Section 5  Recording activities and capturing impact
The different motivations for collaboration between the archive and HE sectors are reflected in variations in the way the two sectors measure the success of their activities. Understanding how each sector records and evaluates their activities will help partners to plan for the collection of appropriate data at the outset of collaborations. It will enable partners to support each other in the promotion of their work.

When resources are limited it is particularly important to be able to report on the results of investment and to be able to make a strong, evidenced argument for future investment.

Perhaps the biggest single difference in approach is that archive services often measure their activities as a way of benchmarking performance and demonstrating value for money. Whereas HEIs are required to have their performance assessed on the wider impact that their research is having, how their teaching supports learning and students, how their activities demonstrate the value of their funding, and as part of the basis on which funding is allocated through the higher education funding councils.

This guide looks in turn at the methods of assessment used by the archive sector and the HE sector and suggests where there is common ground between the two sectors.

### 5.1 Archive services measurements

Archive services have a tradition of recording outputs quantitatively and often report on key statistics such as those required for the archive service accreditation standard (see Figure 2 below). These have been designed to align with CIPFA statistics\(^\text{11}\).

This type of data is relatively easy to collect but does rely on conscientious and regular recording of information. It is useful because it can be used:

- to benchmark or compare activity against similar services
- to analyse trends when collected repeatedly

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\(^{11}\) CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)
• as an indicator of performance
• to support arguments made about cost effectiveness and value for money
• for forward planning
• to report at management meetings or in annual reports where short and succinct snapshots of activity are valuable.

Figure 2. Guidance for measuring the public and other use of collections (from the Archive Service Accreditation Guidance, p.6-7 of 2018 revised edition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of resources</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Total number of visitors of all kinds to site in the last year</td>
<td>Count readers only once a day; exclude visiting groups, guided tours which belong in question 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Of visitors included above, how many were using the archival resources for their own study?</td>
<td>Calculate according to the method usually employed by the service (unit of production whatever size); include only archival documents. Please indicate the method of calculation used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Number of items produced in the last year</td>
<td>Include all sizes of displays/exhibition and all appearances new or repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Number of appearances in exhibitions in the last year</td>
<td>Include all events held on own premises and branch offices, including visiting groups and guided tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Number of learning events held in-house in the last year</td>
<td>Include events held at libraries, town centres, museums, fairs etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Number of learning events held outside in the last year</td>
<td>Total attendance at events noted under 5&amp;6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Total attendance at learning events in the last year</td>
<td>On or related to documentary holdings, requiring an answer and originating outside the archive service’s parent body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Enquiries received by post, email and telephone in the last year</td>
<td>A visit is defined as a session of activity/series of one or more page impressions, served to one user, to the archive website. A unique visitor is determined by the IP address or cookie. The session is deemed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Estimated number of visits to the network resources (website) in the last year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
end when there is a lengthy gap of usage between successive page impressions for that user. An example of a lengthy gap would be a gap of at least 30 minutes. Count one visit per visitor session. Visits to ‘data aggregators’ such as Discovery/Archives Hub should be excluded.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Estimated number of page impressions and user visits to office’s online research resources hosted by commercial providers in the last year</td>
<td>This question will not apply to internal figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Estimated number of page impressions and user visits to the archive service’s online catalogues in the last year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Number of times moving image material contributed to screenings</td>
<td>Includes broadcast and screening events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Archive services may complement this type of statistical information by taking part in surveys such as the ‘ARA National Surveys Group ‘Survey of Visitors’ and the ‘Survey of Distance Users of Enquiry Services’. Both surveys gather information about why people visit/use archives, reveal information about visitors/users and record information about their satisfaction with services.

Further benchmarking of archives is available through the ‘Taking Part’ survey¹², a National Statistic produced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport that provides evidence of participation in the cultural sector.

### 5.2 Higher Education Institutions measurements

The Higher Education sector measures (or is measured against) three main areas:

1. accountability for the way that it spends public money
2. the quality of its research

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3. student satisfaction.

Annual accountability returns are required from HEIs by the higher education funding councils to demonstrate accountability for funding and cover operational aspects of the performance of HEIs such as financial performance and governance.

5.2.1 The Research Excellence Framework (REF)

REF is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. It has a major impact on research rankings and funding allocations for higher education institutions and is therefore of critical importance to them. The REF, which replaced the Research Assessment Exercise, was developed between 2007 and 2011, with the first iteration reporting in 2014 (REF2014\textsuperscript{13}). The next iteration of REF will be in 2021 (REF2021)

There are two core assessment criteria within the REF:

- **Reach**: the size and scale of the impact upon individuals, communities, organisations and environments
- **Significance**: the degree to which the impact has enriched, influenced, informed or changed policies, practices and behaviors

REF submissions must be accompanied by case studies outlining research impact. The REF case study database\textsuperscript{14} used eight summary impact types: political, health, technological, economic, legal, cultural, societal and environmental impacts, to show the different ways in which research can be impactful.

An analysis of REF2014, a review by Lord Stern and consultation with the Higher Education sector, has contributed to the next round of REF which will conclude in 2021 (REF2021\textsuperscript{15}).

\textsuperscript{13} https://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/
\textsuperscript{14} http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/
\textsuperscript{15} http://www.ref.ac.uk
REF assessment elements

There are three elements to REF assessment: outputs, impact and environment. The weighing for each area is outlined in the chart below.

Research outputs account for the largest component of the assessment (60%). The REF assessment framework describes research outputs as follows:

“In addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, images, artefacts, products and buildings; confidential or technical reports; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media.” (p. 22 para.106).

These outputs, therefore, are what HEIs are looking to produce through their research and, by extension, through any collaborative research project with archive services.

Research impact accounts for 25% of the assessment. United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI), state that impact ‘is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy’16.

This may occur in many ways:

- creating and sharing new knowledge and innovation
- inventing new products, companies, and jobs
- developing new or improving existing public services and policy
- and enhancing quality of life and health

UKRI state that economic and societal impact can be defined as the following:

- demonstrable contributions that excellent social and economic research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations. This is measured in the REF.

In REF2021 there is a continued emphasis on collaboration in the impact assessment.

The inclusion of economic and societal impact in the evaluation of higher education research enables HEIs to demonstrate wider accountability for the public money they receive for funding research, particularly its economic and societal benefits; and offers opportunities for the archive sector to collaborate with higher education sector to demonstrate and evidence this impact.

The research environment accounts for the remaining 15% of the assessment. This element of the REF considers the strength of the research environment including research strategy, culture and infrastructure, and measures such as research income and degrees awarded.

There are opportunities in the REF for archive services and HEI’s to develop mutually beneficial collaborations. Understanding this process, and the opportunities that exist for archive services to enhance the work of HEIs in this area, is essential for archives to benefit from research council funded archive-HE collaborations.

Archive services, even those located within HEIs, cannot contribute directly to the REF, but examples of their work can be included in the impact case studies that are submitted by HEIs as part of their REF submissions.
More information on REF2021 can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk). This site also has links to REF2014 results and case studies.

**Citation**

One of the challenges for archive services is to ensure that their contribution to collaborative work is visible in the way that academic work is published and assessed so that they gain profile for the collections and the organisation. Citation is an important mechanism through which academic sources are credited. Counting the number of times an author, article (or other source) is cited is seen as a measure of the impact of the source, particularly in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) subjects. The importance of the journal in which an article is published (the journal ranking) may also carry weight.

Archive services should provide clear guidance on how to reference source material and how to reference their organisation so that it is cited consistently. The research supporting this guidance document suggests that the archive sector does not commonly use bibliometrics (statistical analysis of books, publications and literature). Investigating some of the bibliometric tools that are available to track citations would provide a mechanism for tracking and collating academic access to archives.

During 2018 The National Archives and RLUK are conducting research in archive citations in the Citation Capture project. This will examine the occurrences and context of archive citations and should enable archives services more fully to demonstrate how they support Higher Education Institutions, academics, researchers, and research outputs and impact. The project is due for completion in September 2018.

5.2.2 **Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)**

The TEF aims to recognise excellent teaching in UK higher education providers with gold, silver, or bronze ratings. Until 2018, TEF was voluntary, though in future all HEIs in England with over 500 students will have to take part; in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland it will remain voluntary.
The TEF draws on nationally collected data to measure the performance of higher education providers in the following areas:

- **Student satisfaction** - How satisfied students are with their course, as measured by responses to the National Student Survey (NSS)

- **Continuation** - The proportion of students that continue their studies from year to year, as measured by data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

- **Employment outcomes** - What students do after they graduate, as measured by responses to the [Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey](#) (DLHE).

In addition to this, data on student characteristics, provider's location and provision, and submitted written evidence illustrating the HEI’s performance and case for excellence are also considered.

The TEF may incentivise HEIs and archives to work together on collaborative projects that enrich the student experience and employability. It may also provide archives with an opportunity to engage with new audiences and be exposed to new thinking, ideas, and approaches to the use and utilisation of their collections, services, and expertise.

### 5.2.3 Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) seeks to increase the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funding for knowledge exchange. It aims to support and further a culture of continuous improvement in Higher Education Knowledge Exchange.

The KEF is managed by UKRI and there are two key strands to the Knowledge Exchange Framework – Principles and Metrics. Elements of KEF are still in development (May 2018), and the principles agreed are

- Inspiring universities and business to work together for growth and prosperity.

- Technology transfer and intellectual property.
• Encouraging collaborative research between universities and companies.

• Utilisation of physical assets – such as science parks, incubators, and university facilities and equipment – beyond higher education institutions.

• Developing student, academic, and institutional entrepreneurship.

• Developing opportunities for continued professional development opportunities, short course, lifelong learning, career guidance, work placement, curriculum development, and project experiences between higher education institutions and economic and societal bodies.

• Advancing opportunities for outreach, volunteering, social cohesion, community regeneration, widening participation, and involving the public in research

KEF Metrics are still in development and are planned to be finalised in the autumn of 2018.

5.2.5 The National Student Survey

This survey gathers students’ opinions on the quality of their courses. Again, the purpose is to contribute to accountability for public funding, but survey results are also used by students to help inform their choice of university, and by HEIs not only in their publicity material to attract students but also as a mechanism to reflect on and enhance student experience. The NSS contributes to higher education institutions TEF ranking (see above).

5.3 Evaluating collaborative activities: finding common ground

When planning your approach to evaluating collaborative activities you need to be clear about what you are setting out to achieve through the collaboration (the aims and objectives), what indicators (or information) you need to collect to show that progress is being made towards achieving those objectives, and how you will use the information you collect (for example, the audience to which you are reporting).
The work that archive services do to evaluate public engagement or learning activities is likely to resonate much more strongly with HEIs than the collection of statistical data. Indeed, you may find that your experience of evaluation of public engagement and learning is one of the main contributions you can make to a collaborative project.

If you are not familiar with evaluation techniques, a number of organisations provide useful guidance and toolkits, including: the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England’s Inspiring Learning for All, Museum Development Programmes, and Research Councils UK (see key terms, concepts and resources for links). The techniques are commonly applied to understanding areas such as learning, enjoyment and skills development.

The assessment of impact goes further than evaluating outcomes and is a significant element that HEIs activity is measured on in the REF and TEF (see above). The significant difference is that impact describes the broader or longer-term effects of activities and outcomes, normally on people but sometimes also on policy areas.

A great deal of work has been done recently on impact assessment, and there are many different types of impact assessments that can be undertaken (e.g. economic impact assessments, social impact assessments). A good summary of different methods of impact assessment is presented by Simon Tanner as part of his research into, and development of, the Balanced Value Impact Model for digital resources.\(^\text{17}\)

Knowledge of both evaluation techniques and impact assessment methodologies will help you to talk to academics using a common language. At the beginning of any collaboration, you need to any able to communicate what you hope your activities will achieve, and how and who they will benefit. Likewise, it is important to understand what your HEI partner is seeking to achieve and what they want to measure, and how they will measure this. By doing this, you can devise mutually beneficial methods of recording the activities and capturing impact that can be used to demonstrate the success of the collaboration to multiple stakeholders.

The following case study from Durham University provides an example of how the skills and experience of the library and heritage collections team, which came to light through a high-profile university project, have since benefitted the work of academic colleagues when demonstrating the impact of their research activities.

**Case Study 10**

**Title:** Durham University and Durham University Library and Heritage Collections: using ‘impact’ to raise the profile of heritage collections  
**Archives:** Durham University Library and Heritage Collections  
**HEI:** Durham University  
**Theme:** Supporting the demonstration of impact

Durham University was the leading partner in the project to exhibit the Lindisfarne Gospels at Palace Green Library in 2013. The project was a great success, resulting in 100,000 visits to the exhibition, over 20,000 children participating in learning sessions and workshops and 135,000 people reached through the wider engagement programme.

The Lindisfarne project received HLF funding which enabled an ambitious engagement programme, and staff in the Library and Heritage Collections team used their experience of this project to raise the profile of their work, notably around outreach, learning and engagement and how this can support academic requirements to demonstrate ‘impact’ as part of the REF.

Following the Lindisfarne project a working group with academics from Arts, Humanities and Social Science subjects was set up to advocate how the heritage collections could be used in teaching and research. The working group promoted the work of the Heritage Collections team (for example, running display classes, supporting REF case studies, using research in outreach and engagement work, training academics in outreach and engagement) and produced a leaflet to go to all academics.

A result of this is that exhibitions are now accompanied by an outreach programme. Heritage Collections staff meet with academics to establish what their
research is and the key messages they want to get to their key audiences. From there they work together on a joint learning proposals which is then trialled under the supervision of the academic who gives feedback.

The collaboration between the Heritage Collection and academics means that academics are increasing use the heritage collections support and demonstrate their research, and this is used to support REF.

5.4 Raising your profile through collaboration

Raising the profile of archive collections and archive services was one of the benefits of collaboration most frequently cited by archive practitioners in the course of this research. Yet academics identify lack of access to information about archive services and their content as a stumbling block to further use.

It is therefore worth thinking about how you can raise the profile of your archive service to the higher education sector both in advance of collaborative working and as a result of successful collaborations.

The following checklist has been compiled from conversations with archive practitioners and academics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include information about collections in aggregated catalogues and resources such as Discovery, the Archives Hub, and AIM25 where possible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include information about the variety of material held by the archive service on your website and provide contact details for professional staff who can give greater insight to the collections and their potential for research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include information about how to access collection material held by your archive service on your website, for example whether appointments are needed, reader registration requirements etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Encourage your academic users to become advocates for your archive service and the collections.

Provide guidelines on how to cite collection material in research and how to refer to your archive service (in an effort to standardise how your organisation is referred to in citation indices).

Ask academics to let you know about publications that arise from research on the collections and if possible, to provide the archive service with a copy of any publication for the collection.

Collect information in quantitative and qualitative form and re-use it in a variety of different contexts from management reporting to public engagement.

Investigate the use of bibliographic data and citation tracking tools as a method of tracking the use of collection material (or references to the archive service) by academics, such as Google Scholar or JSTOR data for research.

Use social media and online tools to promote your collaborative working and any opportunities that you are keen to pursue.

These specific pointers can be reinforced through your general approach to communications. The TNA has produced guidance notes that support the promotion and use of archive services and collections which may be of use to you:

- *Developing Partnerships*[^18]
- *Developing access and participation*[^19]
- *Effective communications: raising the profile of your archive service*[^20]

The advice and guidance cited above provide information that will be useful at the outset of collaborative working (e.g. to support the development of external contacts.

or to gain institutional support for collaborative working) as well as to help you plan how to communicate the success of your collaborations and your future ambitions.

Many contributors to this guidance note reported a ‘virtuous circle’ as a result of their collaborative working, with use of the collections and new audiences growing as a result of their developing reputation for working with academics.