

THE ACADEMY

Developing Liverpool

RESEARCHING

Report on Making an Impact 2020



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Executive Summary

Planning and design

The planning and designing of Making an Impact 2020 started in late January 2020 and built on the ambitious programme set out in 2019, cementing the Making an Impact series as a highly-valued and much-anticipated annual event that continually evolves in response to feedback from participants. The Series is structured around a set of activities based on the Making an Impact Framework. The Framework evolves each year, responding to Industrial Strategy priorities and consists of impact clusters defined in REF2021 (Research England 2018) and a knowledge and skill axis based on the first iteration of the [Knowledge Exchange Framework](#) (Research England 2019).

In accordance with the University's HR Excellence in Research Award (Section 3.1.4 of the [University's 2020-2024 Concordat Implementation Plan](#)), Making an Impact 2020 sessions were also mapped against the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) which describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers.

Using both the Making an Impact and Researcher Development frameworks participants were able to build a tailored experience of Making an Impact 2020 based on their respective research impact needs, ambitions and interests.

Taking place over 3 weeks from the 1st-19th June 2020, it was initially planned that a blended approach would be taken when designing the programme which would combine more traditional face to face sessions with podcasts (see table 4.1 for further details), visual minutes and a mixture of complimentary online resources. This would not only provide a more enhanced set of development activities but would also help to improve accessibility.

The Making an Impact series was initially developed in [2018](#) and [2019](#) to provide development activities focused around the [Industrial strategy priorities](#). In 2020, once more in support of the University's Vision to be "globally recognised in all our research and impact activities", and to help deliver the Research and Impact Strategy which "is first and foremost about our people; creating the right environment and supporting our researchers at every career stage" (Strategy 2026, p.6,p.10), The Academy partnered with colleagues from Research, Partnerships & Innovation (RPI) to design and deliver [Making an Impact 2020](#).

On the 23rd March 2020, the UK went into lockdown due to COVID-19 and therefore the vast majority of the University of Liverpool staff were advised to work from home. Recognising the challenges of this new working situation for our researchers, the Academy rapidly responded to the new reality presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and committed to delivering Making an Impact 2020 as an entirely online event. Acknowledging and taking into consideration that the rapid changes in the professional landscape brought with it a state of isolation for many it was more important than ever to develop a community feeling regarding the event, to enable researchers to stay connected and develop their practice during this time of uncertainty.

Programme and additional considerations

The programme was ambitious, flexible and innovative, providing diverse opportunities for participants to create a bespoke development experience for themselves (see Figure 1).

As the use of online conference/ meetings software was still in its infancy for both potential participants and facilitators (internal and external), comprehensive guidelines were created to support the planning and running of sessions for [facilitators](#) as well as separate guidelines for [participants](#).

Throughout the planning of the programme, careful consideration was given to the following from participants' perspectives:

- Caring responsibilities and gendered perspectives

- Accessibility needs
- Varying broadband speeds
- Mobile phone access
- Dipping in & out at different times and need for breaks for screen time away
- Online social space which will bring together Making an Impact 2020 participants.
- Resources post #unilivimpact20

Making an Impact 2020 sessions were given and facilitated by Vice Chancellors, National Funders, leading academics, professional bodies, research impact leaders, external and internal facilitators and consisted of a mixture of workshops, webinars, an online facility tour, café cultures, keynotes, panel discussions, 1:1 surgeries and a showcase. It involved 100 external and internal speakers provided 57 development sessions, with over 2250 registrations from 650 individuals (further details see Section 4).

Making an Impact 2020 aims

The Series aimed to:

- Develop the practice of Liverpool researchers at all stages of their careers by providing rich, varied, high-quality development opportunities.
- Develop Liverpool researchers for future roles in careers both within and outside academia
- Stimulate conversations and encourage engagement with employers and leading industry professional across different sectors
- Deliver an Inclusive and accessible programme as well as create a [rich bank of 'living' resources](#) which will continue to remain available beyond the series.
- Understand and promote the importance of an inclusive, positive research culture and improved wellbeing.
- Utilise short term investment from HEIF Industrial Strategy funds for maximum return

Communication and community

Enhanced communication and engagement with participants through Twitter was achieved by weekly [Twitter competitions](#), [Tweet chats](#) and [Gif awards](#). Testimonials were encouraged during evaluation by a prize draw, a colouring sheet was designed to entertain children whilst parents/carers engaged in the Making an Impact 2020 programme and a playlist of motivational and inspirational songs was created from songs nominated by both facilitators and participants to further instil a sense of community and ownership in the series.

Gif awards in particular formed a useful strategy to get participants to engage in public dissemination about the impact of the development activity in relation to the Industrial Strategy foundations and priorities. Many awards were liked and retweeted from colleagues, collaborators and managers of the recipient and generated further conversations and threads regarding the learning and development Making an Impact had provided. An example of this can be seen [here](#).

A channel on Microsoft Teams was also made available for all those that attended any of the Making an Impact sessions to continue conversations, chat informally, network and make connections. From this two separate discussion groups were set up by some of the participants of sessions. These formed micro communities of practice on impactful leadership and blogging for your research, wherein participants shared examples of effective practice.

Evaluation

The evaluation outlined in this document consists of a post-6-month point evaluation of Making an Impact 2019, as well as primary data from an evaluation survey administered during Making an Impact 2020 which also collected long term information regarding those that had engaged with the Making an Impact series previously. Participants' qualitative evaluations (n=504) of the extent to which Making an Impact 2020 achieved its stated objectives are overwhelmingly positive. Key themes are summarised in the Table 0-1 which follows on the next page.

Table 0-1: Making an Impact 2020 objectives and key themes taken from participants evaluation feedback

| Making an Impact 2020 Objective | Key themes arising from participants' evaluation feedback |
|---|---|
| Develop the practice of Liverpool researchers at all stages of their careers by providing rich, varied, high-quality development opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible genuine investment in development tailored upon current needs. • Opportunities that promoted reflection on where we, as individuals, are up to and where future possibilities lie and how to turn possibilities into realities. • Enabled learning of new skills and engagement with staff across the University. |
| Develop Liverpool researchers for future roles in careers both within and outside academia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated professional development time to work on different aspects of career. • Provides opportunity to reflect on skills and interests outside and beyond academia. • Improved awareness of skills that can be applied in other careers. |
| Stimulate conversations and encourage engagement with employers and leading industry professional across different sectors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great platform to hear from a wide range of people and start up interesting, open and honest conversations around a variety of topics. • Provided a fresh perspective about the impact of research not only locally but also globally. • A dynamic approach to sharing knowledge and developing ideas for the future. |
| Deliver an inclusive and accessible programme as well as create of a rich bank of 'living' resources which will continue to remain available beyond the series. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of interactive online sessions, together with a wide range of resources that facilitate further development. • Flexible, short sessions were more accessible in terms of managing work-life balance • Asynchronous online resources help to conduct additional research in one's own time. • Inclusive for international staff and those with caring responsibilities. |
| Understand and promote the importance of an inclusive, positive research culture and improved wellbeing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing a rich and inclusive research culture. • Proactive discussions on how to improve the culture for research and researchers. |
| Utilise short term investment from HEIF Industrial Strategy funds for maximum return | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing good understanding of Knowledge Exchange and the role researchers play. • Encouraging participants to engage in policy and consultancy. |

Participants' quantitative feedback was similarly positive and consistently better than previous year's feedback which in itself had already been incredibly positive ([See Pg 4 - Making an Impact report 2019](#)). Evaluations highlighted the tremendous success of this activity: 92.4% indicated respective sessions met their expectations (compared to 885 in 2019); 92.2% noted that sessions met their needs (compared to 84% in 2019); and an overwhelming 91.8% confirmed the sessions supported their future needs and career plans (compared to 90% in 2019).

Facilitators' feedback was also sought during Making an Impact 2020. Key themes arising from their comments (n=27) related to the usefulness of pre-event communications and guidance; organisation and support; sense of a shared community and the success of using of the online format.

The [University's 2020-2024 Concordat Implementation Plan](#) outlines actions that that the University commits to undertake in order to retain its HR Excellence in Research Award. Principle 3 (Researchers are equipped and

supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment) and Principle 4 (The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career) of the [Concordat to support the career development of researchers](#) (Vitae 2019) are acknowledged in the action plan. Making an Impact 2020 met the University's commitment to the support and career development of researchers in accordance with the success measures outlined in the University's 2020-2024 Concordat Implementation Plan.

On the whole, Making an Impact 2020 achieved its overall purpose to provide research, academic and research-related professional staff with a platform and forum to interact, share expertise and build cross-discipline contacts across the University with an aim to enhancing research impact. As in previous years, upcoming iterations of the Series will continuously evolve along with changing needs and priorities.


Evaluations of Making an Impact 2020 sessions will inform the ongoing planning and delivery of researcher development made available to staff by The Academy, in liaison with partners across the University and beyond.

Due in part to the increasing uncertainty created by the global pandemic, the Academy faced an unprecedented challenge to articulate value to both Making an Impact participants and wider stakeholders. It was therefore paramount that a holistic and innovative approach to understanding value was taken, and implemented across the second post-Covid phase of planning, designing and execution of Making an Impact. The generation of a rich and diverse bank of asynchronous online resources during Making an Impact 2020, has also formed the foundation of a discussion about a hybrid approach to researcher development, and will therefore also impact on the design and delivery of future Making an Impact events.

Figure 0-1 (on next page): Making an Impact 2020 programme of activity (pages 1 & 4). The full programme can be found [here](#).

This figure shows page 1 (A) and page 4 (B) of the programme. Each session linked to its specific Eventbrite page for registrations and stated not only the time and length of the session but also any breaks that would take place. As well as a description of the format of the session (webinar, workshop etc), each session had coloured square(s) and letters which represented the different impact clusters and knowledge skills and axis covered in this session. Any online resources or podcasts could also be linked to from each individual session. Each page covered a full week of the programme, the final page (B) provided a brief description and links to the playlist, further resources, podcasts, framework, a searchable programme and the Teams social space. Where possible, mid-session breaks were also indicated on the programme for relevant sessions.

(A)



UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Making an Impact 2020

1 - 19 June

**WEEK 1
1 - 5 JUNE**

MONDAY 1 JUNE

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Developing a commercial proposal <i>(Interactive Workshop)</i> 10:00-12:00 10 min break halfway | Getting attention – Elevator pitching <i>(Interactive Workshop)</i> 13:00-14:00 | Impactful Leadership (part 1/2) <i>(Interactive Seminar)</i> 15:00-15:45 |
|---|--|---|

TUESDAY 2 JUNE

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Talk by Vice Chancellor: The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, COVID-19 and our research <i>(Talk by Vice Chancellor)</i> 09:30-10:30 | Demonstrating impact using the UN Sustainable Development Goals <i>(Webinar)</i> 11:00-12:30 10 min break halfway | 1:1 Career Consultations for Researchers (2 individual sessions for 30mins each) <i>(1:1 Surgery)</i> 12.30-13.30 | Managing project delivery <i>(Interactive Workshop)</i> 14:00-16:00 10 min break halfway |
|--|---|--|--|

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Making an Impact on Culture <i>(Webinar)</i> 10:00-11:00 | Making Civic Engagement even more important in a post COVID world: How can we do that? <i>(Webinar)</i> 11:30-12:30 | Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: Partnership that create real impact <i>(Webinar)</i> 13:00-14:00 | KEYNOTE: Research culture: From lab to lobbying <i>(Keynote)</i> 14:30-15:30 |
|---|--|--|---|

THURSDAY 4 JUNE

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Impactful leadership (part 2/2) <i>(Interactive Seminar)</i> 09.30-10.15 | Starting out as a research degree supervisor I: What do supervisors do? <i>(Live Webinar)</i> 11.00-13.00 5 min break after 45 mins | Starting out as a research degree supervisor II: Effective supervision <i>(Live Webinar)</i> 13.30-15.30 5 min break after 45 mins | 1:1 Career Consultations for Researchers (2 individual sessions for 30mins each) <i>(1:1 surgery)</i> 15:30-16:30 |
|---|---|--|--|

FRIDAY 5 JUNE

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Exploring and Sharing Research Through Poetry <i>(Interactive Webinar)</i> 10.00-11.00 | 1:1 Career Consultations for Researchers (2 individual sessions for 30mins each) <i>(1:1 surgery)</i> 11.30-12.30 | Impactful Leadership Live <i>(Tweet Chat)</i> 12.30-13.00 | Cafe Culture <i>(Research cafe culture)</i> 13.00-13.30 | Cafe Culture <i>(Research cafe culture)</i> 13.30-14.00 | Emotional intelligence in leadership – why does it matter? <i>(Interactive webinar)</i> 14:30-15:30 5 mins after 55 mins |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|

KEY

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ELEMENTS

- 🔗 Research partnerships
- 🏢 Working with business
- 👥 Working with the public and third sector
- 🎓 Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship
- 🏘️ Local growth and regeneration
- 📄 IP and commercialisation
- 👥 Public and community engagement

📖 Resources

🎧 Podcast

➔ Link to event

IMPACT CLUSTERS

- DIGITAL AGENDA
- ENVIRONMENT
- CULTURE
- SOCIETY OR QUALITY OF LIFE
- PUBLIC POLICY OR SERVICES
- THE ECONOMY
- BEYOND ACADEMIA

Figure 0-1 continued

(B)



Making an Impact 2020

1 - 19 June

Playlist
A special Making an Impact 2020 playlist of motivational songs has been created and will be available here.
[➔](#)

Development resources
Additional Making an Impact 2020 development resources that can be explored at any time outside of normal session times can be found here.
[➔](#)

Podcasts
Making an Impact 2020 Podcasts will be available here.
[➔](#)

Framework
Elements of the Making an Impact 2020 Framework that are relevant to each activity are indicated within the programme. From this you can build a tailored experience of Making an Impact 2020 based on your own research impact needs, ambitions and interests.
[➔](#)

Programme
A searchable version of the Making an Impact programme is available here.
[➔](#)

Recognition and Value opportunities
Information about Making an Impact 2020 Recognition and Value opportunities are available here.
[➔](#)

Researcher Hub
The Researcher Hub brings together information from a variety of both University and external websites, all in one place, to help you in your role and career.
[➔](#)

The Academy
The Academy promotes and enables every researcher to access high-quality development opportunities in leadership and management, research, education and professional practice, working with partners across the University of Liverpool and beyond to achieve the highest standards of excellence. Find out more here.
[➔](#)

Team Channel
A Team channel has been set up as a social space for you to network and chat informally throughout the whole of Making an Impact 2020 and will be available here.
[➔](#)

THE ACADEMY
Developing Liverpool

Register for sessions on
The Academy's website:
www.liverpool.ac.uk/researcher/making-impact/impact-2020

 @LivResearcher and @LivUniAcademy

1. Context

The Making an Impact series, an annual programme of events led by The Academy aims to provide rich, varied and high-quality development opportunities for researchers, academics and research-related professional services staff at all stages of their career with opportunities offered across all Faculties. Since its inception in 2018, the Making an Impact series has been well attended and received and participant feedback has supported the demand and need for an ongoing development programme.

The University of Liverpool's vision is to be "globally recognised in all our research and impact activities", and to help deliver the Research and Impact Strategy which "is first and foremost about our people; creating the right environment and supporting our researchers at every career stage" (University of Liverpool Strategy 2026, 2016, p.6,p.10).

Building on the success of the now flagship Making an Impact series, RPI made available additional HEIF funding for researcher development activity across UoL in 2020. As the funding was derived from the HEIF industrial Strategy, its use aligned with knowledge exchange and impact, and supported priorities in the government's Industrial Strategy white paper.

The University of Liverpool is also fully committed to the implementation of the principles of the [Concordat to support the career development of researchers](#), these principles set out clear standards that research staff can expect from the University, as well as their responsibilities as researchers, working in a supportive and stimulating environment.

Key elements include an overall increased importance on the personal and career development of researchers, and includes specific individual, institutional and funder obligations to "provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors." (Vitae, 2019, p.6)

Furthermore, the Concordat review has highlighted the need for HEIs to invest in the talent pipeline and promote broader career options, particularly in relation to the UK Industrial Strategy which highlights innovation as a major element within its ambitions of ensuring our research base is the world's best and creating a country of innovators (Industrial Strategy White Paper, 2017).

Making an Impact 2018 and 2019 took an innovative approach to research impact development and over the the first two years, the Series involved 240 external and internal colleagues providing over 80 sessions that 1000+ individuals engaged with.

Following this success, the Series has evolved into a finely tuned annual programme consisting of diverse sessions which address contemporary topics within the research and impact landscape. Sessions enable staff to think about their research impact, how it can be conceptualised, enriched, supported and sustained. Evaluation of both events have been extremely positive and revealed a demand and need for an annual development programme for researchers across the whole University.

Making an Impact 2020 aimed to build on the success of the previous events but also to evolve and increase its accessibility by taking a blended approach to the programme design. The global pandemic in early 2020 required the organisers within a short period to work more closely with colleagues within the Academy to successfully deliver an entirely online event that would take place on the original dates. Making an Impact 2020 provided an ever-higher bar of support to colleagues in this new environment, helping to develop effective ways of fostering research impact skills and knowledge.

2. Aims and Objectives of Making an Impact 2020

A key consideration in planning Making an Impact 2020 was aligning development activities with the launch of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat which was published on 24th April 2020. The Knowledge Exchange Concordat seeks to enhance knowledge exchange within universities through the exchange of good practice, highlight the good practice that exists and act as a catalyst for collaboration between universities and with employers. The [Knowledge Exchange Concordat](#) has eight guiding principles:

- Mission - Knowledge exchange is a recognised part of the overall institutional strategy and is valued for the social, cultural and economic outcomes it helps us achieve.
- Policies and processes - Clear policies on the types of KE that is undertaken and work with staff, students, collaborators and beneficiaries so that the policies are understood and operationalised.
- Engagement - Building effective relationships by having clear routes to access information and expertise in the university, with engagement mechanisms and policies developed to suit the needs of a wide range of beneficiaries and partners working with institutions as publicly funded bodies.
- Working Transparently and ethically - Make sure that partners and beneficiaries understand the ethical and charitable regulatory environments in which our institution operates, including a commitment to inclusivity and equality, and take steps to maximise the benefit to them within that context.
- Capacity building – Ensure staff and students are developed and trained appropriately to understand and undertake their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of successful KE.
- Recognition and rewards – Recognise and reward the achievement of staff and students who perform high quality KE activities.
- Continuous improvement – Proactively strive to share best practice with peers and have established processes for learning from this.
- Evaluation success – Undertake regular institutional and collective monitoring and review of our strengthening KE performance using this concordat and through regional, national or international benchmarks to inform the development and execution of a programme of continuous improvement so that KE becomes more effective.

With this in mind, and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 approaching, Making an Impact 2020 targeted the enhancement of the research environment at UoL. The Activity further strengthened UoL's position as the go-to place for established and aspiring research leaders through the quality of our environment and support.

Making an Impact 2020 sought to additionally address the environment elements in REF 2021, which relate to UoL's Strategy for research and enabling impact (including integrity, open research, and structures to support interdisciplinary research) and UoL's support and training of research staff (Research England, REF 2021, 2018, p.97). Making an Impact 2019 therefore focused on developing participants' research impact attributes in relation to:

- Ideas: explore innovative ideas and solutions in relation to the impact of their research.
- Skills: develop and reflect on skills that will enable greater contribution to the impact agenda.
- Entrepreneurship: supporting ideas around IP and research commercialisation.
- Communities: enhancing the capabilities and impact of multi-disciplinary researchers.

(DBEIS, 2017)

A recent LERU paper affirmed that research-intensive universities are ideally positioned as drivers of entrepreneurial ecosystems; stimulating the emergence of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills and supporting initiatives and programmes related to entrepreneurship (LERU, 2019). Building on this, Making an Impact 2020 acknowledged that entrepreneurship is not only about starting up new ventures, it is a way of thinking – and this was embedded throughout the programme. It is worth noting the paper’s findings that entrepreneurial skills include opportunity recognition, viability screening and creative problem-solving, and that for entrepreneurship to thrive at universities and to make it accessible and relevant to all individuals, its meaning needs to be reframed.

The Making an Impact Series also supports the achievements of UoL’s commitments to support and career development of researchers in accordance with the [University’s 2020-2024 Concordat Implementation Plan](#) (Section 2.3.1). All Making an Impact 2020 sessions were mapped against [Vitae Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#). The RDF describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers. The mapping of Making an Impact 2020 activity against the domains of the RDF is indicated in [Appendix 1](#).

As such, the objectives of Making an Impact 2020 were defined as follows:

- Develop the practice of Liverpool researchers at all stages of their careers by providing rich, varied, high-quality development opportunities.
- Develop Liverpool researchers for future roles in careers both within and outside academia.
- Stimulate conversations and encourage engagement with employers and leading industry professional across different sectors.
- Deliver an inclusive and accessible programme as well as create a rich bank of ‘living’ resources which will continue to remain available beyond the series.
- Understand and promote the importance of an inclusive, positive research culture and improved wellbeing.
- Utilise short term investment from HEIF Industrial Strategy funds for maximum return.

3. Making an Impact 2020 Framework

In 2019, The Academy sought to develop a research-informed framework that addressed the needs of researchers in relation to the Higher Education Industrial Strategy, knowledge exchange, supporting and developing a broad range of knowledge-based interactions between the University of Liverpool and the wider community, targeting research impact activities which result in economic and social benefit to the UK (HEFCE, 2017, 2018).

A framework was developed on the basis of impact clusters surrounding a knowledge and skills axis. The impact clusters were originally derived from Making an Impact Week 2018 feedback ([See Making an Impact 2019 report](#), section 6.1) and the definition of impact for REF2021 in [REF Guidance on Submissions](#) (Research England, REF 2021, 2018, p.68). This framework helped to design the programme of activities and was indicated within the programme to enable participants to build a tailored experience based on research impact needs, ambitions and interest.

Building on the success of this framework in 2019, a similar approach was used when planning the 2020 programme. Also in January 2020 the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool Guild of Students signed the global higher education sector’s commitment to the Sustainable development goals (SDG), the SDG Accord ([University of Liverpool 2020](#)). A positive and clear Digital Agenda can not only be less harmful to the environment, but digital transformation and new digital business are often considered top priorities by today’s business leaders.

The Making an Impact 2020 Framework therefore was slightly revised to include a Digital Agenda Impact cluster relating to initiatives, technologies and digital products that support and promote impact, and enhance urban places and spaces, and enable people to connect more easily.

Once more elements of the Making an Impact 2020 Framework that are relevant to each activity were indicated on the programme (see figure 3-1 on the following page). All sessions were mapped against multiple clusters using the model indicated in Figure 3.1. Depending on the core element(s) of the knowledge and skills axis that specific sessions were focused on, participants were then able to frame their engagement in relation to the impact clusters. Most sessions mapped against multiple impact clusters as well as knowledge and skills axes which ensured that researchers were not limited to or focused on one area but could branch out and observe that development activities of interest to them could provide impact in a broader setting.

The Making an Impact 2020 Framework consisted of the following impact clusters:

- Making an Impact on the Digital Agenda
- Making an Impact on the Environment
- Making an Impact on Culture
- Making an Impact on Society or Quality of Life
- Making an Impact on Public Policy or Services
- Making an Impact on the Economy
- Making an Impact beyond Academia

The knowledge and skill axis was based on the 7 [proposed perspectives of the KEF](#) (Research England, 2019, p.8) on which KE peer clusters will be benchmarked.

- A. Research partnerships
- B. Working with business
- C. Working with the public and third sector
- D. Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship
- E. Local growth and regeneration
- F. IP and commercialisation
- G. Public and community engagement



Figure 3-1. The Making an Impact 2020 Framework

Illustrated on Figure 3-1 above are the impact clusters identified for REF2021 (outer coloured diamonds) and the seven knowledge and skill perspectives of the KEF (blue core) to help participants understand and frame their engagement in the Making an Impact 2020 programme.

The Making an Impact 2020 Framework was revised to include a Digital Agenda Impact cluster relating to initiatives, technologies and digital products that support and promote impact, and enhance urban places and spaces, and enable people to connect more easily. The addition was made to reflect the local North West Industrial Strategy priorities.

Elements of the Making an Impact 2020 Framework that are relevant to each activity were indicated within the programme to enable participants to build a tailored experience based on research impact needs, ambitions and interests.

4. Key Numbers

Making an Impact is a development series open to all researchers and research related staff at all stages in their career and across all faculties. A breakdown of both the faculties and roles of those that attended sessions across the 15 days of development highlighted engagement was achieved in all faculties, and even though participants from Health and Life Sciences (HLS) made up 49% of the total number, over 20% of participants attend from both Humanities and Social Sciences and Science & Engineering. Unsurprisingly Postdocs made up of a quarter of all those attended, however there was representation from each career stage (See Figure 4.1).

The number of no shows across the whole series was on average 29% (range 0-61%). Although the percentage of no shows did increase over the three weeks (12.5% in week 1, 32% in week 2 and 33% in week 3). No clear pattern was seen with regards to format type or length /timing of session.



Figure 4-1 Key numbers from Making an Impact 2020

The figure 4-1 above highlights key numbers from Making an Impact 2020. It includes the number of registrations (total 2236 and individual 650), sessions (57), facilitators (100), resources (23 recorded sessions, 5 podcasts, 53 linked online, 2 visual minutes and 38 top tips illustrations) breakdown of faculties (22% Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), 8% Professional services, 21% Science & Engineering (S&E) and 49% Health and Life Sciences (HLS)) and role (26% Academic Teaching and Research, 12% Early Career Researcher (ECR), 2% Mid-Career Researcher (MCR), 13% Post Graduate Researcher (PGR), 4% Principle Investigator (PI), 15% Professional service, 26% Postdoc and 2% other) and % no shows (29%).

The breakdown of participation by Faculty and role for each session is indicated in Table 4.1 on the following page. Further information about Schools and Institutes can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Table 4-1 Making an Impact podcasts.

The [Making an Impact podcasts](#) account for 13.5% of the total plays of the [Developing practice podcast series](#). The title, topic and number of plays per podcast is stated in the table below.

| Title of Podcast | Topic | Number of plays |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Prosper Project | The Prosper Project, a model being developed to enhance first-time postdoctoral career development and success. | 64 |
| Researcher Wellbeing | Discussion on how coaching can support maximising potential and what we mean by 'researcher wellbeing'. | 67 |
| Sustainable Development | Member of the senior leadership team at University of Liverpool discuss the University's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). | 70 |
| Reimaging Research | The head of policy and advocacy at Wellcome and members of her team discuss the findings of Wellcome's survey of what researchers think about the culture they work in. | 68 |
| Research Communities | Members of University of Liverpool's Research Staff Association (RSA) discuss the role of the RSA in creating a positive change in culture for research staff within the University. | 58 |

Table 4-2: Making an Impact participation by Faculty and Role.

List of Abbreviations:

- HLS – Health and Life Sciences
- SE – Science and Engineering
- HSS – Humanities and Social Sciences.
- PGR – Postgraduate Researcher
- ECR- Early career researcher
- ATR – Academic, Teaching and Research Staff
- MCR- Mid-Career Researcher
- PI – Principal Investigator
- PS- Professional Services Staff

| Session | Number of participants | Faculty/Service | | | | | ROLE | | | | | | | | | % no show |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|----|-----|------------------|-------|------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|-----|-----------|
| | | HLS | SE | HSS | Central Services | Other | PGR | Post -Doc | ECR | ATR | MCR | PI | PS | Other | | |
| Developing a commercial proposal | 26 | 9 | 12 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 10% | |
| Getting attention - Elevator pitching | 33 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 15% | |
| Impactful leadership Part 1/2 | 55 | 27 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 17 | 5 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 7% | |
| TALK: The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, COVID-19 and our research | 83 | 29 | 24 | 27 | 14 | 35 | 13 | 15 | 5 | 30 | 4 | 6 | 38 | 18 | 36% | |
| Demonstrating Impact using the UN Sustainable Development Goals | 25 | 9 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 26% | |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Managing project delivery | 29 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 1 | 24% | |
| Making an Impact on Culture | 28 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 1 | -4% | |
| Making Civic Engagement even more important in a post Covid world: How can we do that? | 24 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | -9% | |
| Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: unique three-way partnerships that create real impact and drive innovation | 30 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 19% | |
| KEYNOTE: Research culture: From lab to lobbying | 50 | 25 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 15 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 16 | 2 | 19% | |
| Impactful leadership Part 2/2 | 48 | 25 | 15 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 15 | 6 | 14 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 14% | |
| Starting out as a research degree supervisor I: what do supervisors do? | 37 | 25 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 10 | 14 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8% | |

| Session | Number of participants | Faculty/Service | | | | | ROLE | | | | | | | | | % no show |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|----|-----|------------------|-------|------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|-----|-----------|
| | | HLS | SE | HSS | Central Services | Other | PGR | Post -Doc | ECR | ATR | MCR | PI | PS | Other | | |
| Starting out as a research degree supervisor II: how can I be an effective supervisor? | 30 | 27 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 9 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 30% | |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Exploring and Sharing Research Through Poetry | 17 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 11% | |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Cafe Culture | 11 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 27% | |
| Cafe Culture | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 36% | |
| Emotional intelligence in leadership – why does it matter? | 40 | 24 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 19 | 0 | 2 | 12 | 2 | 31% | |
| Alumni- Making an Impact as an Entrepreneur | 23 | 19 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 38% | |
| Different not wrong: communicating with impact | 27 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 7% | |
| Habits for resilience (Part 1) | 43 | 23 | 14 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 14 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 22% | |
| Imposter Syndrome - is it real? | 59 | 32 | 11 | 14 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 14 | 5 | 17 | 0 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 17% | |
| Boosting the impact of your publications | 46 | 21 | 16 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 23 | 8 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 21% | |
| Habits for resilience (Part 2) | 29 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 36% | |
| Attracting your own funding | 42 | 23 | 19 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 31 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 29% | |
| Social media bootcamp | 38 | 30 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 33% | |
| Habits for resilience (Part 3) | 28 | 17 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 33% | |
| Entrepreneurial thinking for researchers: start-ups, innovation & impact | 24 | 10 | 14 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 43% | |
| KEYNOTE: The impact journey: have we reached the end? | 41 | 10 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 18% | |
| Global challenges research for impact in low- and middle-income countries | 41 | 25 | 13 | 20 | 3 | 14 | 6 | 18 | 7 | 19 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 45% | |
| Habits for Resilience (Part 4) | 24 | 15 | 9 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 38% | |
| Safeguarding in Research | 18 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 18% | |
| Open Research - what does it mean and what is it all about? | 18 | 10 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 33% | |
| More than a job | 37 | 32 | 16 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 41 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 40% | |
| Standing out from the crowd | 36 | 25 | 15 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 16 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 36% | |
| Research impact - maximizing and measuring change | 23 | 12 | 5 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 39% | |

| Session | Number of participants | Faculty/Service | | | | | ROLE | | | | | | | | % no show |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | | HLS | SE | HSS | Central Services | Other | PGR | Post -Doc | ECR | ATR | MCR | PI | PS | Other | |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| KEYNOTE: KEF | 40 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 17 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 28 | 4 | 29% |
| Speed reading in a digital world | 46 | 26 | 10 | 12 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 18 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 13% |
| Meet the teams of RPI | 25 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 22% |
| Ducks, metadata and Impact, yes really! | 9 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 53% |
| Thriving through change with resilience | 21 | 19 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 34% |
| Who's reading your research? Using Altmetric to track the reach and potential impact of your work | 26 | 15 | 8 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 33% |
| Remote impact: How to make an impact when you work remotely | 7 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 61% |
| Aim to win your next grant by building impact in from the beginning | 25 | 14 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 19% |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Inside the Mind of an Enterprising Researcher | 14 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 33% |
| Find research funding with Research Professional | 22 | 15 | 14 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 16 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 44% |
| Consultancy: How to use your expertise to generate impact and help raise your profile | 30 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 7 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 38% |
| Creating Impactful Research Stories | 29 | 23 | 17 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 21 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 52% |
| 1:1 career consultations for researchers | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Blogging your research | 23 | 22 | 14 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 20 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 57% |
| Engaging with policy makers: practical tips to help you change the world | 32 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 4 | 11 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 37% |
| Prosper Portal | 48 | 38 | 26 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 57 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 45% |
| TOTALS | 2236 | 872 | 503 | 469 | 199 | 201 | 378 | 638 | 174 | 437 | 59 | 69 | 396 | 85 | 29% |

5. Planning, Design and Delivery

Recognising that the Industrial Strategy is more than a set of policies and commitments. It is a new way of working... to build long-term partnerships with business, academia, and local leaders... to build a Britain fit for the future.” (Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, DBEIS, 2018).

Making an Impact 2020 was designed to further support researchers and research related staff across the University to develop their multi-disciplinary research-impact related knowledge, skills, attributes and competencies.

It was important that not only did Making an Impact 2020 provide continuity of learning and alignment to the foundations of the Industrial strategy provided by the series in 2018 and 2019 but that it also evolved and responded to the needs of researchers in their current research culture and environment. Accessibility and inclusivity were strong drivers in the design and initial discussion and planning involved a blended approach to create online resources that would complement the face to face sessions and provide a permanent bank of development material that could be engaged with at the researchers own time.

COVID 19 required a rapid but profoundly holistic approach in supporting the development of researchers through a revised Making an Impact programme that would be delivered entirely online.

As online conference /meeting software was a new tool to the vast majority of facilitators and participants, The Academy came together to provide a team response in gaining the skills needed to not only deliver the event but to also support our colleagues and staff members that would be engaging with Making an Impact in a new way.

The rapidly changing working landscape did not enable a Making an Impact 2020 Steering Group to be assembled. However, all aspects of the programme design were shared with various staff networks (including BAME, LGBT+ and Disability) as well as the University’s Inclusion and Diversity officers. Having the programme reviewed and commented on by those directly involved with different minority groups enabled considerations to be made and acted upon before the programme was finalised and released.

An updated programme was also provided to the University’s Industrial Strategy Steering Group, as well as individual meetings held with senior managers whose teams were supporting with various Making an Impact 2020 sessions. Feedback from these groups were incorporated in to the design of Making an Impact 2020, with the opportunity for staff to request accessibility adjustments before each session and scheduled breaks being not only provided but stated on the programme to enable those with caring responsibilities to plan in advance. Facilitators were made aware that accessibility adjustment requests had been offered during registration and that these would be provided 1 week before the session was to take place to ensure the facilitator could respond positively to any requests. It was also made clear at every session that questions and comments could be made both in the chat and/or by requesting to verbally ask a question, whichever was more comfortable for the participant.

Three drop-in Zoom sessions were organised for facilitators to attend so that they could run through any aspects of their session that they were unsure about/ask questions about the online software. Comprehensive guidelines were also created to support the planning and running of sessions for facilitators as well as separate guidelines for participants.

| | Key Actions | Timeline |
|----------------|--|----------------------|
| Planning Stage | Keynote speakers and the ethos of the Series confirmed, including the Making an Impact 2020 framework. | February 2020 |
| | Prospective speakers and facilitators contacted (sample email included in Appendix 3 and dates confirmed in diaries of senior staff. | March 2020 |
| | Sessions finalised (following completion of adapted booking form for an online event (Appendix 4) and mapped according to Framework. Concurrent liaising with the web team and discussions with the designers of the branding and programme. | Beginning March 2020 |

| | Key Actions | Timeline |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Planning Stage | COVID 19 required a total revision of programme delivery and communication with all facilitators to adapt /change session. Additional support provided through a bespoke hub of ' Guidance for facilitators ', as well as offering drop-in sessions for them to discuss concerns about moving session online. | Middle of March 2020 |
| Comms and Marketing | Rollout of the Making an Impact 2020 comms strategy (Appendix 5), included a Save the Date campaign with video testimonials from previous participants, targeted mail shots, and series of tweets that were developed specifically for the purpose of promoting individual and general sessions – including those opened up to the wider public (Appendix 6) | April 2020 |
| | Signing off Making an Impact 2020 PDF programme (Figure 1.1 of this report) and marketing imagery which included GIF awards and colouring sheet. (Appendix 7). CSD contacted for technical support during the keynote sessions. | April 2020 |
| | Development of the Making an Impact 2020 webpages , and programme broken down by week, including specific keys for which participant groups would benefit the most from individual sessions. A comprehensive, searchable online programme was also made available for participants. | May 2020 |
| | A series of staff news articles were published and included in the weekly all-staff newsletters. Some examples are below; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open for registration • Details on the programme • Facilitating cutting edge research impact • Promoting innovative research ideas • Final chance to participate | |
| Before and During the Series | All hosts and facilitators sent personalised pre-information emails (Appendices 8 & 9). Permission sought from keynote speakers to stream capture their sessions. | May 2020 |
| | Zoom drop-in sessions for facilitators actively supported by a team of 4 members of the Academy both before and during Making an Impact 2020 sessions. | May 2020 |
| | Staff news articles published highlighting the event itself and any session that were low in registrations. | May-June 2020 |
| | Personalised emails (Appendix 10) + Eventbrite auto-reminders to all participants registered for Making an Impact 2020 sessions | May-June 2020 |

Figure 5-1: A chronology of Key actions led by the Academy

The final Making an Impact 2020 programme consisted of a mixture of workshops, webinars, a virtual facility tours, café cultures, 3 keynotes, a talk by the Vice Chancellor, panel discussions, 1:1 surgeries and a showcase.

5.1 Additional Considerations Arising from COVID-19

Understanding that working from home during a pandemic is very different to a normal working from home environment, in depth thought and discussions regarding the challenges and situations that may prevent or limit full engagement in the programme were had throughout the planning stage.

Many online sessions on different conferencing software was attended by the organisers of Making an Impact so that good practice could be incorporated and any issues could be highlighted and discussed. The discussions were also shared with the University of Liverpool Research Staff Association to make sure that the needs of the research community were being met.

The use of online meeting software was still in its infancy and therefore guides were made for both facilitators and participants, links of which were emailed out before the session, highlighted on the webpages and also provided for participants during the session.

As many sessions as possible were recorded, not only to create a rich bank of resources but to also increase accessibility for those with internet issues, people unable to attend or those that find it beneficial to revisit the session.

It was important that defined breaks were incorporated into any session over 60 mins and that the programme was as flexible and diverse as possible. A colouring sheet was designed to entertain children whilst parents/carers engaged in the Making an Impact 2020 programme and a playlist of motivational and inspirational songs was created from songs nominated by both facilitators and participants to further instil a sense of community and ownership in the series.

5.2 Social Media Engagement and Comms

Enhanced communication and engagement with participants was achieved by weekly [Twitter competitions, Tweet chats and Gif awards](#). The lucky winners received an independent Liverpool card, valid for 12 months, which provides discounts at over 100 of Liverpool's best independents to eat, drink and shop, which during the current climate was thought to be a great way to also promote supporting local businesses in Liverpool once it was safe and appropriate to do so.

Participants were encouraged to tweet about each session they attended, and tweet chats were incorporated into the programme around specific sessions and continued the learning of those sessions by involving the facilitator in the discussions.

The Gif awards in particular were very well received generated further conversations and threads regarding the learning and development Making an Impact had provided as well as acknowledging and thanking the support and engagement of staff members empowering them to continue sharing tips and insights they had gained during the event.

During lockdown Twitter for many was also seen as a way of staying connected and used this forum as a way of engaging with the University and finding out information. It was important to therefore not only use social media to connect with the research community but also as a way to advertise sessions and continue conversations. It was felt that it was more important than ever to use multiple channels to provide information about the programme and the event itself and therefore regular staff news articles were also produced, information provide on email news bulletins and disseminated through the faculties via Research impacts leads.

Due to the online format more sessions could be opened out to non-University of Liverpool staff and therefore it was important to provide clear and up to date information to University partners and stake holders.

The creation of [Visual minutes](#) for one of the keynotes and the talk by the Vice chancellor as well [top tips illustrations](#) from many of the sessions were again shared via Twitter and promoted even whilst the event was taking place.

The sessions that were recorded during each week were also made available the following week so that researchers could engage with these sessions during the Making an Impact event, a time that they may have already allocated in their calendars as protected time to develop their practice.

5.3 Networking and Making an Impact community building

Networking has been highlighted as an important outcome from both Making an Impact 2018 and 2019 and therefore a channel on Microsoft Teams was also made available for all those that attended any of the Making an Impact sessions to continue conversations, chat informally, network and make connections. From this two separate discussion groups were set up by some of the participants of sessions. These formed micro communities of practice on impactful leadership and blogging for your research, wherein participants shared examples of effective practice.

Breakout rooms were also encouraged, and facilitators were advised to provide enough time for participants to introduce themselves to each other and have the time to make connections during these breakout sessions. The chat during the sessions also enabled participants to provide their own experiences and solutions to other participants questions and also to highlight local or specific resources and information that the facilitator may not have been aware of.

6. Participants' and Facilitators' Feedback

During Making an Impact 2020, a mix of 100 external and internal speakers and facilitators engaged colleagues from the University in thinking about research impact across 57 individual sessions.

Due to COVID 19, engagement with facilitators and participants was increased both to provide support and information due to the quick change in format from a face to face event to entirely online, as well as the need to make sure the design and delivery of sessions were appropriate for the changing working environment, accessibility needs of participants and the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic with regards to isolation, caring responsibilities and mental health. It was important that we created a sense of ownership and community across all those involved in the series so that Making an Impact could be a beacon of normality and a positive focus where real measurable progress could be made for those that engaged.

The feedback reported in this document consists of primary data based on one post-Making an Impact 2019 survey, and a survey that were administered during Making an Impact 2020.

6.1 Making an Impact 2019 post-6-month point feedback

Feedback from Making an Impact 2019 at the 6-month point (n=27 responses) contributed to informing the design of Making an Impact 2020. A breakdown of responses is indicated in [Appendix 13](#) of this report.

Positive outcomes of Making an Impact 2019

- Opportunity to explore a variety of activities and engage colleagues within and outside of the University.
- Understand more about the research impact agenda as part of the researcher's broader role.
- Increased awareness of activities at Liverpool that can be accessed to enhance professional development.
- Reflection on current position and skills needed to progress.

Notable actions arising from Making an Impact 2019

- Networking and some of the activities have led a successful funding application.
- Through understanding research impact an increased awareness of the motivations for engaging with external organisations.
- One participant wrote *"Having recently taken on my first PI role on a large research project, I have used everything I learned at the previous Making an Impact series and often refer back to my notes.*

This is especially in relation to policymaking; working with external stakeholders and collaborators; and responsible research and innovation aims and online toolkits”

With regards to future Making an Impact activities, notable participants’ responses are outlined below, with key themes including Leadership and research culture.

- Stakeholder engagement and policy making.
- Sessions that involve funders and how to secure grants.
- Digital/New Media training activities.
- Identifying transferable skills - careers outside of academia, how to sell yourself in a non-academic market.
- Confidence building and (career) coaching.
- How to have good mental health and wellbeing.

The feedback above contributed to the planning and design of Making an Impact 2020, which shall be further explained in the sections to follow.

6.2 Making an Impact Series long-term outcomes

Long term outcomes for Making an Impact 2018 and 2019 were also evaluated in the current 2020 survey asking “How engaging with previous Making an Impact series have changed your practice? The model is useful in evaluating how engaging with development activities as part of Making an Impact has changed or enhanced practice and ultimately resulted in increased ownership and responsibility in driving the participants research impacts needs and ambitions.

Participants that responded to this question had either attended the series in 2018 (n=8), 2019 (n=88) or had attended both 2018 and 2019 (n=70).

Participants that responded to this question had attended the series in 2018 (n=77) or 2019 (n=158).

Participants reported on that they were now more reflective and increased awareness of their own skills and research impact and knowledge exchange.

Feedback about the longer-term outcomes on their practice from those who participated in both Making an Impact Week 2018 and Making an Impact 2019:

“Made me take the time to think about my career progression and work on myself rather than purely research” (2018 & 2019)

“I have learnt so much from making and impact sessions. I am more aware of the impact my research has on society and the community. I also have made a lot of invaluable connections through the events”. (2018 & 2019)

“I think more about my research in terms of the bigger picture - public engagement and transferable skills” (2018 & 2019)

“..... It has helped me broaden my network and talk with other researchers on different aspects” (2018 & 2019).

“Greater awareness of University support teams, e.g. press office” (2018 & 2019)

“It has helped me to become better connected with some staff across the university to share information and ideas”. (2018 & 2019)

Feedback about the longer-term outcomes on their practice from those who participated in Making an Impact 2019:

“Making an Impact 2019 helped me think more broadly about how the research can be used locally and with more of an interdisciplinary approach”. (2019)

“Having the opportunity to hear from those working elsewhere in the organisation really helped me find new perspectives”. (2019)

“Definitely improved my awareness of skills that can be applied in other careers”. (2019)

“Better idea of what knowledge exchange actually is and the diverse things that contribute to it” (2019)

“More reflective, conscientious working approach - more efficient and positive” (2019)

Networking opportunities and connections made was also widely reported by participants who have been engaging with the series since 2018.

6.3 Methodology for evaluating Making an Impact 2020

For Making an Impact 2020, there were 504 respondents to the participant survey ([Appendix 11](#)) and 28 respondents to the facilitator’s survey ([Appendix 12](#)).

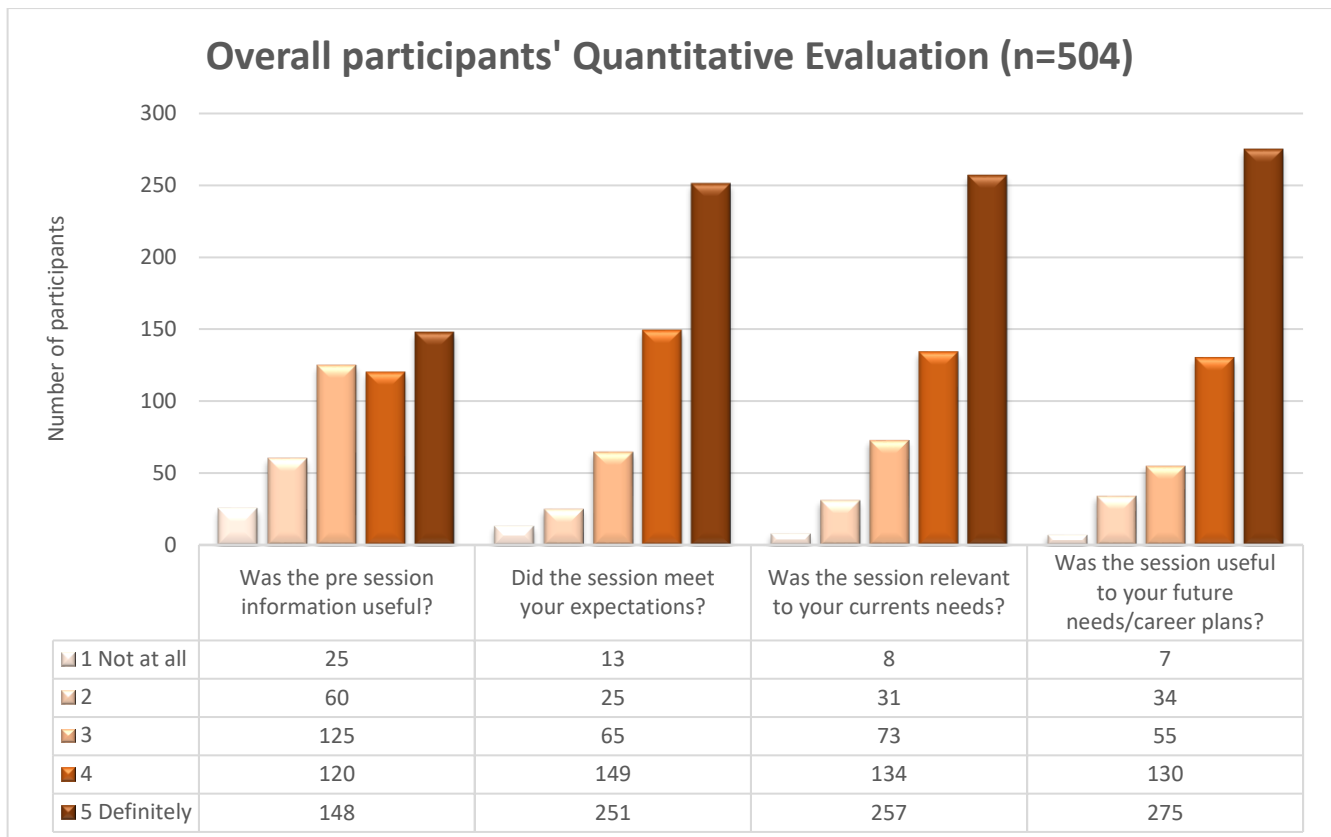
The Kirkpatrick model of evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 2009) is being applied to evaluate the development impact of Making an Impact 2020 and to evidence value for money. The model constitutes “four levels” of evaluation for measuring the effectiveness of development activity. These four levels of evaluation – Reaction (Level 1), Learning (Level 2), Behaviour (Level 3), and Results: Organisational Performance (Level 4) – consist of building ‘a chain of evidence’.

All Making an Impact 2020 participants will be contacted again in December 2020 for the 6-month post-evaluation survey which will feed into Making an Impact 2021 planning. The post session evaluation will also continue to assess long term outcomes by again asking how engagement with previous series have changed research practice.

6.4 Participants’ Feedback: Reaction and Learning

This section shall explore participant feedback in the context of these objectives, focusing on their reactions and the learning. The themes are supported with a representative selection of participants’ testimonies.

In addition to the qualitative feedback about participants’ reaction and learning that is discussed later in this section, the quantitative evaluation based on Questions 1-4 of [Appendix 11](#), is indicated in Figure 6.1 on the next page:



***All participants did not answer every question**

Figure 6-1 Participants' Quantitative Evaluation of Making an Impact 2020.

The figure above illustrates the answers to the four quantitative questions in the evaluation survey which asked, Was the pre session information useful? Did the session meet your expectations? Was the session relevant to your current needs? And was the session useful to your future needs/career plans? For each question over 80% participants answered extremely positive, scoring either 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5 where 1 was not at all and 5 was definitely.

Qualitative evaluation including key themes and testimonials

Key themes from participants' qualitative feedback (n=504) were framed around how Making an Impact 2020 supported research-impact and the aims set out for the series.

Develop the practice of Liverpool researchers at all stages of their careers by providing rich, varied, high-quality development opportunities

"It is great to have access to a flexible, less formal, but genuine investment in my development, that doesn't have to be linked to an annual review but depends upon my needs of the day".

"Although we are all eternally busy, these sessions are really helpful for promoting moments to pause and reflect on where we, as individuals, are up to and where future possibilities lie but essentially, how to turn possibilities into realities".

"The Making an Impact sessions have allowed me to learn new skills and engage with the vast spectrum of fascinating research and other activity that goes on at the University".

"Making an Impact did 'make an impact' and was the perfect one-stop shop for all my research needs"

Develop Liverpool researchers for future roles in careers both within and outside academia

"Making an impact is a really useful series of event that allows researchers to take their allocated professional development time and work on different aspects of their career. What I particularly like is that it is not based on the assumption that every researcher wants to stay in academia and gives you opportunity to reflect on skills and interests outside and beyond your current role".

"Definitely improved my awareness of skills that can be applied in other careers".

Stimulate conversations and encourage engagement with employers and leading industry professional across different sectors

"The making an impact series is a great platform to hear from a wide range of people and start up interesting, open and honest conversations around a variety of topics that you wouldn't necessarily have in your day to day work".

"It was very useful to revisit some familiar issues about environmental sustainability with a fresh perspective and to think about a new vision in education not only locally but also globally".

"Making an Impact is an excellent opportunity to engage with other teams/departments across the wider University and to find out more about their current practice/research area. The sessions are always engaging with a dynamic approach to sharing knowledge and developing ideas for the future".

Understand and promote the importance of an inclusive, positive research culture and improved wellbeing

"Making an impact keeps breaching the gap towards a rich and inclusive research culture. This year during the COVID-19 lockdown is also providing an engaging and useful platform for different people to meet and gain experiences together.

"It was good to be able to get involved in efforts to improve things for research and researchers"

Deliver an inclusive and accessible event as well as create a rich bank of 'living' resources which will continue to remain available beyond the series

"The programme features multiple topics that can cater to many tastes and the online learning allows everybody to access independent of location".

"Excellent, interactive and vital session, with plenty of inspirational thoughts from the main lecturer as well as from the participants, together with a wide range of resources of all kind to help for further development in the field of research degree supervision"

"I have also enjoyed that some sessions are short giving more flexibility, in terms of managing work-life balance"

"Professionals who can provide academic staff with knowledge that has improved not only my professional, but also private life. I gained more than I expected! All resources will help me to conduct additional research in my own time".

"The current programme was absolutely brilliant. I would consider doing the Making an Impact online for 2021. It made it very inclusive for people living far or with caring responsibilities, who thanks to the online platform, were able to attend the workshops".

*"Overall great programme. Online format was actually really good in terms of being able to dip in at the last minute so it doesn't disrupt the whole day of work. People were lively and engaged in the break out sessions. All resources e.g. websites could be tried and tested straight away. No real downsides at all!
The program was diverse and covered a lot of interesting topics. I got a lot out of the sessions, thanks for organising.*

Utilise short term investment from HEIF Industrial Strategy funds for maximum return

"I really enjoyed these sessions. Fantastic tips and tricks that are practical and easy to take forward both in my home and work life".

"I left the session with a new useful skill, potentially life-changing!"

"The Making an Impact sessions have allowed me to learn new skills and engage with the vast spectrum of fascinating research and other activity that goes on at the University".

"Several good advices. From how to read quickly to emotional intelligence insights. Very many points that will help

Networking opportunities and online format

Due to the change in Making an Impact from its previous format as a face to face event to an entirely online format it was important to understand the impact this may have on networking especially as this was a strong positive theme that came out of the Making an Impact 2019 evaluation and how an online format was generally received. Much of the feedback from participants noted that networking and building connections was still possible.

"Making an Impact 2020 is proof that you can move online and still provide colleagues with opportunities to develop and create a supportive community"

"Making an impact is a wonderful programme of events. The past few years I have really enjoyed the networking opportunities and was worried that I would miss out of that this year with it being online. I found that I have made so many connections and really needed the social interactions the breakout rooms have provided".

"I found that I have made so many connections and really needed the social interactions the breakout rooms have provided".

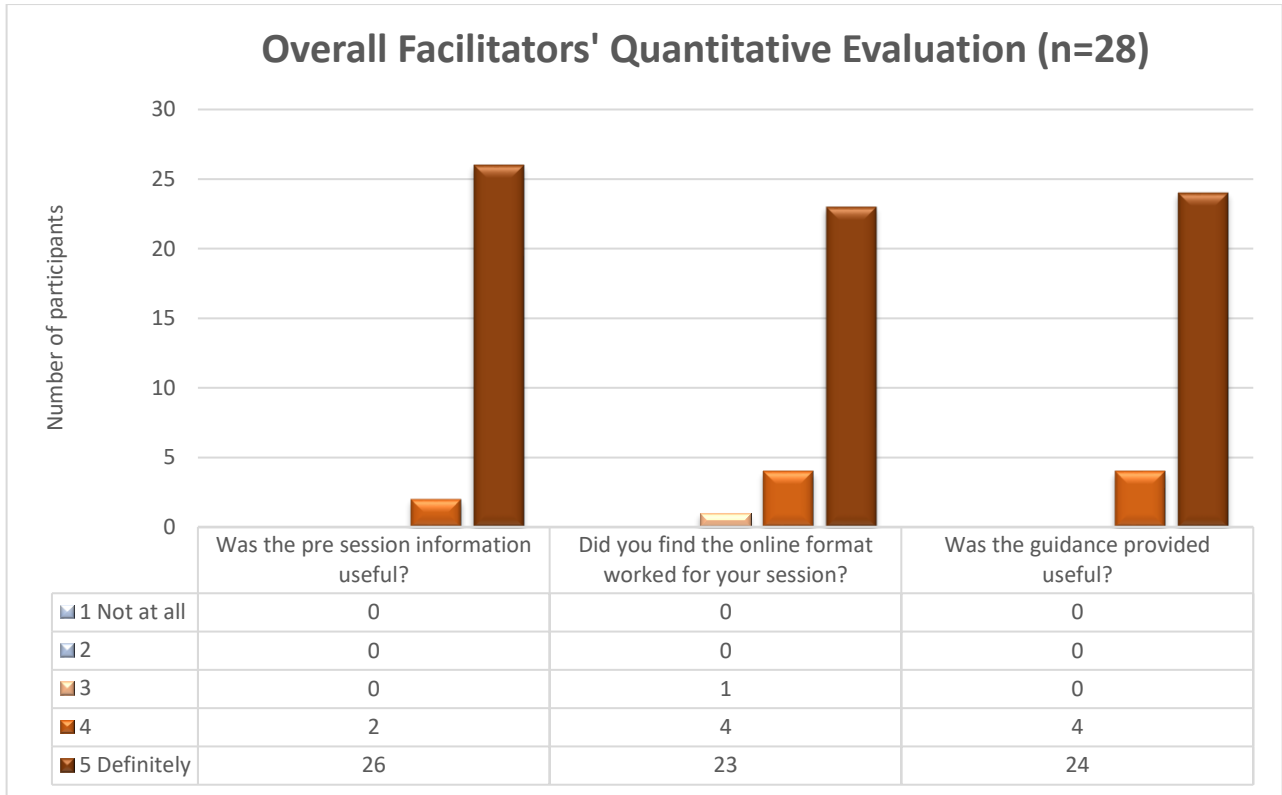
"It was great to do this on-line as I think I managed to attend more session this way. So, I would like this format again".

Detailed participants' evaluations are shared with all facilitators for their respective sessions.

6.5 Facilitators' Feedback and Evaluation

This section will focus on the feedback from the facilitators both internal and external. The number of responses were low with only approximately 1/3 of all those that ran a session providing feedback. Extremely positive feedback at the end of each sessions and via email at the end of the series was received from the majority of facilitators, however thought will be required on how to increase the response rate to a more formal survey from facilitators as it is important to capture their feedback when designing future events.

The quantitative evaluation based on Questions 1-3 of [Appendix 12](#), are indicated in Figure 6.2 on the next page:



***All participants did not answer every question**

Figure 6-2: Facilitators' Quantitative Evaluation of Making an Impact 2020.

The figure above illustrates the answers to the three quantitative questions in the evaluation survey which asked, Was the pre-session information useful? Did you find the online format worked for you session? Was the guidance provided useful? For each question 100% of the responses were positive, scoring either 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5 where 1 was not at all and 5 was definitely.

Qualitative evaluation including testimonials

Facilitators commented on the **usefulness of pre-week communications** that were sent to them:

"I thought the information provided was very useful and I felt that the support was there when I needed some extra help. It was a big task to organise such an extensive online conference in so short a time. Thank you and well done".

"I think the team kept me well informed throughout the build up to MAI, and the support on the day was great".

"I thought the amount of information provided was really good, I knew where to go to find more and the team always seemed to be willing to answer questions".

"This was easy to participate in and ran smoothly. No immediate improvements spring to mind"

It was also clear from the feedback that the facilitators felt supported throughout the planning and delivery of Making an Impact 2020.

“Great support pre course and on course. It meant I was able to cater to the needs of the participants without having to worry about 'driving' zoom”.

“Nothing to change from my point of view. [names redacted] have gone out of their way to make everything clear and easily accessible. Preparation and communication were excellent.”

“I found it all very well organised. I did not experience any problems. The support of the academy facilitators was essential, as they could flag up issues and I could deal with them as and when they arose”.

“I would like to keep the short snappy nature of this workshop with the option for participants to come to one or two parts. I was challenged to open up to more participants and WOW did it work. A learning stretch for me that I have lots to look forward to using in the future”.

Comments were made from a number of facilitators regarding the series itself and how it can drive knowledge exchange and it was a positive learning experience for them too, encouraging them to adapt and be more innovative.

“The Making an Impact programme is an excellent initiative that brings together a wide range of people including researchers, students, entrepreneurs, professionals and innovators. This gives everyone involved to expand their network, learn from each other and participate in knowledge exchange. I highly recommend taking part!”

“The best thing the Academy did for Making an Impact 2020 was to commit to delivering the programmes of sessions in an on-line form. This forced us to engage with delivering on-line and provided a great opportunity to innovate and engage in quite different ways”.

“Making an Impact was a fantastic experience to be involved with, both as a facilitator and attendee. The Academy team were always on hand to help if needed and I learnt a huge amount about running online events that'll be really useful in my normal role”.

The sense of community, interaction and contribution of facilitator and participants with the series was noted and how it is valued by University of Liverpool staff. The commitment and ability of the Academy team to be flexible and agile in delivering Making an Impact during a global pandemic was also commended.

“Making and Impact Series was one of the most engaging and seamlessly organised events I have been part of. I particularly appreciated that the event generated a nice engagement across both the facilitators and the participants through the use of social media. Looking forward to being part to this event again in the future :).”

“I would like to say a huge Thank You to everyone who attended or was involved with the career development sessions. It was a joy and a privilege to meet and work with brilliant researchers from a variety of disciplines and at various stages of their careers. I also greatly enjoyed working with the Academy team. Their highly professional and always friendly support with preparing ...sessions was much appreciated.”

“I think the impact week is a useful event that many of our staff look forward to. I have been particularly impressed this year with the Academy's efforts to convert the programme to an online offering in a short space of time and proud to support this.”

Summary of feedback

The data from participants and facilitators were overwhelmingly positive and indicated that the series had provided many opportunities for innovative thought and engaged participants to reflect and build on their personal, socio-

cultural, cognitive, and professional competencies. An important outcome (especially in response to the current COVID 19 situation) was the sense of community and focus the series provided.

The annual Making an Impact series has built each year on its success, creating and delivering an ambitious and leading-edge programme that is valued by those that facilitate and participant in the series. It has cemented its reputation as a research-impact related activity that can be conducive in developing practice that enriches research culture and professional networks.

The evidence presented supports Liverpool's ambition to "make our staff feel valued, empowered and free to innovate in pursuit of our strategy" (Strategy 2026, p.17).

7. Articulating value for the Making an Impact Series

The onset of the pandemic resulted in a time of increasing uncertainty, related to which the Academy faced an unprecedented challenge to articulate value to both Making an Impact participants and wider stakeholders. It was therefore paramount that a rounded and innovative approach to understanding value was taken, and that this is implemented across the second post-Covid phase of planning, designing and execution of Making an Impact, and throughout the Academy's strategy, operations and communication about Making an Impact 2020.

Indeed, previous evaluations of the Making and Impact Series been crucial in highlighting and measuring participants' perceptions of value, and of the criticality of communicating with all stakeholders in a consistent, authentic and transparent way.

With this in mind, and the parallel onslaught of messaging as the pandemic took hold, the Academy endeavoured to create a compelling narrative about the value of the Making an Impact Series and how it is understood. The focus of all comms and messaging once the decision was taken to move to a fully-online programme, was to change the narrative to enable participants themselves to better articulate the value that engaging with the Series would create for themselves, their peers, research groups, the university and wider society. As indicated in Section 5, this involved a complex and resource-intensive approach to planning, design, communication and liaison with teams and departments across the University.

By taking a holistic, multi-capital approach which considered how all the Academy's assets and resources are used and drawn on to create value proved worthwhile. Moving away from a focus on metrics and numbers, the Academy implemented a mixed-methods approach for assessing value by including qualitative data in its calls to actions.

Incorporating this approach of looking at value through the lens of integrated thinking and reporting enabled a holistic overview of all the Making an Impact resources or 'capitals' at the Academy's disposal. This included the intensive intellectual capital and human capital that was required as the Series pivoted to a wholly-online offering. This approach, which resulted in a rich and diverse bank of asynchronous online resources, has formed the foundation of a discussion about a hybrid approach to researcher development, which further provides transparent and authentic development opportunities to all research-related staff, and helps the whole University connect to research impact as a purpose and strategy.

Integrated thinking and reporting, as evidenced in this document and previous Making an Impact reports, has resulted in a step-change in the way the Academy engages stakeholders through a far more compelling and accurate picture of the full value we create over the short, medium and long term for stakeholders and wider society.

Moving forward from Making an Impact 2020, The Academy continues to actively use this approach to enhance its researcher development activities, decision making and collaborative working, in ways that support and inform Liverpool's strategic planning for researchers' career development.

8. Overall Reflections

Making an Impact 2020 aimed to provide an enhanced support to colleagues during the challenging environment and new ways of working brought on by the pandemic. The Series continued its focus on helping to develop effective ways of fostering research impact skills and knowledge.

The focus remained on the four of the five foundations of the Industrial Strategy:

- Ideas: encouraging University of Liverpool staff to explore innovative ideas and solutions in relation to the impact of their research
- Skills: ensuring participants develop and reflect on skills that will enable their greater contribution to the impact agenda.
- Business environment: supporting participants' ideas around IP and commercialising their research
- Communities: enhancing the capabilities and impact of multi-disciplinary researchers who advance the communities within which they are based, and the wider UK populace

(DBEIS, 2017)

The Series met all of its key objectives and deliverables in relation to the development of staff engagement with research impact, which is even more noteworthy due to the unprecedented times in which the event was run.

The involvement of a wide variety of stakeholders – ranging from funding bodies, to leading third-sector professionals, internal impact-related champions, external development experts, facilities and technicians, academic, research and research-related professional staff resulted in a diverse, rich and accessible programme where connections were made and practice enhanced – evident in section 6.3 and 6.4 of this report.

Wellbeing and Research culture were strong themes in this year's programme. Meaningful progress in enhancing and supporting these key areas will positively influence the ability and drive for researchers to continue and embrace developing their practice and feeling confident to broaden their skills, knowledge and ambition.

The themes arising from participants' feedback indicate the successful development of core knowledge, skills and capabilities in relation to research impact. These outcomes include the development of personal, socio-cultural, cognitive, and professional competencies. Indicating that Making an Impact 2020 has linked in successfully with the Knowledge Exchange Concordat in particular the key principles of:

- i) Capacity building to ensure staff are developed and trained appropriately to understand and undertake their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of successful KE,
- ii) Continuous improvement as participants and facilitators were proactively engaged to share best practice with peers and how to continue learning from this.

Making an Impact 2021 will further build on the increased understanding of the Knowledge Exchange Framework and the Knowledge Exchange Concordat generated during this series and to use this to demonstrate and further develop the contribution of Universities to the Industrial strategy. As universities are major contributors to society and the economy at local, national and international levels, a programme will be developed that aims to facilitate and enable the University to collaboratively and innovatively translate knowledge and research into impact in society and the economy.

As Making an Impact emerges as a valued, well recognised development programme it is critical that we sustain this momentum generated through the activities it has facilitated at the University of Liverpool, and channel it towards the continued support of the University's Research and Impact Strategy. Indeed, nurturing the core capabilities of staff through collaboration, innovation and enhancement is at the core of The Academy's remit, as we provide opportunities for continuous improvement at individual, team and organisational levels in pursuit of Liverpool's strategic objectives.

The financial viability of the Series has been demonstrated through the following measures: participant testimony about quality of sessions; participant overall evaluations; engagement metrics and the development of a rich and diverse bank of resources that facilitate knowledge and skill development in relation to research impact.

By articulating the unique value proposition for the Making an Impact Series (Section 7 of this report), The Academy has developed a collective vision of what value means for the University's central researcher development activities, framed around its purpose and taking into account external factors. This report enables an understanding of the value of all the planning, design and post-session resources for Making an Impact and how they work together to create value by using strategic 'multi-capital' resources more holistically.

The use of online meeting software and the lack of experience of some facilitators in delivering sessions in this format, required increased organisation by The Academy's management and administration systems and each session benefitted from the support of the Academy team in helping with technical issues and the logistics of providing information to the waiting rooms, organising the breakout rooms and ensuring the smooth running of the each session and mitigation of risks. Every session had the full-time support of four members of the Academy before and during the session, which contributed to ensuring the overwhelming success of the activity and seamlessness of the participant experience. The extent of human capital investment required for a wholly-online format, has offered insights into the planned hybrid model approach for future iterations of the Series.

8.1 Moving forward plans for Making an Impact 2021

In view of Research England policies and principles 2020-21 to 2024-25 HEIF, the Series will continue its focus on:

- Knowledge exchange activities involving external partners
- Addressing government priorities through the Industrial Strategy
- Flexibility to use HEIF to maximise outcomes and impact across the University of Liverpool environment
- Augmenting the University's participation in the KE Concordat
- Fostering the progression of researchers and strengthening the University's Accountability Statement

The focus on managing and monitoring success to demonstrate evidence, additionality and value for money for Spending Review purposes will continue through the use of the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation which seeks to capture participants outcomes both immediately after and at 6 month and 1-year intervals post-event. Their testimonies will enable the continuous improvement of mechanisms to support the University of Liverpool's KE development activities via the Making an Impact Series. The aim of employing the Kirkpatrick will continue to be those of:

- Identifying methods to describe how HEIF funding leads to outcomes
- Exposing relationships between HEIF as an input and resulting outputs from HEIF funded activities

Making an Impact 2021 shall also give credence to the following KE functions:

- Skills and human capital development
- Knowledge networks/diffusion
- Entrepreneurship and enterprise education.
- Supporting the community/public engagement
- Commercialisation

Building further on the success of an entirely online event in 2020, Making an Impact 2021 will use a hybrid format of activities to provide an accessible tailored programme helping researchers to develop effective ways of fostering research impact skills and knowledge. The programme will be developed around the Making an Impact Framework which includes themes consistent with the topics covered by the [Good Business Festival](#). Enabling researchers to engage in activities around their research impact needs and interests that are also important in the global good business movement.

The University of Liverpool is to sign up to Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC) with the explicit goal of eliminating any racial disparities for staff and students and achieving race equity on campus. Linking in and engaging with the BAME network for this series has also highlighted the importance when planning and delivering Making an Impact 2021, that a proactive approach is taken to engage with facilitators from more diverse

backgrounds, the need to reach out further to more diverse participants and also to ensure that BAME representation is reflected in the programme content.

Making an Impact 2021 will also build on the [resources and materials](#) generated during previous Making an Impact series to create a comprehensive skills portfolio for those researchers that have engaged previously as well as providing a variety of rich and topical sessions for returning participants and those engaging for the first time. The programme will be flexible and innovative, providing diverse opportunities for participants to create a bespoke development experience for themselves.

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