

# SGSSS Impact Competition Applicant Guidance 2022

## 1. Overview

### 1.1 Competition aims

The SGSSS Impact Competition is designed to give Social Science PhD students across Scotland an opportunity to reflect on how their research can make a meaningful difference beyond their own research field.

The competition aims to:

1. Offer you an opportunity to identify and articulate your 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.

### 1.2 Defining ‘impact’

The SGSSS defines impact using the terms of the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), as the [“demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.”](#)

We understand that depending on where you are at with your PhD, you will be at a different stage of your journey to create impact. This aspect will be carefully considered during our review of applications so that you will be assessed against peers that are at similar stages of your journey. More information is provided in section 1.5

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.

For instance, applicants could submit an application based on their PhD research, an internship or an OIV (Overseas Institutional Visits Scheme).

Beneficiaries can be:

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

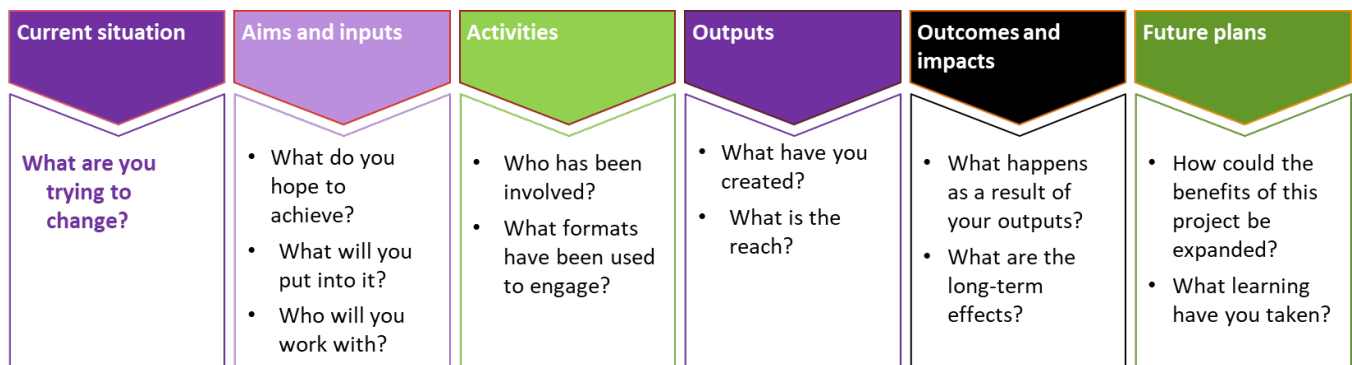
We expect applicants for this competition to be at distinct stages on their pathway to impact, and the entire process is designed to help you with that journey by providing an opportunity for you to reflect on what you are planning to achieve, what you have achieved so far and what you could do next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

To reflect on where you are in your impact journey and participate to this competition, you can start by identifying:

1. The outputs that have been realised (or that you are planning to realise in the next years of your PhD)
2. The outcomes that have been achieved (or that you are planning to realise in the next years of your PhD)
3. The impact that has already been realised (or has the potential to be realised in the future).

Additionally, if you do not have one already, you may wish to draw up a logic model for your project. For instance, the model in Figure 3, originally designed as a planning tool, 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](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. While it is worth considering that, 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.
- Information about impacts that have been achieved, or that are yet to be realised

Ideally, applications would include a combination of various kinds of evidence 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 had not 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.

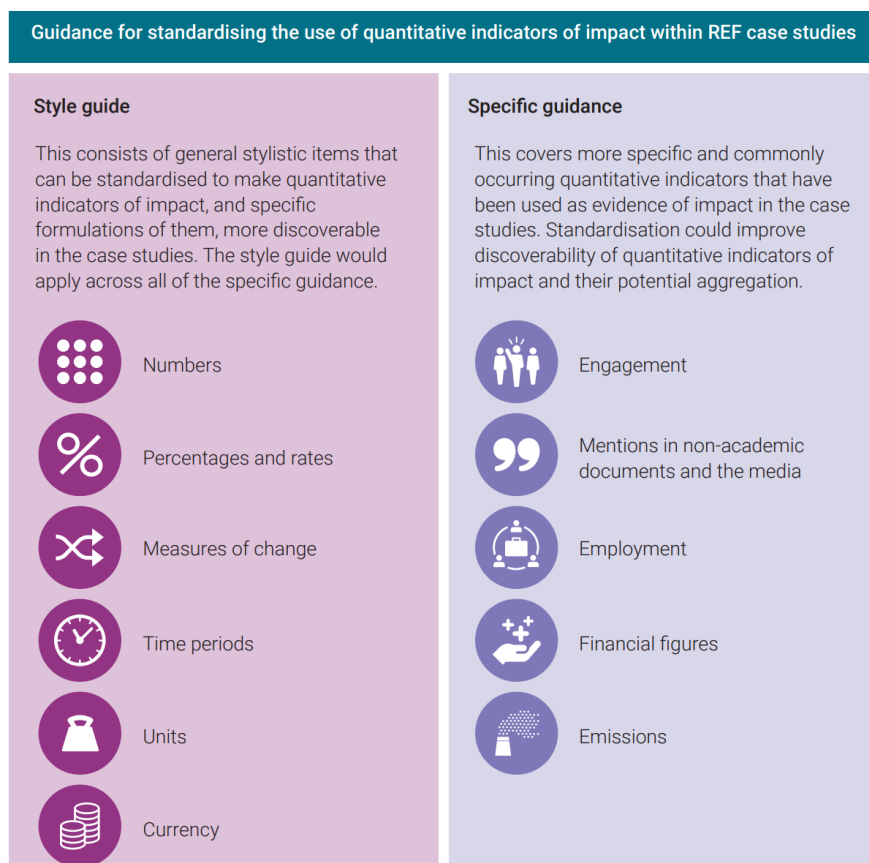


Figure 2: Guidance for quantitative indicators of impact.

Sarah Parks, Becky Ioppolo, Martin Stepanek and Salil Gunashekar, *Guidance for standardising quantitative indicators of impact within REF case studies*, Cambridge: Rand Europe, 2018

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## 1.5 Assessment Criteria

Depending on your year of PhD studies, you can apply for one of the two categories available for the SGSSS Impact competition. Each category has some specific assessment criteria which have been created to give you the opportunity to compete with researchers that are at similar stages of their journey to create impact:

- First category: applications are welcomed from any student in their first year of PhD (or equivalent part-time)
- Second category: applications are welcomed from any student in their second and third year of PhD (or equivalent part-time)

The table below details the specific criteria relevant to one or the other category.

	FIRST CATEGORY	SECOND CATEGORY
Focus on	✓ Planned and expected impact that is intended to develop in the next years of the PhD	✓ Achieved and ongoing impact
Scale and significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What outputs are planned and what are the likely benefits for different stakeholders?</li> <li>✓ Are these outputs feasible given current plans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What were the outputs of the project, and how far-reaching are the benefits for different stakeholders?</li> <li>✓ What are the opportunities to expand the existing benefits for key stakeholders through the follow-on funding?</li> </ul>
Relationship between researcher and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How clear are the potential links between the research planned or underway and the stated potential impact?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How clear are the links between the underpinning research and the impact?</li> <li>✓ What opportunities are there for future research and impact as a result of this work?</li> </ul>
Clarify and concision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How clearly are the planned outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project articulated?</li> <li>✓ How and to what extent has appropriate consideration been given to the evidence that will be needed to justify and monitor impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How clearly are the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project articulated?</li> <li>✓ How effectively is qualitative and/or quantitative evidence used to explain the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project?</li> </ul>

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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

Key Events	Date
Competition launch (both first and second category)	04/03/2022
Round 1 deadline (both first and second category)	03/04/2022
Invite to Round 2 (only second category)	28/04/2022
Round 2 deadline (only second category)	12/05/2022
Winners announced (both first and second category)	24/05/2022

#### **First category: Year 1 PhD researchers (or equivalent part-time)**

For the first category of the SGSSS Impact Competition there is only one round of assessment.

##### Round One: Panel review

- Applicants submit an application [via Social](#) by Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2022.
- 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.
- One applicant will be selected and will receive £500 prize for the First Category.
- The winner of the First Category will be announced in the beautiful venue of the V&A Museum in Dundee, during the SGSSS Collaboration Showcase event – Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.

#### **Second category: Year 2-3 PhD researchers (or equivalent part-time)**

For the second category of the SGSSS Impact Competition there are two rounds of assessment.

##### Round One: Panel review

- Applicants submit an application [via Social](#) by Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2022.
- The submissions will be reviewed by a panel of knowledge exchange leaders within universities, non-academic organisations that work closely with academics

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on research projects, and early career academics that are leading innovative impact projects.

- Up to six candidates will be shortlisted in Round One and will be invited to participate in Round Two.
- The winner of Round One will be announced in the beautiful venue of the V&A Museum in Dundee, during the SGSSS Collaboration Showcase event – Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.

## Round Two: Public vote

- Applicants that are shortlisted in Round One will be invited to produce a poster to present their submission.
- The poster should be aimed at a non-academic audience. Candidates will be provided with resources and guidance to support them in producing the poster effectively.
- The posters will be put to an online public vote for 10 days in May 2022 and exposed during the SGSSS Collaboration Showcase in May 2022.
- The winners of both rounds and two runners-up will be announced in the beautiful venue of the V&A Museum in Dundee, during the SGSSS Collaboration Showcase event – Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.

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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 £1500 prize funding in total available for the Impact Competition, split across the two categories:

- First category: the top applicant will receive £500.
- Second category: the top applicant in Round 1 will receive £500, and the top applicant 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 (i.e.. 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 through your University which will be reimbursed by 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.



[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.