Systematic Impact Data & Evidence Collection for Robust Impact Reporting

Lead presenter: Laura Tucker (Founder & CEO, Vertigo Ventures)

Co-presenter: Lucy Day (Impact Officer, Liverpool John Moores University)

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Introduction to Vertigo Ventures (VV)

- **Founded in 2009** and have since been working with leading research organisations globally to help them identify, capture and report the impact of their work
- VV provides a range of services such as **impact training and workshops**, **consultancy services**, and, its unique proprietary software **VV-Impact Tracker**
- VV has delivered impact training/consultancy to **50+ research organizations**
- VV-Impact Tracker released in 2014 and is being **used by over 30 universities** around UK, Australia and Hong Kong, **with 6000+ academic users**.
- VV are currently:
  - Partnering with **Times Higher Education** to develop a **World University Impact Ranking**
  - **Training 100+ academics/month** (Pro VCs, Research Managers, Associate Deans, RDSO)
  - On-boarding universities at the rate of **2+ university / month**
  - Running an ongoing **webinar program** for UK/Australia/HK based research organizations
  - Distributing weekly **Impact newsletter to 2,000+ subscribers**

University of Kent
Kingston University London
The University of Nottingham UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA
University of Exeter
Liverpool John Moores University
GuildHE
Brunel University London
University of Oxford
King's College London
Loughborough University
University of Essex
Federation University Australia
The University of Sydney
University of Wollongong Australia
香港浸會大學 Hong Kong Baptist University
VV-IMPACT TRACKER

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Why we are here

Impact is important to funders

REF 2021 draft guidance in final consultation phase

Only 2 years left to REF 2021

Impact case study preparation

Focus on amplifying impact

Real time monitoring essential

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IMPACT – REF DEFINITIONS

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND (HEFCE) DEFINITION OF IMPACT

"For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined 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**." (REF, 2012 and 2018).

REF 2021 DRAFT GUIDANCE:

"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 includes the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects

For the purposes of the impact element of the REF

- Academic impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge (whether in the UK or internationally) are **excluded**.
- Impacts on students, teaching or other activities both within and beyond the submitting HEI are **included**."

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REACH AND SIGNIFICANCE

- Breadth and depth of the impact(s)

Reach:

The **extent** and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as **relevant to the nature of the impact** (it will not be assessed in geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries)

Significance:

The **degree** to which the impact has enables, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or well-being of beneficiaries

** From the REF 2021 draft Panel Guidance*

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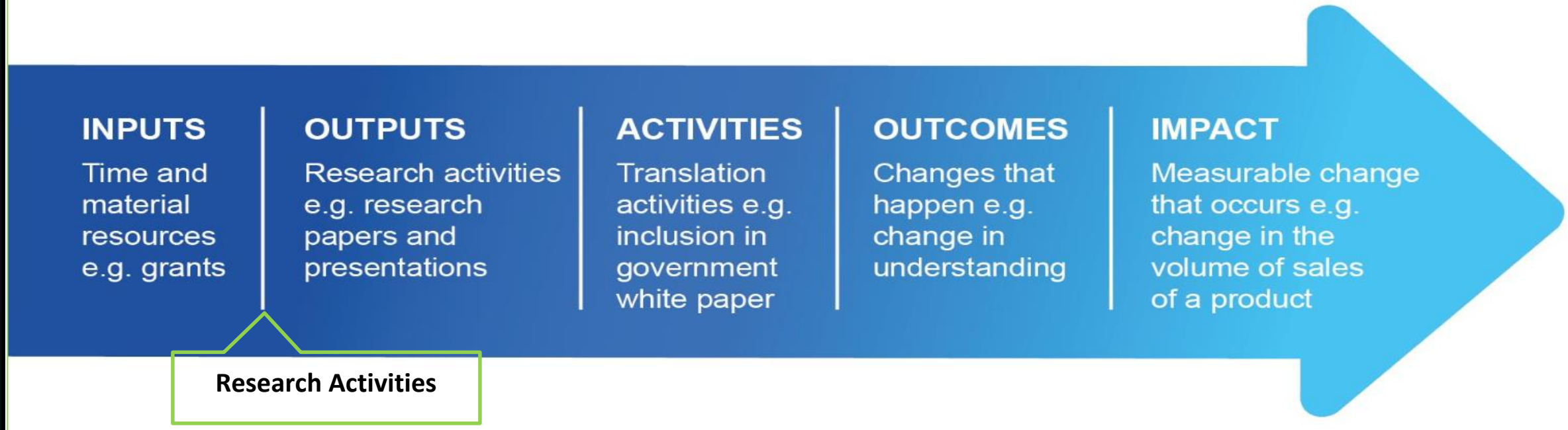
LOGIC MODEL FOR IMPACT



Further reading: Bayley J, Fedorciow L, Strategieis for Embedding Impact, Elsevier 2014

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Examples of evidence by impact type

Impact Type	Example Impact Evidence
Health and wellbeing	• Reports on changes in Quality Of Life Years (QOLYs). • Statistics reflecting changes to the number of admissions, presentations at hospital facilities over time. • Patient surveys. • Testimonials from clinical staff.
Commercial and economic	• Company reports, e.g. annual reports. • Company websites. • Licence agreements. • Cost savings reports over time. • National government statistics showing changes over time.
Public policy	• Policy documentation. • Regulation and standards documents. • Public meeting minutes. • Social media 'shares' over time. • Legal documentation. • International non-governmental organisation policy briefings.
Societal and cultural	• Audience surveys. • Testimonials from influential cultural figures. • Media coverage statistics such as readership.
Environmental	• Government reports. • Charity reports. • Independent reports or reviews on improved functionality of machines.

**From VV's HEFCE commissioned "Evidencing Impact" Report.*
You can download the report from our website's homepage.

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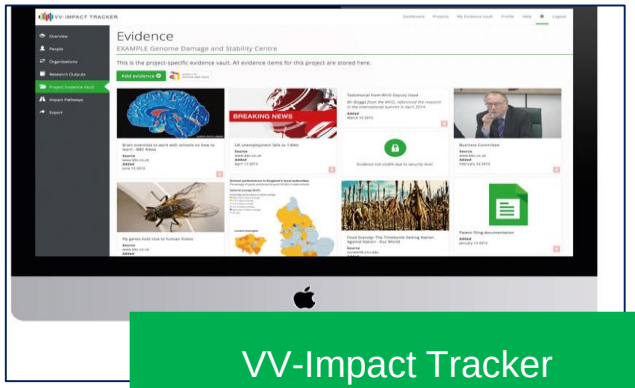
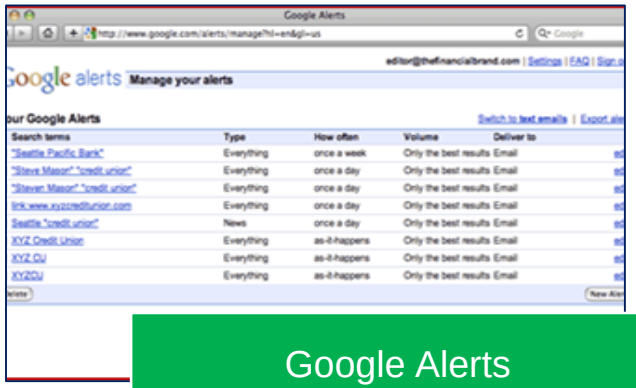
EVIDENCE CAPTURE - TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

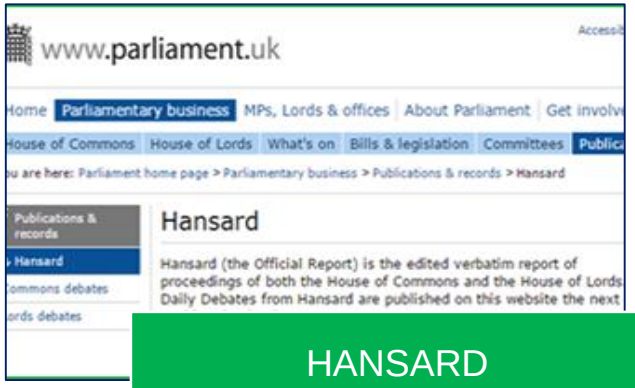


VV-Impact Tracker

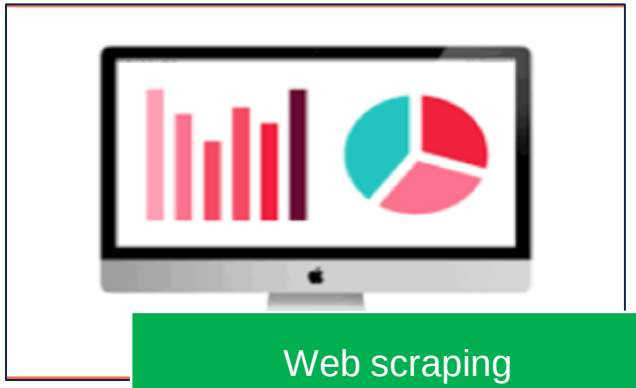


Google Alerts

Survey Monkey



HANSARD



Web scraping

Focus groups & interviews

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Structuring Impact Case Studies

REF2014
Research Excellence Framework

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Bristol
Unit of Assessment: 26 - Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
Title of case study: Building new capacity to increase children's outdoor play
1. Summary of the impact
Many children and young people are not sufficiently active to achieve a range of physical and mental health benefits. Extensive research undertaken at the University of Bristol has developed gold-standard methods of quantifying the important contribution that time spent outdoors and greater child independence make to children's daily physical activity. This work has provided unique data to support the development of a new, low-cost approach to adapting residential streets in Bristol for regular outdoor play. The Bristol model has been adopted nationally to provide street-play opportunities in the most disadvantaged areas. It is building capacity to promote outdoor play in a range of public- and third-sector agencies at local, regional and national levels. As a result, children are spending more time outdoors and undertaking increased physical activity, while both children and adults are engaging in more social interaction on residential streets. The model has also been showcased internationally, supporting a cultural shift towards reintroducing the street as a place for children's outdoor play. This shift is necessary to combat the marked decline in street play and child independence which has occurred in recent decades.

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Structuring Impact Case Studies

4. Details of the impact

This research has been instrumental in increasing children's outdoor play on residential streets by:

1. Underpinning new interventions to increase children's active outdoor play

In 2007, a range of dissemination activities took place (including stakeholder events and media briefings) to showcase research quantifying the contribution that time spent outdoors can make to children's physical activity [1] and demonstrating that children spend the majority of their time on built surfaces rather than in green spaces [2]. In 2008-9, people who attended these events in Bristol used this evidence as a basis for developing a new intervention to open up their streets for children's play. The intervention involves simple signs and stewarding by local residents to close selected residential streets to through-traffic after school (from 3.30 to 5pm) so that children can play safely with minimal disruption to cars. After this was successfully piloted, the residents set up a new social enterprise Community Interest Company called 'Playing Out CIC' (www.playingout.net). Using combined GPS and accelerometer data, Page and Cooper provided pilot data to demonstrate that a measureable increase in physical activity of approximately 10-15 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) could be obtained during these street closure or 'playing out' events.

2. Increasing awareness and building partnerships

This pilot data was used by Playing Out CIC in partnership with Active Bristol to encourage a cross-department collaboration within Bristol City Council (BCC: Health, Children & Young People's Services, Sustainability and Transport) which led to a change in policy and in the legal interpretation of transport regulations. This created a new Temporary Street Play Order (TSPO) [a] which allowed regular street closures on the basis of a single, annual application. Previously, closures were restricted to two or three times per year. The wide support for the 'Playing Out' model from both the traditional and social media brought the research to the attention of Play England who used the research highlighting the importance of time outdoors to support the case for outdoor play [b] and promote their national Love Outdoor Play campaign.

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Structuring Impact Case Studies

Impact case study (REF3b)

REF2014 Research Excellence Framework

3. Increasing funding potential and sustainability for third-sector agencies

The underpinning research [1-4] was used in evidence briefings for Bristol City Council [c] which led to increased and longer-term public health funding for Playing Out CIC to deliver street play in 2010. The evidence also helped enhance the funding potential of the play sector more broadly by providing quantitative evidence which had been lacking. As Cath Prisk, Director Play England asserts: *"There is very little quantitative evidence to support the work of the play sector. This is why we've joined up with ENHS as their research has showed that children spent up to 30% of their time outside engaged in 'moderate to vigorous physical activity'. If we could look to build up this kind of robust evidence base it would give ourselves and community based organisations access to further funding"* [d, 2012].

4. Influencing national policy

Page was invited to present a policy briefing on research findings [1,2,4] to senior representatives of the Departments for Transport and Health at two meetings in 2011 and 2012. In response to this, a partnership involving the University of Bristol, Play England and Playing Out CIC was invited to submit a bid to the Department for Health's Innovation, Enterprise and Strategic Development fund. The bid was to roll out the Playing Out model for street play nationally, alongside a national campaign to promote street play and the provision of a web-based hub to support residents in developing play opportunities in their communities. The success of this bid [e], which is the largest single bid ever awarded by the fund, confirms the acceptance of time spent outdoors as an important public health target. The underpinning evidence [1,3,4] was also used in the press release [f] to launch the national Free Range Kids campaign initiated by Sustrans in 2011. This seeks to directly influence policy and practice to encourage children to increase their independent use of the environment. Examples of the impact of the Free Range Kids campaign include political impact via the Early Day Motion 1954 (signed by 161 MPs) [g] and instrumental impact by, for example, the provision of over 25,000 packs for parents to help them increase their children's outdoor play. The importance of street play for children's physical activity and health was recognised in the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012 [h]. This report includes the Bristol street play model as a case study and cites ENHS research [5] to signal a shift in national health policy highlighting street play as a significant source of children's physical activity.

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4* Checklist for Impact Case Studies

✓ Headline impact identified in the summary
✓ Clear need/problem statement identified
✓ Clear structure provided
✓ Pathway to impact understood
✓ Data included (where possible, sensible and relevant)
✓ Specific terms used (e.g. locations, stakeholder names)
✓ Impact included (not just activities)
✓ Appropriate evidence referenced clearly
✓ Context easily understood
✓ Impact has already happened (will happen in time period)
✓ 'Change' is evident – use of baseline data included
✓ Is a 'deep dive' example into a 'reach' stat useful to demonstrate significance?

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THE REF 2021 ENVIRONMENT TEMPLATE

Section 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

This section should provide evidence of the submitted unit's achievement of strategic aims for research and **impact** during the assessment period, and details of future strategic aims and goals for research and **impact**; how these relate to the structure of the unit; and how they will be taken forward.

Section 2. People

This section should provide evidence about staffing strategy and staff development within the submitted unit; support mechanisms for, and evidence of the training and supervision of, PGR students; and evidence of how the submitting unit supports and promotes equality and diversity.

Section 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

This section should provide information about the submitted unit's income, infrastructure and facilities pertaining to research and **research impact**.

Section 4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

This section should provide information about the submitted unit's research collaborations, networks and partnerships, including relationships with key research users, beneficiaries or audiences; and the wider activities and contributions to the research base, economy and society.

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LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY (LJMU)

PREPARING FOR THE IMPACT ELEMENT OF REF

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REF 2014 – LJMU's Performance

- Submitted 40 ICS (225 fte)
- Underperformance on impact (compared to sector)

Rank		4*	3*	2*	1*	U/C	GPA
67	Research Outputs	15.9	50.2	29.8	3.5	0.6	2.77
92	Impact	24.7	47.3	23.6	2.2	2.2	2.9
42	Environment	16.1	44.1	36.9	2.9	0	2.73
75	**Overall**	**18**	**49**	**29**	**3**	**1**	**2.79**

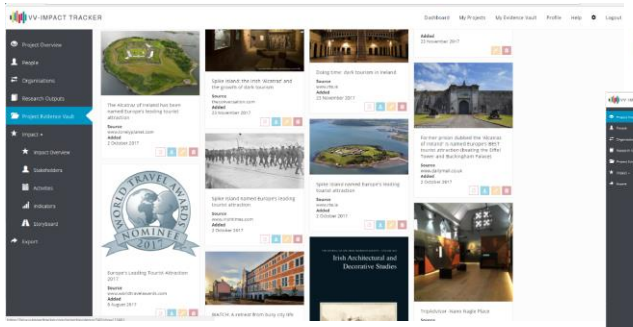
- 50% of ICS included an element of Public Engagement (PE)
- Mixed performance across faculties and schools

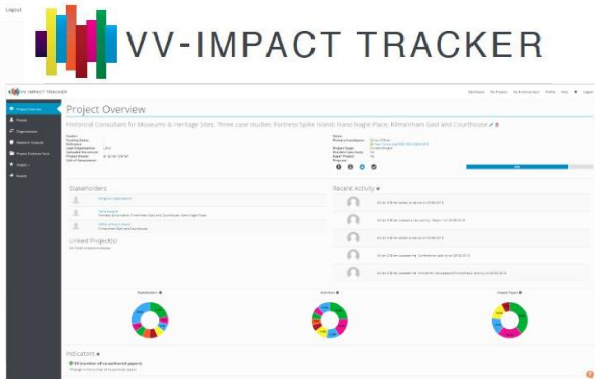
Planning for REF 2021 - Strategically

- Institutional Strategic Plan
- Senior management responsibility for impact
- Research Strategy & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Faculty management roles (Associate Deans - Research, Impact & Global Engagement)
- University and Faculty committees

Planning for REF 2021 - Operationally

- Appointed an Impact Officer (2014)
- Purchased an impact capture system (2014)
- Developed bespoke Training (2016)
- Launched LJMU Impact Awards (2016)
- Disseminated Impact Funding (2017)

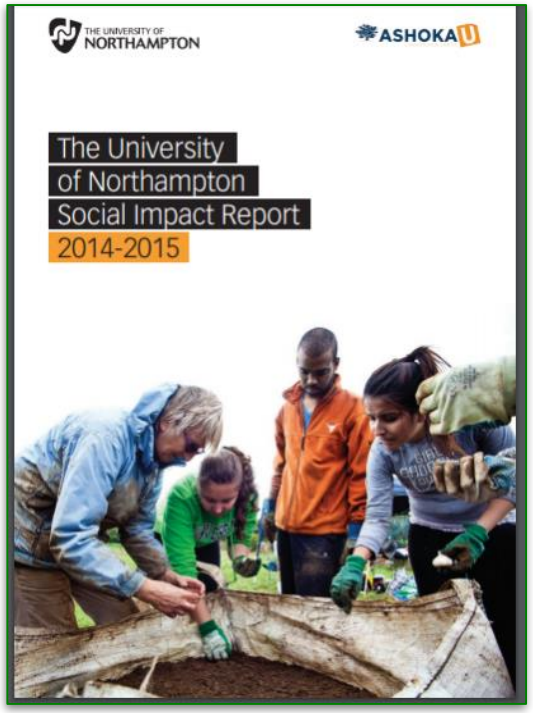


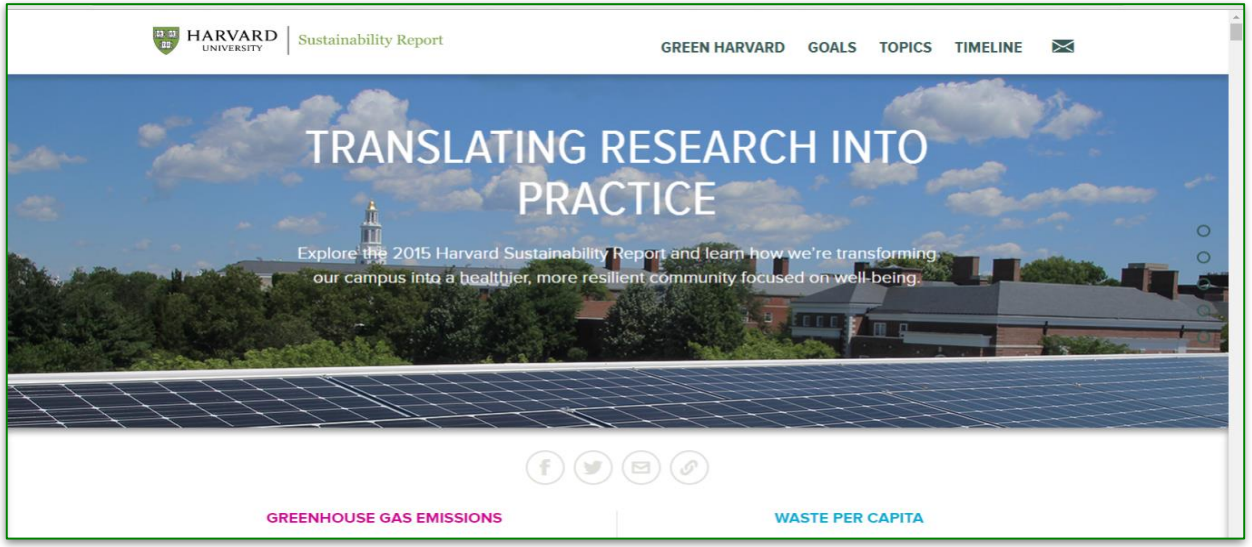


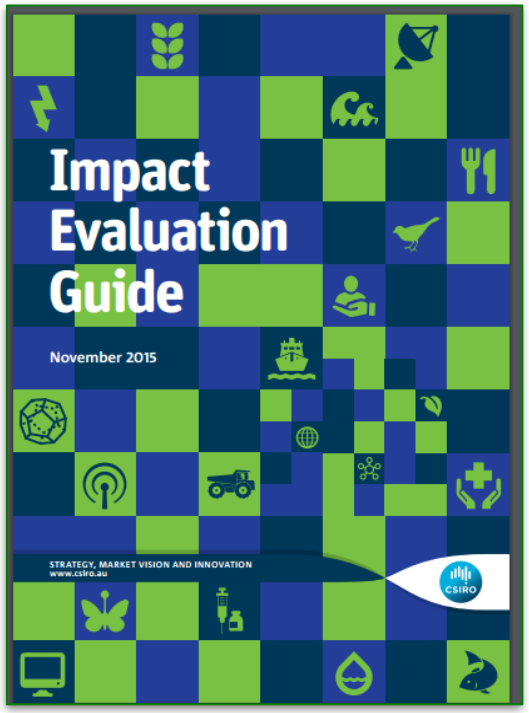
Planning for REF 2021

- Annual REF Conference for researchers, coordinators, ADR's, PVC and support staff
- 1-2-1 meetings with all ICS potential leads
- Mock REF (2017 & 2019)
  - UOA Coordinators provided a list of potential Impact Case Studies (ICS) for each area
  - All potential ICS leads were asked to complete a REF ICS Template
  - Mandatory use of VV-Impact Tracker software
  - Review Panel (PVC, ADR's, External)
- Peer review process (external & internal)
- Continual refinement and improvement of ICS ahead of submission

IMPACT PRACTICE IS GROWING INTERNATIONALLY & ACROSS SECTORS







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THE's new University Impact Ranking

- VV are advisory partners for Impact Ranking
- Launched on 25th September at the World Academic Summit in Singapore
- Positive feedback from the global HE sector
- Ranking will show how the sector working towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- The Impact Ranking is an opportunity to shine on aspects not covered in other rankings
- Expect growth and development of the Impact Ranking approach

PRESS RELEASE

THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

6th Sept 2018

Times Higher Education (THE) Launches

University Impact Ranking

A World First.

Vertigo Ventures

Working in partnership with Vertigo Ventures, THE is set to launch the world's first university impact ranking. The first edition will be published at THE's Innovation and Impact Summit at KAIST, South Korea, in April 2019.

This ranking is set to capture unique new insights on universities' work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which represents an 'important and necessary step' in documenting higher education impact. Consultation with universities and sector experts will remain ongoing.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

This is the first global initiative to document evidence of higher education impact and is designed to capture unique new insights on universities' work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It will remain subject to ongoing consultative discussion and is expected to develop over time, with a long-term objective to recognise performance against all 17 SDGs. It will factor in aspects of university research, operations and impact.

Data collection will begin this autumn, with the first edition of the ranking to be published at THE's Innovation and Impact Summit at South Korea's KAIST in April 2019. Data will be collected from universities and Elsevier to produce an overall ranking of institutions, and the best within individual SDGs.

"Universities contribute a huge amount to society, and this data can help capture unique new insights on how they're addressing some of the most pressing global issues. This work has never been fully explored in the past, and has never been recognised in global rankings. The need and desire for clear, new metrics on impact is strong, and while this is a highly challenging area of data collection, it's also an important and necessary step forward. It is a chance for universities which don't usually appear in global rankings to shine for their work – so it's really important that it develops in a way that enables universities, wherever they are in the world, to evidence their impact."

Phil Baty, Editorial Director, Global Rankings, THE

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