RIS IMPACT MODULE

Introduction

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The Impact Module of the Research Information System (RIS-IM) is a confidential repository for academic staff to store and track information about their engagement and knowledge exchange activities and the impact of their research outside of the academy.

The RIS-IM enables you to create different types of records, link them to users or outputs, and attach evidence. You can plan and record your impact activities and capture evidence from the beginning of projects, progressively linking outputs, outcomes and impact as they are delivered.

By linking the impact to related publications, grants or conference proceedings you can build links between research inputs (funding), outputs and outcomes (publications, conference proceedings), impact activities (engagement and knowledge exchange activities) and resulting impact.

The RIS-IM helps to capture the entire research life cycle and over time, a portfolio of evidence is built, which can be used to create narratives or case studies of the measurable impact.
**Impact**  The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations (UKRI)

**Engagement**  A two-way exchange of ideas between a researcher and a stakeholder for mutual benefit

**Knowledge Exchange (KE)**  Activities facilitating a two-way exchange between researchers and stakeholders or research users to share ideas, research and expertise

**Routes/Pathways to Impact**  The activities through which your research could achieve impact *i.e.* the knowledge exchange or engagement activities

**Impact Evidence**  Sources external to the University that provide corroboration of your impact claim

**Further Resources**
- Research Impact Toolkit
By the end of the guide you should be able to:

- **Login** to the System
- **Create records** to capture impact plans, impact activities and impact
- **Upload evidence** of impact and supporting documentation
- **Link records** to publications and other records within RIS
Login at: https://ris.essex.ac.uk

You don't need the VPN to access the RIS. It works from anywhere with an internet connection and in most browsers (Microsoft Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari)
When you first log in the Home Page will be displayed, looking something like this.
You can create one of three types of impact record in the RIS-IM:

**Impact plan** - Capture information about the intended impact of a piece of research and the activities planned to reach those goals.

**Impact engagement activity** - Record your engagement and knowledge exchange activities as they occur.

**Impact narrative** - Record a narrative of events describing the impact of a piece of research. Impact narratives may link to an impact plan and can link together multiple engagement activities.

**NOTE:** Existing ‘Records of impact’ will default to the new ‘Impact narrative’ type
You can view your existing impact records on your Homepage by clicking ‘View all’ in the ‘Records of Impact’ box.
Alternatively from your Homepage go to your Menu drop down and choose ‘Records of Impact’.
Your existing records of impact will appear as a list. You can filter the records by a number of fields in order to search your impact records for something specific.

❤ Favourite the record so it shows at the top of your impact records.

⚙️ Manage your privacy settings.

More options – ‘view details’ of the impact record or ‘remove relationship’ to delete it from your profile.
There are two ways that you can add an impact record to your profile:

1. In ‘my records of impact’ click on the + to ‘add a new activity’.
Alternatively, on your Homepage go to ‘Records of impact’ box and ‘Add new’ to start the impact workflow.
Choose impact record type

Whichever route you take to add a new record you will be taken to a window where you will need to choose the type of impact record that you’d like to add.

When creating records, the sections marked * must be completed otherwise the record will not save. Help for each section can be found by clicking on ?
Add impact plan – create record

**Title:** Add a title that will allow others to find this impact plan from within a longer list.

**Lead Contributors/Contributors:** Add the names of the people contributing to this impact plan. Click ‘Add a person’ after each contributor.

**Planned activities:** Add an overview of steps in your impact plan. You can add further entries at any point. ‘Evidence’ can be recorded separately. + Add to save.

‘Save’ to move to next step.

Access tools and resources to help you develop an impact plan in the [Research Impact Toolkit](#)
The next step is to link other users that are associated with this impact plan. You can use the ‘Filter’ at the side and enter the last name of the person.

When you have found the user you want to link, click the box next to their name and ‘Link Selected’ and choose the relationship the user has with your impact plan. This will result in the impact record being also shown on the other user’s profile.

Once you have finished linking users click ‘Done’ to go to the next step.
The final step is to attach evidence. You can upload documents, links to webpages, and contact details here. At the planning stage this will not be evidence of impact *per se*, but you can use this section to attach supporting information related to your impact plan.

- To upload a document ‘Attach a document’, then ‘Choose File’ and choose your document in Windows Explorer.
- To provide a web link ‘Provide a link’ and add the URL. There is also an option to add a file, which could be a screenshot of the webpage or a pdf copy of the webpage (in case the link breaks).
- ‘Add contact details’ will enable you to record contact details of individuals and their relationship to the ‘evidence’ (may not be required for impact plan record).

For each of these different types of evidence entries you should add:

**Date of testimonial:** Add a date for the document if relevant.

**Nature of evidence:** Details about the document and ‘Save’.

Once you have completed this page click ‘Done’. 
Add impact engagement activity – create record

Title: Add a title that will allow others to find this engagement/KE activity from a longer list.
Lead Contributors/Contributors: Add the names of the people contributing to this engagement/KE activity. ‘Add a person’ after each contributor.
Details of engagement activity: Give details of your engagement/KE activity (e.g. who’s involved, what the aim of the activity is etc.). You can add further entries at any point. + Add to save.
Underpinning Research: Outline the key research or insights that this engagement/KE activity is linked to or draws upon, if appropriate.
Organisations: Add details of organisations involved with this activity. + Add to save.

‘Save’ to move to next step.

Next step - Link other users, as outlined for the impact plan record (page 15)

Access tools and resources to learn more about different types of engagement and knowledge exchange activities in the Research Impact Toolkit
Attach ‘evidence’ as outlined for the impact plan record (page 16).

At this stage this will not be evidence of impact, but you can provide evidence about the activity and its outcomes, which can help to show attribution of any resulting impact to you/your research.

For each of the different types of evidence entries you should add:

- **Date of testimonial**: Add a date that the evidence was made available. For a document this would be when it was created, for a website or URL the date it was made accessible.
- **Nature of evidence**: Add details about the document and ‘Save’.

Once you have completed this page click ‘Done’.

Find out more about different types of impact evidence in the Research Impact Toolkit.
Underpinning Research: Outline the key research or insights that underpinned this impact. This work may be a body of work or project that underpins this impact. Relevant research outputs can be linked separately afterwards.

Organisations: Add details of organisations involved with this impact. + Add to save.

Impact Type: Select the type(s) of impact achieved (see Annex A of the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions). Multiple types can be selected.

Next step - Link other users, as outlined for the impact plan record (page 15)
Add impact narrative – attach evidence

Attach ‘evidence’ as outlined for the impact plan record (page 16).

For the impact narrative record you will need to record evidence of impact by attaching a document, providing a link or contact details. Examples of impact evidence could include testimonials, reports, webpages etc. Find out more about different types of impact evidence in the Research Impact Toolkit.

For each of the different types of evidence entries you should add:

Date of testimonial: Add a date that the evidence was made available. For a document this would be when it was created, for a website or URL the date it was made accessible.

Nature of evidence: Describe how this evidence confirms or demonstrates the impact. In the case of contact details you could provide details of why this contact is important to the impact record e.g. they held a particular role that provided testimonial evidence to support your impact claims. Click ‘Save’.

Once you have completed this page click ‘Done’.
Providers of testimonial/confidential evidence must understand how their data and the information they provide will be used by the University and give consent for this. A consent form, completed by the evidence provider should be attached to the impact narrative record alongside the evidence item.

**Date of testimonial:** The date on the signed consent form.

**Nature of evidence:** Should state which evidence item the consent form relates to. Click ‘Save’.

Once you have completed this page click ‘Done’.

Find out more about confidentiality and consent in the Research Impact Toolkit.
Edit an impact record and add links

To select an impact record to edit, go to ‘Records of impact’ (see page 9) and click on the title to open the record. You can ‘Edit record’ and ‘Attach evidence’.

From this page you can also create links to other records in RIS e.g. grants, underpinning outputs, professional activities, other RIS users etc.

Importantly, you can link to other impact records e.g. you could link an impact plan to an impact engagement activity record and the impact narrative record to create a story about the impact activities that were planned and carried out and the resulting impact.

Once you have chosen the type of item to link, it will open a new screen.
Use the filters to find the items you want to link to. Tick the items and then click on the dropdown item (e.g. associated with, underpins etc.) under ‘Link Selected’. Click ‘Done’ when complete. This returns you to the previous page and you can link other items such as grants, publications etc.
Edit an impact record and add links

You can also create links from the Menu on your homepage (see page 10). Under ‘Tools’ select ‘Create Links’.

This takes you to a new page where you can create links between different items/records.

Select the items/records you wish to link then click ‘Go!’
If you have any further questions please email reors@essex.ac.uk or contact the Research Impact Team.