



BUILDING A
CULTURE OF

Research Impact

AT THE
UNIVERSITY
OF MELBOURNE



Enabling and building a culture of research impact is vital to ensure that discoveries and ideas change and improve the world around us.

Whether it's finding new ways to solve complex problems, informing public policy decisions, advancing technology, or supporting individuals and communities, the conscious pursuit of impactful research enables research findings and outputs to create meaningful and positive changes within society.

The *Advancing Melbourne 2030* strategy clearly highlights the University of Melbourne's aspiration of being "at the leading edge of discovery, understanding and impact, through research". Accordingly, the strategy places a renewed emphasis on the impact of research and its potential to address and solve major global challenges.

It is undeniable that researchers at the University produce an incredible array of impactful research. Therefore, it's imperative that we enable researchers across all disciplines to engage with the wider community using their expertise, to communicate their research for practical benefit, and to apply research breakthroughs to make a positive difference in the world.

What is research impact?

Research can influence and change prevailing community attitudes, inform government decisions, shape professional and creative practices, and achieve economic, social, health and environmental benefits.



The University of Melbourne's Research Impact Framework

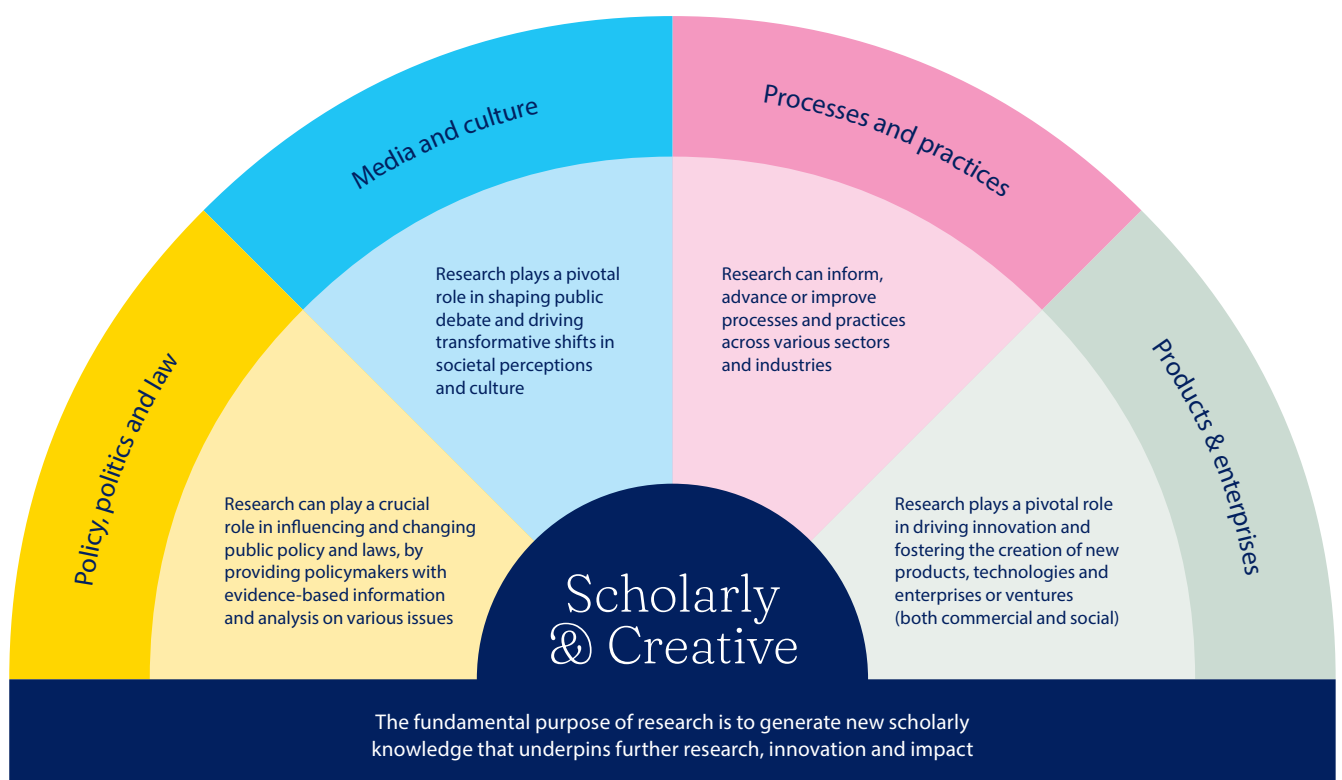
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The University defines research impact as the effect on, change or benefit to scholarly knowledge and the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life.

In 2020-21 the University developed a Research Impact Framework to build and support a culture of research impact. The framework was designed to be broad and inclusive, and to address the needs of diverse disciplines and approaches, including interdisciplinary programs.

It considers all career stages and encompasses different pathways to impact. Furthermore, it is aligned with the University's deep commitment to academic discovery, as expressed in the adopted definition of research impact.

The University's Research Impact Framework outlines a range of different impact facets.



The impact journey will differ for many reasons:

The pathway to impact is not linear or predictable and may cover several different facets.

The length of time to impact will differ depending on disciplinary approaches and the level of engagement required beyond the University.

Impact will fluctuate based on career stage and many local, national and international factors.

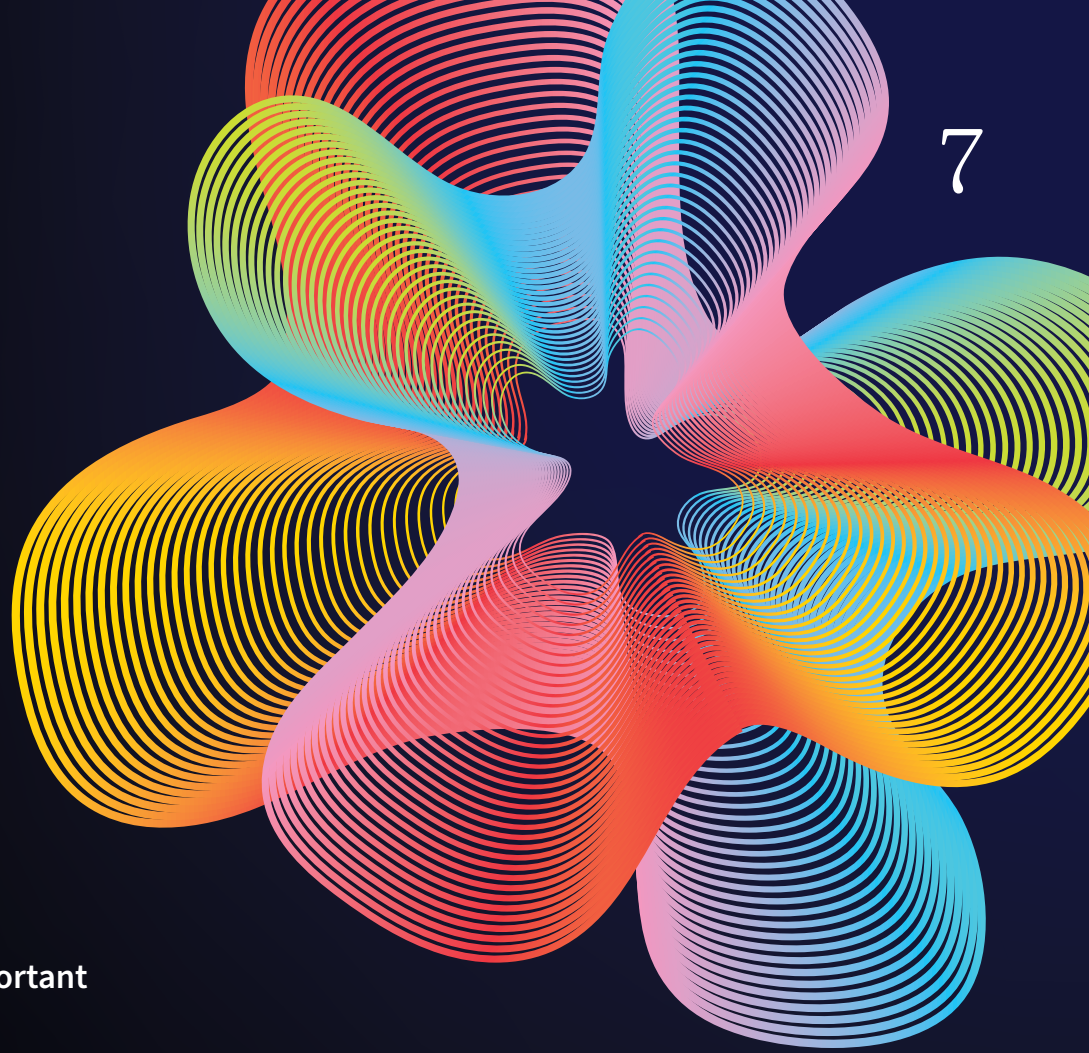


Why is research impact important?

The higher education landscape in Australia and around the world is changing, with an ever-growing emphasis on universities being able to demonstrate their ability to deliver new knowledge, innovation and capability to benefit society.

In this evolving landscape, it is becoming increasingly important for researchers to consider the potential long-term benefits of their research, and to be able to communicate this to diverse audiences.

Many researchers are keen to make a difference in the world by doing great research that benefits individuals, communities and society.



Research impact is important for many reasons:

Expand human knowledge

The primary goal of research is to expand human knowledge and understanding. Research impact is a means for demonstrating that a study has contributed new insights, ideas, or theories to a particular field, building a foundation for further research.

New discoveries

Impactful research leads to new discoveries or technologies that often result in the creation of new products, services and processes that benefit society.

Funding for research

Government agencies and other funders are increasingly prioritising research with a clear potential for impact. Effectively articulating the impact of previous research, or the potential impact of future research, will enhance a researcher's chances of securing vital funding, resources and backing from a diverse array of stakeholders.

Collaboration & engagement

Impactful research often involves collaboration with various stakeholders, such as industry partners, policymakers, and community organisations. Engaging with these stakeholders can open doors to valuable partnerships, knowledge exchange and the practical application of research findings.

Visibility and recognition

Researchers and institutions that produce impactful work gain visibility and recognition within their field and beyond. There is a symbiotic relationship between high quality research and substantial research impact.

Career advancement

Impactful research can support and accelerate research career advancement through generating new opportunities and by demonstrating engagement beyond the university.

Building impact literacy and skills

The concept of research impact is complex. There are a range of different training programs and initiatives available at the University to help staff and students gain a deeper understanding of the concepts of research impact and how it may apply to their unique circumstances.

Emerald Impact Services — Impact literacy skills and planning tool

A range of self-paced online learning resources developed by Emerald Publishing are available to build awareness and understanding of research impact.

The two core platforms include:

Impact Skills

A suite of self-paced modules to help build knowledge and understanding of research impact, planning for impact, and stakeholder engagement. The entire program can be completed in less than 90 minutes and has been designed to provide a baseline understanding of research impact and associated topics.

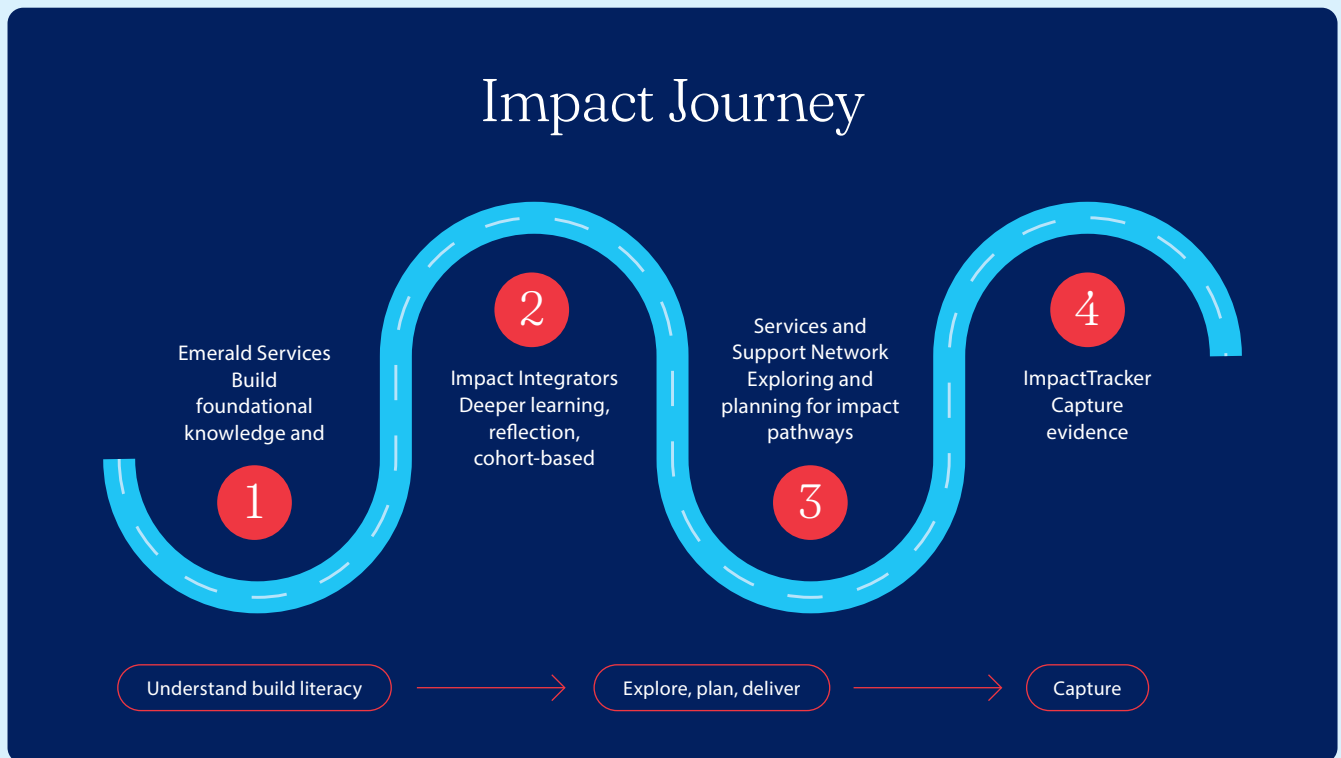
Impact Planner

The Impact Planner guides researchers through a step-by-step process to develop a robust plan that will identify, enable and measure the impact of their research.

Impact Integrators

For those wishing to further develop and maximise the impact of their research, a cohort-based, reflective learning program is available, which has been designed to enable participants to carefully consider and plan for impact, whilst also providing an opportunity to meet other impact focused researchers and professional staff from the University.

The online, self-paced training program consists of a series of short videos and simple activities which encourage participants to carefully consider and plan their own impact journeys.



Championing research impact at the University

The University has established a network of faculty-nominated Research Impact Leads who are responsible for championing a culture of impact and identifying priority activities/initiatives to support all forms of research impact across the University.

Impact Leads provide local discipline specific insights and support, and act as a point of coordination, collaboration and knowledge exchange across faculties.

This network has been crucial in informing the current and future program of work to nurture research impact at the University, including training programs and other relevant initiatives.

Services and support to enable research impact

There are a range of different services and support options available across the University for researchers who are keen to explore the different pathways to impact that might be relevant to their research, and to ultimately maximise the impact for societal benefit.

These services and supports are centered around:

Recognising and rewarding impactful research in recruitment, performance reviews and promotions

Training and development for all aspects of impact planning and guidance to explore potential impact pathways

Establishing and facilitating collaborations and partnerships with industry, government and community organisations

Securing research funding

Promoting impact stories and offering impact prizes

Capturing and storing the evidence of impact

Capturing the evidence of impact

ImpactTracker is a new platform supported by the University which aims to simplify the process of collecting, managing, verifying and reporting on impact data.

Understanding impact is challenging!

ImpactTracker was designed to address this challenge by streamlining and simplifying the processes underpinning data collection and reporting.

Specifically, the platform enables researchers to capture, collect and report on the evidence of impact, including publications and non-traditional research outputs (NTRO), as well as the outcomes of ongoing engagement activities.





For further information, please email
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[gateway.research.unimelb.edu.au/
innovation-outputs-and-impact/research-
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