THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

Research Impact: Introductory Information

How you can use this document

The primary purpose of this document is to assist you to reflect on and document **retrospective impact** associated with your research- it is a supportive resource, but is not a compliance requirement. It is comprised of the following sections:

1) Introduction to the logic model: a tool to reflect on impact
2) Logic model template: a template to assist in documenting components of the impact continuum
3) Impact evidence: how to find and document evidence to support impact claims
4) Writing an impact narrative: steps to articulate your impact in a narrative or story format

These materials can either be used together sequentially, or you can use them in whatever order you wish, depending on your purpose. They can be used to focus on one project, to reflect on a broader program of work within your career to date, or to demonstrate partial or emerging impacts which are valid and worth documenting. You may wish to use this resource iteratively and return to them over time as your work evolves.

A Note on Different Kinds of Impact

The use of these resources is not contingent upon any one type of impact. Your impact documentation and narrative may reflect one or both below types of impact.

1) "Academic" or "scholarly" impact- adoption, awareness, influence, changes to understanding or solving of longstanding problems within the research community. Commonly measured with bibliometrics from Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar and other analytic platforms.
2) Impact beyond academia (sometimes called "real world" impact)- improved health or educational outcomes, environmental benefits, economic gains, improvement in social wellbeing, changes to policy or legislation, behavioural changes, etc.

It is also important to note that there are significant disciplinary differences among the ways that impact is measured and demonstrated, and discipline-specific experts- such as your supervisors and mentors- are best placed to guide and advise on these nuances and contexts. The UQ Library also provides guidance on different kinds of impact as it may relate to different disciplines (see Impact evidence.)

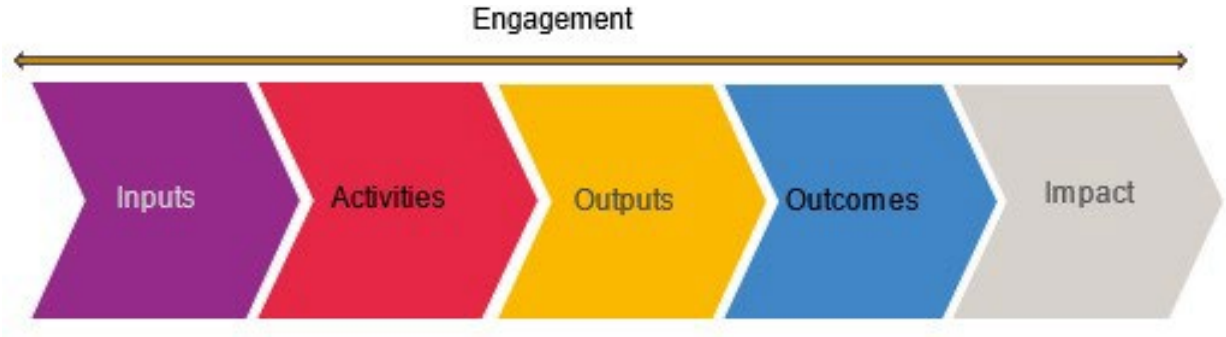
Introduction to the Logic model

The logic model, also called "theory of change, or "pathway to impact" is a common framework used to capture the different components involved in the impact continuum, and any engagement that happens along the way. Understanding the impact process in this way can be helpful because it provides a visual "roadmap" that links concrete actions with intended (or unintended) outcomes. This is important when you want to document, demonstrate, or communicate how and why your research is valuable.

The ways that impact happens are often unpredictable, non-linear, complex and discipline specific. Therefore, the logic model provides only a basic framework. It is best used as a starting point to reflect on and record the impact process and is open to adaptation as required.

The Logic Model (Theory of Change)

The below diagram shows the components of the logic model and the order in which they generally occur. As impact is often non-linear, it can occur at almost any point along the continuum- this is especially true of end user-centred, co-designed projects where engagement (leading to impact) happens early on and informs the project's approach, methodology or guiding principles. As the yellow arrow below indicates, engagement can also happen continuously or at any point.



Definitions

Inputs: What resources enabled your research?

Examples may include funding, research assistants, travel, infrastructure, access to scientific or archival materials.

Activities: What activities were done to complete the research, or actions taken to produce outputs?

This is the research "work." What activities were done to complete the research, or actions taken to produce outputs? For example, lab work, qualitative or quantitative data collection, building or leveraging collaborations or partnerships, providing workshops and training.

Outputs: What tangible, concrete and usable products resulted from the research activities?

Examples can include both traditional research outputs such as books, journal articles, conference presentations; or non-traditional research outputs such as artistic performances, new materials or technologies, datasets, patents, educational resources, policy briefs or reports, etc.

Outcomes: What were the results of the use of the outputs?

This can be thought of in terms of success measures, or how you know an activity worked. For example, increased awareness by research community (other researchers using your knowledge, tools or data), use of research in guidelines or policy design, application of your outputs/knowledge by stakeholders, changes in stakeholder perspectives or behaviours, lower mortality rates for certain diseases, etc.

Impact: What longer term, wider benefits arise from an outcome?

This can include academic impact (new findings by other researchers using and building on your work), or beyond academia such as environmental benefits, improved health or social outcomes, cultural benefits, economic gain or savings, etc.

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Logic Model Template

Download an Excel version of the template from the Evidence of research impact and engagement page. Fictional examples are included in the first four rows.

Research topic	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Stakeholders and End Users	Impact
What was the focus of your research? What was the scope?	*What resources were required to conduct your research?*	*What activities were done to complete the research?*	*What was produced as a result of the activities?*	*What were the results of the use of the outputs? What indicators signal the outputs are leading to uptake/success?*	*Which organisations, groups or individuals are/have been interested in your research? Who benefits from it?*	*What longer-term, wider benefits arise from an outcome?* *How has your research contributed to addressing a larger societal issue or challenge?*
Stroke risk screening	NHMRC & MRFF; patient access; ethics	Prospective clinical study	Validated screening tool	Tool incorporated into hospital clinical protocol	Hospital partners; clinicians; patients at risk of stroke	Reduced incidence of preventable stroke; personalised risk profiling reducing economic burden
Housing affordability	ARC funding; government data access; NGO partners	Policy analysis; participant focus groups; stakeholder workshops	Policy briefing; submission to Parliament	Findings cited in state housing policy draft	State housing dept; NGOs; people experiencing homelessness	Improved access to affordable housing for low-income households
Quantum phenomena in biological systems	Quantum physics expertise; biological samples; grant funding; interdisciplinary collaborators	Exploratory experiments applying quantum entanglement principles to biological diagnostics	Proof-of-concept quantum sensing method; high-impact publications	New diagnostic capability taken up by other researchers for further validation and development	Research community; translational researchers	Expanded scientific understanding enabling future diagnostic technologies and clinical translation
Energy-efficient materials	Grant fundings; wet lab facilities; ANNF access	Materials synthesis; performance testing; nanocharacterisation	Journal articles; conference proceedings; prototypes; patents	Material licensed for pilot manufacturing process	Industry partner; energy consumers	Reduced energy consumption in industry production

Impact Evidence

Providing evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative) of your impact is important because it further demonstrates the value of your research, and substantiates any claims made about your impact.

Just as there are wide-ranging impacts, there are also an array of different kinds of evidence you can use, depending on the kind of research, its methodology, and its disciplinary characteristics.

Monitoring and documenting evidence

There is no one "correct" method for tracking evidence of your impact. Perhaps the most important thing is to have clear indicators or measures to guide your monitoring and collecting, and to choose a method that is easy for you to return to as you go.

UQ RDM is recommended for storing evidence of research impact. It has been specifically designed to help researchers manage their project's research data from project conception to the publication and dissemination of results, and can also accommodate impact evidence in various file formats.

Resources for finding impact evidence

Due to disciplinary differences, there are many diverse ways that research impact can be measured, and therefore many kinds of evidence that can be used to demonstrate impact.

The below resources have been developed by the UQ Library and provide information on identifying indicators for measuring impact and sources for finding impact evidence for both traditional and non-traditional research.

- As a starting point, you may wish to explore the UQ Library page on Research Impact Evidence.
- Impact evidence for traditional outputs, including how to find citation network metrics via bibliometrics databases such as Web of Science and Scopus
- Explore Research Metrics, including for analysing your publications, patent citations, online attention and altmetrics, and those for your Grant Applications and Promotions. You can also explore how to use databases like Capital monitor for mentions in Parliamentary and Government information sources such as Hansard.
- Impact Evidence for NTRO Publications, including suggestions of impact indicators and types of evidence for different non-traditional outputs
- UQ eSpace: Manage your research outputs and datasets for guidance entering NTROs into UQ eSpace (UQ's outputs repository), including writing about the scale/significance of a work in the creator research statement, and selecting quality indicators/measures

Writing an Impact Narrative

Being able to write a clear and compelling impact narrative can be helpful to translating the above components- research activities, outcomes, evidence, and impact- into a coherent story. This serves several critical purposes, including making complex research and research processes understandable, providing further context for impact that purely quantitative metrics often miss, and distilling down the essence of why your research is important.

As with the logic model, the impact narrative can be used either for a specific project, or for a broader program of work over a longer time. It can also be tailored to multiple purposes, such as for the APD, promotions, or specific grants.

Different ways to frame an impact narrative- the UNSDGs

There are different ways to frame an impact narrative depending on the discipline and the kind of research that is being done.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) are one such "scaffold" that can be used to explain why your research matters, who it benefits, and how it contributes to global priorities. The SDGs provide an opportunity to:

- craft your story with a "shared language" that is relatable to funders, policy makers and industry/government stakeholders.
- anchor your research in global challenges, and show how the challenges manifest in your local or disciplinary context
- explain and metricise your research contribution by connecting your research impact directly to SDG targets
- show the long-term, forward-looking potential of your research in alignment with global priorities

Not all research will be suitable for framing within the context of the SDGs. For further information, see UQ's reporting on the UN SDGs (including impact case studies), and the UN SDGs official web page.

Narrative Elements Table

Over the page you will find a table to help you think through some of the elements that can form your impact narrative. Both the following table and template have been adapted from a resource developed by the UQ Research Office.

Element	Guiding questions	Your response
Research Problem & Approach	- What problem were you trying to solve? - What research activities took place? - What [scientific] process did you follow? - How did you engage with relevant stakeholders? - How did you choose your research partners or collaborators? - What resources were needed?	
Outputs	- What outputs were produced from the research activities? (e.g., publications, training materials, creative works, databases) - What were your contributions to these key outputs?	
Outcomes	- What outcomes resulted from your outputs? (e.g., book sales, industry agreements, patents, clinical trials) - How did these outcomes relate to the problem you set out to solve?	
Beneficiaries	- Who benefited from this research? - Were the beneficiaries expected or unexpected? - Were there beneficiaries beyond the immediate users?	
Measurable Benefits	- What were the measurable benefits (i.e., the impact)? - What evidence supports the impact (e.g., dollar value, adoption rates)? - What links can you draw between your research and the impact achieved? - Over what timeframe did the benefits occur?	

Impact Case Study Template

The impact narrative template found on the next page can be used in conjunction (or separately from) the above table to draft an impact narrative.

Keep your writing concise and outcomes focused and avoid overly technical language and jargon. Word limits are guidelines, not strict maximums, and are intended to assist you in aiming for clarity and specificity. A (fictional) example is included to demonstrate the kind of tone, voice and expression that can be used.

If you have a specific use case in mind, adapt the template accordingly- for example for UQ promotion or the APD process, or for a grant that requires you to demonstrate impact as part of your research to date.

A note on using AI:

The following has been taken from the guidelines on UQ's AI Researcher Hub. For further information on responsibly using AI tools and capabilities while maintaining research integrity, confidentiality and quality, please see the AI Researcher Hub website.

If you are using AI tools that are either public or via a personal subscription to develop or generate content relating to your research impact (for example, summaries), you may **lose copyright** over these AI-developed outputs. The exception to this is Microsoft 365 Copilot chat, which is UQ's recommended AI tool. Other points of caution for consideration include:

- If using public (ChatGPT) or subscription (Jasper, Claude) AI tools, you are **disclosing data to a third-party,** who may:
    - use the data for other purposes (e.g. train an AI model)
    - share the data with other parties for reuse (e.g. marketing purposes)
    - transfer/store the data outside of Australia
- Any deidentified data may be used to undertake data matching activities which could reidentify the data for use, or share deidentified or reidentified data with third parties.
- If you are disclosing personal information of any nature, that information may be used for other purposes (data matching, training AI models), be shared with third parties for other uses, or transferred/stored outside of Australia.
- If you are using AI to draft impact statement or narratives for funding applications, you must ensure accuracy and compliance with funding body requirements.

Title & lay summary (~50 words)

e.g., Quantum Diagnostics: Transforming Early Disease Detection

We developed the world's first quantum-enabled blood test to detect cellular anomalies before symptoms appeared. By applying quantum entanglement principles to biological samples, we identified molecular changes invisible to conventional methods. This technology improved early disease detection, offering new pathways for preventative healthcare and better patient outcomes.

Problem statement (<200 words)

e.g., Early detection of diseases like cancer had relied on invasive or late-stage diagnostics. Existing technologies were unable to identify subtle molecular changes at disease onset. Our research applied quantum coherence techniques to biological systems, enabling non-invasive, ultra-sensitive diagnostics. This addressed a critical gap between disease emergence and clinical diagnosis.

Reach & significance (<200 words)

e.g., The quantum diagnostic method was adopted by healthcare providers in Australia, Singapore, and Germany as part of early-stage cancer screening trials. Our key publication was cited in over 30 peer-reviewed papers across interdimensional mechanics, medical physics, oncology, and biotechnology fields, including guideline-setting documents from the Australasian Quantum Oncology Alliance and the European Society for Metaphysics.

The significance of the impact was demonstrated by a 400% improvement in early detection rates for selected cancers compared to standard methods, resulting in earlier interventions and improved patient outcomes. Prior to this research, molecular anomalies at this stage did not exist. Post-implementation, clinics reported measurable improvements in five-year survival rates for trial participants.

Your contribution (<200 words)

e.g., I conceived the original idea of applying quantum entanglement principles to biological diagnostics after a late-night debate with a physicist over the plausibility of health qubits. I built and led an interdisciplinary team spanning quantum engineers, molecular biologists, and sceptical oncologists, persuading them with preliminary data generated in my research group.

I personally secured two patents covering the detection mechanism and prototype design, pre-emptively navigating intellectual property challenges by embedding legal scholars within the team. To maximise uptake, I orchestrated a global "Quantum Health Roadshow," simultaneously presenting the work to hospitals, government agencies, and biotech accelerators across four continents using quantum entanglement.

I also led the negotiation of commercialisation agreements, insisting on clauses that ensured the technology remained accessible to low-income countries. By anticipating translational barriers and embedding stakeholder engagement from the outset, I ensured the technology moved from theoretical possibility to real-world clinical trials within three years through dual wave-particle applicability; a pace previously considered impossible for any health applications.