

10 Types of evidence

	Types of evidence	What can it provide?	How to get it
1.	Information available in the public domain e.g. online, in the news or in reports.	This information can help demonstrate change – it helps to have independent sources of information on the previous situation or scale of the issue from websites or reports from external stakeholders.	There are different exploratory approaches that can be used to find information using internet searches.
			If you believe that your research will be featured in the media or through partner press releases or on their websites you could set up an Altmetrics or Google to capture that information.
			The UK Office of National Statistics has a searchable database of national and local statistics which can help describe the context of the issue. The Business and IP Centre can also provide access to many data sources.
			If your potential impact is international then searching the UN Global Issues . Relevant charities or Government web pages may provide information on the scale of the issue.
2.	Information on research use from partners	This information can provide evidence of process or organisational changes. It may also be the only way to obtain confidential or commercially sensitive data.	It is always best to discuss impact at the start of the research collaboration, that way you will know what your partner wants to achieve using the research and how they will demonstrate it. At that point, you can discuss what evidence your partner would be happy to share with you.
			Even if your project has started or ended, you can approach your partners to see whether they are happy to tell you about the benefit they realised from using the research or being a part of the collaboration. They may be able to provide evidence of this.

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3.	Event attendance and feedback	The attendee's information can provide a quantitative and qualitative baseline of your potential beneficiaries and the long-term change in their perceptions and behaviour.	The Public Engagement Team have developed resources to help evaluate events.
			If your research was used by a partner organisation in an event or if you took part in an event that was hosted externally, you could ask for the feedback they have collected.
			If you have presented at a workshop/focus group or event, ask the organiser to include some of your questions in their feedback form.
4.	Follow-up feedback	Impact may take time to demonstrate so being able to contact participants 6 months or a year later is a useful way to find out if any has occurred.	The Public Engagement Team have developed resources to help evaluate events.
5.	Awards	The award can either be for your research contribution to impact or an assessment by research users of the impact, e.g. product to performance.	Keep all records of shortlisting or awards through organisation press releases, media coverage and correspondence.
6.	Independent reviews	Reviews by individuals who are external to the university but considered lay experts can provide an assessment of the significance of the research contribution of the activity.	Examples of Independent review used to demonstrate significance in REF2014 Impact case studies.
7.	Media and news article	News and media articles can demonstrate dissemination and can be used alongside other indications of the reach of the potential audiences.	Weblinks, screenshots and dates of publication or broadcast all need to be captured (but be mindful of Newspaper Licensing Association guidelines).
			Websites such as Statista or BARB can provide readership or viewership numbers.

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8.	Downloads / viewing statistics and social media comments	This can be used to show the effectiveness of your engagement and a pathway to the impact you are claiming. This information depends on where share your research e.g. web pages or social media	Google Analytics is a tool which lets you track user information on websites.
		Tracking your research or project web pages can provide numbers on how many people have visited the web page, the average time spent on the web page, and who is accessing the web page.	The University of Aberdeen has subscribed to Altmetric to allow our researchers to discover the online attention their research has received, to evidence potential impact and to provide additional evidence when applying for funding. You can log in to Altmetric at https://www.altmetric.com/explorer/login
		For example, Twitter can provide information on the location and demographics of individuals, and track downloads and re-tweets.	If you're receiving a lot of comments on social media, you may not want to record all of them. You may just want to record a selected few that demonstrate engagement or the public debate that has been effected. Sites such as Wakelet can be used for this.
		Weblinks to independent sites and visitor traffic can be measured.	Weblinks can change so you should keep the link and the date it was taken along with a screenshot of the evidence you are citing.
		Altmetrics can be used to discover who is talking about your research in the public domain.	It covers a wide range of online sources including news outlets and policy documents. However, it may give an incomplete picture as the link to the journal article or DOI number of the research paper must be used directly in the mention. Therefore, some discussions about the research paper could be missed.

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9.	Testimonials	<p>Testimonials can be both qualitative containing evidence of the effect or influence of your research and who it influenced, and quantitative, providing dates, economic figures or numbers of appearances/attendees.</p>	<p>Reach out to individuals who are qualified (e.g. senior figures) to show the impact the research has made. The most effective way to start is via introduction email, explaining the purpose of the request, where the email evidence can be saved and referenced at a later date.</p>
		<p>Testimonials should come from an independent, well-respected figure who directly mentions the research work and how it has affected them.</p>	<p>Being explicit in asking what evidence you would like them to provide will help you to gather evidence which clearly supports what the impact of the research has been. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exactly how has the research influenced their organisation? • Outline how guidelines/standards were adopted in practice resulting in efficiencies/benefits. • What can be done now that could not have been done before.
		<p>Where possible, the testimonial statement should provide quantitative examples of the impact, describing how the research has led to the impact.</p>	
10.	Correspondence	<p>This can provide qualitative evidence of who your research influenced and the significance of this effect.</p>	<p>You should keep emails or correspondence you receive on your impact activities. You will need to be able to review the emails quickly for relevance to the impact you are claiming.</p>
		<p>This could be an email from an organisation requesting you attend a meeting or talk to a group. The email will contain details of the organisation and event and also potentially why they want your expertise or perspective.</p>	<p>You can do this by making a note of who this individual is and the organisation they belong to.</p>

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		<p>It could be from an individual or organisation that your research has impacted (directly or indirectly).</p>	<p>You can create a timeline of your activities in relation to the impact from invites to talks or meetings.</p>
		<p>It might be in response to a keeping in touch email you sent out to partners that have provided information about the impact your research has had for them.</p>	<p>Create a file for relevant emails e.g. 'impact emails' or similar to be accessed at a later date.</p>