

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Lincoln</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19 – Business and Management</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p><b>The four research groups</b> (RG), within the Lincoln Business School's Research Enterprise and Innovation Centre aim to link research, enterprise and innovation to create impact: (i) Enterprise, (ii) Marketing and Supply Chain (MaSC), both of which focus on value creation and improving management processes; (iii) Regional and Rural (RRRG) focussed on regional economics, policy and development; and (iv) Community Organisation (CORG), focussed on community, public and third sector effectiveness.</p> <p>Our strategy of stakeholder engagement and an interdisciplinary approach enables us to generate research questions relevant to the issues of the day and design studies for useful impact for users, often leading to further research development. Beneficiaries of our research include private businesses; the public sector, in particular, public administration and health; consumers; the third sector; and the military. Specifically they include: <b>policy/decision makers</b> influencing socio-economic conditions, including government departments and regional economic partnerships; <b>management practitioners</b>, such as management teams and entrepreneurs; providers of <b>intermediary services</b>, including consultants, educators, business networks and professional institutes; <b>specific clients</b>, customers and employees of these organisations; and <b>society more widely</b>, affected by actions of these organisations, for the public good.</p> <p><b>Our main aims in developing impact</b> are to: maximise economic and social benefits; improve responsible management; develop sustainable enterprises; and promote healthy economies. The types of impact include economic, commercial, organisational, policy and social well-being.</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> benefiting, for example, SMEs and other businesses, e.g. more efficient translation of innovation into business models, more resilient small businesses, lower costs in maintenance management (Enterprise); improved measurements of risk and regional contagion in global financial markets, more targeted use of public investment in Broadband benefiting rural residents and businesses (RRRG); more effective return on investment in citizenship training (CORG).</p> <p><b>Policy:</b> e.g. more targeted regional economic and skills policies, rethinking the role of market towns, including a strategy to address decline of Lincoln's markets in the light of changing retail patterns (RRRG/MaSC); greater fitness for purpose in entrepreneurship education, potentially creating more effective future leaders (Enterprise); improved localised structures for citizenship learning, improved regional policies and practices to reduce public health inequalities (CORG).</p> <p><b>Commercial:</b> e.g. more effective shopper communications through digital signage benefiting media owners, advertisers and consumers; improved value creation in supply chains benefiting suppliers, retailers and consumers; increased visitor numbers through rebranding, identifying visitor perceptions, e.g. to shape the 'authentic' setting for the Magna Carta at Lincoln Castle, aiming to benefit consumers and contribute to heritage conservation (MaSC).</p> <p><b>Organisational:</b> benefiting organisations and users, e.g. improved wellbeing and reduced safety risks in the workplace (Enterprise); improved measurement of environmental and social value, risk reduction in contractor-military relationships (MaSC); more efficient organizational structures for providing mental healthcare and public health service delivery, and effective management in health charities, benefiting patients and taxpayers (CORG).</p> <p><b>Social well-being:</b> e.g. improved take up of healthy walking and of 5-a-day choices benefiting public health (Enterprise/MaSC); increased adoption of online shopping and social networking leading to reduced isolation for citizens with mobility issues (MaSC); increased understanding and use of democratic processes by local communities leading to greater engagement and wellbeing of citizens (CORG).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p><b>Impact in design, engagement, value creation and public engagement:</b> the School considers impact as integral to four areas of research design.</p> <p><b>Planning:</b> the potential for significance and reach of new projects is part of early stage ethical sign-off. Details of planned activities and resources for achieving impact are required in annual research plans and for annual monitoring of research projects by the School Research Committee. These are noted when considering applications for conference attendance or other research support from School and College research funds. Impact pathways are considered at each stage of the life of a project, from inception through to joint publishing of results and associated advocacy.</p> <p><b>An engaged approach</b> to research is encouraged. At the core is locating research within the wider</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

network of stakeholders and understanding problems so that its effects can be strengthened. CORG is a leader in university–community partnerships for knowledge co-production, arising from their ESRC Take Part capacity building cluster (2008-13). They and other experienced staff, and business development managers, provide help to the research groups to form working partnerships, locate funding and design engaged research projects.

**Value creation:** the School's Research Committee focuses increasingly on opportunities to generate value and income from research in the form of direct services, such as consulting and training, and outputs such as practitioner guides. These pathways involve team members with skills in translation, relationships and delivery, as well as those with research skills.

**Effective translation into the public domain and dissemination**, such as working with users to translate research into their specific contexts, presentations to user groups (e.g. Regional Studies Association), publication in professional and trade journals (e.g. *British Food Journal*), and use of the media. Staff who appear on radio and TV receive training. Online blogging and twitter feeds are supported by a dedicated media assistant in the College, and the University widens dissemination and public engagement through events, online promotion, broadcast and print media.

**External relationships** are fundamental to the above approach. We develop **advisory roles** with organisations, groups and committees that often initiate research (leading to over forty projects since 2008) and create impact. For example, on request from Springfields Horticultural Society, MaSC translated research in cognitive causal modelling into a practical research tool, producing a new brand identity for the Fens region.

Advisory roles linked with research and thus providing the pathway to impact include:

**international:** UNESCO (policy foresight and anticipation); **national** for the Department for Communities and Local Government (rural evidence), Institute of Directors (strategy), Quality Assurance Agency (standards), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (citizenship), Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration (logistics), National Association of British Market Authorities (revitalising high streets); **regional** examples include NHS Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire Probation Services, East Midlands councils, Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and Relate Lincolnshire, each of which is linked to research and has provided pathways to impact.

We invest in **building networks** to create engagement, organised by the research groups and business managers, many hosted at the School's Leadership Centre. These include a cross-disciplinary group on public health, leading to experiments on giving health advice to shoppers and changing retailer and consumer behaviour. Other collaborations include with food producers, concerning sustainable local supplies; social enterprises re value creation (who sponsored research seminars); a care sector network of businesses; third sector and public organisations on (multi-disciplinary) social innovation; Lincoln Citizenship Network (fifty organisations – churches, colleges, local authorities, voluntary sector) undertaking community-based research on active learning. The School was a founding sponsor of the 90-member Lincoln Business Club, and our Advisory Board has 15 leaders from external organisations who help orientate areas for research on topics of value and help access to such organisations.

We also benefit **from university-wide interdisciplinary partnerships** providing ground for impact, e.g. Siemens Turbomachinery Ltd (field research on safe working, following up with a Knowledge Exchange project to UK and European plants); Lincolnshire Co-operative (research on well-being for staff and customers and re-imagining pharmacy roles); Lincolnshire County Council (research on managing broadband); and the private sector led Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (studies on key sectors).

### c. Strategy and plans

Our focus is impact, and maintaining evidence of the impact of research, including upon users. Users include commercial businesses, social enterprises, charities, public services, local and central governments. We will strengthen and *improve our links with users* by trialling different approaches to engagement in the course of our research. We will develop *routes to impact* through research partnerships and engagement with users. We will provide support for staff to enable impact to be achieved from their research by providing expertise and resources through our impact champion. And we will and support our partner organisations to adapt and respond to our research findings and outputs.

**In our strategy for future impact:** we will: make our research part of significant social and political processes that create change; and establish standards to make impact activities within the School more consistent in everyday practice. This approach extends reach and significance by:

**Developing active networks of influential stakeholders** to assist in engagement and impact by targeting specific leaders and organisations, promoting our work at a policy level, and inviting participation through keynote presentations and events (e.g. in the House of Lords), personal contact, appointment of Senior Visiting Fellows, and one or more major sponsored events per year.

**Developing co-production partnerships and involving key partners at every stage**, sharing the experience of research groups, making it an expectation of research programmes, and seeking co-funding in support, so that each research programme has significant user engagement.

**Identifying and bidding for external funding for impact**, building on previous experience, such as of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and joint projects with private sector consultants. The goal is for each research programme to have a funded impact activity, and preferably many of them.

**Extending reach by increasing visibility and dissemination** by: combining with partners' networks to widen international engagement (e.g. through partner universities, businesses such as Siemens, and the international community e.g. UNESCO/UNITWIN); creating more open access to research, inviting public participation via online media; instigating public debate at events and online; using the University Press Office and social media to disseminate research results; developing materials and direct services to create value for users and for the University.

This **externally-oriented strategy** is supported **internally** by formalising the role of the impact champion in relation to engagement and impact, and working to:

- make 'impact' an everyday part of the process of research and engagement by its explicit inclusion in the School's research planning, evaluation, monitoring and appraisal processes;
- provide advice and training on impact and applications for appropriate sources of funding;
- build teams of academic staff with skills in translation and delivery as well as research;
- ensure work-planning fully accounts for impact activities in individuals' annual plans;
- collect and record evidence of impact from research groups and programmes.

This strategy is supported by a range of University expertise, training, advice and funding (e.g. a College fund supports impact-generating research up to £5,000 per annum per project).

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The case studies demonstrate our strategy of developing stakeholder engagement and how our interdisciplinary approach enables us to generate research questions and design studies that seek to directly improve organisation/business effectiveness and efficiency, often aimed at improving public good. The cases illustrate different approaches to generating impact, but reflect typical organisations and beneficiaries. Both exemplify an engaged approach, with research being followed up to generate impact and leading to further research.

In '**Shaping public investment in economic growth**', initial research assisted the regional development agency to conceptualise key areas of its strategic plan (enterprising regions). To help maximise the economic and social benefits of research, the research team produced a user-related report and gave direct advice to senior management of the agency. This triggered follow-up research providing an evidence base and generating further issues (e.g. the role of market towns), which our research then addressed, providing strong evidence and reasoning that was used as a key part of regional economic strategy. Seminars were held to share this with decision makers. The relationship with local authorities was maintained by further studies (such as of broadband investment), which led to improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure and benefited enterprises and consumers in the region.

For '**Changing policy and practices in the organisation of community-based active citizenship learning**', researchers were aware of the potential impact and implemented ways to influence national practice through engagement with government ministers and senior civil servants, in line with the School's encouragement of researchers to develop appropriate advisory roles with organisations. They remained embedded in the process through three government white papers, pilot studies and national programmes, working with other organisations. The main beneficiaries were government (more effective training), charities and third sector organisations (more effective programmes), and their communities of clients (improved citizenship). This research programme uses a co-production action research process as an empowering activity. The impact creation and on-going 'action' research have continued in parallel over seven years, and are also being disseminated through international partnerships. The lead researchers were both promoted during the project, reflecting the School's strategy of rewarding staff for research impact.