

# BUILDING BLOCKS FOR IMPACT

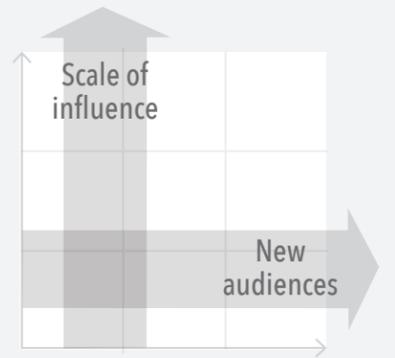


Capturing scholarly “impact” often relies on familiar suspects like h-index, JIF, and citations, despite evidence that these indicators are narrow, often misleading, and generally insufficient to capture the full richness of scholarly work. Considering a wider breadth of contributions in assessing the value of academic activities may require a new mental model.

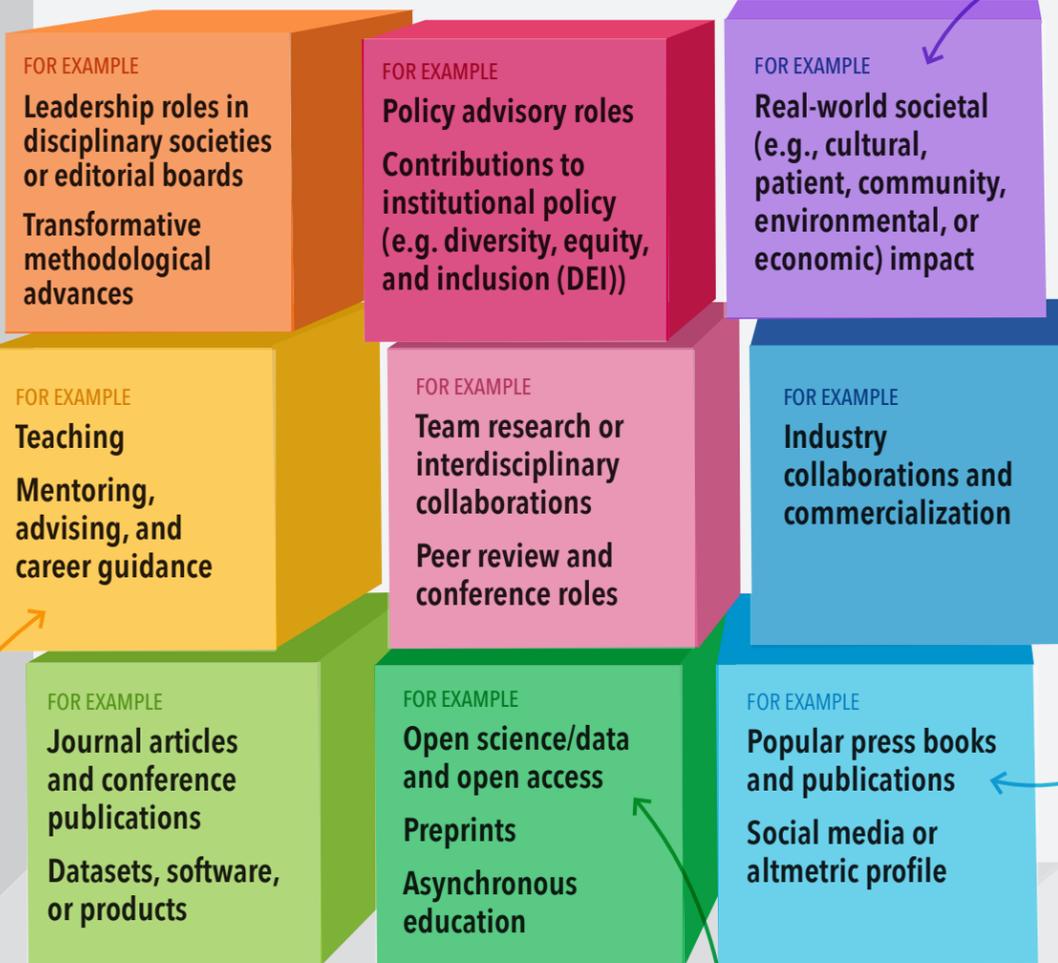
*Collaborations, mentoring, and demonstrations of eminence that allow scholars to shape the direction of fields demonstrate increasing scales of impact.*

## Scale of influence

**Two dimensions to illustrate “impact”**  
Broadening the definition of scholarly “impact” against two dimensions—the scale of contributions’ influence and new types of audiences—can help institutions recognize and reward a wider variety of academic achievements and outcomes.



**Scaled magnitude**  
resulting in significant reach, scope, or stature



Researcher Katalin Karikó’s work on mRNA immunogenicity was repeatedly dismissed by elite journals and funders, yet became key to the development of Covid-19 vaccines.

While non-academic works and social media lack the rigor of peer review, communicating the value and importance of scientific advances to wider audiences makes scholarly knowledge more approachable and meaningful.

## New audiences

*Reaching audiences outside of disciplinary or academic peers can broaden the societal value derived from scholarly work.*

Recognizing the impact created by cultivating future generations of scholars also rewards contributions of women and minoritized individuals who tend to bear heavier expectations and loads for mentoring.

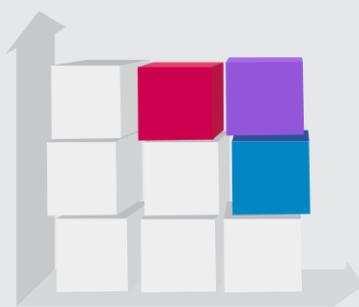
Open datasets and open science are increasingly valued for their contributions to replication and research transparency. This broadens access and rewards a mindset of collaboration over competition.

### Expanded definitions for “impact” can help individuals identify and embrace different goals.

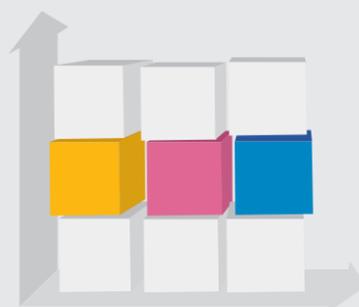
While some scholars may naturally be more oriented toward disciplinary work, seeing a broader set of “impact” characteristics allows academics to define, plan for, and pursue more personally meaningful career aspirations.



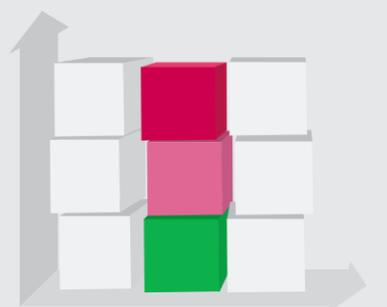
Pursuing a traditional path of deep specialization within a discipline will continue to provide credibility of expertise and a significant base of influence within one’s field.



Applied research, perspectives, and project work provide new forms of visibility and societal value through scholarly activities that directly contribute to real-life challenges.



Emphasizing how expertise can enrich other individuals, collaborations, or entire fields rewards scholarly activities that value interdisciplinarity and fostering new capabilities.



The explicit recognition of efforts that support open research or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) can enhance their status as critical components of academic values.