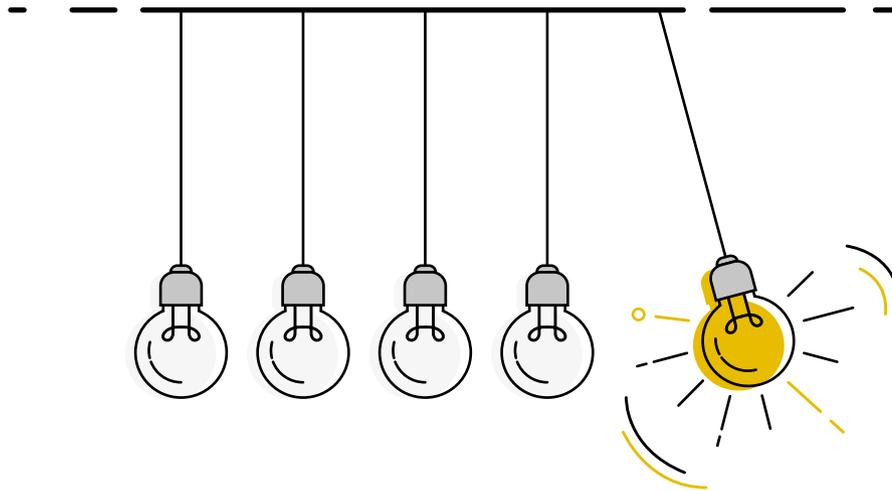


IMPACT FESTIVAL



Earlier this year, the universities of St Andrews, Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt, Glasgow and Strathclyde joined forces to deliver the first-ever Impact Festival. Aimed at early career researchers, Impact Festival was a hit with attendees and stakeholders alike

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) managers at the universities of St Andrews, Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt, Glasgow and Strathclyde meet regularly to exchange ideas, share best practices and discuss where we can undertake joint activities. Our discussions have led us to recognise the on-going need to inform and train early career researchers about the impact agenda, ways in which impact can be achieved and the importance of collaboration both with academic colleagues and external stakeholders to maximise impact.

ENTER IMPACT FESTIVAL

To address this need and to help stimulate collaborative projects between the institutions, we organised and jointly funded an 'Impact Festival', an event comprising of a day of learning, connection and stimulating dialogue on impact-related topics.

FEEDBACK CORNER

Following the Impact Festival, many individuals shared their thoughts from the event on Twitter and in the team's feedback form:

"I can make an impact"

"There was opportunity to talk with professionals who have extensive experience working with impact, moving into their positions following time as an active researcher"

"Advice on how to start from scratch to develop an initial relationship with industry (or practical scientist) and foster that relationship over time"

"Fab interactive exhibits at #2018ImpactFestival"



The National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh was chosen as the event venue, both for its historical innovators displays and its neutrality. The festival took place over one day, which comprised both plenary and breakout sessions, including case study presentations in the morning from each institution highlighting impactful projects and bite-size sessions in the afternoon covering a wide range of relevant topics. They included:

- Maximising impact
- Writing for impact
- Making public engagement count
- Engaging with policy makers
- Impact and social media
- Building and sustaining relationships

These sessions were delivered by colleagues from the five partnering institutions, external impact experts and stakeholders, including the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, the Scottish Parliament, Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre and the University of Reading.

An 'Impact Gallery' was also set up comprised of projects previously supported by EPSRC IAA, which demonstrated the impact resulting from these projects through a mix of interactive demonstrations and exhibition stands.

Impact Festival was chaired by Hamish Macandrew, ARMA's Chief Operating Officer, who opened the festival, set the scene for the day and asked for audience participation from the outset. To gauge the audience's understanding and perception of it, we asked them for one word to describe impact. Using technology to help, we instantaneously create a word map that highlighted the many ways in which impact can be considered. It was a fun and interesting way to get the conversation flowing.

A FESTIVAL WITH IMPACT

This festival was ambitious on many levels, particularly as it was the first time this type event has been undertaken and delivered by several different institutions supported by EPSRC IAA funding. The primary audience for the event was early career researchers, and there were approximately 90 attendees from across the five participating universities, as well as representatives from other universities who hold IAA funding. Dr Christopher Gibson, the Impact Manager at EPSRC, also attended. Following the event he said he was "really encouraged to see the strong links between (IAA) accounts".

The festival was also well received by attendees. Feedback included feeling inspired by the stories of successful impact the usefulness of the bite-size sessions. In fact, based on the success of the inaugural Impact Festival, all of the participating institutions have recognised the benefits of working together and are anticipating delivering a similar event in 2019 to promote the collective institutional research strengths to all stakeholders.

