

THE IMPACTFUL ACADEMIC

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The Impactful Academic is a must-read for the academic community. It effortlessly demystifies impact, bringing together a range of expert voices whose collective experience covers everything from planning pathways through to demonstrating effects. The book is full of actionable advice from those working within the research sector, reflecting the realities of ‘doing impact’ in a range of settings and within differing national agendas. *The Impactful Academic* will steer any reader in the right direction as they embark on impact for the first time or are looking to strengthen their existing practice.

–Dr Julie Bayley, Director of Research Impact
Development & the Lincoln Impact Literacy
Institute, University of Lincoln, UK

Written in an accessible and colloquial style, *The Impactful Academic* is a how-to guide for academics with the courage to step out of their comfort zone and dip their toe into the impact world to demonstrate the benefits of the work they do. Authors lure the reader into a reflective impact state of mind while providing actionable tips on how to immerse themselves in impactful scholarship. For those keen to become more impactful, this book will prepare you for the journey. Essential reading for early career academics and those seeking faculty promotion.

–Dr Melanie Barwick, PhD, CPsych Senior Scientist,
SickKids Research Institute Professor, Psychiatry,
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

The *Impactful Academic* is a comprehensive guide that includes everything an academic needs to achieve impact from their research. It contains invaluable practical advice that is both evidence-based and accessible, drawing on experience from around the world. This is an essential guide to impact for early career and senior researchers alike.

–Mark Reed, Professor and Centre Director,
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), and
CEO of Fast Track Impact

The Impactful Academic provides practical strategies for success in a contemporary landscape that values societal impact. This book is a valuable resource for those in the early stages of their academic careers, for senior scholars embarking on new projects with community partners, and for university staff and administrators who support impact work. The book's focus on self-assessment and reflection, including tips and techniques from experts working in various disciplinary contexts, means there is something here for everyone. By covering such topics as community engagement strategies, research translation practices, and ways to track evidence of impact, this book serves as a go-to guide for academics to foster social change and make a difference in the world.

–Prof Lisa M. Given, Director, Social Change
Enabling Capability Platform and Professor of
Information Sciences at RMIT University in
Melbourne, Australia

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Building a Research Career
That Makes a Difference

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To the academics who choose to make a difference and the
community members who welcome them in.*

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PREFACE

The impact of research is being discussed more and more in higher education – both from the project-based level to how universities are judged to contribute to the broader community through their research efforts. Understanding what impact means and articulating how research produces an impact beyond the generation of new knowledge is becoming a crucial component of the academic landscape. But how ready are we for this? What does impact mean, and how can this be demonstrated? The concept of impact may not be entirely new, but its centrality in the research agenda is. The increasing use of impact in grant applications, institutional strategies, and national assessment schemes means researchers and institutional administrators need to become more ‘impact literate’ and build impact into their planning and assessing research activities.

During my career as a biomedical researcher, and now in a research administration role, I have seen impact increase in prominence. Looking back, I can see where my research has had impact but I also recognize that the work did not always have impact built into the design. Over the last decade, I have engaged more with stakeholders, which has helped focus the research conducted in my laboratory and also diversify our funding streams from traditional funding sources to ones that include partnering for impact. In my current research

administration role, impact is front and centre – it is even in my position title! As the research landscape changes, we need to adapt and move with this change. *The Impactful Academic* is a very useful resource that bridges this impact knowledge gap, with practical and accessible approaches. Many of these approaches were not available to me during my research training (back when the internet as we know it now was still new) but I can see now how important engagement and impact skills are for my students and colleagues to possess.

The Impactful Academic is a timely contribution to the discussion of research impact and provides a rich spectrum of contributions from academics and professional staff across the globe that will guide researchers in developing themselves into impactful academics.

The book is split into nine chapters. The first introduces the topic of impact and provides an overview of how the book can be used. Chapters on navigating impact within an academic institution follow, with tips on identifying support and expertise to guide the researcher's journey to impact. Early on, the book sets a vibrant tone, with activities and exercises included to guide the reader in developing their impact story. The book cleverly unravels the different levels of impact from the researcher level through the institution and community including identifying and engaging with stakeholders. *The Impactful Academic* provides a reflective opportunity for the reader to assess their progress on their impact pathway and learn from others. Rounding off the book is a chapter that describes an impactful academic and advice for keeping on track with impact with the development of impact goals and plans that need regular attention.

The book is written with a broad readership in mind which is helped by the multidisciplinary and expertise of the authors. The content is very accessible, and the chapters make for thoughtful reading. The exercises throughout this book

provide an opportunity to put the book down and reflect, and they offer practical steps to increase one's profile and guide their impact journey.

The Impactful Academic is suitable for academics at all levels as well as professional staff working in the research space. Of course, while more junior academics might benefit more in the long run by developing their impact journey earlier, more established scholars and research leaders will similarly benefit by following the practical advice in the book and embedding impact in the research agenda of their organisation.

Wade Kelly has brought together a group of authors who have produced an excellent resource that will have an impact in developing researchers and supporting their impact journeys.

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Thank you to the series editor, Marian Mahat. Marian offered encouragement throughout and graciously understood delays due to moves, new jobs, and a global pandemic. Thanks as well to Joann Cattlin for introducing us. You're a connector extraordinaire.

Kim Chadwick is the exact person you dream will work for a publisher. Kim, thank you for calming me by figuratively holding my hand throughout this process and for being an absolute delight.

Thank you to my husband Phil for always supporting me and the projects I take on when I already have said yes to too many things. For the multitude of ways you deserve to be thanked, I would need another book.

Finally, my thanks to all the academics I have worked with over the years who have taught me so much. Sometimes I get lost in the bureaucracy – forms, deadlines, assessments, and

spreadsheets. All it takes to remind me why I love what I do is to hear about someone's research and the ways they are helping to transform conditions for individuals, industries, and communities. We need more of you.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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Dr Caroline Osborne is a consultant, academic and IAP2 practitioner specialising in research, engagement and evaluation, using engagement to design impactful policy and strategy. Caroline is an Adjunct Fellow at USC and has published in international journals on transformational community engagement, impact measurement, social capital and city futures.

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