Towards a SAH Vision Statement for Knowledge Exchange & Impact 2024-8

Lent 2024

Embracing Diverse Impacts in the Arts and Humanities

The School of Arts and Humanities' portfolio of knowledge exchange projects and global impact is rooted in its world-leading research. For subjects across Arts and Humanities, the [Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2024](#) place the University of Cambridge at #1 in the UK and #3 globally, while in the [QS World University Rankings by subject 2024](#) the subject area continues to place at #2.

The strategy laid out here will amplify that impact and extend its reach beyond the university into social, cultural, and economic spheres. Building on the School's '**Supporting Research: Strategy and Implementation'** plan (approved by the CSAH in May 2023), this document interprets impact broadly, reflecting the natural curiosity that drives Cambridge research, and going beyond traditional metrics. It acknowledges the specific REF definition of research impact; however, the work outlined here will acknowledge and promote our researchers' remarkable achievements in Knowledge Exchange (KE) and Impact, within the School and beyond.

Missions for Research Impact

Supporting researchers to creatively explore connections between their research and societal challenges as they arise is key to the School's vision. This iterative approach, which builds capacity in key areas based on rigorous academic research, serves to maximise impact where researchers strive to make this crucial turn in their work.

While, where appropriate, Arts and Humanities research may be leveraged to inform and impact any and all of society's biggest challenges, the following themes and approaches are seen to broadly drive Arts and Humanities Research Impact:

- **Learning & Diversity:** *What do the diverse perspectives, experiences and concepts explored and analysed through the Arts and Humanities tell us about the past, present, and future of humankind?*
- **Methodologies:** *How can Arts and Humanities methodologies include and communicate diverse perspectives, experiences and concepts? How can we identify and best communicate the benefits of taking an Arts and Humanities approach to society's 'wicked problems'?*
- **Education:** *How can we ensure people's lives are enriched by the Arts and Humanities?*
- **Trust & Society:** *How can people with diverging views be supported to successfully communicate and negotiate?*
- **Health & Well-being:** *How can the Arts and Humanities allow us to understand and improve health and wellbeing of individuals and populations?*
- **The Environment:** *How does the Arts and Humanities support the development of strategies which can address the climate emergency?*

These align with the AHRC's objectives which are:
- *discovering ourselves*
- *contemporary challenges*
- *cultural assets*
- *creative economy.*

Developing a Culture of Impact

We will build upon success in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and nurture a culture built on Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). Six aims will support our mission, ensuring that all members of our community are supported to contribute meaningfully and responsibly to the broader field of arts and humanities.

1) Develop, and diversify funding for, strategic impact and research activities. In particular, to help all academics explore how impact funding can be used as a "gateway" to apply for larger research grants. We will support the development of work that is scalable and self-sustaining.
2) Strengthen, increase, and diversify our relationships with external partners, including through closer work with the University's Strategic Partnerships Office and the Research Office. Robust partnerships are crucial for the real-world impact of our research, we will support collaborations that enrich research and amplify its societal relevance and application.
3) Foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in our knowledge exchange and impact projects that is "enmeshed" within the network of support available at Cambridge, including Cambridge Enterprise, CSaP, the Public Engagement Office, the Libraries and the Museums.
4) Provide support for academic career progression at all levels, ranging from postgraduate students to senior faculty members. This includes providing academics with essential information, resources, advocacy, and access to support and skills training.
5) Promote the advancement of integrity, ethics, and transparency in all aspects of research and its impact.
6) Recognise the importance of showcasing our researchers' achievements to increase the visibility of successes and the effects of our research on society. We will promote and celebrate the impact of our research among colleagues, funding bodies, and the wider public.

Our Vision

Over the coming five years, researchers will be supported to realise their research and impact ambitions. In shaping this vision, we engaged extensively with researchers throughout the School of Arts and Humanities, identifying key areas for development and transformation. There will be a strong emphasis on learning from and celebrating our successes.

Curiosity-led research is valued and important. Significant impacts often emerge from exploratory and innovative endeavours. This will be measured in a range of metrics, including through REF, but also through commercialisation, partnerships, innovation in addition to REF outcomes. Our overall approach is to celebrate and support intellectual adventure and entrepreneurial and innovative efforts, fostering research that is impactful in both conventional and novel ways.

Conclusion

The School will foster a diverse and vibrant culture of impact, advancing its status as a global leader and showcasing the crucial role of Arts and Humanities research in tackling global challenges.

Implementation

In addition to delivery on specific goals the aim of the strategy will be to increase effectiveness, raise additional funds for impact and work strategically with key partners inside and outside the University.

General implementation aims:

- Communicate the SAH Knowledge Exchange and Impact Vision Statement across the School
- Develop impact work plans for Impact and KE through industry partnerships, policy development and commercialisation, as well as around more Arts and Humanities-specific routes for impact development and collaboration.

- Identify Impact Leads within Departments & Faculties to create a network and resource sharing structure
- Support opportunities for interplay between rigorous academic research and responsible impact development across varied research projects
- Consolidate alert, imaginative, ready kinds of support to help researchers work towards impact projects instead of/in addition to preparing publications
- Consolidate appropriate support for AH research impact projects with small, medium and larger scale funding
- Deliver impact training – with a focus on REF, diverse impacts, EDI and RRI
- Build measurable benefits to academics across the research lifecycle through practical support and funding
- Profile impact evidence and innovations at live and online events hosted by the School
- Regularly submit Impact Case Study submissions to UKRI, Impact Showcase Awards, etc
- Create AH REF Impact Lead Group

Goals and Implementation

- **Learning & Diversity:** *What does the diversity expressed through the Arts and Humanities tell us about the past, present, and future of humankind?*

Work with EDI strategies and ROI to ensure development of projects that reflect diverse communities of scholars, partners and participants. Ensure application processes are EDI focused and driven. e.g. Laura Wright's work, with colleagues, on raising awareness of the Llanito language in Gibraltar and concrete steps and policy interventions to avoid its disappearance.

- **Methodologies:** *How can Arts and Humanities methodologies include and communicate diverse perspectives? How can we best communicate the benefits of taking an Arts and Humanities approach to society's 'wicked problems'?*

Proactive support for collaborative, interdisciplinary projects and flexible thinking and support for projects that engage Arts and Humanities projects with the most pressing societal concerns in line with the priorities expressed by AHRC, UCAM and other partners. e.g. Nicholas Thomas' collaboration with partners in Australia and the Pacific to repatriate items from Cambridge University museum collections.

- **Education:** *How can we ensure people's lives are enriched by the Arts and Humanities?*

Support initiatives across faculties to engage with delivery partners such as the Public Engagement team, Cambridge Festival, schools, museums and outreach partners to reach the public at scale through key projects such as the Must Farm impact currently in development with the Archaeological Unit.

- **Trust & Society:** *How can people with diverging views be supported to successfully communicate and negotiate?*

Callouts that focus on social impact. Collaboration with CSAP. Prioritisation of existing projects and proposals, e.g. Esra Osyurek's project on antisemitism and how to engage recent immigrant communities with holocaust education.

- **Health & Well-being:** *How can the Arts and Humanities allow us to understand and improve health and wellbeing of individuals and populations?*

Interdisciplinary collaborations (i.e. with MRC IAA) and engaged support for impact projects that focus on health and wellbeing. e.g. Laura Davies' collaboration with hospice nurses, patients and families to encourage open conversations about the experience of death and dying through game development

- **The Environment:** *How does the Arts and Humanities support the development of strategies which can address the climate emergency?*

Focused callouts and development of bespoke projects at a range of development points (early, mid, pump prime) that can lead to larger scale impact and partnership. Collaboration with Cambridge Zero. Prioritisation of imaginative approaches to the climate emergency and development of existing strategies, e.g. Zoe Svendsen collaboration with High Tide Theatre.

Key Partners/Facilitators

- Cambridge Enterprise
- Collusion, The Junction, et al.
- AHRC DTP
- National Trust
- Strategic Partnerships Office, University of Cambridge
- ROO
- SHARE
- Arts Council
- Cambridge Cultural Compact
- English Heritage
- ARU
- UKRI
- CSAP
- SHAPE Hub
- CUDAR
- School Research Facilitators
- Cambridge Zero
- Institute for Sustainable Leadership

LS/BE/ESC/ACS