagement, participation and agency
 - *Consider at the planning stage how these will be evidenced. Examples may include focus group reports, interviews, surveys and evaluation reports, attendance numbers at events and web analytics.*
- Cultural impacts such as enhancements to cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, the production of new cultural artefacts, media or creative practices.
 - *Provide evidence such as URLs, press release and media coverage*
- Public-health and wellbeing impacts

4. Evaluating Impact

Impact evaluation should be considered at the planning stage of your project and incorporated within your IAA work plan. Write an evaluation plan that considers what the indicators of impact might be and what your quantitative and qualitative measures of success are. Where impact extends beyond the partner organisation, consider who the key beneficiaries will be and where appropriate, how you will engage with them.

The University offers training and support on impact and you are strongly advised to explore the [resources available on Staffnet](#) and talk to your faculty impact team.

Here are some useful external sources of further information on how to evidence and evaluate impact:

[NPC's Starting to Measure Your Impact](#)

[Museums Association guide to measuring social impact](#)

[National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's guidance on evaluation](#)

[ESRC Impact toolkit](#)

[EPSRC Health technologies impact and translation toolkit](#)