

University of Leeds

Research Culture Awards 2021-22

Application Form

Please email nominations/self-nominations using this form to Holly Ingram
H.L.Ingram@leeds.ac.uk by Wednesday June 1st, 5pm

Information section

This section covers information about the lead applicant and the team as well as the chosen category of award. Expand the sections as necessary. The maximum number of people in a team is set to 10 for event planning and personal prize budgeting purposes.

1. Select the nomination type

- Third-party nomination (you will need to secure the nominees' agreement for submission)
 - Nominator name: Professors Carl Thompson and Anne Maree Keenan (on behalf of the Faculty of Medicine and Health)
 - Nominator School: Faculty of Medicine and Health | Pro Deans for Research and Innovation
 - Nominator role/post: Pro Deans for Research and Innovation

2. Lead applicant and team

Provide details about the applicant and the team (including external partners if applicable), and their contribution to the initiative. The lead applicant will be the contact person for the management of the award application.

Lead applicant name: Alistair Quaile

Lead applicant contributor role: Leading development of Faculty Impact Strategy

Lead applicant Service or School / Faculty: Faculty of Medicine and Health

Lead applicant role/post: Research Impact Manager

Lead applicant career stage: Professional

Team member name (include lead applicant)	Contributor role	School/Service/external organisation + role/post	If member deserves special mention, state reason (optional)
Alistair Quaile	Leading development of Faculty Impact Strategy	Research Impact Manager, Faculty of Medicine and Health	Our nominee – Alistair did the bulk of the work and drove the achievement
<i>Mark Mon-Williams</i>	<i>Overall responsibility for impact strategy</i>	<i>Director of Impact, Faculty of Medicine and Health</i>	<i>For context but not nominated</i>
<i>Carl Thompson</i>	<i>Overall responsibility for R&I activity</i>	<i>Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation (Applied)</i>	<i>For context but not nominated</i>

<i>Anne-Maree Keenan</i>	<i>Overall responsibility for R&I activity</i>	<i>Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation (Translational)</i>	<i>For context but not nominated</i>
--------------------------	--	---	--------------------------------------

Expand table as necessary; the upper limit for a team is 10 members.

3. Select the award category that best fits the research culture activity:

- Open Research and Impact

Case for Award

1. Title

Creating an impact strategy for the Faculty of Medicine and Health to accelerate the translation process between research excellence and societal impact

2. Summary

Alistair Quaille created an impact strategy to improve the Faculty of Medicine and Health’s planning, generation and evidencing of societal impact from our research. At its core, is the creation of a research impact environment of motivated, involved, supported, impact-minded, researchers. The strategy recognises impact in workload models and annual appraisals; ensures staff are not overburdened by making impact a core part of their activity, not just “another” University requirement; provides individually tailored support through impact accelerator funds; and recognises impact beyond academia as a key criterion for staff recruitment and promotion.

3. Why?

Pre 2020, we (FMH) had no formalised arrangements for a consistent and integrated approach to impact. The lead up to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, with its emphasis on impact, highlighted this critical omission. While there were pockets of good practice, many academic staff struggled to identify and define impact, retrospectively gathering evidence solely for the purpose of the REF submission, resulting in frustrated and disengaged staff. Significantly, we lacked a clear picture of Faculty’s most significant and far reaching, impactful, research.

4. What?

Alistair – as Research Impact Manager (then Impact Support Officer) – proposed the development of a prospective, formalised Faculty Impact Strategy to Faculty Director of Impact, Prof Mark Mon-Williams. REF2021 catalysed Alistair’s proposal. In September 2020, Alistair was tasked with leading the development and execution of an impact strategy to accelerate the translation of research excellence into societal impact. Whilst Prof Mon-Williams oversaw the process, Alistair was the architect and drove implementation. Progress updates were periodically sent to members of the Faculty Executive, with final approval obtained from the Executive Dean, Deputy Deans and Pro-Deans for Research and Innovation at the end of 2021. The initial work was presented to the University Impact Group (chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation) in October 2020 and the final strategy agreed in November 2021. The work directly informed the development of the University’s Engaged for Impact Strategy and delivery plan. We began implementation at the beginning of 2022 – in time for REF2021 submission.

5. How?

The strategy sought to establish a vision and missions to drive our impact agenda, supported by a structured framework to embed impact as a core activity. Alistair used an innovative (in HEI circles) Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach. A strategy map (see *Appendix*) with various perspectives: Missions, Methods, Culture and Impact was produced. Accompanying each perspective, were clear objectives to be realised. Each objective was linked to indicators, targets, and initiatives as part of a *coordinated* implementation plan.

The Culture perspective is of particular relevance. It was the blueprint for an environment where motivated, involved and supported researchers could flourish. Practical objectives needed for a *healthy* impact culture were set and clear: recruiting and developing the best staff; infrastructure for research excellence and strategic partnerships; and support for delivering impact - such as training and sufficient workload allocation.

This approach was immediate: the framework has been embraced by researchers across the faculty and provided a structured approach to presenting our impact case studies. Alistair's strategy was included in the REF submission as part of our environment statement, which scored highly. More importantly however, as Pro-Deans, we are confident the result of this strategy will be longer-term increase in research income and reputational benefit, improved impact literacy and culture, and the achievement of our overall vision of creating good health and wellbeing by addressing clinical and health challenges through our research strengths.

6. So what?

Alistair's strategy helps us communicate how well we are achieving our faculty research ambitions – for the first time, in a replicable and efficient way. Each objective is connected in a cause-and-effect relationship, creating a linked narrative that clearly tells us which step we are at in achieving our vision.

For example, the first part of the implementation phase focuses on improving Faculty impact culture by rolling out selected initiatives: improving impact literacy through School and Institute impact workshops, creating online impact resources, and establishing School impact working groups to recognise and support impact delivery. With these clear objectives, indicators, targets and initiatives we can judge our delivery success.

7. What next?

We think Alistair's work will help other Faculties develop their own impact strategies. Presenting at the University Impact Group ensured impact leaders in other Faculties are aware, but we think there is a case for establishing a University-wide platform where targeted support and shared learning can be facilitated and culture enhanced.

8. What challenges did you have in planning/organising/running/evaluating your initiative and how did you overcome these?

Our Faculty's breadth meant grouping research strengths into clinical challenges was tough. Alistair wanted to ensure academics could see where their research fitted, whilst ensuring these "challenges" represented our research strengths. By skilfully discussing this with Pro-Deans, Directors of Research and Innovation, REF Unit of Assessment Leads and Impact Champions, he ensured as many voices as possible were heard and consensus reached – no mean achievement in our Faculty!

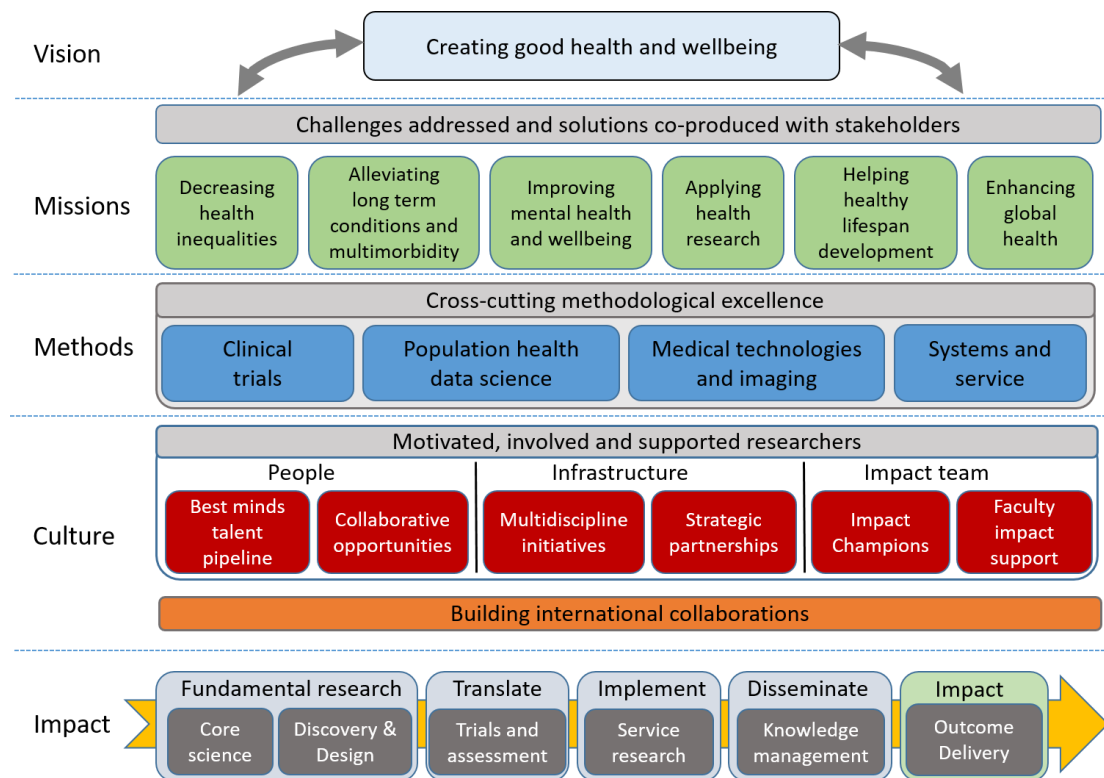
9. Was there something particularly innovative/creative about your initiative?

The BSC is conventionally used by industries other than universities to translate the vision and strategy of an organisation into action. However, by carefully adapting these “alien” businesses perspectives, Alistair made it appropriate for the context of research impact.

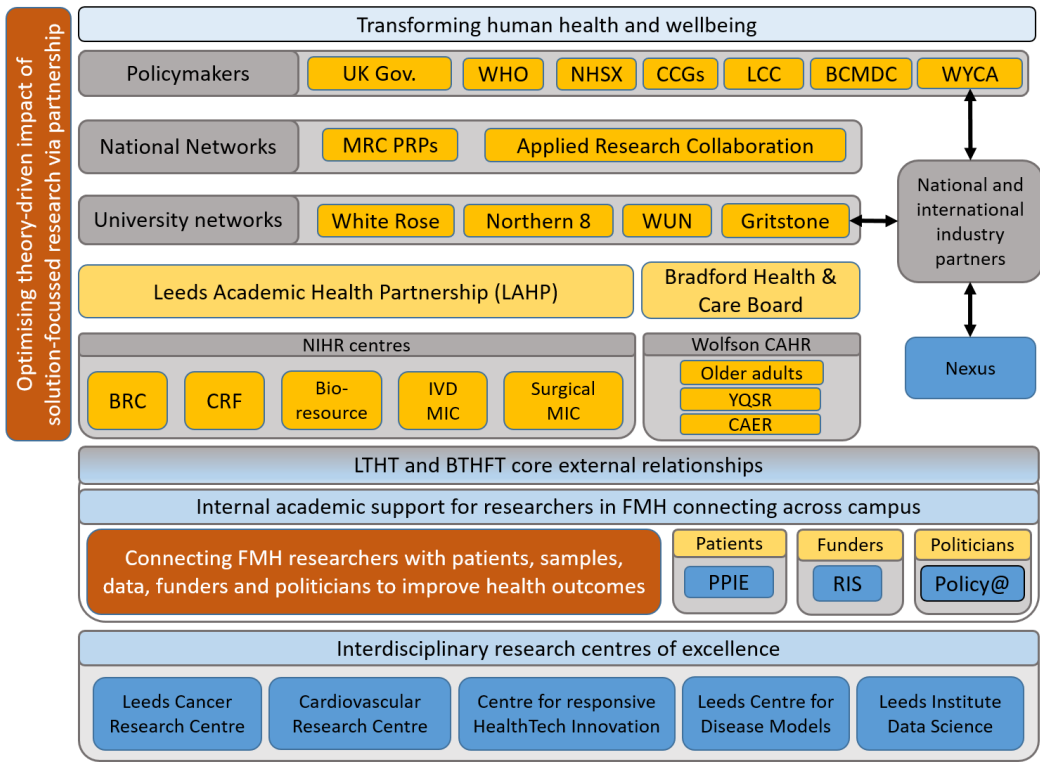
10. What makes your activity a notable example of culture change?

For the first time, our Faculty has a consistent and integrated approach to research impact. Alistair’s work has contributed to a culture of accountability, learning and improvement and allows for (scarce) resources to be allocated in a way that will lead to maximum benefit. It offers a clear method for tracking progress against the Faculty’s objectives and setting the actions we think will help, in a form that any member of staff can understand and see where their role fits. Importantly, Alistair’s work articulates our Faculty impact vision - and how we will support individual researchers to achieve this.

Appendix:



Faculty of Medicine and Health Impact Strategy map



The infrastructure supporting our vision