

## **REF impact pilot: revised case study template and guidance July 2010**

1. We have amended the case study template following feedback from pilot HEIs and panel members and would like to use a revised template for the example case studies that we intend to publish as part of the pilot report.
2. The main change has been to re-order the template to follow a narrative that starts with the research, and then explains the impact or benefit and how the research made the contribution. This does not imply a linear model of research leading to impact; panels have fed back that in general it would be easier to assess a narrative that first explains the underpinning research (even if the impact happened in parallel to the research taking place).
3. This guidance is provided to the pilot HEIs that we are asking to revise selected case studies for potential publication by HEFCE. Note that as well as changing the order of questions on the template, revised guidance is provided to ensure clear presentation of the evidence for publication.
4. Further refinements to the template and guidance for the full REF will be made subsequently.

### **General guidance on completing the template**

5. When revising the case studies, HEIs should note that they should present information in such a way that would allow panels to make robust judgements based on the evidence presented to them. The case study narrative and supporting evidence should be sufficiently explicit, transparent and self-contained that the panel can assess the impact without having to make inferences, gather additional material, rely on members' knowledge, or follow up numerous references.
6. In particular HEIs must ensure that:
  - a. The connection between the underpinning research and the impact is explicitly explained and evidenced, even when the link is not simple or direct, with clear explanations of:
    - i. the specific research insights or findings that underpin the claimed impact, contribution or benefit
    - ii. the process through which the research came to have an influence, benefit or impact
    - iii. the specific nature of the contribution made by this research (and where appropriate it should be put into context alongside the research contribution from other HEIs)

b. The quality of the underpinning research is evidenced in such a manner as to clearly show that it meets the expected quality threshold. For example by referring explicitly to peer review or other quality assurance processes.

c. References to research and external sources should be provided to assure the panel about the underpinning research and to enable corroboration of what is set out in the case study – not as a source of further information for panels to follow up in order to understand the narrative or make the assessment.

d. Clear details are provided to show that the impact claimed occurred between 2005 and 2009 and that the underpinning research was published no earlier than 1993.

## **Detailed guidance for completing the case study template**

### Short summary of the case study

7. This section should provide panel members with a succinct description of the case study, outlining the core impact being claimed, before they read the case study in full.

### Underpinning research

8. This section should explain what the research and key insights were that underpin the impact, and that this research was undertaken within the submitting institution during the appropriate timeframe. (Research references should be provided in section 3.)

9. Please provide the following information:

a. An outline of what the underpinning research was (this may relate to a body of research, a research project or programme, or parts thereof)

b. Names of the key researchers, dates of when it was carried out, and what positions were held by the key researchers at the institution at the time (where researchers joined or left the HEI during the period the dates must be stated)

c. Any key contextual information about this area of research and the significance of this research in relation to the impact

d. A brief summary of the relevant insights or findings from this research which relate to the impact claimed.

## Research references

10. This section should provide references to key outputs from, and any key grants awarded for, the research described in section 2, and evidence to assure the panel of the quality of the research (in terms of its rigour and originality). Only references to **key** outputs and grants are required – a maximum of 10 references may be provided although we would usually expect fewer than 10.

11. Include the following details for each output:

- a. Author(s)
- b. Title
- c. Publication date
- d. Journal title, volume and page numbers / publisher, etc.

12. Include the following details of any key grants:

- a. Who the grant was awarded to
- b. The grant title
- c. Who made the award
- d. The period of the grant (with dates)
- e. The value of the grant

13. Provide justification about the quality of the overall body of research referred to in this section. This should include brief details about the peer review or other quality assurance processes involved for the outputs and grants referenced.

## The impact / contribution / benefit achieved

14. This section should describe what the impact or benefit was in relation to the two criteria used for assessment: 'reach' and 'significance' and explicitly explain how the research made a contribution to that impact or benefit.

15. Provide the following information:

- a. The process through which the research led to or contributed to the impact (for example, how it was disseminated, how it came to influence users/beneficiaries, what collaboration there was, how it came to be exploited, taken up or applied, etc.)
- b. Who has benefitted or been influenced. Include specific details about organisations, constituencies, groups etc.
- c. How they have benefitted or been influenced.
- d. Dates of when these impacts or benefits occurred.

16. Evidence and indicators that support the specific claims being made should be included where possible.

17. Within this narrative, please explain clearly the link between the research and the impact, and the specific nature of the contribution that this research made. Where appropriate it should be put into context alongside research contributions from other HEIs.

Impact references / corroboration

18. The information in this section is intended to be used for auditing / corroboration purposes only. References provided in this section should not be used as a substitute for a clear statement of the evidence of the impact, which should be provided in section 4. Normally no more than 10 references should be provided.

19. Provide references as appropriate to:

a. Reports, documents, reviews, etc. that could corroborate the information provided in section 4 above (including web-links)

b. Organisations for whom you would be able to provide named contacts of users/beneficiaries who could corroborate claims (for the purpose of publishing examples we intend only to publish the names of the organisations, not the individual contacts. If you have claimed a particular organisation / group has benefitted, we would expect you to be able to provide contact details in this section)

## REF impact pilot case study

Revised template: please ensure guidance notes are followed in completion of the template

|   |
|---|
| HEI name:   |
| UOA name:   |
| Filename:   |
| Confidential?:  |
| Title of case study:  |
| <b>1. Short summary of the case study</b> (Maximum 150 words)<br><br><i>See guidance paragraph 7 before completing</i>  |
| <b>2. Underpinning research</b> (Maximum 500 words)<br>Provide information about the research and the specific insights that underpin the impact or benefit claimed in this case study.<br><br><i>See guidance paragraphs 8-9 before completing</i> |
| <b>3. References to the research</b><br>Provide references to key research outputs, any key research grants, and evidence of the quality of the research (Maximum of 10 references).<br><br><i>See guidance paragraphs 10-13 before completing</i>  |
| <b>4. The contribution, impact or benefit</b> (Maximum 750 words)<br>Describe the impact or benefit and how the research contributed to this<br><br><i>See guidance paragraphs 14-17 before completing</i>  |
| <b>5. References to corroborate the contribution, impact or benefit</b> (Normally maximum of 10 references)<br><br><i>See guidance paragraphs 18-19 before completing</i>   |