# Supporting & capturing Research Impact at UoM

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**Academic Director, Scholarly & Social Research Impact**

ARMS meeting – 29 June 2023

Defining research impact and creating a framework at UoM

# What do we need from the university?
## (From consultation with 10 faculty research offices in 2020-21)

Clear direction on what impact means

Clues on whether it is distinct from engagement

Clear sense of whether it really matters (good research is the be all and end all?)

Direction on whether everyone should do it

It should be measured and in the PDF process (recognition & rewards)

Accessible and clear guidance on practical tools to get people to think in this way / take it seriously

Direction on what information/evidence to use, how to collect it, where to store it

Better support on contracts, more focus on SSH disciplines

# Some clarifications of 'Research Impact'

- Engagement & impact are tightly linked - but measured separately, engagement is 'the process of impact' rather than the outcome

- Excellence & impact - it's not a dichotomy, they support each other

- Impact is not (just) commercialisation and tech transfer – it is about 'making the world a better place'

- At UoM we aim to support and revere both scholarly and creative impact (discovery), and a range of impacts beyond this

*The (positive) change to the world that research can make*

# Diversity of research impact: 5 facets

| Facet | Aim |
|---|---|
| **Scholarly & Creative** | Advance knowledge and ways of knowing |
| **Policy, politics and law** | Inform/improve politics, policy and governance, including law and regulation |
| **Media and culture** | Inform/facilitate public debate, perceptions and culture |
| **Processes and practices** | Inform/advance/improve processes and practices |
| **Products and enterprises** | Create new products, technologies, and (for profit and not-for-profit) enterprises and ventures |
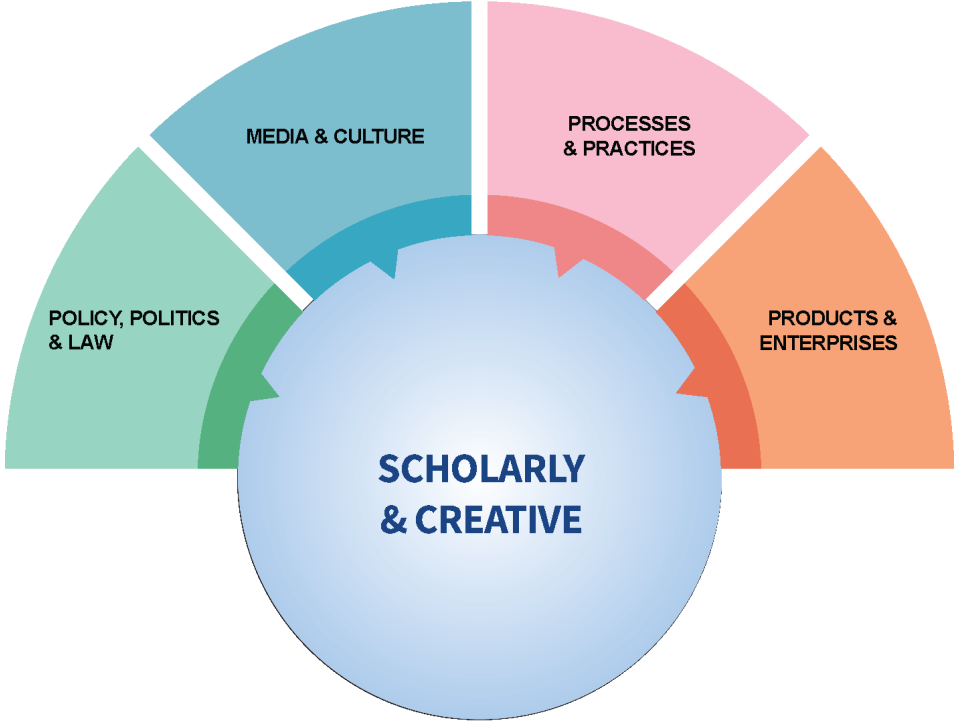


*Framework adapted from Williams, K and Lewis, JM (2021) 'Understanding, measuring and encouraging public policy research impact', Australian Journal of Public Administration 80 (3), 554-564.*

# Research Impact Framework

*Research impact - "the effect on, change or benefit to scholarly knowledge and the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life".*

- Enable pathways to impact across all stages of academic careers and for all disciplines
- Give equal recognition to and provide appropriate levels of support for all facets of research impact

MEDIA & CULTURE

PROCESSES & PRACTICES

POLICY, POLITICS & LAW

PRODUCTS & ENTERPRISES

SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE
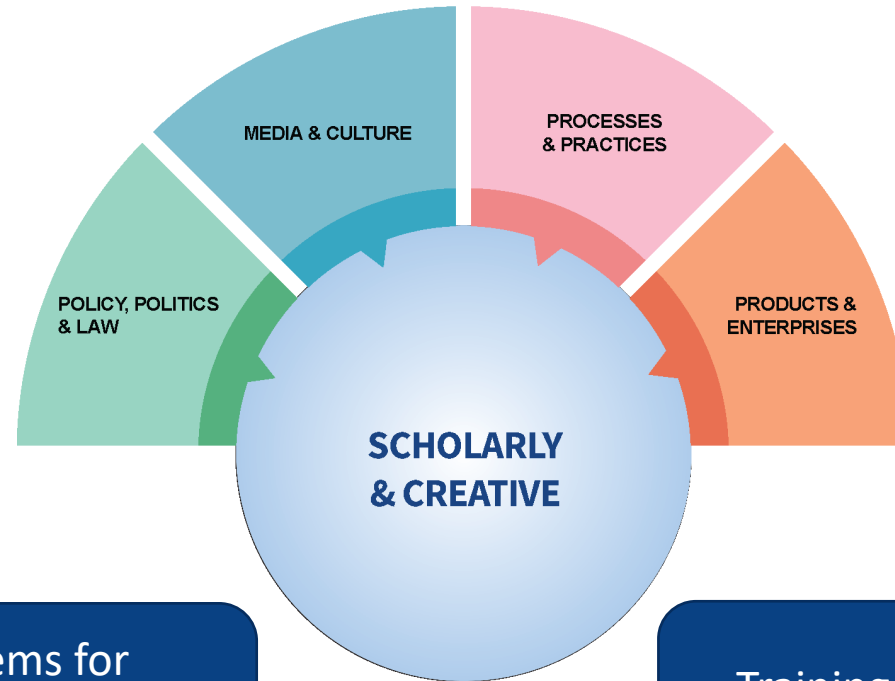
Commercialisation

Systems for capturing/evidencing impact

Training & development

Impact support grants

Impact strategy

Recognition & reward

Supporting structures – RIF & RILs

Communications & story telling

New coordinating initiative?

# Performance development framework



## Your Impactful Career

Changes are being introduced that aim to improve and streamline the University's Academic PDF by building on the existing ACBI framework to ensure that our systems and processes reflect the breadth of academic work.

**Key Updates include:**

- Appropriate recognition to the range of research impact activities.
- Recognition of the embedded nature of engagement across all domains of academic work, and core to the contributions and achievements of many academics.
- A focus on the impact and influence of research beyond trhe academy.
- Recognition of emerging pathways to future impact and influence.
- And, recognising the sustained positive influence of partnerships with communities, industries, and government, including translation and adoption of research with external partners.

There are other approaches to show a fuller range of an individual's contributions to excellent research. These examples aim to prompt written descriptions of contributions and achievements that more accurately reflect a broader range of skills and experiences, such as the UK Royal Society's *Resume for Researchers*, and the Imperial College London *Narrative CV*.

*Adapted from 2023 Academic Career Benchmark & Indicators (ACBI)*

UoM business services (research) discovery project on capturing research impact information 2022

# Choosing a tool: How we got there (1) - 2022

- Interviewed 18 UoM researchers

- Conducted desktop research

- Surveyed local and international Universities

- Focus group of Australian universities (via ARMS)

- Interviewed international universities

- Interviewed other Australian Universities

# Research impact
**(What does it mean to the researcher?)**

**What does research impact mean to you?**

*Using research to change the world, to improve and make the world the better place.*

*Impact is about using the great knowledge to make things better.*

*1. Research has to be a catalyst for a change, not just a measure of engagement or a measure of a communication activity (that is an important distinction). It is about initiating change, and
2. The change should be for good (not for bad/evil).*

*...broadly speaking impact = benefit. Something that has a positive result and positive change but you have to acknowledge that it can [sometimes] have unintended consequences.*

*...research that has the ability to create change*

*RI does need to account for translation of research outside of academic constraints. Academic impact is important, but real society impact has to go beyond and influence the lives in the community, including impact on the environment*

*...the results of research endeavour that include expanding our knowledge... It can have benefit for scholarly as well as community at large.*

From: UoM discovery project on capturing RI 2022

# Research impact – misconceptions

**What are the common misconceptions about research impact?**

…that impact is commercialisation.

…it's not about good or new research, that it is somehow in opposition for doing excellent research vs doing impactful research.

…it only relates to non-academic outcomes

When it is completely linked to social media to be used as a measure of reach - it is considered impactful because the article was tweeted XX times
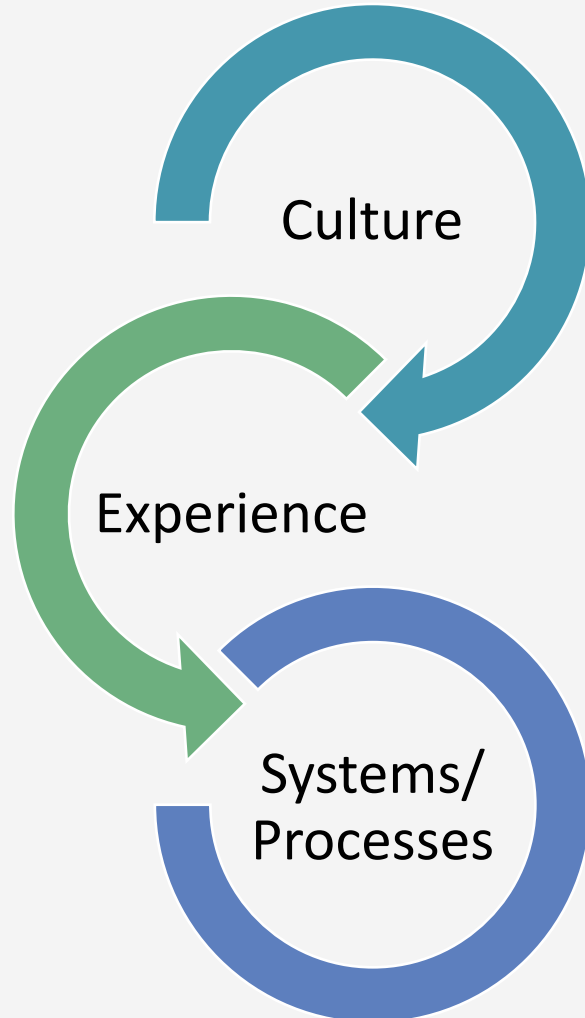
…to have an impact it must be used in policy. However you can have impact without it, for creating knowledge.

…that is not important or it is just box-ticking exercise

Misconception around the narratives - there is a sense of grandiosity, that it has to be really large

# Pain points / challenges

We grouped the researcher insights into the following categories:



**Culture**

UoM has a very well established culture for capturing academic impact, however lacking in capturing non-academic impact.

**Experience**

UoM researchers are not very clear on what is it that the University wants them to capture [in relation to impact].

**Systems/ Processes**

There are no systems to capture 'beyond academia' impact.

# Key pain points

Summary of the key pain points (challenges) that researchers highlighted in relation to capturing research impact

## CULTURE

**Capturing impact**
The University has well established systems for capturing academic impact, however not so much (or any) for capturing non-academic impact.

**Measuring impact**
Currently concentrated very much around measuring impact using traditional indicators (bibliometrics, altmetrics).

**Measuring researcher esteem and recognition**
Over-reliance on traditional markers to establish researcher esteem and recognition (awards, promotion).

**Impact doesn't feed up the line**
Impact that has been captured (in annual performance reviews) is not passed up the line to acknowledge and reward the researcher.

**Misconceptions about research impact**
Research impact misconceptions can get in the way of capturing impact.

## EXPERIENCE

**Defining/Clarifying what is Research Impact (Understanding what is required to be captured)**
Researchers are unclear in relation to the University's requirements for capturing impact.
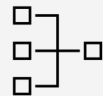
**Communication**
What's in it for the researcher?

**Expectation vs Reality**
Lack of resourcing - Researchers are expected to do it all. Collecting, capturing, documenting research impact is time consuming.

**Not systematic**
There is no systematic approach to capturing non-academic impact.

**Capturing implicit impact**
It is hard to identify and/or track implicit impact.

**Repetition**
Researchers are asked to provide the same information about research impact multiple times. Information already captured is not extracted from systems to be re-used.

## SYSTEMS / PROCESSES

**Tracking events and other non-traditional indicators**
Not having a system where you can continually add and/or track events and other relevant information.

**Capturing impact for non-funded projects**
Unlike funded projects where prospective and retrospective impact can be captured at various stages of the project, for non-funded projects impact is likely not to be articulated/captured.

**Capturing impact for closed projects**
Capturing impact [months or years] after the project has been closed – how do you capture it and/or link it to the project? How do you know it is happening?
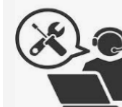
**Capturing impact retrospectively**
Not having regular [system] prompts to capture impact leads to researchers having to collect this information at performance review.

Researchers may also not be aware about the ongoing impact of their work, particularly for projects that they may not be following closely.

**Lack of support on how to use systems**
Some of the systems that researchers are required to use are not very easy or intuitive to use

# Choosing a tool: How we got there (2) – 2023

- Participated in vendor demonstrations from 6 research impact vendors; Hivve Impact Tracker, Symplectic Elements, Kudos, Grow Impact, Research Fish and Emerald Publishing

- Facilitated testing of the top four applications; Hivve, Symplectic Elements, Kudos and Emerald Publishing

- Key Decision Document presented and approved recommending Impact Tracker be tested

- Conducted a 2-month Proof of Concept on Impact Tracker

- Proved the usability, data capture, data extract, evidence capture, reporting, integration with UoM systems as part of the POC

- Received predominantly positive feedback after POC

# Recommendation – June 2023

Go with Hivve Impact Tracker – recommendation accepted, now in contracting process

Key reasons:
- It can integrate with our systems
- It was approved by testing & feedback

- It has been primarily developed for researchers
- It is not perfect for our needs but it is the best fit of all the tools analysed
- Investing in the best tool on the market shows the University's commitment to capturing research impact

"I didn't do it for the fame, I did it for the impact"

Lady Gaga

The project team:
- Project Sponsor: Jenny Lewis
- Project Manager: Kate Vanson
- Project Analysts: Biljana Kimova &
- Sophie Cleaves
- Project working group: 8 academics (different disciplines/faculties) & 2 professional staff

MASSIVE THANKS!

Final decision body: Business Product Group for Research Translation and Impact:
- 4 academics (different disciplines/faculties – includes the chair)
- 2 professional staff from faculties
- 4 professional staff from central services/chancellery
- 4 business services staff