



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Impact & Research

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15.3.22

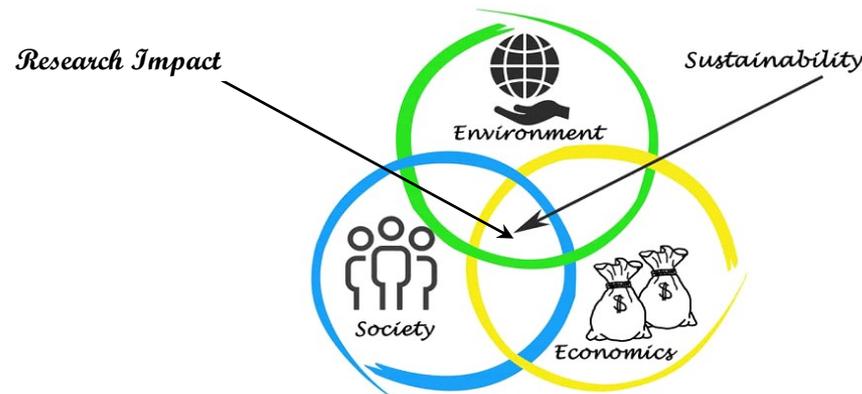
Overview

- Focus on **research impact**, with regards to the **REF**, **SDGs** and **Times Higher Impact Rankings**.
 - Use of REF 2014/2021 exercise to underpin this.
- Specifically:
 - **What is research impact?**
 - **SDG overview**
 - Global resonance
 - Strategic value to the University
 - **REF 2021 Overview**
 - Research Excellence
 - REF Impact
 - Our experience
 - REF Impact Case-studies
 - **Times Higher Impact Rankings**
 - Submissions to THE Impact



What is Research Impact?

- The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) defines research impact as the **demonstrable contribution** that **excellent research** makes to **society & the economy** (UKRI, 2022).
 - **academic impact:** shifting understanding and advancing theory and application across/within disciplines
 - **economic and societal impact:** demonstrable contribution that research has on society & economy, benefitting individuals/organisations/nations
- To put it more simply, how does our research lead to ‘**good stuff**’.





Sustainability & the SDGs

SDGs Overview

- The Sustainable Development Goals provide 17 impact areas of focus to run to 2030.
 - They provide a “...a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future” (UN 2021).
 - Build upon the Millennium Development Goals that preceded them and Agenda 21 before that.
 - 17 SDGs, 169 targets, one holistic pathway to sustainability.



Strategic Value

- Universities must define their strategic position globally, especially post-Covid-19:
 - **Research:** How do we deliver real impact through our research towards sustainable development?
 - **Teaching:** How is our teaching informed by cutting-edge research?
 - How does this affect student experience?
 - **Estates:** What are we doing to ensure sustainability in our operations?
- Crucially, it provides **global positioning** for a university's social values.
- **Centring our work** on impact is therefore crucial.
 - SDGs provide one avenue for this.



REF 2021 Research
Excellence
Framework

REF 2021 & Impact

- REF guidance states that impact is defined as *“an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia”*. (REF, 2019:68)
- Impacts are assessed in terms of ‘reach and significance’ and this is not related to geographic reach.
 - Reach relates to the impact delivered within a constituency (albeit this is not solely focused on total numbers of people)
 - Significance relates to how much the impact has led to changes in the lives of the beneficiaries within said constituencies.

Four star	Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Three star	Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Two star	Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
One star	Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Unclassified	The impact is of little or no reach and significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit.

Example Case-study

- Titled *‘Driving Policy Innovation for the UK Government in the development of an outcomes focused public service innovation market’*.
- Key is being able to **link between** your research outputs (papers/books/reports) to the impact you have (and **evidence it**).
- Delivered **three core impacts** based upon our research:
 - Supporting HM Treasury on tax-relief and state-aid.
 - Informing the design of a social investment fund support programme.
 - Co-designing the Government Outcomes Lab.
- **Evidence gathered** from government/funders/partners in the form of:
 - Signed Impact Statements stored in our Pure research repository.
 - Websites and case-studies within them.
 - Policy Papers and Impact Reports.
 - Databases from our research (and elsewhere).

Challenges

- There are **numerous challenges** to evidencing impact:
 - **Disseminating** your research effectively to **drive change**.
 - Ensuring that you can clearly show how your **research outputs** led to change.
 - Creating a **coherent narrative** across your research & impact.
 - **Collating** impact evidence as you go (i.e. in 2015 for use in 2021).
 - Partners move on & change.
 - Describing the impacts to **maximise reach & significance**, without over-claiming.





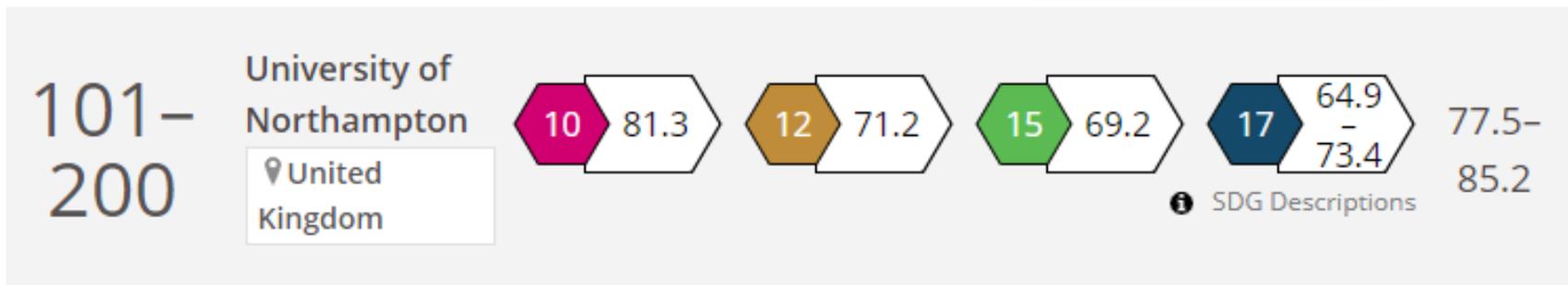
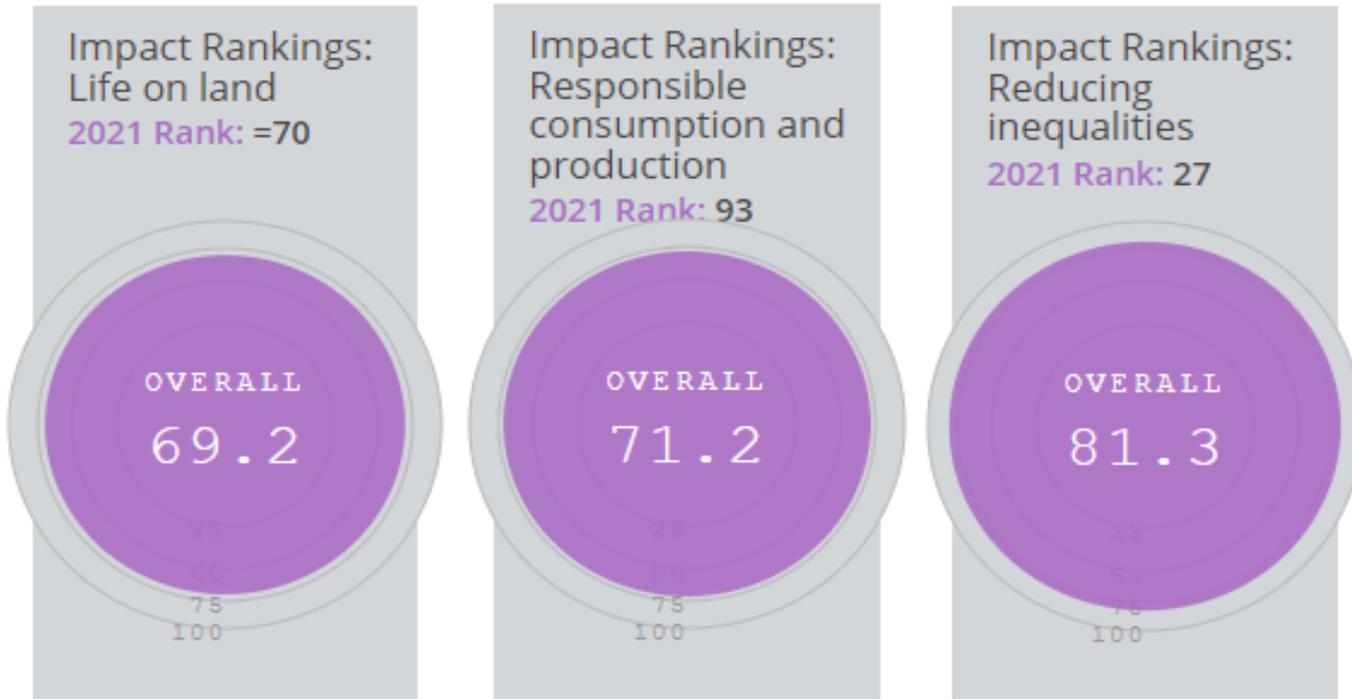
Global Impact Rankings

Times Higher Impact

- Scored across submitted SDGs, with our **three highest scoring SDGs** being used for our ranking score, alongside the compulsory SDG17.
 - Scoring based on a mixture of academic metrics (i.e. publications) and other impact related KPIs within each SDG.
- UoN made its first THE Impact submission in December 2020, covering:
 - SDG3: Good Health & Wellbeing; SDG4: Quality Education; SDG5: Gender Equality; SDG7: Affordable & Clean Energy; SDG10: Reduced Inequalities; SDG11: Sustainable Cities & Communities; SDG12: Responsible Consumption & Production; SDG13: Climate Change; SDG15: Life on Land; **SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals (compulsory)**
 - Selection made based upon an analysis of our relative **distance to the top** of each SDG based upon key metrics within each SDG.
- Ranking results released **every April** each year.



UON's 2021 Results



Summary

- Rankings & frameworks like **REF** and **Times Higher** make research impact critical:
 - Likely to only become **more important** in the **next 10 years**.
- The SDGs provide you with an opportunity to build an **impact narrative**:
 - One that can have **global resonance**.
 - One that is aligned with the **Institutional Strategy**.
- Impact profiles can't be developed at the **last minute**.
 - **High quality impact** will require you to engage with this over the next decade.

SUMMARY



Thank you
for listening

Any questions?

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