



Introduction to Knowledge Exchange

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Background and context

- ▶ Innovation as a central area of interest
- ▶ Moved on from technology and commercially focused meaning
- ▶ Economic development and social change – innovation essential ingredient
- ▶ Universities catalyse and support innovation
 - ▶ **Technology transfer** – linear model
 - ▶ **Knowledge transfer** – broader, CPD, consultancy, collaborative research, 2-3 times more economic impact
 - ▶ **Knowledge exchange** – non-linear iterative model
 - ▶ Different assumptions about structure of the collaborations and the nature of the knowledge

Current context

- ▶ 2009 - Government pressure to justify public spending
- ▶ Focus on 'IMPACT' of research
- ▶ Realignment of resources to support KE and Impact:
 - ▶ Pathways to Impact (RCUK)
 - ▶ Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEFCE)
 - ▶ REF Impact – 20% (REF2014)
 - ▶ Impact Acceleration Accounts (ESRC and other RCs)
- ▶ Universities strategic aims to widen engagement, support KE activity and embed engagement
- ▶ Still long way to go in terms of culture change

Funder definitions

Knowledge exchange...

“...is a two-way process where social scientists and individuals or organisations share learning, ideas and experiences. We are committed to knowledge exchange and encouraging collaboration between researchers and the private, public and civil society sectors. By creating a dialogue between these communities, knowledge exchange helps research to influence policy and practice.” – *ESRC*

“knowledge-based interactions between universities and colleges and the wider world, which result in economic and social benefit to the UK” – *HEFCE*

Impact...

“...is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy” – *RCUK*

Knowledge exchange activities

- ▶ **Academic placements** with a civil society, business or public sector organisation
- ▶ **Practitioner placements** at the University
- ▶ **Policy or evidence seminars** (encouraged to exchange and develop ideas)
- ▶ **High-level stakeholder, practitioner meetings/workshops**
- ▶ Activities to facilitate the **development and management of relationships** with external users/stakeholders
- ▶ The **co-development of tools** that emerge from research that can maximise the use of research outputs in practitioner communities
- ▶ **User-led research**, where researchers are engaging directly with users in shaping the research agenda and in applying social science to current issues relating to policy, strategy or practice
- ▶ **User-led public engagement** activities – web, social media, briefing papers, public events, podcasts, citizen science

Motivations

- ▶ Professional duty/moral obligation – making a difference
- ▶ Funding incentives
- ▶ Access to people, intel, data, know-how
- ▶ Profile raising could improve academic reputation
- ▶ Future research and collaboration opportunities

Barriers

- ▶ Lack of clarity of definitions
- ▶ Government imposed agenda
- ▶ Perceived and real disapproval of peers
- ▶ Lack of significant support from senior managers
- ▶ Significant time and effort
- ▶ Perceived and real lack of control
- ▶ Lack of skills
- ▶ Lack of peer advice

Putting it into practice

- ▶ What are my KE aims and objectives?
- ▶ Who are my stakeholders and how can I best engage with them?
- ▶ What are the challenges and how can I overcome these?
- ▶ Measuring success
- ▶ The long term game

What are my KE aims and objectives?

- ▶ *[a] Research aim* – e.g. review all the evidence relating to care for older people with dementia to determine what you think are the best care pathways/techniques
- ▶ *[b] Impact aim* – **start with the end goal** e.g. you want to improve care standards for older people with dementia
- ▶ *KE aim* – **how you will get from a to b** e.g. to engage with policy-makers and practitioners involved in care of older people with dementia throughout the research process to ensure useful, timely information feeds directly into the policy-making process/is put into practice.
- ▶ *KE objectives* – how you are going to do that (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and timebound)

Who are my stakeholders?

- ▶ Deciding on initial aims can help focus on right groups
- ▶ Chicken and egg – should involve stakeholders in setting aims etc. – iterative process
- ▶ Government, business, civil society
- ▶ Choosing appropriate level e.g. national policy-makers, local businesses
- ▶ Choosing appropriate people e.g. those that have enough decision-making power but also have time to commit
- ▶ Use existing networks available to you
- ▶ Do your homework
- ▶ Make the most of conferences etc. to have face time with people

How to best engage with your stakeholders

- ▶ Different stakeholders will have different needs, motivations, aims, levels of engagement, commitment.
- ▶ Different mechanisms suit different stakeholders – no one size fits all
- ▶ Ask them!!
- ▶ If something doesn't work, try something else
- ▶ Involving them early on in discussions , helps to co-design activities
- ▶ KE is about stewardship of professional relationships with stakeholders – don't underestimate how important this is

KE activities/tools



What are the challenges and how can you overcome them

- ▶ Getting the right people involved
 - ▶ Make use of contacts of contacts! Add people as you go along.
- ▶ Continuity when people change roles e.g. civil servants
 - ▶ Try to stay one step ahead, regular contact avoids nasty surprises!
- ▶ Managing expectations
 - ▶ Really easy for this to get out of control. Make sure everyone is clear about what is expected of them and what is expected of you.
- ▶ Stakeholders changing timeframes/priorities/commitment
 - ▶ Keep talking, remain flexible and work out an exit strategy just in case. Binding commitments not always necessary but MoU can be helpful.

What are the challenges and how can you overcome them

- ▶ Socio-economic, political and environmental factors interfering
 - ▶ Be flexible and agile. Revise aims. Stall if necessary.
- ▶ Timing issues
 - ▶ Plan ahead, be responsive. Policy windows short and you need to have 'product' ready. Don't sacrifice academic integrity to fit their timelines.
- ▶ Culture/language differences
 - ▶ Be aware and sensitive to different working cultures and languages. Double check meanings. Learn new/Brush up on communication skills.
- ▶ Resource intensive
 - ▶ Don't underestimate this in the first place. Make realistic plans and build in contingency both in terms of costs and time.

Measuring success

- ▶ Measure success against KE aims and objectives and also against impact aims
- ▶ Mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures
- ▶ Factor in the time lag for impact to be achieved
- ▶ How will you check for unanticipated outcomes/impacts?
- ▶ Testimonies can be crucial so maintaining good relations is essential

The long game

15

- ▶ Further engagement
- ▶ More impact
- ▶ Linking back to research –continuous engagement and feedback loops, ideal scenario
- ▶ Academic outputs
- ▶ Reputation – go to person