

## GDPR for REF2021: Information for UEA Researchers

Please read the full [REF2021 guidance](#) from Research England which includes [data management guidance](#) on the storage, sharing and publishing by Research England, of impact case study evidence/supporting information. We have provided text below which you should use when approaching external collaborators/research, along with advice on storing the information provided. We have split this into two themes of evidence collection: Testimonials/evidence letters (Section 1, p.1) and Surveys (Section 2, p.4).

### 1. Guidance for requesting REF testimonials/evidence letters:

In line with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, please ensure that the text below is included in any communication when you approach third parties for information, for example, testimonials, supporting statements etc. Please also ensure that you are familiar with the contents of the [University webpage on Data Protection](#) including the UEA [Research and Innovation Division \(RID\) privacy notice](#) (which aligns to the UEA privacy notice but also includes data from external parties), and the [Data Management Guidance from Research England](#).

#### 1a.) Text to be included in your communication requesting impact case study evidence:

*“In line with the new GDPR requirements, please be aware that the information you provide may be shared with Research England for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The sharing of this information will be in the form of evidence submitted to support an impact case study and further guidance on this can be found on the [REF website](#).”*

*FAQs on the use of the evidence you provide for the University’s impact case studies can be found via the [Information for Research Users](#) document. Please also refer to the [general information](#) provided by the University of East Anglia regarding Data Protection.”*

#### 1b.) Guidance on storing the impact case study evidence:

Information supporting the impact case studies supplied to you by third parties should be stored centrally and securely for GDPR compliance.

There are a number of options for how this can be done by you:

- i) Upload the documentation to your section of the OneDrive that has been created by the RIN Impact Team (you should have a link for this); or
- ii) Email the documentation to the RIN Impact Team: [Impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Impact@uea.ac.uk) who will store this on the RIN server; or
- iii) Enter the documentation into Pure (for guidance on how to do this contact the RIN Impact Team: [Impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Impact@uea.ac.uk))

## Collecting Impact evidence testimonials and support letters. Why? How? What?

### Why?

REF impact case study submissions must include evidence to support their impact claims. Evidence can be supplied in many forms depending on the impact claim and may be qualitative or quantitative in nature. One popular form of evidence is testimonials, or statements, written by research users and beneficiaries. This form of evidence was widely used, and well received, in REF2014 Panels B, C and D, but less well utilised/received within Panel A. You can read more about this in the [Digital Research Report on The Societal and Economic Impacts of Academic Research](#).

Evidence type is very specific to each project, so if you are unsure about what type of evidence is relevant to your work, contact [impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:impact@uea.ac.uk) for advice. Your UoA coordinator, Impact Champion or Director of Innovation (SCI) may also be able to assist with queries, and support from RIN can be accessed via [impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:impact@uea.ac.uk) and provided by your RIN lead, Impact Manager or Evidence coordinators.

### How?

Often, you (as the academic lead) and your team will have a good working relationship with relevant external organisations who are using your work. In these instances, we would advise that approaches for evidence come from you using the information provided in the next section as guidance. If your work has been picked up by an organisation that you have had little/no working relationship with, then evidencing may be difficult but RIN can offer support to contact these organisations. Who will source evidence will be agreed with you when the RIN evidence team meet with you to review your case study. When contacting individuals/organisations for evidence, make sure that it is clear why you are asking for this information. We have produced a short [information document for research users](#) that you can refer people to if you wish. Please ensure they are aware of how and why their data is being stored and used by the University, we have provided draft text for you to include in emails – please see section 1a above.

Option 1 (written email/ letter, or interview) - You could either approach via email/letter or you could use the guidance below to help shape a conversation or interview. If you are collecting oral testimony then please remember you will need to seek permission to record quotes or excerpts and it would be necessary to ask them to verify in writing that the statement (e.g. follow up email) provided represents their views. If you would like support when meeting with your external contact, please contact your RIN lead or the relevant evidence coordinator who may be able to offer support.

Option 2 (Questionnaire/checklist) - You could use the guidance below and your own understanding to form a questionnaire or checklist. The risk with this approach is that you could limit the information being provided and you might lose the authenticity of the information being provided. Your contact in the external organisation may also not like the approach, and this is where you need to consider tailoring your approach based upon previous interactions with the organisation.

Option 3 (Draft a statement for completion) – In some cases, where your contact is extremely pressed for time or is uncertain/hesitant to write a letter, it may be necessary to write a draft statement yourself or to provide a skeleton version for the partner to complete. The risk with this approach is that it is based solely on your knowledge of the benefit, meaning that you may miss some of the subtle changes or some of the quantitative examples. If you were to take

this approach with a number of external agencies for one case study, you may also risk similarities across your evidence portfolio which assessors may not view kindly.

Option 4 (Supply contact details) – Instead of gathering testimony, you could supply contact details in your case study in order that evidence can be provided as and when required. We would not recommend this approach. Panel feedback from REF2014 often commented that the case studies that were easiest to read, and thus score, contained extracts or quotes from evidence sources to corroborate claims.

## What?

- **OFFICIAL:** If seeking written testimonial, ensure it is on official headed paper or a suitably signed email. There is a balance to strike between getting the most senior voice possible to provide a testimonial and those best placed to provide testimonial - your knowledge of the organisation and your working relationship should inform this.
- **RELATIONSHIP AND REPUTATION:** Describe how they started working with you (e.g. consultancy, knowledge transfer grants, direct contact, advisory work, etc.), ensure that they name you and any relevant grants, projects or outputs.
- **APPLICATION:** How was your research applied within the organisation? e.g. Did they train staff? Did they develop a new product? Did your work inform their decision making or policies?
- **UPTAKE:** How did they implement your research findings?
- **OUTCOMES:** What changed for the organisation as a result of using your research? Did your research also affect changes within groups they work with? A portfolio of [REF2014 impact case studies](#) is available to help generate ideas of impacts and evidence. The [Panel criteria](#) can also be viewed and provides examples of impacts that may help external organisations to identify impacts of working with you. It is important that those providing testimonials/letters of support are explicit about benefits or changes, and where possible include relevant quantitative or qualitative indicators. How do they know this change was beneficial? What position would they been in if they hadn't used your research? This section should form the bulk of any statement and it is important to try to draw out direct and anticipated impacts as well as broader impacts. If the organisation works with end-users ask if they have monitored changes within that group and if they can demonstrate the effect it has had on them.
- **THE FUTURE:** Is the work continuing? Will they have an ongoing relationship with you? Are they now more open to working with academics? Will they change the way they work to aid incorporating external advice/input?

## 2. Conducting surveys for evidence collection

In line with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, please ensure that the text below is included in any communication when you approach third parties for information, for example, via surveys (and that the survey receives ethical clearance – see below). Please also ensure that you are familiar with the contents of the [University webpage on Data Protection](#) including the UEA [Research and Innovation Division \(RID\) privacy notice](#) (which aligns to the UEA privacy notice but also includes data from external parties), and the [Data Management Guidance from Research England](#).

Ethical Clearance: It is also important that your survey receives ethical clearance from the appropriate UEA Research Ethics committee prior to you sending the survey out. If you are unsure which committee to submit your ethics application to, please refer to the [S-REC \(Research Ethics Subcommittees\) page](#) on the portal.

### 2a.) Text to be included in your communication regarding surveys:

Below is some University approved text that you can use when sending surveys out.

- i. **Anonymous surveys** (please seek ethical clearance from the appropriate [S-REC \(Research Ethics Subcommittee\)](#) before sending out surveys.

*“This notice explains how the personal information you share with us in this survey will be used. For more detailed information, please see the [Research and Innovation Division \(RID\) privacy notice](#).”*

*In line with the new GDPR requirements, please be aware that the information you provide may be shared with the Research England for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The sharing of this information will be in the form of evidence submitted to support an impact case study and further guidance on this can be found on the [REF website](#).*

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- *We will use the data you provide below to... (insert summary of purpose of survey)*
- *We may share your data with partner organisations but we will never sell your data*
- *Your data will be kept securely and confidentially only for as long as required for the purposes of research*
- *Where you have left your name or contact details, you are entitled to ask us to erase or stop using your responses given in this survey at any time (otherwise, as the survey is anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw your responses once the survey has been submitted). Your data can be removed up until the stage of data analysis.*
- *Your data will remain anonymous in any reports or associated publications, and it will not be possible to identify you individually from these.*

*UEA will only ever use the information you give us in accordance with UK data protection law.*

- *If you have any queries regarding this survey or research, please contact...(enter your contact details).*

Please tick the 'yes' box below to confirm that you consent to taking part in the survey and to your data being used in the ways outlined above.”

Lead onto survey...

- ii. **Non-anonymous surveys** (please seek ethical clearance from the appropriate [S-REC \(Research Ethics Subcommittee\)](#) before sending out surveys.

“This notice explains how the personal information you share with us in this survey will be used. For more detailed information, please see the [Research and Innovation Division \(RID\) privacy notice](#).

In line with the new GDPR requirements, please be aware that the information you provide may be shared with the Research England for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The sharing of this information will be in the form of evidence submitted to support an impact case study and further guidance on this can be found on the [REF website](#).

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- We will use the data you provide below to... (insert summary of purpose of survey)
- We may share your data with partner organisations but we will never sell your data
- Your data will be kept securely and confidentially only for as long as required for the purposes of research
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UEA will only ever use the information you give us in accordance with UK data protection law.

- If you have any queried regarding this survey or research, please contact...(enter your contact details).

Please tick the 'yes' box below to confirm that you consent to taking part in the survey and to your data being used in the ways outlined above.”

Lead onto survey...

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- ii) Email the documentation to the RIN Impact Team: [Impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Impact@uea.ac.uk) who will store this on the RIN server; or
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### Why?

REF impact case study submissions must include evidence to support their impact claims. Evidence can be supplied in many forms depending on the impact claim and may be qualitative or quantitative in nature. Evidence may be collected using surveys which may be sent out to beneficiaries, users and/or stakeholders. This can be particularly useful if you wish to evidence, for example, a change in public opinion/understanding, or an improvement to a system/process following an intervention, etc.

Evidence type is very specific to each project, so if you are unsure about what type of evidence is relevant to your work, contact [impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:impact@uea.ac.uk) for advice. Your UoA coordinator, Impact Champion or Director of Innovation (SCI) may also be able to assist with queries, and support from RIN can be accessed via [impact@uea.ac.uk](mailto:impact@uea.ac.uk) and provided by your RIN lead, Impact Officer or Evidence coordinators.

### How?

Surveys may be conducted at various points during your research. For example, you may conduct a survey at the start, and again at various points during your research in order to capture a change in opinion/practice as a result of your work. You may wish to collect contact details in order to do follow up surveys. When doing this, please ensure you read [UEA's Data Protection guidance](#) associated with collecting and storing personal details.

We recommend that you consider evaluation at the earliest stages of developing your research proposal and impact activities. This will allow you to shape your plans around the effects/changes/impacts you plan to deliver and how you will evaluate them.

### What?

You may wish to use paper or online surveys. Please be aware that online survey tools such as 'Survey Monkey' should **not** be used as they are not GDPR compliant. UEA's approved system for creating online surveys is '[Microsoft Forms](#)' which is part of the Office 365 package for which UEA holds a license.

Below are some points to consider when designing your survey:

- Think about the project aims and objectives, and ensure that the questions you ask will help you to evaluate whether these have been met.
- Questions should be phrased in such a way that they reflect the age, language and expertise of the target group and must not 'lead' respondents to give biased responses.
- Ensure that you have built in time/resource to analyse survey responses as well as qualitative data provided in response to open ended questions. You can build in costs associated with such analysis into your grant proposal. There are also limited funds available via the internal [PVC Impact Fund](#).
- Consider how you will capture the reach (the extent and diversity of the individuals, organisations, or any other beneficiaries who have benefited or been affected) and significance (the degree to which the impact has enriched, influenced, informed or changed policies, opportunities, perspectives, or practices of those beneficiaries).

Different types of impact may need to be evidenced in different ways, so it can be useful to decide what impact you are aiming to achieve and then decide what type of evidence you need. You may find the table below (based on resources from Fast Track Impact) useful when thinking about your survey design.

| Type of Impact                             | Evidence required  |
|--|--|
| <b>Understanding and awareness impacts</b> | <p>You will need to evidence how you have achieved learning outcomes among target publics, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quantitative surveys evaluating levels of knowledge and understanding around an issue before and after engagement e.g. entry/exit quizzes, website or in-app questions based on interactions with website or app content</li> <li>○ Multiple-choice questions before, during and/or after public lectures using audience participation technologies</li> <li>○ Qualitative content analysis of comments left in visitor books, feedback forms, stuck on post-it notes to walls or objects, written on a graffiti wall or written on post-cards that are posted back to participants after the event</li> <li>○ Quotes describing changes in understanding or awareness</li> </ul> |
| <b>Attitudinal impacts</b>                 | <p>You will need to evidence how attitudes have changed in response to your public engagement activities, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Before and after Likert scale (e.g. from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') survey questions to quantify the extent to which attitudes have changed</li> <li>○ Semi-structured interviews analysed using content analysis or Grounded Theory Analysis</li> <li>○ Group or individual interviews based around pictures drawn by participants as part of the interview process to elicit implicit knowledge</li> <li>○ Quotes from describing attitude change</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Behavioral impacts</b>                  | <p>You will need to provide evidence showing that behavior change has taken place, ideally at scale, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Longitudinal questionnaires asking people to self-report changed behaviours and assess the extent to which engagement with research contributed to behavior change</li> </ul>   |

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|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Photo survey techniques where participants take photographs of their community or something linked to the research, you talk about their photos during interview to elicit implicit knowledge and photos are displayed in a community exhibition to gather further data about the changes that have taken place since your public engagement work</li><li>○ Quotes describing changes in behaviour</li></ul> |
|--|--|