

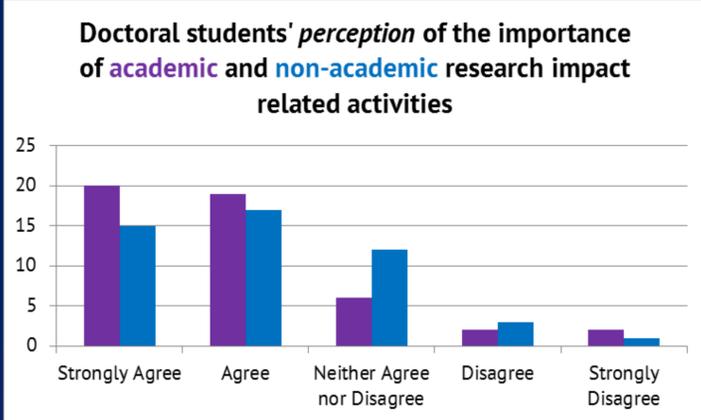
# Non-Academic Research Impact: A Case Study Exploring the Perceived Importance of Non-Academic Impact of Doctoral Students' Research at Bournemouth University

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## Introduction

Research Councils UK (RCUK) defines research impact as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy'. At Bournemouth University (BU) we actively support our doctoral students to understand what constitutes impact and how their research can benefit society. However, tangible measures for non-academic impact are not easily articulated, particularly for doctoral students whose research is predominantly inward facing. We have initiated a pilot study to investigate doctoral students' attitudes to research impact (both academic and non-academic) to identify how we can best support and facilitate individuals in maximising the reach and impact of their research.

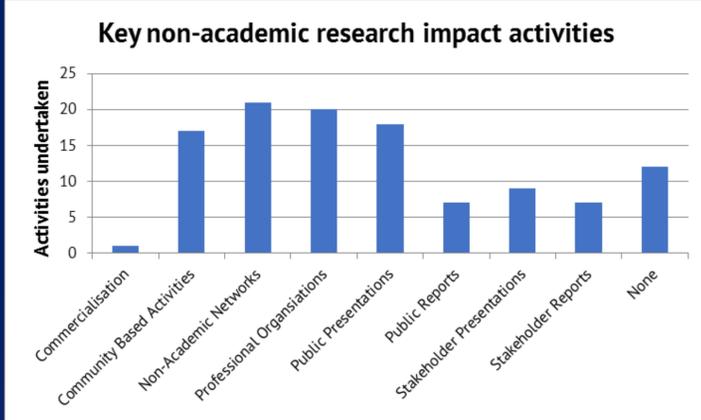
## Research Impact



73% of doctoral students perceive impact related activities as being an important aspect of their research. However, academic impact is regarded as being more important than non-academic:

- 80% agreed with the importance of academic impact
- 67% agreed with the importance of non-academic impact

## Non-Academic Impact Activities



This is the first time that this data has been collected across BU. Currently doctoral students engage in a limited number of non-academic research impact activities, with:

- 52% focussed on professional related impact activities
- 37% focussed on public or community related impact activities

## Development Needs

Doctoral students have told us they need help in identifying how to achieve non-academic impact. They would like support in the following key areas:

- Making new **industry contacts**
- Joining relevant **networks**
- Writing **case studies for businesses**
- Presenting **scientific research to a non-scientific audience**
- Disseminating research findings to a **wider audience**
- Presenting to **different audiences**
- Writing **funding proposals**
- Developing reports for the **public**
- Creating a **blog**
- Exhibiting **practice-based research**
- Training in **media appearances**
- **Commercialising** research
- Understanding **social media**

## Methodology

Delivered in accordance with BU's ethical guidelines, this research has a cross-sectional time-horizon, with a realism philosophy and an abductive approach and using mixed methods delivered via an online survey. The study includes responses collected from full / part-time doctoral students in May & June 2017.



## Further work

At BU, academic and non-academic impact are at the heart of our strategic plan. They are an essential part of academic life and integral to the University's Research Excellence Framework submission. We plan to build on these findings to provide sector leading support for our doctoral students.