

CPRA Application Lab:

Strategies for Articulating the Quality & Impact of Your Research

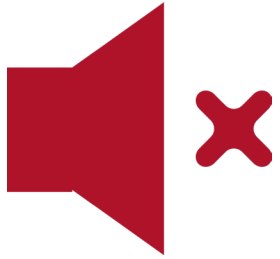
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August 12, 2025

Housekeeping



Mute your
audio



Use the chat to ask
questions or share
resources



Raise your hand if
you have a question



Turn off your video
if there is a lag

I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7 located in the heart of Southern Alberta, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).

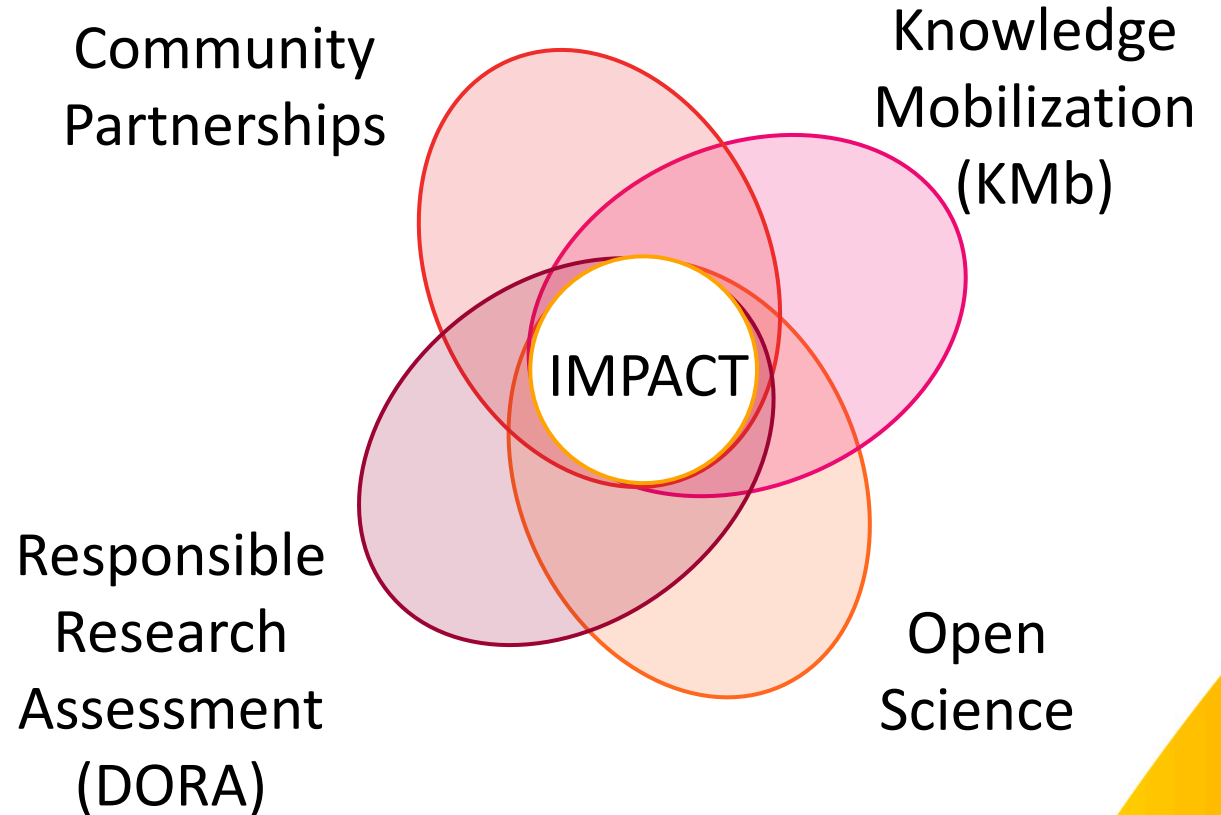


The KI Team

The **Knowledge to Impact team** supports collaborative efforts to **maximize and recognize the positive impacts of research** for the benefit of our communities.

Impact is at the centre of all that we do.

 ucalgary.ca/knowledge-impact



Today's Session

Poll
#1

- Introduction to **Research Impact**
 - How & why it's important to your CPRA application
- Connecting **Contributions** to **Impact**
- **Strategies for Writing:** The How-To
- Planning for Impact (**Knowledge Mobilization**)
- Q&A + Wrap-Up

Impact & Your CPRA Application

- How do I tell the story of my work? What do the Tri-Agencies mean by “impact”?
 - How do I choose which ‘contributions’ matter?
 - How do I connect contributions and impact and make my application shine?
-
- Very high-level focus today → you and the post-doc office should be the experts on exact criteria for your specific opportunity!

Intro To Research Impact

What is research impact?

The higher-level and ultimate long-term **effects or changes** resulting from an “intervention”. Such impacts can be **intended and unintended, positive or negative**.

Impact is a journey, and there are **diverse pathways to impact**.

(Source: adapted from OECD-DAC, 2022)

Impact goes beyond what research has, does & produces—
to the **difference it makes downstream, and for whom**

What is research impact? (cont.)

- What do we mean by **impact**?:
 - *the difference(s) our work will make or has made in others' lives*
 - *Think long-term!*
- Make our knowledge and research useful to the people and communities who will be able to make the best use of it
- Always be thinking of the **who**:
 - **Who** benefitted or will benefit from this work?
 - **Who** are my audiences and partners in this work?

The Impact Logic Model

outputs

Shorter-term results,
deliverables, etc.



(i.e., “the stuff we make”)

- Publications
- Datasets
- Podcasts, videos, infographics
- Other media

outcomes

Activities undertaken
because of new insights



*(i.e., “the stuff that happens
because of our outputs”)*

- Uptake/use of research findings (citations, etc.)
- New policies

impacts

Longer-term effects,
changed thinking and
behaviours, ‘moving the
needle’



*(i.e., “the Big Picture effect(s)
our work had”)*

- Health, social, cultural, environmental or economic impacts, etc.

Diverse Pathways to Impact

- Describing impact can be **future**-focused or **retrospective**
 - What you **have** done can lead into what you **will** do!
- Impact is a winding road
 - There is no obvious, singular path
 - Be able to articulate your winding road(s) - past, present, and future
- How you connect your **contributions** to their **impact(s)** is key



Assessing Contributions and Impact

Challenges of Unrecognized Impact

- Growing unease with relying on certain numbers to measure researchers & their impact
- Longstanding problems using journal-based metrics (e.g., JIF) in hiring, promotion, & funding decisions
- “All of our best work isn’t getting recognized!”
 - How do we value what really matters in our scientific work?
 - Go beyond just using numbers to quantify valuable research(ers)

Poll
#2



Declaration on Research Assessment

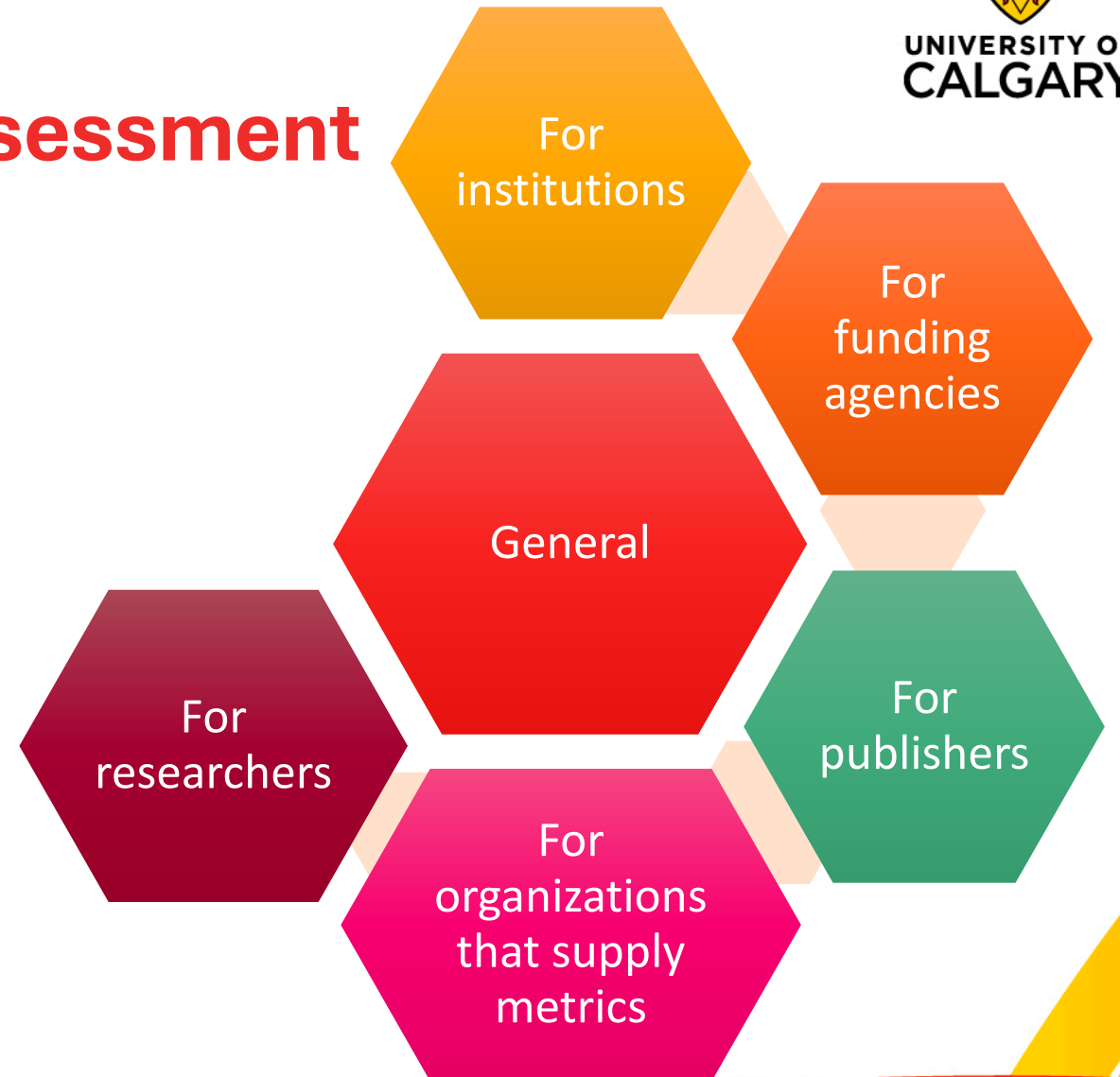


DORA



Declaration on Research Assessment

- **18 recommendations** from 2012 American Society for Cell Biology annual meeting
- **Worldwide initiative** with ~26k signatories in 166 countries
- Recognized traditional journal-based metrics inaccurate & incomplete measures of research value
- Recommendations span entire research ecosystem



DORA in a Nutshell

Growing commitments to valuing diverse contributions

Consider a broader
range of outputs
and impact
measures

Focus on content
of paper/output,
not on journal-
based metrics (JIF)

Mix of quantitative
and qualitative
indicators of both
quality and **impact**

Criteria transparent
to those being
assessed



ucalgary.ca/dora

DORA in Action: *Evolving practices in Canada*

Many Canadian signatories:

- **Tri-Agencies (2019)**
- **University of Calgary (2021)**
- McGill University (U15)
- Université de Montréal (U15)
- University of Victoria
- Concordia University
- National Killam Program
- MRU
- And many others...

DORA at the Tri-Agencies:

- Broadened accepted contributions
- Contributions should be broad, wide-ranging, and showcase diversity, breadth, and depth of your work
- Manifesting in application processes including CPRA

DORA and RRA – Pushing For Change

- Broader space of responsible research assessment (RRA)
 - An effort / starting point to advocate for equitable practices in funding & awards
- Not to de-value high impact publications → DORA/RRA is a “**yes, and...**”
 - There are many ways to make impact in your work
- DORA and RRA have big importance for applicants like you
- CPRA’s application format(s) are informed by DORA!
 - CIHR & NSERC are explicit – SSHRC implicit

How DORA Shows Up in the CPRA

<u>Agency</u>	<u>DORA Mentioned?</u>	<u>Level of Detail</u>	<u>Integration into Review Process</u>
CIHR	Explicitly mentioned	Detailed explanation	CIHR is signatory to DORA. Reviewers instructed to assess productivity broadly, consider range of contributions and impacts. Emphasizes scientific content over publication metrics. Prohibits use of journal-based metrics (Impact Factors). Links to additional DORA guidance resources.
SSHRC	Not explicitly mentioned	No direct reference	No explicit mention of DORA. However, evaluation criteria include "research potential and experience" beyond just publications and considers fellowships, scholarships, awards, and previous research experience.
NSERC	Explicitly mentioned	Detailed explanation with policy link	NSERC is signatory to DORA. Promotes wide range of research results and outcomes. Emphasizes research excellence beyond traditional metrics. Prohibits reviewers to consider journal impact factor or h-index metrics. Links to detailed policy document. Refers to revised Guidelines on Assessment of Contributions.

The How-To (Contributions)

More Than What NOT To Do

- Not just about what **not** to do – how do we go about showcasing **quality** and **impact** in our research?
- Umbrella is wider – but showcase your best work
 - Don't minimize your papers!
- Think about **quality** and **impact** together
 - What work is the **most relevant** and what work **made the biggest difference**?
 - To whom, when?

Steps to Building Your Contributions



Pragmatics: Bundling Your Contributions



- Consider *all* of your contributions
- Bundle your contributions up
- 3-5 things that together tell a mini-arc of your career*
- Summarized in one sentence or label
- “This is my XYZ era”

**Check your application instructions for specific criteria on contributions!*

Inclusion Criteria: Relevance, Quality, Impact

- Is it *relevant*?
 - Does it align with the CPRA's priorities? Does it demonstrate your research potential, experience, and/or attest to your strengths for the proposed research?
- Does it showcase *quality*?
 - EDI, novelty, responsibility (ethical), rigorous/reproducible, transparent
- Does it showcase *impact*?
 - Who did it benefit? When? How was it accepted or adopted?



- **Contribution 1, 2, 3, etc.**

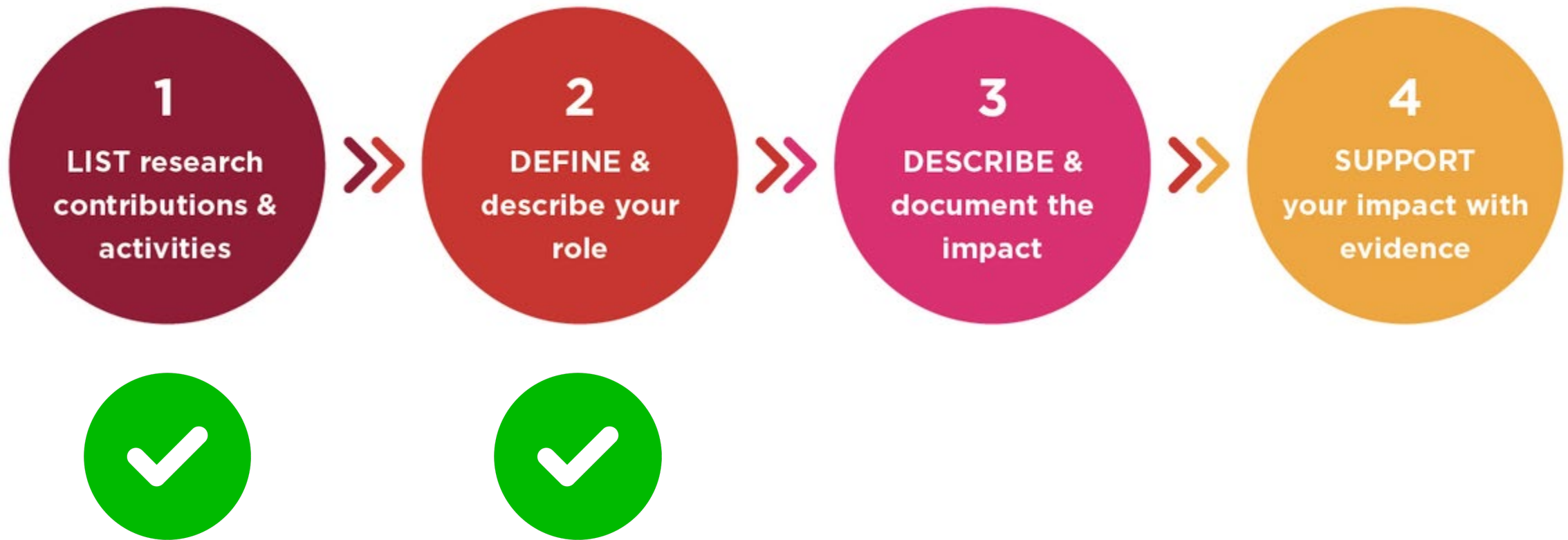
Pragmatic Approach: Steps For Contributions



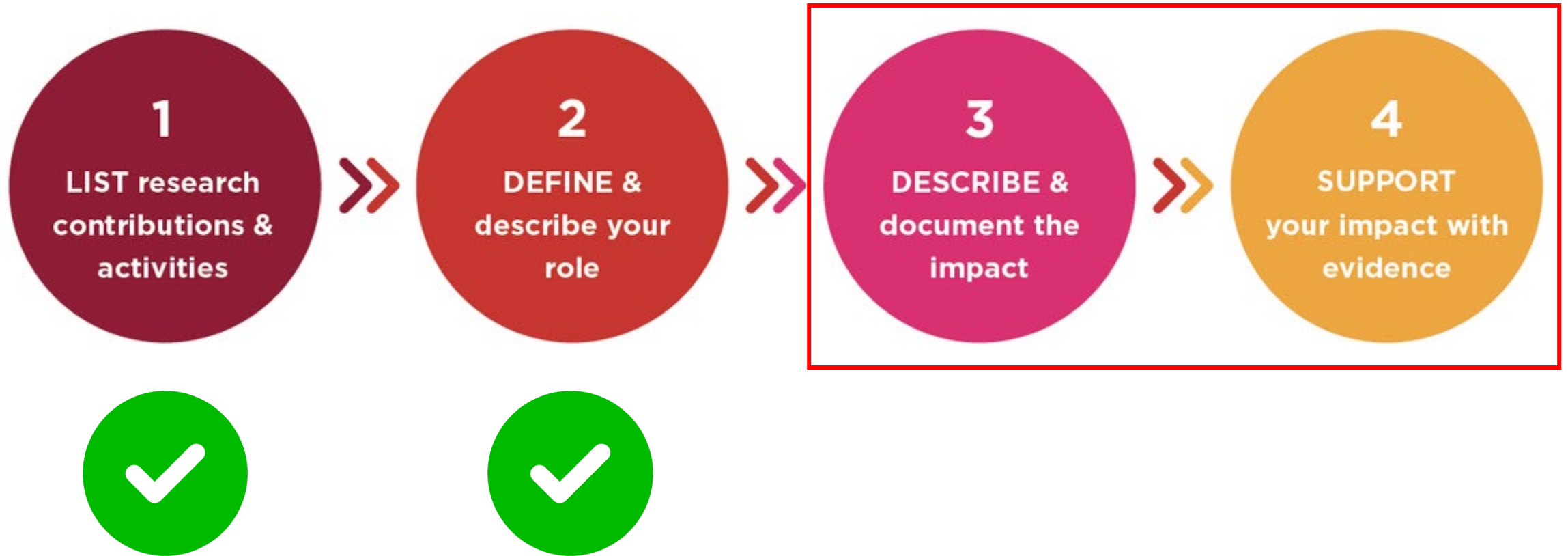
STEP 2: Defining Your Role

- Now you have your bundle(s) identified – **don't forget to define your role!**
- CIHR & NSERC reviewer criteria explicitly mention your role as critical to assessment
- Be as specific as possible – use author contribution statements for publications as a potential template:
 - *e.g., “AB and BC conceived of the idea. AB developed the theory and performed the contributions. BC prepared the manuscripts and CD and DE acted as primary editors and support...”*

Pragmatic Approach: Steps For Contributions



Pragmatic Approach: Steps For Contributions



STEPS 3 & 4: Impact and Evidence

- Ask yourself:
 - Who benefitted from the activities/contributions and when did that benefit occur?
 - What were the research objectives achieved by this project or activity?
 - Were there any benefits or outcomes from this work, expected or unexpected?
- Ask yourself:
 - How do I prove this? What kinds of data would support the difference(s) this scholarly activity has made?
 - Would my reviewer feel confident that they have seen this difference demonstrated clearly?

STEPS 3 & 4: Thinking About Indicators

- **Qualitative:**

- Interview/survey/case study excerpts
- Documentation of partnerships formed during project
- Project report summaries, endorsements, awards
- Media coverage, reviews, implementation evidence
- Testimonials

- **Quantitative:**

- Performance metrics
- Event records (attendance #s)
- Media analytics
- Aggregated totals or outputs
- Success rates for grants, total grant monies awarded, etc.
- Number of citations

Pulling It All Together

- Does each contribution statement tell a story?
- Does it highlight the works that you're most proud of?
- Does it feel supported by evidence? Does it demonstrate impact?
- Is it clearly and consistently formatted? Will the reviewer(s) be able to follow your story easily?
- Is it a standalone document that reads on its own?
- Is the tone approachable, positive and learning-focused?
- **Read and re-read it. Have your friends, family, and peers read it!**

Planning for Impact (Knowledge Mobilization)

Knowledge Mobilization is a Key Pathway to Impact

Knowledge mobilization is getting the “right information” to the “right people” in the “right format” at the “right time”

- Research Impact Canada

- **Umbrella term** – knowledge translation, implementation, etc.
- Can mean anything from one-way dissemination to co-creation
- **KMb is how you're doing/making impact**

Knowledge Mobilization is a Key Pathway to Impact

- Only **SSHRC** asks for KMb plan explicitly (in Program of Work)
 - **CIHR & NSERC**: KMb is implicitly expected – what impacts are you expected to achieve? How?
- **Start with your intended/potential impact – what benefit might your research generate?**

Identify Your Partners & Target Audiences

- Next, identify key **partners** and **audiences**
 - Who might benefit from or be impacted by this research?
 - Consider academic and non-academic knowledge users
 - Who might be left out?
- Specify & Prioritize!
- Pro tip: Think about *actors* and *influencers*
 - decision-makers, gatekeepers, brokers, and potential champions
 - When/how do they need to be engaged?



KMb is the Path: Impact is the Destination

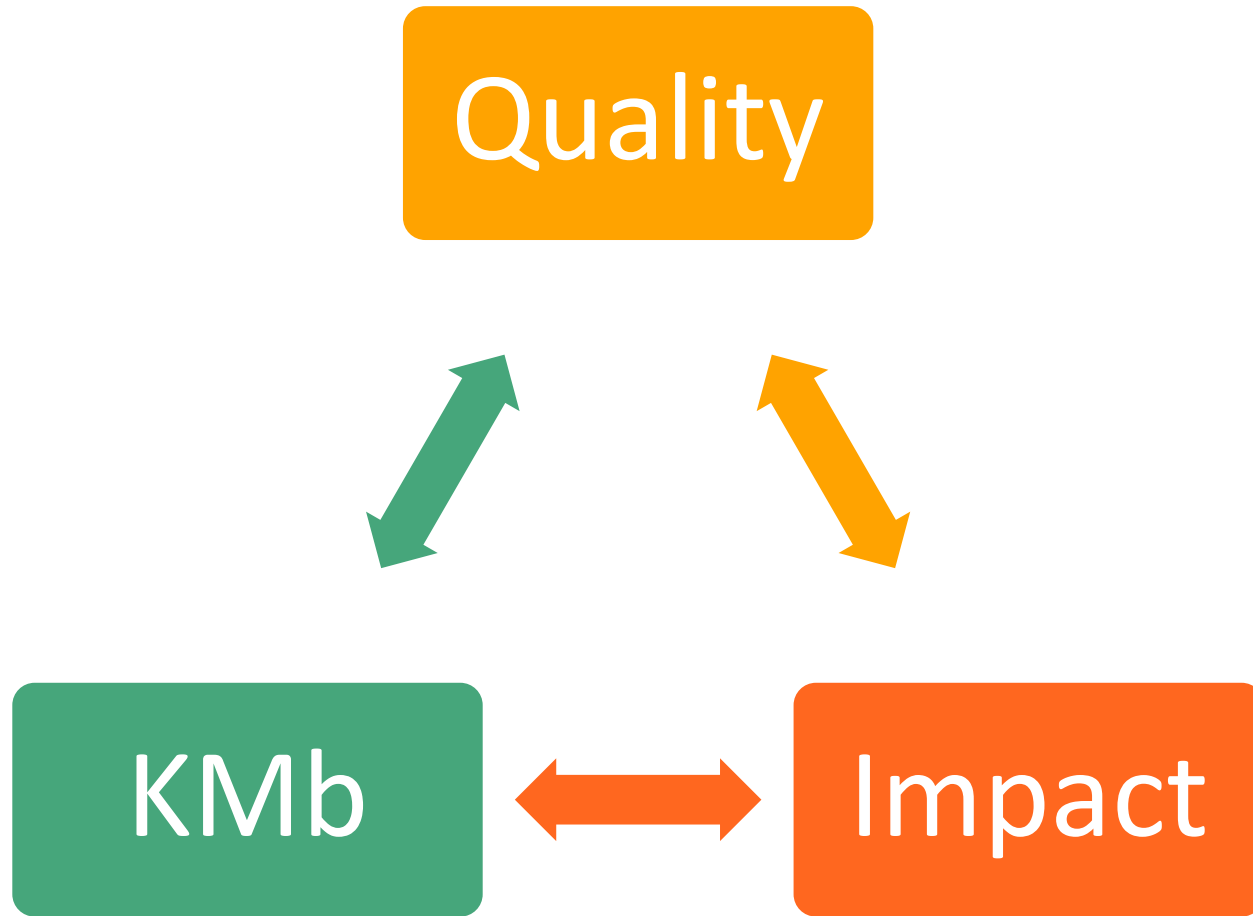


- Choose activities to reach each of your target audiences
- Your audiences and partners are there to guide you along your way
- Think about co-creation and collaboration where feasible
- Let your impact goals guide the way
- Tie your **activities** to your **outputs**, your **outcomes**, and your **impact**

What Makes a Good KMb Plan?

- **Feasible:**
 - Budget AND Timeframe
- **Integrated:**
 - Ties outputs to audiences and outcomes to impact
 - Clear logic and structure (sequenced)
- **Targeted:**
 - Focused on key higher-impact deliverables rather than saturation

Conclusion



- Each domain feeds into all the others
- Your contributions should support your KMb and vice versa
- Demonstrate that your past work informs your future work and impact
- Tell your story and show that you are right for this opportunity



Connect with Knowledge to Impact



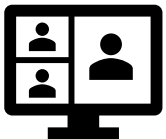
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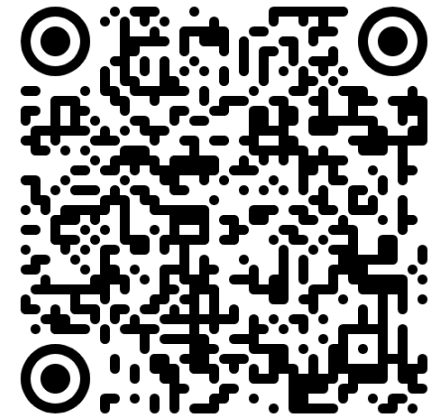
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To make your application process easier, we have created a **dedicated CPRA webpage** with everything you need in one place:
[Canada Postdoctoral Research Award \(CPRA\) | Research at UCalgary | University of Calgary](#)

- Instructions for the SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR competitions
- Direct links to agency program pages and application portals
- Detailed information about internal approval deadlines and submission procedures at UCalgary
- Helpful resources for both applicants and supervisors

For any CPRA related questions, please reach out to:
fellowships@ucalgary.ca

