

## Impact Case Study Template Guidance Document

### I. Introduction

The College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS) at UCC has an excellent record in fostering and sustaining high quality research at the forefront of international activity, as evidenced in the strong indicators of international excellence across the different disciplines in the 2015 Research Quality Review. A particular strength, highlighted across the College, is the commitment to an open and engaged research culture, in the range of research-related activities showcased under RAI4. Although the range and quality of activity in this area was considered by all panels to be impressive, with clear and compelling evidence of engagement with a wide range of local, national and international audiences, most reviewers indicated the need for improved systems for archiving, measuring and enhancing the visibility of these activities and, above all, for better articulation of their status as indicators of the impact of excellent research.

To address these issues, CACSSS has begun to invest resources in research training and supports on Impact, drawing on recent work in the area by the [Irish Humanities Alliance](#)<sup>i</sup>, and the [League of European Research Universities](#)<sup>ii</sup> (LERU), in order to ensure that the significance of research in the Humanities and Social Sciences is fully represented and supported in UCC policies and strategies. The Impact Case Study template has been designed to support good practice in the articulation of the impact of all types of research – including STEM research, interdisciplinary engagement and practice-as-research (the latter not captured adequately through existing metrics) – and will be underpinned by investment in digital supports and training to ensure the internal and external visibility of research across all parts of UCC. Initially this initiative will focus on supports and training in relation to research within CACSSS; however, it is hoped that the template will prove transferable to other colleges in UCC. It is also intended to enhance national and international policy around the value of Humanities and Social Science research, harnessing existing best practice across the University.

## II. Understanding Impact

UCC plays a key role in the development of Ireland’s knowledge-based economy and, since the 1980s, the University has been to the fore nationally in developing capacity for the commercialisation of its research outputs and supporting the enterprise sector. Furthermore, UCC has a strong track record in creative, community and policy engagement with a wide range of policymakers, partners, stakeholders and audiences, locally and globally. The focus on innovation is aimed at delivering economic, societal, cultural, educational and entrepreneurial impact.

Research impact has been identified as a core part of UCC’s research mission and strategic priorities, and, in simple terms, is about defining how research is important and what effects it is having in local, national and international contexts. It represents both the reasons for and the reach of our research activities in response to emerging and changing societal challenges and research priorities, which the impact agenda itself contributes to and shapes.

Other definitions of impact include:

- “Consequences of an action that affects people’s lives in areas that matter to them” (European Science Foundation, 2012).
- “An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia” (Research Excellence Framework, 2014).
- “Influence of research or its effect on an individual, a community, the development of a policy, or the creation of a new product or service” (Pathways to Impact, Arts and Humanities Research Council).

---

*“Universities are both apart from and a part of society. They are apart in the sense that they provide a critically important space for grasping the world as it is and – importantly – for re-imagining the world as it ought to be. But Universities are also a part of our societies.*

*What’s the point unless the accumulated knowledge, insight and vision are put at the service of the community? With the privilege to pursue knowledge comes the civic responsibility to engage and put that knowledge to work in the service of humanity”.*

*– President Higgins*

---

---

*“Innovation is more than technology. EU innovation policy must be based on a definition of innovation that acknowledges and values all forms of new knowledge – technological, but also business model, financing, governance, regulatory and social – which help generate value for the economy and society and drive systemic transformation”.*

*– Lamy Report <sup>iii</sup>*

---

### III. Developing Your Case Study

To develop an effective case study, it is important to understand the difference between outputs, outcomes and impact. See the chart below for an explanation of each.



## IV. Developing Your Case Study

See the sections below with guidance notes

### 1. UCC's Logo

Centre at top of page one

### 2. Project Title

Utilise the UCC Branding Guidelines for the font style and colour palette: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/dewg/resources/vigs/>

### 3. Project Statement [10-20 words]

This is an impact-focused, concise statement about the research project.

### 4. The Challenge [200 words]

In this section, the researcher will explain why the research matters. The goal is to utilise a story-telling approach that includes a compelling narrative along with robust data. Why does this research matter? What's happening in the world that makes this research needed, valuable, useful, and required? Consider local, regional, national and international issues that this research addresses. Also, consider the stakeholders that this project is relevant to. This section presents the brief situation analysis which compels this research.

### 5. The Research [200 words]

In this section, the researcher will explain what s/he did with a focus on what methods were used. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that the project was original, significant, rigorous and that it utilised an engaged research approach by sustaining dialogue with particular communities or partners. In this section, the inputs and activities are presented. Include testimonials or acknowledgement from external partners relevant to the research approach here, if possible.

### 6. The Impact [600-1000 words]

In this section, the researcher is describing how the project is relevant. See the Engaged Research Impact Categories in Part IV, with indicative actions provided. Ultimately, this section is focused on the planned outputs from the research, their outcomes and the actual or anticipated impact over time. A focus is on both the reach and significance of activities with the goal of corroborating the impact by choosing the most relevant indicative actions and customising them with the key performance indicators from this project. The researcher should explain how the research adds to the vitality and sustainability of UCC's strategic goals in teaching and learning, research and innovation, external engagement, internationalisation, and infrastructural and financial sustainability. The researcher should broaden this reach to include how this research is changing and informing the research landscape in Ireland and beyond. Ultimately, you are demonstrating that this research is on a pathway to impact – demonstrating significant effects within and beyond the University.

**7. For More Information [25-50 words]**

Allow the reader to find the project online and make contact with the Principal Investigator, if possible. This might include a website link, contact details, social media platforms and hashtags, or a link to the researcher's profile.

**8. Images, Artwork and Captions [15-30 words]**

As far as possible, add to the enjoyment of the reader's experience by including photographs, artwork and other visuals. Ensure your captions reinforce the key messages of the document: engagement with diverse audiences; impactful activities that have tapped the knowledge held by others; how the research adds to the vitality of teaching and learning, research and innovation, internationalisation and sustainability; or how this project improves the research landscape, attracts international researchers, or otherwise builds capacity in research.

## **Part IV. Engaged Research Impact Categories**

In 2017, Campus Engage, the Irish Universities Association, and the Irish Research Council engaged colleagues across sectors to develop an [Impact Framework<sup>iv</sup>](#) for engaged research. The following categories of impact and sample indicative actions were presented. These indicative actions are suggestions only, so please choose the categories most relevant to your research and then customise the information with data. Measure what matters.

### **Knowledge Production**

- New peer-reviewed publications and citations
- Presentations to national and international conferences
- New 'grey literature' including research reports, interviews, policy briefings, editorials, newsletters, web articles, social media, presentations with/to stakeholders
- New systematic reviews or findings
- Increased availability of evidence including open access data
- Establishment of new datasets, databases or research data

### **Social & Cultural Impacts**

- Enhanced opportunities for creativity, self-expression and human development
- Increased appreciation and/or design of cultural services such as museums, galleries, libraries
- Attitudinal changes, education and understanding
- Stimulation or informing of public debate or interest
- Greater awareness of the public's role and responsibility in contributing to solving social challenges
- Increased confidence of the general public to address issues affecting them

- Exchange of public tacit knowledge to inform new or improved products, services and processes
- Improved quality of life through improved access to services
- Local, regional or national development and regeneration plans
- New processes for responding to public research needs and partnerships
- Improved human performance due to new or changed technologies or processes.

#### **Policy & Product Development Impacts**

- Implementation, revision or evaluation of policies to improve efficiency, efficacy of public services, products and processes, and government regulation
- Policy and related budget decisions, changes to legislation, regulations, guidelines, or funding are evidence-informed
- Revised educational curricula, across all levels, informed by new knowledge
- Commissioned reports or projects from government departments or agencies
- Policy briefing papers, practical handbooks and other grey material produced for / disseminated to relevant professionals, policy makers, and civic and civil society organisations
- Patents and other IP applications and award of commercialization support grants to develop products or services
- License agreements and revenues generated as a result of spin-out companies or formal collaborative
- Partnerships between researchers and relevant research stakeholders.

#### **Professional & Public Service Impacts**

- New or improved professional standards, working practices, guidelines or training
- Quality, efficiency or productivity of a service
- Professional body practices are evidence-informed
- Practice or process changes in companies or other organisations through capacity building
- Increased inter-agency collaboration
- Improved services evaluation methods and technologies
- Improvements in risk management across public and private sectors
- Advancements against strategic plans.

#### **Internationalisation Impacts**

- Success of researchers and relevant entities in attaining international research funding, for example, through EU Framework programmes
- Improved international reputation of Ireland in the research arena
- Attraction and retention of international talent
- New connections to international expertise providing access to state-of-the-art knowledge, ideas and publics
- Leveraging of international funding through industrial and collaborative research

- New national/international collaborations or strategic partnerships formed with other research teams, community and industry partners or relevant agencies.
- Increased global social responsibility, cultural awareness, and languages
- Contribution to international relations and the international profile and reputation of Ireland.

#### **Capacity-Building Impacts**

- Education, training and improved skills of current and future populations and workers for public and industry services, and academia
- Improved relevancy of educational curricula at all levels
- Higher degrees and research experience obtained by research personnel
- Retention rates of research personnel in national research system
- Increased leveraged funding due to number and level of highly skilled researchers
- Increased national, EU, international social capital
- Increased research capacity in CSOs
- Increased levels of engagement of members of the public with research, and corresponding levels of confidence in public-science dialogue
- Spin-off projects developed and further research funding leveraged.

#### **Economic Impacts**

- New or expanded products, licenses, or services created
- Spinout or start-up businesses registered
- Improved performance or processes adopted
- Employment created or increased
- Improved international reputation for investment in Ireland
- More efficient use of public resources
- Leveraging of national and international funding
- Increased income generated
- Reduced redundancies and costs

#### **Environmental Impacts**

- Improving awareness and understanding of climate change and its consequences
- Stimulation of public debate and awareness on the environment
- Provision of information to civil and civic societies
- Environmental policy or planning decisions are evidence-informed
- Improved management or conservation of natural resources to advance climate justice
- Improved management of environmental risks or hazards

- Improved private or public services to meet relevant environmental policies or goals
- New/improved technologies or processes to reduce pollution and/or the impact of pollutants
- Improvement in sustainable use of resources for resilient societies
- Improved understanding of health risks to livestock and disease risks to crops for better health and food security
- Improved built environment infrastructure including transportation systems and land use.

### Health & Wellbeing Impacts

- National or international health and wellbeing outcomes due to new or improved interventions, services, drug/treatments/therapies, diagnostic or medical technologies, care practices or processes.
- Improved health and wellbeing at an individual level
- Reduced inequalities in health status and health and social care utilisation through information and policies targeting vulnerable/disadvantaged groups
- Increased efficiency in the delivery of public health and social services, as well as health-related interventions and services delivered by NGOs and others in the community
- Decisions by public, private and voluntary stakeholders informed by research evidence
- Improved quality of life due to improved health and wellbeing services/interventions, products or processes
- Enhanced animal health and welfare
- Reduction in costs and delays for treatments, interventions, practices, and processes due to newly
- Developed or improved alternatives (e.g. new treatments, interventions, drugs, devices or diagnostics)
- Mitigation of risks to health or well-being through preventative or early intervention services and measures
- Increase in number of participants enrolled in clinical and community-based trials
- Increase in number of individuals engaging in healthy lifestyles

---

<sup>i</sup> Irish Humanities Alliance (2015) *Impact and the Humanities Workshop Report and Policy Recommendations*, Dublin: Irish Humanities Alliance

<sup>ii</sup> League of European Research Universities (2017) *Productive interactions: societal impact of academic research in the knowledge society*, Leuven: League of European Research Universities

<sup>iii</sup> European Commission (201) *LAB-FAB-APP Investing in the European future we want*, Brussels: European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation

<sup>iv</sup> Campus Engage (2017) *Engaged Research - Society & Higher Education Working Together to Address Grand Societal Challenges*, Dublin: Campus Engage Engaged Research Working Group