

# EARMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEW HORIZONS IN RESEARCH MANAGEMENT



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# New Horizons Research Management



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# AIM to impact





## AIM to Impact

Applying Impact Models in research  
management: Coventry University reflections on  
an integrated lifecycle approach

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## Session

- About Coventry University
- UK context
- Intervention approaches
- Benefit to research management
- Integrating impact into project lifecycle
- Overall reflections from Coventry experience

# RESEARCH EXCELLENCE WITH IMPACT

## University of the Year

Times Higher Education Awards 2015

## Modern University of the Year

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2016

## Ranked No.15 UK University

Guardian University Guide 2016

## Top University for Student Satisfaction

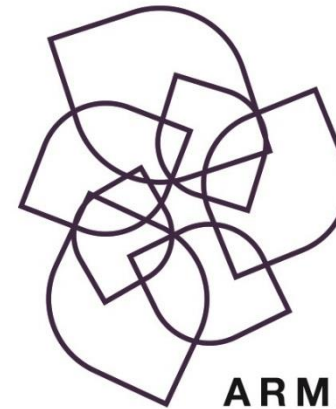
The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2016

## 95% of graduates are employed or in further study

DLHE survey 2013/14

## The Queen's Awards for Enterprise:

International Trade 2015



**ARMA** AWARDS

## UK context

- Research funding and accountability
- Quality and reach of research
- Research Excellence Framework 2014 & 2021(?)
- Research Councils UK
- Horizon 2020

## [REF] definition of impact

‘For the purposes of the REF, 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’

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*ie: A provable change in the real world, as a result of our research*



# REF2014 case study analysis



- 6975 impact case studies
- 149 fields of research
- 60 impact topics
- 3709 unique pathways to impact
- <http://impact.ref.ac.uk>

# Interventions and impact

## Impact planning

- Often poorly mapped:
  - Mismatched outputs / activities / audience / impacts
  - Limited linearity
- ‘Default’ activities (workshops, seminars)
- Assume activities lead to impact
- Assume exposure leads to impact
- Focus on broad not achievable impacts
- Overlook the realities of implementation

Stakeholders

Activities

Impact

Too simple

## Benefits of intervention logic

- Intervention = an activity designed to create change
- Vast body of evidence/guidance on intervention design (e.g. Intervention Mapping (Bartholomew et al, 2006))
- Key principles to make a change:
  - Incorporate user views, expert opinion, theory and evidence
  - Determine actual needs
  - Determine what changes are needed, what *can* be changed and what would be acceptable
  - Select appropriate techniques
  - Create a coordinated strategy
  - Implement and evaluate





## Impact in research management

- Can be difficult to support impact:
  - Not impact expert
  - ‘Academic as expert’
  - Time available

## Using intervention logic

- Impact plans are mapped (matched)
  - Outputs / activities / audience / impacts
  - Clear, defined paths
- Articulates how activities lead to impact
- Focus on achievable impacts within broader impact goals
- Accommodate and acknowledge realities of implementation

## Benefit to research managers

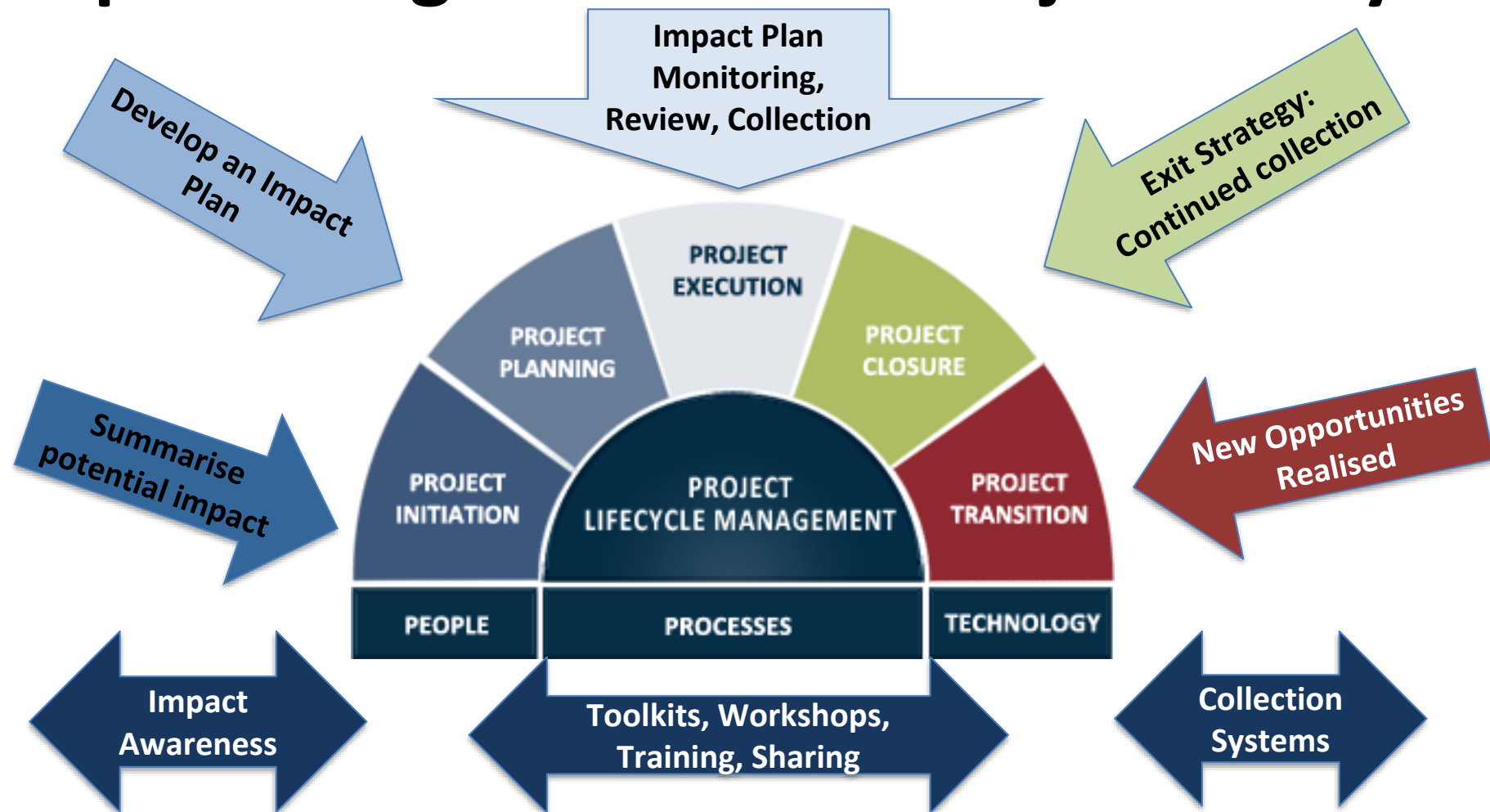
- Drawing on intervention methods arms research managers to:
  - Support realistic impact planning
  - Create and follow feasible project management plans
  - Support, question and challenge academic plans
  - Offer informed, objective review
  - Be a ‘critical friend’

# Integrating into the project lifecycle

## The reality of impact planning

- Often academics need support to strengthen and deliver their impact plans
- May have only basic ideas
- Research managers can apply logical approach, even with limited information

## Impact integration in the Project Lifecycle





## Integrating Impact

- It is not necessary to be an impact expert to support impact
- Crucial element is supporting:
  - Staff training and awareness building
  - Building open dialogue with staff
  - Clarifying responsibilities
  - Team effort

## Reflections

- Integrate impact into academic and research management roles
- Have a 'specialist', but don't restrict support to a single role
- Bridge academic- research support divide
- Assessment is driver but quality is the aim
- Build a positive culture towards impact

**RESEARCH EXCELLENCE**  
**WITH IMPACT**



**Any questions?**

## Exercise

- 1) How do you build stronger partnerships between academics and research management to deliver impact?
- 2) Based on what you currently do, how do you strengthen the process of impact planning?
- 3) How can you better integrate impact to the delivery of your project?
- 4) How can you strengthen the ongoing support and follow up after a project has ended?