



The Council's Evaluation Strategy

A. Background and Evaluation Framework

1. Council's evaluation framework is underpinned by four key concepts.
2. Firstly, we have moved away from evaluation of individual awards. Instead, we have adopted the concept of a **research landscape**, taking into account the relationships and interactions between research activities and the wider social, economic, cultural and educational realms. Our approach is therefore to try to capture the nature and scale of interactions in particular parts of the landscape. This removes the need to focus on a specific short-term award life span, and also provides the basis for capturing interactions beyond the immediate and known use of research results and outputs.
3. Secondly, we have moved away from a linear concept of impact and quality assessment in which assessment is made simply at the end of an award. Instead, we have developed a **research life-cycle approach**, recognising that impacts can and do occur at any point in the research process, from the formulation of new ideas, partnerships and research, to the dissemination and exploitation of results.
4. Thirdly, we have recognised that metrics of activity that describe the nature and scale of research activity and output are very different from impact assessment and assessments of quality. Metrics of activity, such as citations, bibliometrics, or patents, have tended to be used in some other subject areas and disciplines as proxies for impact and quality. The validity of such proxies has been challenged where such proxies distort or misrepresent the real extent of impact and quality. Hence, we now have three evaluation elements: **metrics of activity; impact assessment; and assessment of quality or excellence.**
5. What binds these three concepts together is **knowledge exchange**. This concept is important because it recognises that there are multiple forms of interaction between academics and other people, and that academics engage in them throughout their working lives. Knowledge is exchanged through a number of pathways:
 - physical outputs such as books, radio and TV programmes, patents, exhibitions, performances, the press;
 - electronic outputs such as databases, datasets, software, websites;
 - physical infrastructure such as museums, archives and galleries;
 - teaching and training of postgraduate students;
 - development and nurturing of academic careers;
 - formal interactions through research collaborations, contract research and consultancy, visiting lectureships or fellowships;
 - informal interactions through networking at conferences and seminars, and through advisory work to private and public bodies, either through membership of committees/boards or as advisors.