



Northern Health
and Social Care Trust



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Planning for research impact: from proposal to impact case study

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What is research impact?

- UK higher education funding bodies under REF 2021:
- Research that produces ‘an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.’
- Broad benefit to groups or individuals in any geographic location.
- ‘Beyond academia’: impact **excludes** impacts on research and academic knowledge.
- **Includes** impacts on students and teaching.




What is research impact? Alternatives

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- Advancing knowledge
 - Raising awareness
 - Influencing perspectives
 - Satisfying curiosity
 - Inciting enthusiasm
 - Changing behaviour
 - Bringing social justice
 - Producing winners and losers
 - A corrupting, stunting influence
 - Giving the powerful what they want



Why research impact?

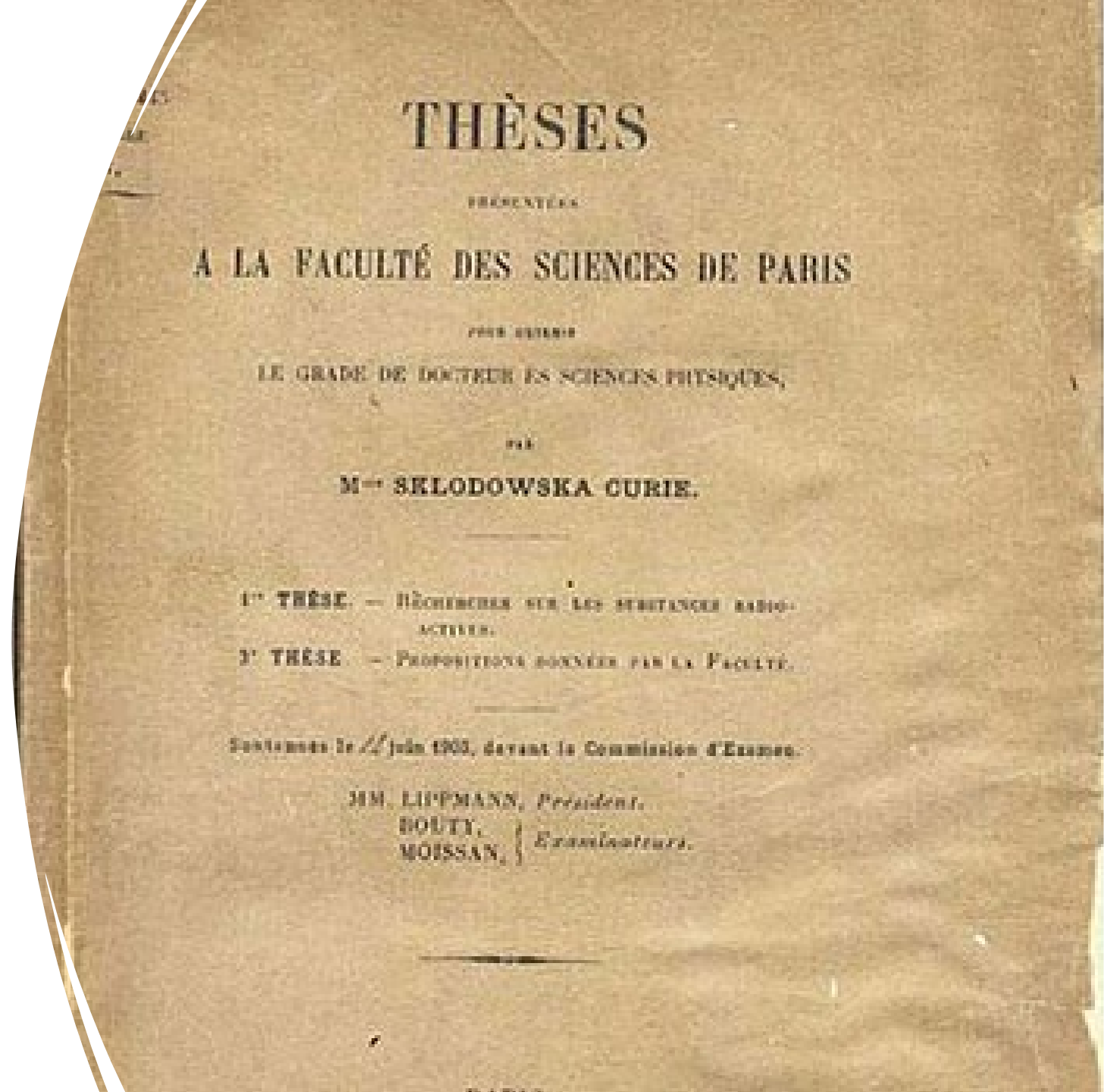
- We want to optimise our ability to influence or help others
- It is one way to show our work is valuable
- Practitioners are committed to evidence-based, effective practice
- Collaborators who are not researchers and research participants want to see their efforts result in change that is relevant to them
- Funders want a return of significant results
- Wider society is entitled to know that public funds are being well-used
- Impact case studies are important for university REF assessments
- Universities have a responsibility to work for the public good by addressing complex problems



King's College London: Transforming access to palliative care for underserved groups

- **Research:** identifying underserved groups and inequities at a population level; measuring and managing symptom burden and concerns across physical, psychosocial and spiritual domains; developing and testing complex interventions to reconfigure care delivery and improve outcomes.
- **Impact:** Contribution to 2020 World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Atlas of Palliative Care; inclusion of end of life care as a priority for London; inclusion of King's research in NICE guidelines and WHO recommendations; improved end-of-life care for people from ethnically diverse communities across the UK, and internationally.
- **Evidence for impact:** WHO, NICE, regional, and other specialist documents; testimonials; audits; independent reports

How does
our research
have an
impact?





How does our research have an impact?

- Not just knowledge **translation** but knowledge **co-creation**
- Involvement of stakeholders in identifying problems and developing interventions
- Adapting flexibly and imaginatively to the local context
- Participatory, collaborative, leadership and governance
- Assessing and addressing barriers to implementation
- Effective management of conflict
- Evaluating appropriate and agreed outcomes (effects, reach, implementation, costs, acceptability) and looking for unexpected outcomes
- Tailored approaches to education and inclusion of stakeholders
- Training of staff, organisational commitment, maintaining relationships
- Producing products and tools to support change




QUB: Transforming supportive cancer care for patients and families in Northern Ireland.

- **Research:** population-based surveys and qualitative research with cancer survivors demonstrating co-morbidities, lower physical health and mental health scores, greater overall health service use and health and financial needs. Research with carers and professionals showing unmet needs among carers. Co-design of a web-based resource to support carers.
- **Impact:** Investment by Macmillan Cancer Care in the 'Transforming Cancer Follow-up Programme' across NI; six new NHS service development posts; implementation of a self-directed aftercare pathway; reduced patient travelling and anxiety; streamlining of follow-up; improved access to specialist care, support groups, and financial benefits; spread of these approaches to Vietnam and Australia.
- **Evidence for impact:** independent evaluations; testimonials; toolkits; visits to the web-based resource.



Planning for research impact

- Consider impact from all types of research
 - Plan and fund for impact at the proposal stage
 - Identify both powerful and marginalised stakeholders
 - Secure organisational support
 - Take a multi-disciplinary approach
 - Identify and agree potential benefits and beneficiaries of the research
 - Build and maintain trusting relationships
 - Measure outcomes that are meaningful to stakeholders and include their views
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Measuring impact

- Plan and fund for impact assessment
- Consider using an impact assessment framework (e.g. 'Payback')
- Agree measurements with stakeholders
- Be creative and eclectic when deciding what to measure
- Look for unexpected impacts
- Use formal impact measurements when appropriate (QUALYs, economic and health outcomes)
- Collect impact data (expected and unexpected) as you go
- Consider both short and longer-term impacts
- Obtain independent evaluations if possible



Impact case studies

- ▶ **REF results and impact case studies:** <https://ref.ac.uk/>
- ▶ **Case studies:**
- ▶ **Transforming access to palliative care for underserved groups**
- ▶ Professor Richard Harding et al, King's College London
- ▶ <https://results2021.ref.ac.uk/impact/32f1c5bb-1f06-4d0b-b8ba-ea5fb6592a?page=1>
- ▶ **Transforming supportive cancer care for patients and families in Northern Ireland.**
- ▶ Dr Olinda Santin and Dr Gillian Prue, Queen's University Belfast
- ▶ <https://results2021.ref.ac.uk/impact/f8c95c71-8b97-4172-9f73-2f459dd6d15a?page=1>



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