

Q: There is a focus on impact, and this can be challenging in terms of translatable research, eg if Alzheimer's research does not yield any drugs so you need to go back to basics. Does this fit with impact?

A: We don't fund human disease, we fund fundamental science. It is difficult to track the impact of this underpinning work, often BBSRC funds basic research which is taken forward by, eg, MRC.

Q: My Pathways to Impact is mainly academic, what can I do?

A: All research has impact, through activities such as training, dissemination, engaging with other academics. Pathways to Impact should focus on project specific activities, not just mentioning what is already happening. We recognise that impact is variable with different types of research, but it is important that people exploit identified areas of relevance.

Q: Impact plans are part of the peer review process. How is this assessed at the end of the grant, apart from through publications? How is this translated back to the Committee, especially where multiple stakeholders are involved?

A: The potential for this is limited as impact accumulates more slowly than the rate at which applications are submitted. We may devise metrics to determine this.

**Q: Do we have any indicators of the impact of the impact agenda/Pathways to Impact?**

A: Given that very few grants that have been awarded since the Ptl's were introduced have finished, let alone had time to realise any impact from the results, at this stage the answer is no. In terms of changing behaviours and engendering a greater awareness of impact potential within the research community, the progress looks encouraging.

Q: Is there a cross Council group working on quantifying economic value of impacts?

There are many efforts by the Research Councils to obtain impact data from third party users, and there are several cross-council groups looking at how we describe and quantify impact in economic terms. It is recognised that the use of case studies is necessary in many situations.

-While it can be difficult for researchers to track impact of their research once it has moved on to a third party, where outcomes are commercialised there are tracking methods available such as royalty and milestone payments from IP, and the observed growth of new companies founded out of the research.

-Research Councils have a clear responsibility to understand and, as far as possible, track the impact of the outputs and outcomes of the research they invest in. There are various cross council groups looking at this, as well as work by individual councils. For example, BBSRC is looking at those companies that can be seen as having a basis in its past investments in research. BBSRC is also working to quantify the benefits to be realised from some of its very major investments, for example at the Research and Innovation Campuses.

-As the government will continue to be interested in impact data, it is important that the research community and the Research Councils continue to develop strategies for tracking and reporting their impact.

Q: Could BBSRC get access to academic Research Excellence Framework documents?  
These would be very useful in assessing the impact of research.

A: This would be extremely useful for all the research councils, but is unlikely to happen.

Q: Are you still looking for balance between knowledge exchange and public engagement in the Excellence with Impact competitions?

A: Yes. Both KE and PE activities are recognised routes to achieving impact, where BBSRC encourages both. It remains the responsibility of the Research Organisation to determine the most appropriate blend of activities that will maximise their research impact and quality, and concomitantly form the basis of a strong strategic Excellence with Impact vision (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/impact-incentive/excellence-impact.aspx>).