

SGSSS Impact Competition 2021

Applicant Guidance

1. Overview

1.1 Competition aims

The SGSSS Impact Competition is designed to give PhD students across Scotland an opportunity to reflect on how your research can make a meaningful difference outside of academia.

Our objectives are to:

1. Provide an opportunity for social science doctoral students to identify and articulate their pathways to impact;
2. Champion a culture of creating meaningful impact across the SGSSS student community and the wider public;
3. Inspire further impact, helping students progress with their pathway to impact through up to £1000 follow-on funding for winning projects.

There is more information about the definition of impact below, along with guidance about the application process. We advise all candidates to read this information carefully prior to submitting an application.

1.2 Defining 'impact'

The SGSSS defines impact using the terms of the ESRC, as the ["demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy"](#).

Knowledge exchange is how you work in collaboration with others outside of academia – impact is what happens as a result of these exchanges.

We understand that students go on a journey to create impact, and expect applicants for the SGSSS Impact Competition to be at different stages of this journey.

For the purposes of the SGSSS Impact Competition, 'impact' can include:

- An **effect on, change or benefit to society and the economy**. This includes a positive change on the activity, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding of key beneficiaries;
- The **positive academic contribution** that excellent research can make to the understanding and advancement of scientific method or theory across disciplines.

Beneficiaries can be:

- A non-academic audience, community, constituency, organisation or individuals;
- An academic audience, community, or consortium;

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- Based locally, regionally, or internationally. Although researchers must be registered at a Scottish University to be eligible for this competition, their impact can take place anywhere in the UK and overseas.

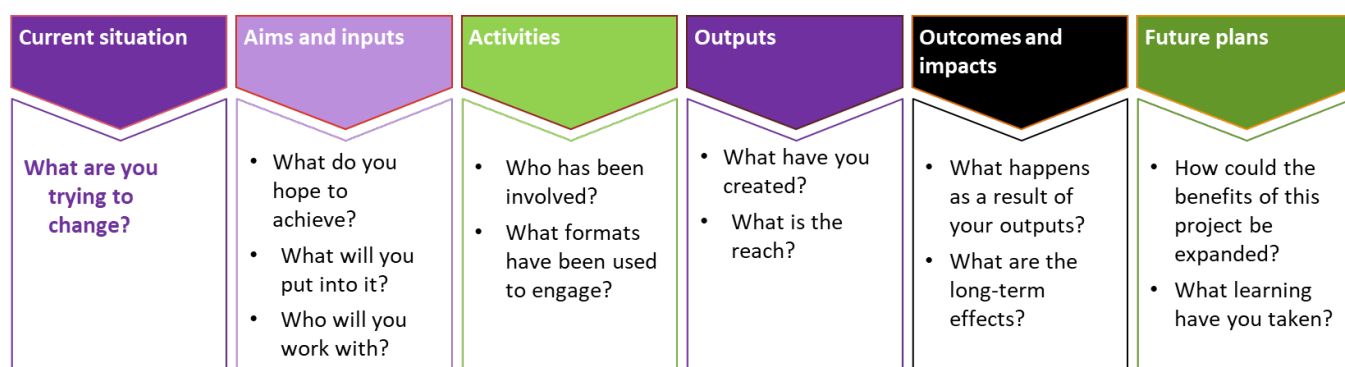
1.3 Pathways to impact

We expect applicants for this competition to be at different stages on your pathway to impact, and the whole process is designed to help you with that journey by providing an opportunity for you to reflect on what you have achieved so far and to consider what you could do next with some follow-on funding.

As part of this application, you can reflect on where you are in your impact journey. This involves identifying the outputs that have been realised, the outcomes that have been achieved, and the impact that has already been realised and could be realised further down the line.

To support with this reflection, you may wish to draw up a logic model for your project (if you don't have one already) like the model in Figure 3. This model was designed as a planning tool, but can be useful for evaluation as well.

Figure 1: Pathways to Impact diagram



Logic model adapted from the National Centre for Co-Ordinating Public Engagement:

https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/evaluating_your_public_engagement_work.pdf

The key caveat to using a logic model to plan/evaluate impact is that it can suggest the process is linear. In fact, in any collaborative project, elements such as engagement with stakeholders (those you are seeking to benefit or persuade, for example) will be embedded all the way through and can change the shape of the project.

1.4 Measuring impact

SGSSS accepts the following evidence as part of the Impact Competition:

- Quantitative evidence;
- Qualitative evidence;
- Information about short-term, medium-term and long-term impacts;

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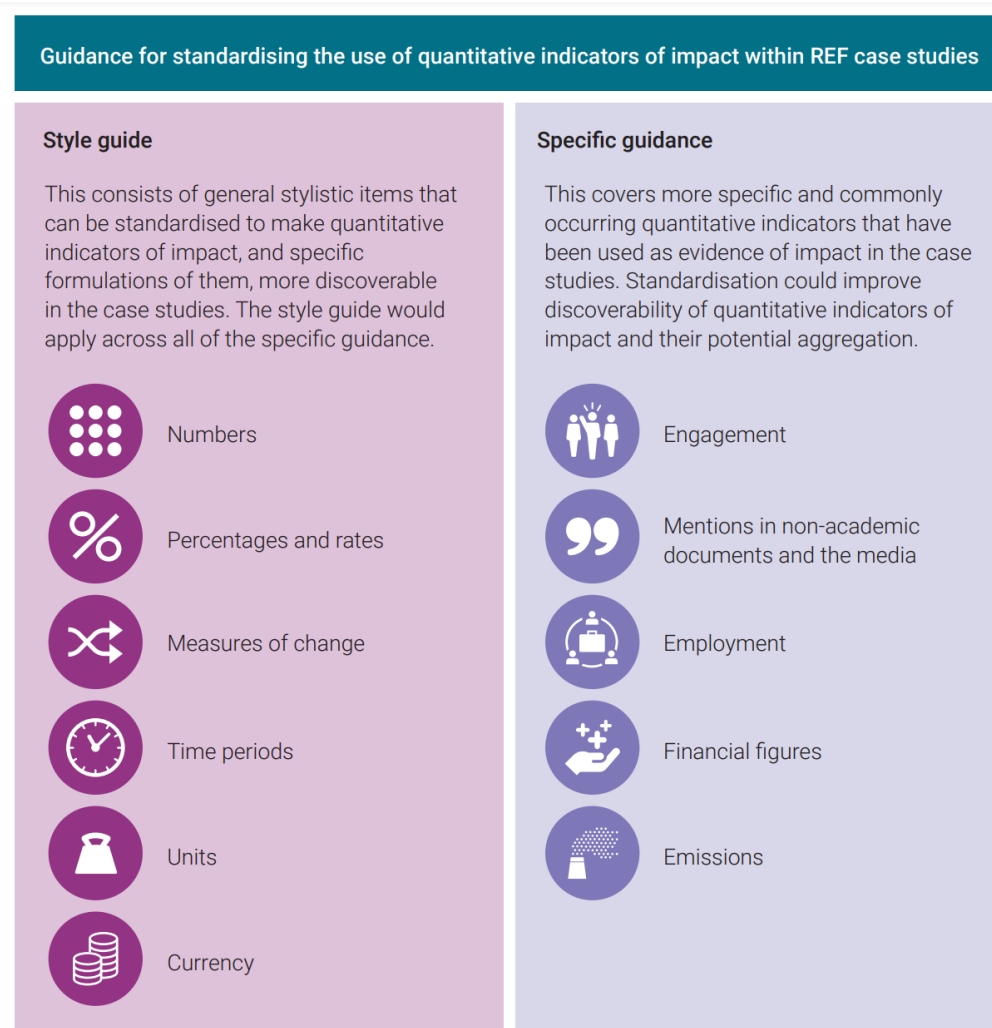
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- Information about impacts that have been achieved, and that are yet to be realised.

Ideally, applications would include a combination of different kinds of evidence in order to demonstrate the well-rounded and continuing impacts of the project. You can include evidence of impact that you had planned, and also evidence of unanticipated impacts that arose as you went through the project (for example, positive feedback from stakeholders that you hadn't initially planned to engage).

For advice on quantitative measures for impact, we would recommend RAND Europe's [Guidance for standardising quantitative indicators of impact within REF case studies](#) (2018). Commissioned by HEFCE, this document provides an overview of some standard measures for quantifying impact, based on the 2014 REF case study submissions. A graphic summarising some of their top tips is below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Guidance for quantitative indicators of impact



Source: RAND Europe analysis

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Sarah Parks, Becky Ioppolo, Martin Stepanek and Salil Gunashekar, *Guidance for standardising quantitative indicators of impact within REF case studies*, Cambridge: Rand Europe, 2018
(<https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1018/guidance-for-standardising-quantitative-indicators-of-impact.pdf>)

1.5 Assessment Criteria

The review panel will assess all applications by considering:

- Relationship between research and impact:
 - How clear are the links between the underpinning research and the impact?
 - What opportunities are there for future research and impact as a result of this work?
- Scale and significance
 - What were the outputs of the project, and how far-reaching are the benefits for different stakeholders?
 - What are the opportunities to expand the existing benefits for key stakeholders through the follow-on funding?
- Clarity and concision:
 - How clearly are the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project articulated?
 - How effectively is qualitative and/or quantitative evidence used to explain the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project?

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2. Application process

2.1 Eligibility

The SGSSS Impact Competition is open to all PhD social science students registered at a Scottish University. Applicants do not have to be ESRC funded and can be at any stage in their studies.

2.2 Competition overview

Date	Activity
01 March	Competition launches
12pm on 26 March	Submission deadline for Round One
05 May	Shortlisted candidates announced
26 May	Submission deadline for Round Two
07 June	Public vote launches
11 June	Public vote closes
w/c 14 June	Prize winners announced

There are two rounds for the SGSSS Impact Competition. Please see a written description below, and a flow chart in Figure 2.

- Round One: Panel review
 - Applicants submit a word application form by 12pm on 26 March 2021;
 - The submissions will be reviewed by a panel of knowledge exchange leaders within universities, non-academic organisations that work closely with academics on research projects, and early career academics that are leading innovative impact projects;
 - Up to six candidates will be shortlisted in Round One and invited to participate in Round Two.
- Round Two: Public vote
 - Applicants that are shortlisted in Round One will be invited to produce a short video which focuses on how they would use the follow-on funding to generate further impact;
 - The video should be aimed at a non-academic audience. Candidates will be provided with resources and guidance to support them in producing the video effectively;
 - The videos will be put to a public vote in June 2021.

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Figure 3: Flow chart of process



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3. Follow-on funding

3.1 Prizes for candidates

This competition is designed to celebrate impact that has taken place, but also to inspire future impact and help students further along their pathway to impact through follow-on funding.

There is £1000 prize funding in total available for the Impact Competition, split across the two rounds of the competition. The top application in Round 1 will receive £500, and the top application in Round 2 will receive £500. If the same application wins both Round 1 and Round 2, the candidate will receive £1000 in total.

3.2 Conditions for funding

The follow-on funding will be paid by the SGSSS to the researcher as they start generating the further impact, and based on the needs of the project. The researcher can claim up to their allowance, and will need to submit evidence of the costs they are incurring and the relevance to the project.

The follow-on funding can be used for:

- Further dissemination of impact based on the project that has taken place;
- A follow-on project that builds on the findings or impact of the original project to develop clear benefits for stakeholders.

The follow-on funding cannot be used for:

- The researcher's time (ie. working hours);
- A new research project that does not have clear benefits and impact linked with the original submission.

The follow-on funding **must** be claimed from the SGSSS within 12 months of the award having been made, and all direct activities connected with the funding must take place within 12 months of the award.

If the funding has not been claimed within 12 months, the candidates will forfeit the award.

3.3 Examples of former winners



[Jenn Glinski was the winner of the 2020 Impact Competition, for a three-month internship which enabled the Royal Bank of Scotland to transform their approach to supporting customers facing economic abuse in their relationship.](#) Jenn used her follow-on funding to attend and lead a workshop at an international conference, raising awareness about these issues and methodological approaches to tackling them.

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[Oliver Hamlet was a runner-up in the 2020 Impact Competition and awarded £500 follow-on funding.](#) Oliver used his funding to further disseminate the impact of his project, developing resources that were posted to air crews internationally. His project was reported in regional media and in specialised news outlets such as Air Med and Rescue Magazine.