Exhibitions and the REF

Dr Kristi Bain and Dr Charlotte Sausman, REF Impact Team
Chetwynd Room, King’s College, 9 October 2018
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Panel C

Dr Kristi Bain
Panel D

Mike Roberts
Project Manager
Role of the REF Impact Co-ordinators

- Provide advice and information on REF 2021 Impact criteria.

- Assist UoAs to scope out potential impact, specifically within the context of REF impact criteria:
  - Eligibility
  - Underpinning research
  - Supporting evidence
  - Breadth and significance of impact

- Provide ongoing support to UoAs in the development and editing of impact case studies.

- Provide advice on the eligibility of the overall impact submission including narrative and supporting documentation.
Features of top-rated Impact Case Studies (I)

- Establish clear links between research and impact
  - Provide clear impact progression, from envisioning the research through to its implementation and outcomes.
  - Identify the problem the research aims to address.
  - Show how impact is an *integral part* of the research and was necessary for impact to have taken place.

- Detail the benefits
  - Detail the *extent and/or diversity* (reach) of those who benefited from the research, and the *degree to which* (significance) people, institutions, practices, etc, have changed/benefited.
  - Clarify *who* are the beneficiaries, *in what ways* these groups have benefited, *how* the research has had this effect, and *when* it happened.
  - Demonstrate collaboration and interdisciplinarity if applicable.
Features of top-rated Impact Case Studies (II)

- Provide strong supporting evidence
  - Make the evidence of impact appropriate to what the research set out to achieve.
  - Provide evidence for all impact activities and outcomes where possible.
  - Provide both quantitative and qualitative evidence to support reach and significance.
  - Focus evidence gathering on the benefits of impact, rather than on pathways to impact.

- Compelling narrative
  - Use succinct, clear language which focuses on impact.
  - Distinguish clearly between research and impact sections.
  - Make sense to an engaged but non-specialist reader.
Exhibitions ICS—Challenges

• Evaluating impact rather than focusing primarily on *routes* to impact.

• Demonstrating how diverse beneficiaries engaged with the research through the exhibition, and translating that experience into impact.

• Providing context for quantitative indicators (visitor numbers, ticket and catalogue sales, etc).

• Ensuring that the narrative and impacts are not limited to the timeframe of the exhibition.
Exhibitions ICS—Opportunities (I)

- Collaborative, interdisciplinary, and cross-sector.
- Improved knowledge and skills among staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- Reach diverse audiences.
- Reciprocal engagement with a variety of publics, including the museum staff.
- Co-production of knowledge through museum collaborations.
Exhibitions ICS—Opportunities (II)

- Experience other aspects of museum practice beyond that of exhibitions.

- Learn from and implement museum expertise in outreach, engagement, and evaluation.

- Legacy—ie, ongoing partnerships/collaborations; invitations to stage exhibitions at other museums; invited to advise on design and curatorial practice/strategy; the creation of school resources, and so on.
Examples of Exhibition Impacts and Beneficiaries

**Impacts**
- Cultural awareness, understanding and exchange
- Cultural heritage and tourism
- Creativity
- Economy
- Education
- Museum practice/strategy
- Visitor experience

**Beneficiaries**
- Heritage Professionals
- Local communities, including local authorities
- Museum professionals
- Students
- Visitors

**See Annex A, Panel Criteria (pp. 94-110) for examples of impacts and indicators. Exhibitions could include any of the areas/types of impact.**
REF2021 Draft Guidance and Exhibitions (I)

Impact

• No specific guidance on exhibitions.
• Public engagement guidance refers to the NCCPE and Arts Council for evaluation frameworks that could be applicable to evaluating exhibition engagement and impact.
• However, these frameworks are not required, as ‘impact partners may also have their own evaluation frameworks that could be drawn upon to evidence impact’ (See Annex A, Panel Criteria, pp. 94-110).

Outputs—Definition: A single or series of public events, or short-term, long-term, or permanent installations, at which works of interest are displayed (See Guidance on Submissions pp.125-126 for further details).

• Annex C, Main Panel D, Exhibition (Panel Criteria, pp.118-119)
  • Recommended additional statement on research process/content/contribution—up to 300 words.
  • Medium—DOI/PDF/USB
  • Content
    • A coherent presentation of the research, evidencing the year of dissemination.
    • The material submitted should provide sufficient information for assessment, which may be provided in the statement noted above.
    • This may take the form of an A-V and/or other materials that represent both the research as well as the distinctive contributions of individual researchers.
Outputs

• Annex K, All Panels, Exhibition (Guidance on Submissions, pp.125-126)
  • Category M
  • Medium—PDF upload of photographic/visual record of output, or details of how it can be freely accessed (e.g. URL, DOI and evidence of year of dissemination).
  • Physical output—Representation of the output (e.g. recording or photographic/visual record) and evidence of year of dissemination (paper and/or DVD/CD/USB).
And...a few more notes on Exhibitions as Outputs

• Exhibitions from any panel
  • Should be submitted with a written description of the research process and/or content (maximum 300 words) if it is not apparent.
  • Only where necessary, a fuller written description of the research process and/or content should be provided instead of the above statement.
  • The fuller written description should be included as part of an uploaded PDF, or on paper together with a physical output.

• Main Panel C:
  • Should be submitted either as a PDF or on paper, and a written description provided.
  • Where the form of the output makes this essential, it may be supplemented by limited additional visual material in an accessible format.
  • Further information can be found in ‘Panel criteria’, paragraphs 252 to 254.

Note that exhibitions submitted as outputs can also be the focus of an impact case study (Assembling Bodies; Threads of Feeling).
Output Example (I)—Assembling Bodies, REF2014

REF 2014 Output Results

Title and brief description
Assembling Bodies: Art, Science and Imagination

Dr Anita Herle - Lead Curator

The exhibition included 280 objects, mainly from the collections of MAA, the University of Cambridge and the Colleges. Assembling Bodies: Art, Science & Imagination aimed to reveal and challenge preconceived ideas of the body by exploring the different ways that bodies are imagined, understood and transformed in the arts, social and biological sciences. The exhibition brought together diverse materials, underpinned by recent theoretical ideas about the body, in ways that prompted audience engagement on multiple levels. Many of the displays highlighted innovations resulting from Cambridge-based research - from anthropological fieldwork, archaeological excavations and historical enquiries to developments in surgery, the discovery of DNA and the sequencing of the human genome. Assembling Bodies was part of a Leverhulme research project ‘Changing Beliefs of the Human Body’ (2004-2009). Additional funding was provided by the Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue (96 pages with 91 illustrations), a teacher’s guide and website http://maa.cam.ac.uk/assemblingbodies/. An extensive final report includes reviews, a list of numerous related academic and public activities, and visitor evaluations.

Type: M - Exhibition
Output Example (II)—Assembling Bodies, REF2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue(s)</th>
<th>Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year of first exhibition</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://maa.cam.ac.uk/assemblingbodies/exhibition/">http://maa.cam.ac.uk/assemblingbodies/exhibition/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of additional authors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional information</td>
<td>Dr Anita Herle - Lead Curator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary and Details of the Impact
Research on the Shahnama and the Cambridge ‘Shahnama Project’ have stood at the head of a wider effort to promote a better understanding of Persian culture in Britain and the West, especially in view of the current negative image of Iran and its clerical regime. The impact has been (1) to enhance heritage activity in Iranian diaspora communities in the UK and elsewhere; (2) create a focus and catalyst for raising awareness amongst the wider British public of Persian culture and history, and of past relations between Britain and Iran; and (3) inspire and support new forms of artistic expression.

The key impact of this research on the wider public is the major exhibition, ‘Epic of the Persian Kings. The Art of Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh’ mounted at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (01/09/10-09/01/11). The exhibition curator paid tribute to the work of the Project which informed the curatorial process. The research provided significant additional enhancements to the museum’s presentation, with the creation of an audio gallery guide relating to 18 key items and a podcast offering an overview of the Shahnama.
Impact Case Study Example I, The arts of the book in Persian culture REF2014

Key strengths

• Impacts not limited to the exhibition alone—evaluation of legacy.

• As a result of the above, the case study includes a diverse range of impacts and beneficiaries.

• Emphasises the link between the research, curatorial process, exhibition, and related outreach and engagement activities.

• Evaluation of visitor numbers and feedback is part of a broader narrative that demonstrates regional, national and international reach and significance.
Other Potential Impacts/Evidence

• Highlight the role of collaboration with the museum as a route to impact.

• Consider the co-production of knowledge that may have resulted from the university-museum collaboration.

• Provide context for visitor numbers and catalogue sales.
Summary and Details of Impact: ‘Threads of Feeling’, a major exhibition of the textile tokens left with abandoned infants at the London Foundling Hospital in the mid-eighteenth century, was curated and based on original research by Professor John Styles. Displayed at the London Foundling Museum in 2010-11, it received 19,132 visitors in six months. A permanent online presence from 2011 extended its reach, and when it travelled to the USA in 2013, a further 46,619 people saw it over two months.

The London Foundling Museum opened in 2004 to tell the story of the hospital and its children, yet the Foundling Textiles remained in the London Metropolitan Archives, relatively inaccessible and previously virtually unknown outside a small circle of specialists. Styles’s research into the textiles, combined with his previous findings on clothes and fashion, were the basis of the ‘Threads of Feeling’ exhibition, which ran at the museum from October 2010 to March 2011. Attracting 19,132 visitors, it was the best-attended display since the museum’s opening.
Case Study Example II, Threads of Feeling, REF2104

Key Strengths

• Includes different types of impact: professional practice, impact on those personally affected by the research themes, economic impact, and cultural impact.

• Evidences demonstrable impact of the public engagement activities described.

• It is clear that relevant research underpinned the engagement activities.

• The initial UK exhibition was held alongside more targeted events such as workshops. The success of the UK activities led to an international series of activities.

• Quantitative information, such as visitor numbers, sales figures and website hits, is given throughout, demonstrating the reach of the impact.

• Extensive qualitative information, including visitor feedback and critical reviews, demonstrates the significance of the impact.
Summary of Impact:

• Invitation to collaborate with National Gallery lead curator to produce *Visions of Paradise: Botticini’s Palmieri Altarpiece* (Sunley Rooms, 4 November 2015-28 March 2016).

• Reconstruction of the painting’s original context within the Florentine church of San Pier Maggiore, a building demolished at the end of the eighteenth century.

• A 6 minute film was completed and shown alongside the exhibition for the duration of the show, viewed extensively online on the NG YouTube channel.

• Collaboration with the University of Exeter and encompassing monuments across Florence’s historic centre.
Types of Impact/Beneficiaries

- Visitor experience, as well as attracting significant footfall to the museum.
- Significant online audience with 18,000+ views so far.
- The film has been well received by a UK audience and has also provoked significant interest in Italy, especially Florence, where local residents have often been surprised and moved to learn that their homes were once chapels filled with Renaissance masterpieces.
- The methodology and the format developed for the film has been adopted by other digital practitioners.
- Locals/cultural heritage/identity: ‘The discovery that a Renaissance church could still be discovered in an attic, a kitchen and a bathroom came as a revelation to many viewers. It also underlined that Renaissance art was intended for real, lived spaces, rather than the rarified context of the museum’.
Impact Resources

- Research Strategy Office, Impact, including Annotated examples of case studies
- REF2014 case studies (searchable database of all impact case studies from REF2014)
- REF2021 Draft Guidance on Submissions and Consultation on the draft panel criteria and working methods
- NCCPE Museum-University Partnerships Resources
- NCCPE Public Engagement Evaluation
- Arts Council (Generic Learning Outcomes, Generic Social Outcomes, Quality Principles, Quality Metrics)
- Pathways to Impact toolkit
- Fast Track Impact
- Impact repository (to capture impact, any access needs to be granted by DA)
Impact Contacts

- Public Engagement Team
- Impact@admin.cam.ac.uk (REF Impact Team)
- REF2021@admin.cam.ac.uk Cambridge REF team (other REF matters: outputs, open access, environment)

**Impact and Environment Team:**

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Dr Kristi Bain, Sr Impact Co-ordinator, Panel D  kristi.bain@admin.cam.ac.uk
• REF impact coordinators can meet with PIs individually to discuss how to apply today’s suggestions to REF impact case studies under development.

• Use today’s presentations to think retrospectively about past projects/exhibitions, to plan ahead for activities leading up to REF, and envision future museum-university collaborations.

• Q&A