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'Making a Difference: Impact in the Social Sciences' Conference 2018 Call for contributions

The contribution proposal submissions will be processed through an online system. Follow this link to make a submission: <https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/impact-conference-contributions>

About the event

University of Oxford, the Open University, Oxford Brookes and Reading Universities are hosting a joint impact conference on 19 April 2018 at St Anne's College, Oxford. This free one-day conference seeks to develop a positive culture of engaged research and impact across the social sciences.

Over the last 4 years, University of Oxford has been working collaboratively with our neighbours, Oxford Brookes University, University of Reading and the Open University, to build and strengthen regional partnerships for impact through our Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account (ESRC IAA).

One of the key aims of the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account is to create a positive culture around impact and build capacity amongst the research community, to generate high quality impact from social sciences research. As part of the ESRC IAA programme of activities, we have funded 140+ knowledge exchange projects and provided training and capacity building opportunities.

For the very first time, this conference brings together the combined and complementary expertise of the research communities in the partner universities, to share their knowledge, experiences and learning with regards to engagement and impact activities.

The conference is targeted at researchers of all career stages (including DPhil/PhD students, research staff and academics) and the professional colleagues who support them.

The programme

The programme will comprise a mixture of invited external speakers and session leaders, and contributors from the four partner universities. We are also keen to represent the voices of non-academic partner organisations, so participants can hear directly, what they need from researchers.

The event aims to encourage the sharing of examples, practical guidance, hints and tips through plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions, skills sessions, case studies, contributed papers, and an exhibition.

The conference will share best practice, techniques and published research that will help participants with: designing and planning for impact; the practicalities of implementing their plan and engaging beyond the Academy along a number of pathways; monitoring, measuring and evaluating their impact, translating and communicating their impacts.

Topics of interest include (but not limited to):

- **What does impact mean for social sciences?** What are the unique opportunities and constraints for social scientists? How does this differ to other subject groupings? What is the value of social sciences beyond academia? How can we ensure this is well understood and communicated?



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- **Planning for impact** – what lengths have you gone to in terms of planning impact into your research projects? What were the pathways you chose the focus on and how did you create your impact plan? How did the reality match the plan? What would you do differently?
- **Responding to the current funding climate** – responding to increasing challenge-focused funding calls with more demand for direct impact; making the most of opportunities for impact in developing countries through the Global Challenges Research Fund; encouraging social sciences to engage with businesses, in response to the funding opportunities created by the Government's Industrial Strategy; and, REF as a driver of impact-generating activity.
- **Building successful, impactful and sustainable partnerships** with a variety of different stakeholder groups – public and private sectors, and civil society. How are you responding to the needs of stakeholders? –what works for a particular sector/topic area; what do they want from research; what formats and techniques have you used to engage particular audiences; what outputs have you created, and how have you ensured they were taken up by users, different kinds of impacts; instrumental, conceptual and capacity building approaches;
- **Public engagement with social sciences research** – informing and inspiring, consulting and collaborating with different 'publics' to have an impact. Do you have examples of when public engagement has been really worthwhile? What did you and the public(s) involved get out of it? How did it feed through to impact and back into your research?
- **Impact in a world of interdisciplinary research.** Issues in terms of working across disciplines, different approaches and talking different languages etc. but also the positive aspects of a multi-pronged approach to a societal challenge in achieving impact.
- **Balancing competing demands** with your personal needs developing an academic career. Managing engagement and impact activities alongside teaching, research and admin workloads. How you were supported, helpful approaches you took, how you have incorporated impact into your other activities. Does this need to be over and above? Have you had to develop new skills and competencies?
- **Tracking your impact** - In a world evermore focused on metrics, indicators and evidence, how can you really prove the scale and significance of your impact? Which evaluation techniques work well and how have you tracked and monitored your impact? What evidence have you collected to corroborate the impact you are claiming?
- **Growing the reach and significance of your impact** – creative examples of initial impact being developed further e.g. roll out of policy on larger scale, additional regions/countries/sectors involved, translation to creating a sustainable business model to facilitate impact, dissemination to grow interest in your work, entrepreneurial and innovative approaches.

Submission process

We want to hear from you if you are a DPhil/PhD candidate or member of staff at any of the four partner universities and:

- you have experience of engaging with non-academic audiences to make a difference with your research in the real world (whether that experience was good or not so good!)
- you have already successfully created impact
- you are on the journey to impact but not quite there yet
- you have published on the topic of impact and engagement, theory or practice
- you have provided professional support for impact and engagement activities



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NB We are very happy for you to suggest co-contributors from other HEIs and especially from non-academic organisations. We'd also welcome suggestions of specialist trainers for skills sessions.

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The deadline for submissions is **12 February 2018, 5pm** and notification of acceptance will be sent in late February 2018. Accepted contributors should register to attend the conference by 19 March 2018 to confirm their contribution.

Information required for submission

- Name(s) of contributor(s)
- Institution, Department, position and career stage
- Contributor bios (Word limit 100 per person)
- Title (no more than 100 characters)
- Abstract (200-word description of planned contribution excluding title, author, affiliations)
- Formats (choose all formats you would be willing to contribute)
- Topics and strands (select all that apply)
- Complete the following questions:
 - Who is your contribution aimed at? DPhil/PhD, early-career, mid-career, established researchers, project administrators, research facilitators and other support staff, all?
 - What would you say are the unique selling points of your contribution?
 - How do you plan to engage the audience? (100 words max)

Formats

- plenary sessions – short oral presentations (10-15 mins + Q&A)
- workshops – interactive workshop sessions engaging participants on a topic (1hr)
- panel discussions – series of short presentations (5-8 mins) followed by Q&A, discussion
- skills sessions – training on a particular skill/technique required for engagement and impact
- case studies – best practice examples with views from researchers and external partners (1hr)
- contributed papers – presentations of published work on engagement and impact (15 mins)
- exhibits - poster, video or other physical or virtual project outputs e.g. teaching packs, policy briefs, reports, toolkits, artefacts, photos.

Poster format

- Maximum poster size is A0.
- Keep text to a minimum and ensure text is in a large font (24 or above)
- Use photos, charts, diagrams, infographics or other visualisations
- For other exhibits e.g. videos, online toolkits please bring PAC tested electronic equipment or make arrangements to borrow equipment with the conference secretariat.

Terms

- The text of the abstract along with the names and affiliations, poster, powerpoint presentations and/or additional documents may be published on the conference website and in promotional materials/programme.
- A submission as a particular presentation type may be changed to a different type following review in order to be accepted and included in the programme.



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- Sessions may be recorded or live streamed. A recording of the presentation and a copy of the slides may be published online after the conference.
- Accepted contributors must register to confirm acceptance of their offer in the programme by 19 March 2018 or they may be removed from the programme.
- The contributor must be available to present at the conference on 19 April 2018

If you have any queries about the above contact the conference secretariat:

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