DRUSSA

Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa

DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey Summary

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Executive summary

The second benchmarking survey of research uptake management in sub-Sahara African universities participating in the DRUSSA programme has provided new insights into how research and research uptake are currently approached at the institutional level, as well as identifying some of the constraints universities face in getting research findings to end users.

As part of the exercise, universities responded to a comprehensive survey covering institutional priorities, policies for research, staffing for research management and uptake, and current research and research uptake activities.

This document summarises and compares responses across those universities taking part in the project. Responses have also been compared directly with those from the first benchmarking survey, disseminated in 2012. In modelling the 2014 survey largely on the 2012 version, we have been able to begin mapping evidence of change in various aspects of research uptake – strategy, processes, research communication, and stakeholder engagement – over the course of the past two years. Trends in approaches and changes undertaken will provide further impetus to discussions held at the second Leadership and Benchmarking Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, from 12-14 March 2014.

Key findings

Section A: Research uptake strategy

- There has been a reported increase in the number of offices and/or posts dedicated to research uptake since 2012. In 2014, almost all participating universities (20), compared to 12 in 2012, indicated that their institution has offices, units, or staff responsible for the communication of research results.

- We have seen a growth in interest in research uptake across all university offices participating in the survey (libraries, public relations offices, vice-chancellor's offices, industrial liaison offices, extension offices, and research management offices). None of the offices reported that interest in research uptake had diminished over the past two years.

- An increased number of respondents noted that their universities offer incentives for (academic) staff and departments to encourage the development of partnerships with the public, NGOs, and the private sector. Of those who responded to the 2012 survey, a little more than half (53%) said their university had such incentives, whilst the corresponding figure in 2014 is 72%.

Section B: Research uptake process

- There appears to have been an increase in the number of universities noting that they have mechanisms to assess the impact of their research – up from 20% of respondents in 2012, to 41% of respondents in 2014.

- More than half of the respondents (64%) indicated that their university provides training or resources to their academic staff in order to help them identify the needs of external stakeholders and plan their research accordingly. This is considerably more than in 2012, when 47% of those responding to the question said that their university offered such support.

- Respondents indicated that their university leadership and senior management are the most enthusiastic and actively supportive of research uptake, followed by research management staff. Attitudes among university leadership also appear to have improved since 2012.

Section C: Stakeholder engagement

- Over half of respondents said that their university gives high or very high priority to collaborating with non-HE actors, including partnering with the community to include their views in the research process.

- In terms of engaging external stakeholders with research results, respondents indicated that the most highly prioritised stakeholders are government ministries, departments and councils; research funders and donors; health and medical professionals; and enterprise and industry.

- Over half of the respondents noted that their university does not record or keep centralised records of research dissemination activities. However, over half also noted that their university does keep some form of record of their research activities, either through institutional repositories (where research output is tracked) or through annual reports.

Section D: Dissemination of research

- Most university offices responsible for coordinating university publicity are not exclusively concerned with research communication, and only a few universities noted that their staff have qualifications or experience of science communication.

- 80% of responding universities reported that their institution either has or is currently developing a communication strategy. The survey shows that, since 2012, five universities have started developing these strategies.

DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey Summary

Introduction

This summary provides a general overview of responses to the second benchmarking survey of the DRUSSA universities, and of how these compare to responses in 2012, in order to identify areas of change within university management, processes and practices related to the strengthening of research uptake management (RUM). It will also form the basis of discussions at the Leadership and Benchmarking Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, from 12-14 March 2014.

As we move into the second half of the DRUSSA programme, the 2014 survey focused on *change since the outset of the programme*. Its structure and questions therefore followed the general format of the 2012 survey.

This summary is organised into six sections and draws on major trends from the survey responses. It focuses largely on quantitative data, providing evidence of change from 2012 to 2014. For the purposes of this summary, we have kept information taken from the survey responses anonymous, highlighting some of the commonalities and distinctions between responses without identifying the respondents directly.

As noted, the 2014 survey sections correspond to those from 2012, looking at different aspects of research uptake. However, some alterations have been made to accommodate the fact that we now know more about how research uptake is organised in the participating universities. The first section – **Research uptake strategy** – covers key areas of university management, structures, and functions relating to the communication and uptake of research. It is more focused on top-level support for research uptake than the previous survey, which sought to get a broader overview of how research uptake was organised at each university.

The next section, **Research uptake processes**, looks at how university processes work to communicate research results, including how results are prepared and assessed for the intended end users of the research. This section has shifted focus towards assessing the impact of research on end users, as opposed to issues of intellectual property and commercialisation.

The section on **Stakeholder engagement** aims to determine university procedures in engaging external stakeholders, looking more closely at the relationships universities seek to develop with key stakeholders in order to drive research results into policy and practice.

Section 4 addresses university processes for **Communicating research** to the wider public (rather than specific stakeholders) in order to raise the profile of the university.

The survey also asked universities to identify the **level of Impact** that the DRUSSA programme has had on various areas of research uptake, the responses to which are examined in Section 5.

The information collected in the first survey has been used to form the baseline for university development over the programme using 'process benchmarking' – whereby universities set their own 'benchmarks' or areas to be developed. These benchmarks – synthesised into Statements of Good Practice during the first benchmarking exercise – have been further refined by the participating universities and have begun to be incorporated into their research uptake plans. Section 6, therefore, is a summary of the **Research uptake plans** that have been collected from the DRUSSA universities so far.

The results of the current survey aim to support universities' research uptake plans further by noting areas of strength and weakness, and by considering where to direct efforts to support the operationalisation of priority areas for each university.

The summary is also structured to support dialogue and learning at the 2014 Leadership and Benchmarking Conference in Cape Town. The sections in this summary correspond both to the survey's sections and to the thematic sessions planned for the conference, although universities will also have the opportunity to explore regional results at the conference. In this respect, the focus of this summary and the planned benchmarking sessions have shifted from the first benchmarking exercise – in which results and discussions were organised for each regional grouping – to a focus on thematic threads and how these can be developed and strengthened. The conference will also provide further opportunities to explore the effect DRUSSA has had at each university and how the programme can help universities operationalise their research uptake plans.

Following the 2014 Leadership and Benchmarking Conference in Cape Town, a full report will be produced, building on this summary. The report will include the quantitative elements and evidence of change found here, but will also provide more analysis of trends identified through qualitative areas of the survey, in combination with the outcomes and resolutions that emerge from discussions at the Cape Town conference. The full DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey Report will be disseminated to participants in due course, after the conference has concluded.

1. Research uptake strategy

Research strategy

The programme has revealed a view that research uptake is considered part of the overall research process and should therefore be incorporated into a university's overall research strategy, rather than form a stand-alone strategy. The results of the 2014 survey appear to support this viewpoint. The survey found that all universities participating in the programme have overall research strategies, including two universities whose strategies were in development when the previous survey was conducted in 2012.

A majority of universities (86%) also indicated that their research strategy includes an emphasis/focus on research uptake, including two universities which had previously indicated that their policies only partly emphasised research uptake. This is a significant increase compared with 2012, when only five universities indicated that their policies considered research uptake and with most universities leaving the response blank. This focus is articulated in various ways, such as the inclusion of research uptake in the assessment of applications for internal research funds and in the evaluation of academic staff for promotion, support for communications and media training for researchers, or the direct inclusion of research uptake as a key strategic pillar in the university's research strategy.

Research uptake structures
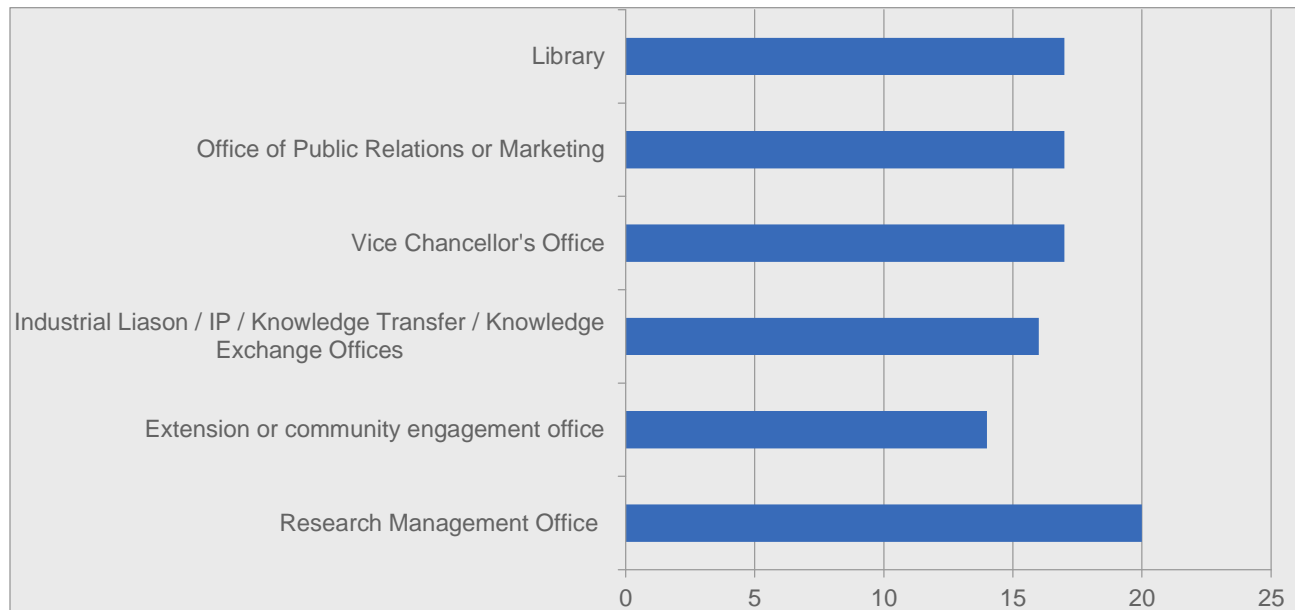
Offices/post dedicated to research uptake

There has been a reported increase in the number of offices and/or posts dedicated to research uptake since 2012. In 2014, almost all universities (20), compared to 12 in 2012, indicated that their institution has offices, units, or staff responsible for the communication of research results. This increase can be accounted for in a variety of ways: some universities have set up new offices or appointed new staff, whilst others have strengthened or restructured existing offices; others have done a combination of both.

Offices with an interest in research uptake

The survey asked participants to indicate which offices – in their view – have an interest in research uptake. That is to say, offices that *could* have a role to play in communicating research results, whether this has been formally recognised or not.

The research management office, the library, and the PR/marketing office were the three offices most often cited as having an interest in research uptake in both 2012 and 2014, with a marginal increase for all three between the two surveys. Since 2012, there has been a considerable increase in the importance placed on external advice and commercial services-related offices: half of the participating universities indicated that external advisory boards/commercial services have an interest in research uptake, compared to 20% in 2012. More universities also said that their industrial liaison office or offices managing intellectual property and/or knowledge transfer/exchange have an interest in research uptake compared to 2012. In this context, a few universities noted that their institutions include the considerations of industry when planning research goals and projects, through policies, guidelines, strategies, and advisory groups. Finally, the vice-chancellor's office has entered the top offices cited as having interest in research uptake, with 17 universities now stating the importance of the vice-chancellor's office in communicating research, compared to 12 in 2012. This could be related to many new and existing directorates of research (or similar offices) reporting directly to the vice-chancellor's office.

**Figure 1: Offices with an interest in research uptake – 2014**

Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Figure 1 shows the top six offices noted as having an interest in research uptake. All but two universities indicated that the research management office has an interest in communication research results. This is closely followed by the library, the PR/marketing office, and the vice-chancellor's office. Figure 2 shows the change from 2012-2014 (in absolute numbers), and shows that the largest increase can be seen for external advisory boards/commercial services and industrial liaison/IP/knowledge transfer/knowledge exchange offices.

As was the case in 2012, respondents indicated that extension and community engagement offices have a lower level of interest in research uptake when compared to the other five offices listed. Reasons for this may include the absence of extension offices across the sample, or that research uptake is primarily driven through research management, public relations, or industrial liaison and technology transfer structures, suggesting varied interpretations of the scope of what is considered 'research uptake' across participating universities. This may be an area for further exploration during the Cape Town conference.

Figure 2: Offices with an interest in research uptake – 2012-2014
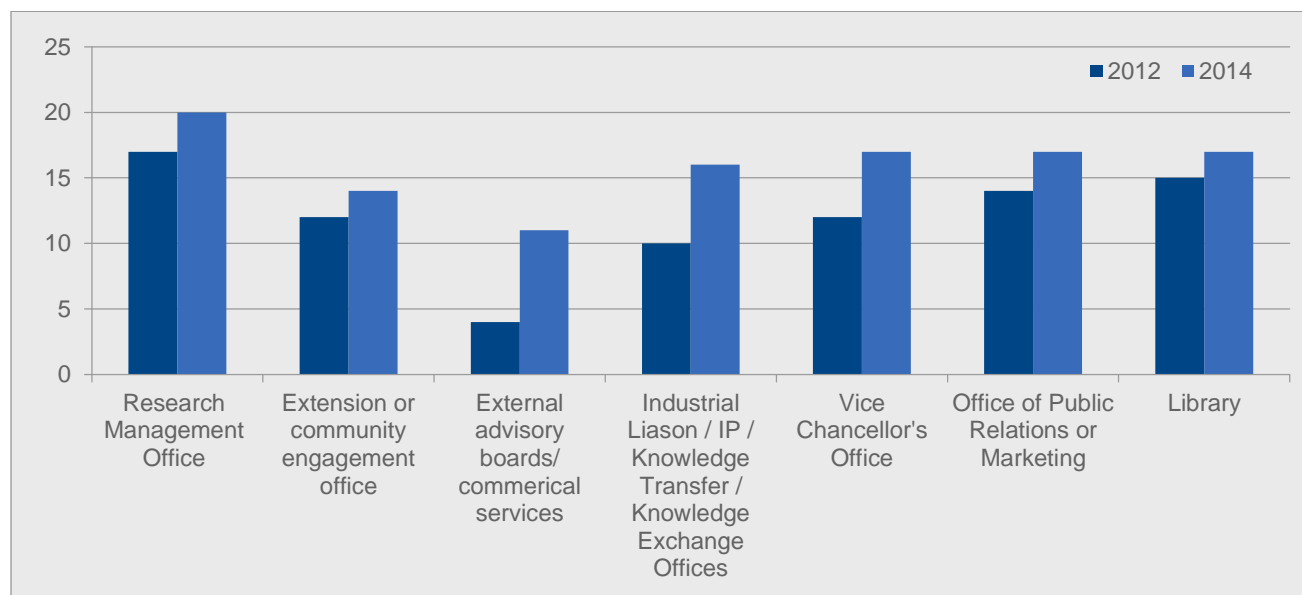
Sources: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2012 (sample: 23); DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Looking specifically at degrees of change in the levels of interest in research uptake between 2012 and 2014, the highest growth in interest is reported amongst external advisory board/commercial services, with 11 respondents in 2014 indicating that these offices are interested in research uptake, compared with just 4 in 2012. Libraries and extension offices have seen the lowest levels of reported increased interest, with just two more respondents indicating interest now than previously.

While rates of growth in interest in research uptake change across the office types listed in Figure 2, we nevertheless have seen a growth in interest across all offices. None of the offices reported that interest in research uptake had diminished over the past two years.
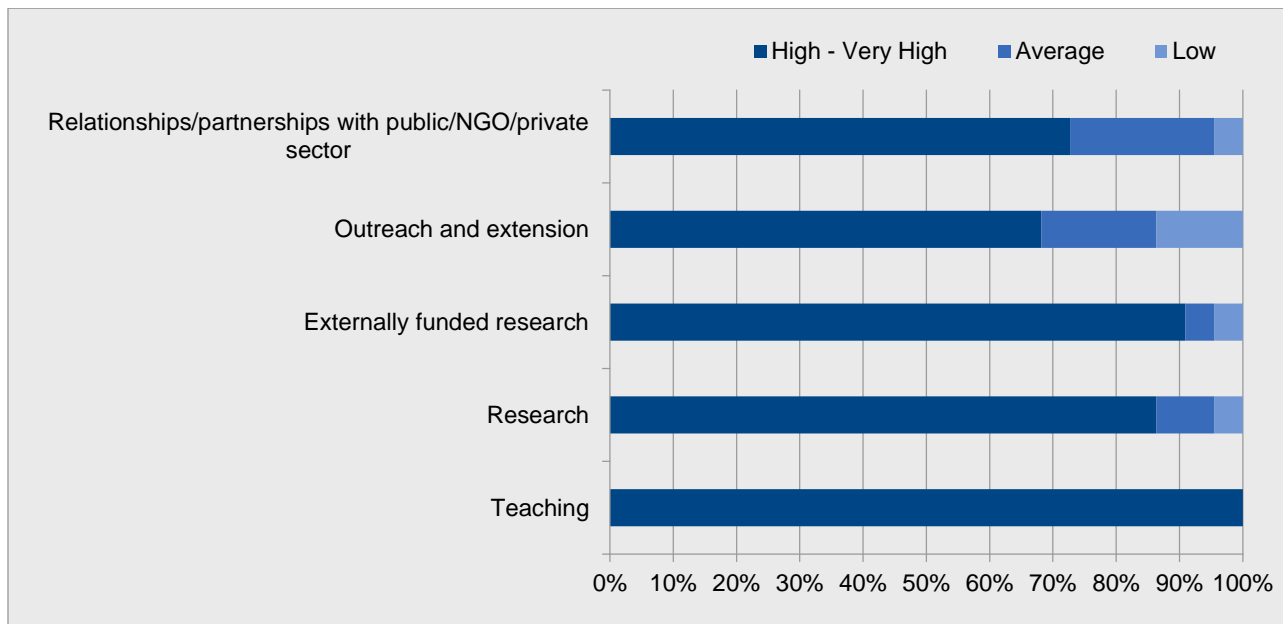
University priorities

Areas of university priority

As in 2012, teaching remains the top priority for universities responding to the 2014 survey, closely followed by research (general) and externally funded research. There has, however, been a slight decrease in those giving high priority to general research, in favour of externally funded research – those who considered the latter to be a very high priority is 20% higher than in 2012. This compares against a marked increase in the high prioritisation of outreach and extension between 2012 and 2014, suggesting a correlation between the need for research uptake and the relative increase of prioritisation given to externally funded research.

Teaching, research, and community service form the core mission of most participating universities, and these are often used as assessable criteria in the promotion process. There has, however, been an increase in respondents noting that relationships with external stakeholders are a high or very high priority for their university, supported through new offices to manage external grants or by encouraging staff to engage in externally funded research though profit sharing arrangements. At the same time, staff are increasingly expected to win competitive grants for research and are assessed on their research output. These results match the initiatives mentioned above,
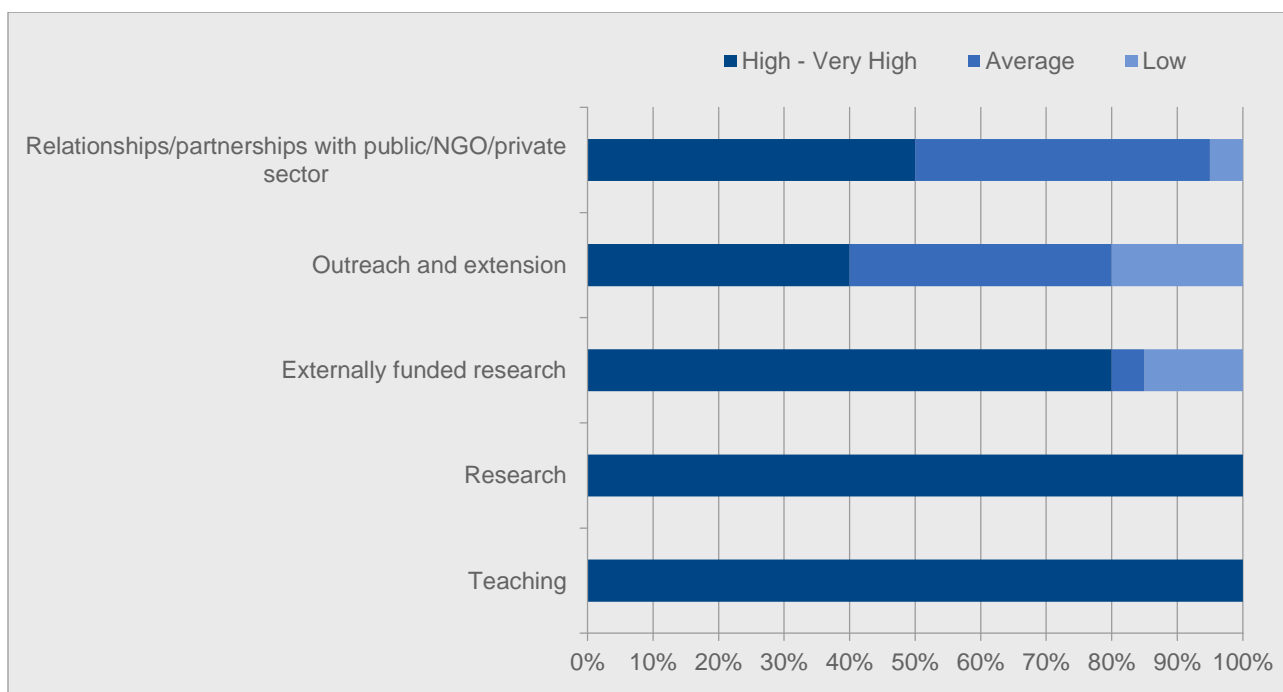
whereby the interest and needs of industry are increasingly important in the design and consideration of new research projects.

Figure 3: University priority areas –2014

Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Figure 4: University priority areas – 2012

Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2012 (sample: 23)

Links or partnerships with the public, government, NGOs, or the private sector

All but one university either have or are developing mechanisms to develop partnerships/links with external stakeholders such as NGOs, industry or businesses. In 2012, 75% of corresponding universities indicated that such mechanisms were in place at their universities. This corresponds to an overall increase in the importance awarded to the needs and interests of external stakeholders (as noted previously), with a particular emphasis on industry.

There has also been an increase in respondents noting that their universities have incentives for (academic) staff and departments to encourage the development of partnerships with the public, NGOs, and the private sector. Of those who responded to the 2012 survey, a little more than half (53%) said their university had such incentives, whereas the corresponding figure in 2014 is 72%. The latter includes those who indicated that their university is currently developing incentives, both for departments and for individual academic staff.

Respondents to the 2014 survey listed a range of incentives for developing links with external stakeholders, both individual and institutional, which mainly relate to engaging in research funded by industry or businesses. For individual academic staff, these include non-financial and financial incentives such as incorporating research activity (particularly externally funded research), research output and community engagement into formal promotion assessments, and reducing teaching loads in order to allow more time for research. Among financial incentives, respondents noted that their universities have policies for profit sharing when engaging in externally funded research.

At the institutional level, respondents also reported a range of incentives to support the development of links/partnerships with external stakeholders. These include the use of memorandums of understanding (MoUs), and the introduction of new policies (for research incentives, partnerships, etc) to guide relationships with government, with the public and private sectors, and with communities who may benefit from university research. Such incentives also include establishing (or strengthening) centres for innovation or incubation, creating offices to raise or manage funds from external donors (including the public and industry), and linking the approval of internal applications for research funding to a consideration of industry needs and demands.

However, whilst there appears to have been considerable movement towards rewarding engagement with external stakeholders, some responses to the 2014 survey indicate that the definition of 'incentives' has narrowed to become more precise (or not considered if not formalised into guidelines or policies), whereas these were considered sufficiently supportive of building external relationships in the previous survey (as indicated by 'yes' responses).

2. Research uptake processes

This section of the survey looked at the processes by which universities communicate and prepare research results to ensure that they can be readily understood by external stakeholders. It examined how universities assess these communication activities and determine their impact, as well as looking more closely at university staff attitudes towards research uptake activities and whether or not these have changed since the beginning of the programme.

Determining the impact of research

The 2014 survey asked participants a number of questions to find out if their universities have mechanisms to assess the wider impact of their research, as well as to assess the *effectiveness* of such mechanisms.

Less than half of respondents (41%) indicated that their university has mechanisms to assess the impact of their research. The number of universities reporting that they evaluate their own dissemination mechanisms to determine their effectiveness perhaps unsurprisingly matches the number of those who indicated that they have such mechanisms. In the 2012 survey, these two questions – the first enquiring about formalised ways of assessing the wider impact of research and the other enquiring about the *effectiveness* of these ways – were conflated and slightly differently worded[1], therefore comparisons will not be exact.

Nevertheless, there appears to have been an increase in the number of universities noting that they have mechanisms to assess the impact of their research – up from 20% of respondents to 41%. These results line up well with further findings from the 2014 survey which indicate an increase in universities noting that they have mechanisms to obtain *feedback* from potential users regarding the usefulness of their university's research and the extent to which users benefit from it.

Many respondents noted that current mechanisms to assess the impact of their research and its effectiveness are not yet in place or are very weak at their universities. However, respondents did highlight current efforts to provide end users with an opportunity to give feedback on research they could benefit from – including demonstrations within communities, open days to which potential users of research are invited, monitoring of media, and meetings of external funders at which immediate feedback can be given on research output and impact. One university also noted that they have been carrying out evaluation surveys among staff in order to show changes since the start of the DRUSSA programme.

Some respondents also noted that they are making efforts to improve their monitoring of research impact – by incorporating impact assessment in their research policies, for example. One university is currently engaged in a project which aims to improve stakeholder engagement by focusing on how the university interacts with its stakeholders, what kind of knowledge is generated, and who benefits from this interaction.

A few universities also noted that they monitor and assess the impact of research through the measurement of research output – the number of publications, articles and citations, as well as information on grants and contracts, for example. In this regard, it is interesting to note that one university's response indicates that this type

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[1] Survey question in 2012: Are there any monitoring and evaluation procedures in place at your university to assess the external impact of dissemination and communication of research results and research uptake? Survey questions in 2014: Are there any mechanisms in place at your university to assess the wider impact of university research? Are there any mechanisms in place at your university to assess the effectiveness of mechanisms to disseminate and communicate research results? (i.e. assessing the effectiveness of radio and TV, external newsletters, the university website, and other means of dissemination).

of assessment is not considered sufficient to gauge the impact of university research, whereas other responses clearly consider it a way of measuring impact.

Communicating research to relevant stakeholders

More than half of the respondents (64%) indicated that their university provides training or resources to their academic staff in order to help them identify the needs of external stakeholders and plan their research accordingly. This is considerably more than in 2012, when 47% of those responding to the question said that their university offered such support.

Attitudes towards research uptake

A new question in the survey enquired about university staff attitudes towards research uptake within each university. Participants indicated that their university leadership/principal officers are the most enthusiastic and actively supportive of research uptake, followed by research management staff (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Enthusiastic, actively supportive, and engaged attitudes towards research uptake – 2014
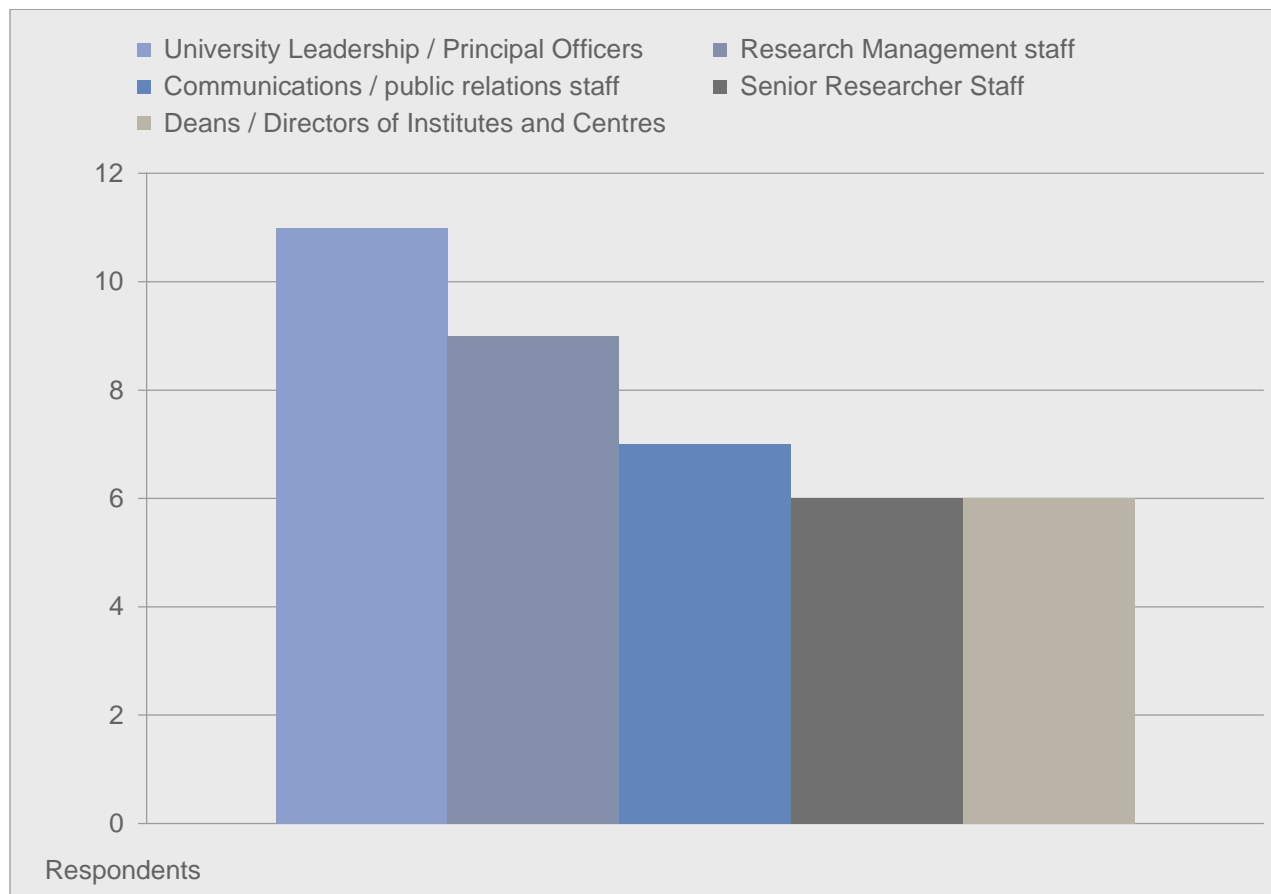
Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

A third of respondents also indicated that dean/directors of institutes and centres and junior research staff are supportive of research uptake, but that they are not actively engaged in research uptake activities. Very few respondents said that staff are negative towards research uptake, but quite a few noted that staff are interested yet do not have experience of the area.

Change in staff attitudes towards research uptake

The 2012 benchmarking survey did not include a question on university staff attitudes towards research uptake. However, participants in the 2014 survey were asked to indicate attitudes in 2012, if these were known. More than half of universities noted attitudes in 2012 and, of these, all but one respondent noted changes in university staff attitudes towards research uptake. These changes were mostly positive, with respondents indicating an improvement in staff attitudes as well as more active involvement in research uptake activities. This is particularly noticeable among university leadership staff, but also among communications and public relations staff.

3. Stakeholder engagement

This section aimed to determine the procedures used in engaging external stakeholders by gauging how participating universities work with key decision-makers and users of research findings to drive research results into policy and practice. The questions in this section were not included in the 2012 survey and therefore direct comparisons cannot be made. Where appropriate, links with findings from the 2012 survey are considered.

University-stakeholder relationships

Participating universities were asked to provide details of their relationship with external stakeholders in terms of which stakeholder relationships they **prioritise**, the perceived **power** of stakeholders in influencing societal change, and how **strong** they consider their relationships with the respective stakeholders to be.

The stakeholders most frequently indicated as a very high priority were government ministries, departments and councils, research funders/donors, health and medical practitioners, and industry (see Table 1). These stakeholders were also associated with strong relationships and perceived to have strong power to influence societal change.

For the remainder of the stakeholders, the responses were more widely spread, with clusters at both ends of the scale. For example, at first glance, the most frequent response with regard to publishers indicates that universities perceive the relationship to be weaker than publishers' power to influence change. However, looking more closely, there is a wide spread in the responses, with almost half of the sample indicating that the relationship is strong, whereas around half say it is medium or below. These findings may merit closer examination at the benchmarking sessions in Cape Town, to unlock some of the disparities in the data.

For more details on views regarding university engagement with external stakeholders and how universities compare to the modes, see *Appendix.*

Table 1: University-stakeholder engagement 2014

UNIVERSITY-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: MODE AVERAGES OF PRIORITY RELATIONSHIPS, POWER OF AGENTS, AND STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS – 2014			
	PRIORITY	POWER	STRENGTH
Government ministries, departments and councils	10	10	9
Research funders and donors	10	8	9
Health and medical professionals	10	8	8
Enterprise and industry	10	8	7
Farmers and agriculturalists	9	8	7
Teachers and educators	9	7	7
Media agents	9	6	6
Publishers	8	8	6
Other universities (domestically and internationally)	8	5	7
Informal sector	7	8	4
NGOs, INGOs, and international associations	7	5	5
Environmental groups and agencies	6	6	8

Mode averages: These are the ratings (using a scale of 1-10) most frequently reported,1 being the least important and 10 the most important.

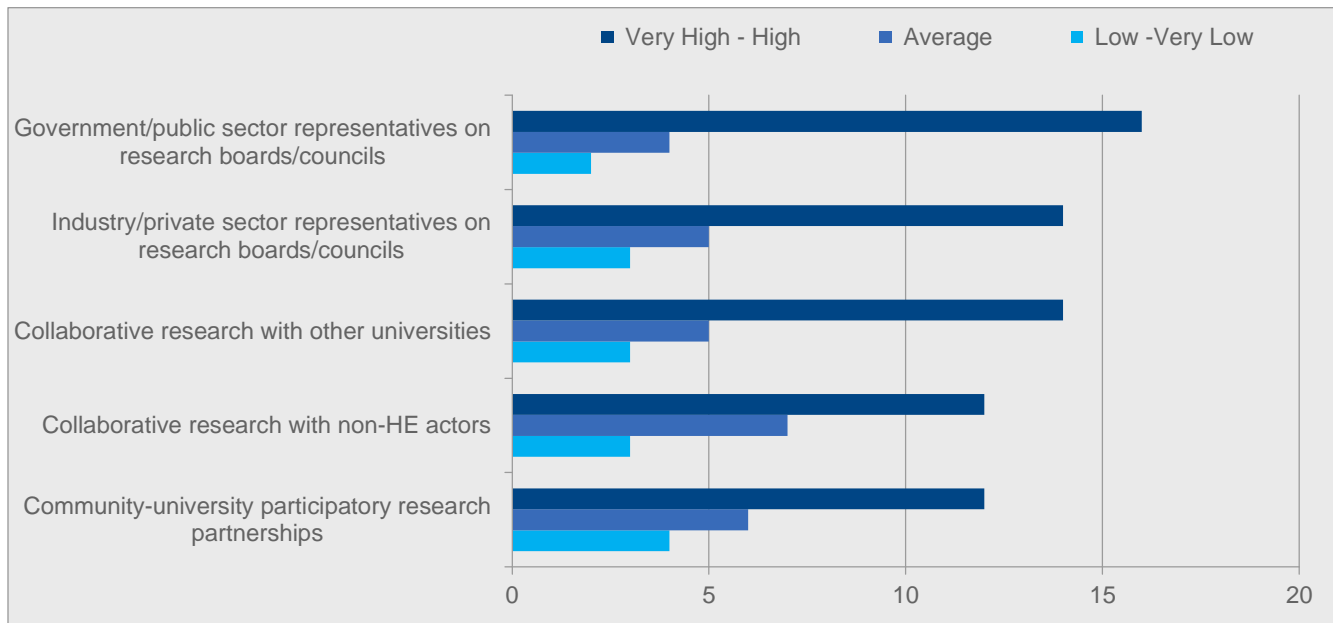*Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)*

Priority mechanisms to engage external stakeholders

Respondents were also asked to tell us which mechanisms they favour in engaging key external stakeholders in university research. The survey found that universities give the highest priority to including public and private sector representatives (e.g. government and industry) on university research boards or councils, and to collaborative research projects with other universities. Interestingly, over half of respondents also said that their university gave high or very high priority to collaborating with non-HE actors, including partnering with the community to include their views in the research process.

Interestingly, results also show that over half of respondents (55%) give high or very high priority to involving external stakeholders at the agenda setting and dissemination stages of the research process (particularly agenda setting), whilst only a third give the same priority rating when it comes to involving stakeholders at the design stages of research projects.

This can be linked to responses in 2012 (although the exact question was not asked), in which many respondents indicated that the involvement of external stakeholders was related to funding agency requirements or included in research contracts, i.e. external stakeholders or beneficiaries of research are involved in the planning/design of research if this is required by funders or contracts.

Figure 6: Top five mechanisms to engage external stakeholders – 2014

Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Figure 7: Engaging stakeholders in the research cycle – 2014
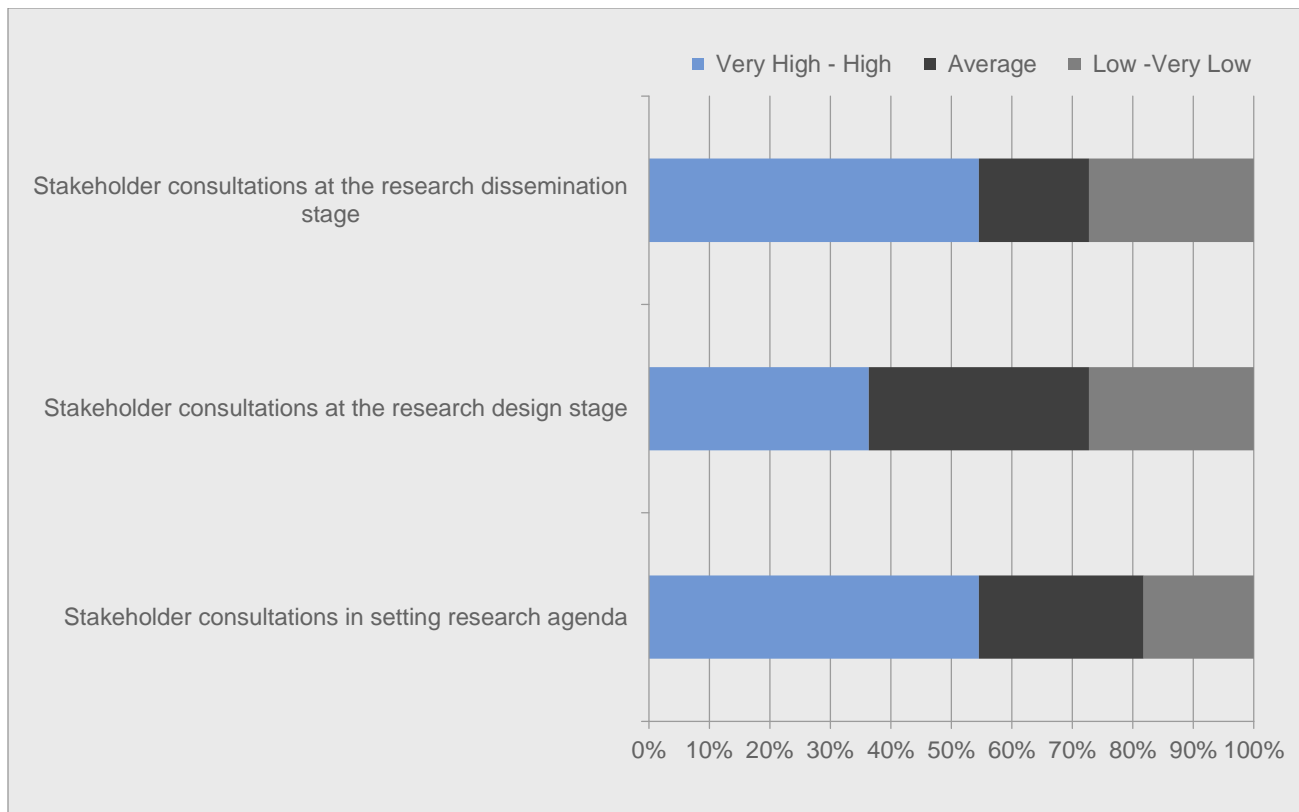
Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Recording research dissemination activities

Over half of the respondents noted that their university does not record or keep centralised records of research dissemination activities. However, over half also noted that their university does keep *some form of record of their research activities*, either through institutional repositories (where research output is tracked) or though annual reports, summarising research activities. Some universities also noted that their university keeps records of research activities at the departmental level – e.g. in the university library, the research office, or individual departments or faculties. None of these, however, relate specifically to recording dissemination activities but rather to research activities in general, which may or may not include dissemination. It is also interesting to note that a majority of universities (15) did not indicate any change with regard to the recording of research dissemination activities, since the 2012 survey.

4. Communicating research

This section of the survey aimed to determine the universities' processes for *communicating and publicising* research findings. It looked at the ways in which participating universities publicise research results in order to raise the profile of their institution. Rather than report on particular approaches to specific stakeholders (as in Section 3), universities were asked to tell us about how they approach the wider public to make research findings known.

Coordinating university publicity

Participants were first asked to tell us where in their university overall publicity material is coordinated. Almost all respondents said their universities have central offices that are responsible for collating and distributing publicity material – typically the public relations office or marketing and communications office, often working with departments, faculties, research centres, etc, in order to collect the relevant information.

Most university offices responsible for coordinating university publicity are not exclusively concerned with research communication, and only a few universities noted that their staff have qualifications or experience of science communication – similar to findings in 2012. A majority of staff in PR offices, however, are reported to have qualifications in PR-related subjects, which is an increase of three universities since 2012. Over half of universities also indicated that staff in these offices have degrees related to marketing, communications and journalism, ranging from diploma to PhD level. Some universities particularly noted the DRUSSA short courses and MPhils.

However, the responses indicate that quite a few universities have not made any distinction between the different categories of communication, reporting the same qualifications (and staff) across all categories (i.e. PR, marketing and communication, journalism and science communication).

In some universities, responsibility for publicising research results is shared among a number of offices – such as research and/or publications offices, libraries, or particular departments or centres – which separately communicate the research results emanating from their individual units to specific audiences. However, these often work with the PR and ICT offices in order to distribute publicity more widely.

There have been relatively few reported changes in offices responsible for university publicity and/or research communication between 2012 and 2014, although some universities have recorded additional offices, such as the research and/or publications office and the library.

Communication and marketing strategies

Almost all universities responding to the survey (80%) said that their institution either has or is currently developing a communication strategy. The findings of the survey show that since 2012, five universities have started developing these strategies. On the other hand, only a third of universities have marketing strategies (36%), with a further four universities currently developing these strategies. However, in the 2014 survey, respondents were asked to report on communication and marketing strategies separately, whereas in 2012 these two were conflated into one question. Therefore, the above comparison with 2012 should be viewed with some caution.

Communicating research results

Announcing new research

The most cited channels through which to announce new research projects externally were external media (including print, TV, radio, and social media), newsletters and journal articles, and the university website. Many universities also noted the use of public-facing events, including open days, conferences, stakeholder meetings, and demonstrations of research within communities that may benefit from the research. Around half of the participating universities have not made any substantial differentiation between external and internal modes of communication, as they have indicated very similar channels to reach their external audiences. Additionally, some universities have indicated channels that would usually be considered as external – such as newspapers, radio and public lectures, and open days – to reach staff within the university.

Most universities, however, use the university website or newsletters to announce new research internally, followed by annual reporting to senior university management and through internal email distributions lists, although the latter has decreased in use since 2012 (see Figure 9).

For the most part, these have not changed significantly since the 2012 survey, although survey participants noted an increased use of external media − including social media, print, TV and radio and the website − to announce new research.

Communication channels

Respondents were asked to let us know of the ways in which they communicate and publicise research results. Figure 8 shows that the most commonly used communication channels for research results are conference papers, public lectures and internal newsletters, as well as the university website (as noted above). The use of conference papers and internal newsletters is an interesting finding since these would typically be directed to staff within the university or academics at other institutions, rather than to potential users or beneficiaries of research. These channels may also be less accessible to the wider public, both in practical and language terms. However, there has also been an increase in the use of external newsletters aimed at the general public, used by 15 universities in 2014, compared to eight in 2012 (see Figure 9).

Six more universities noted that their university now has a database of research staff with media engagement experience. The use of email distribution lists to communicate research results to external stakeholders, on the other hand, has decreased since 2012, as has the use of publications directed specifically towards the public sector (government and NGOs, for example).

Figure 8: Most used research communication channels – 2014
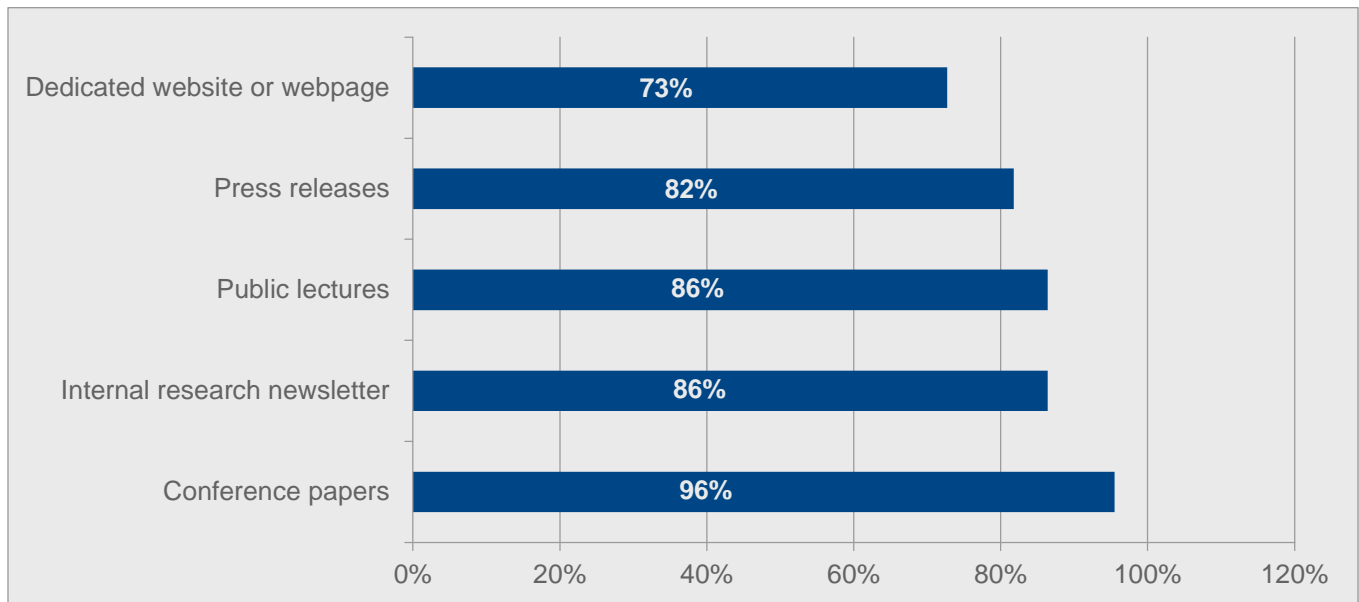
Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

Figure 9: Communication channels used by universities – 2012-2014
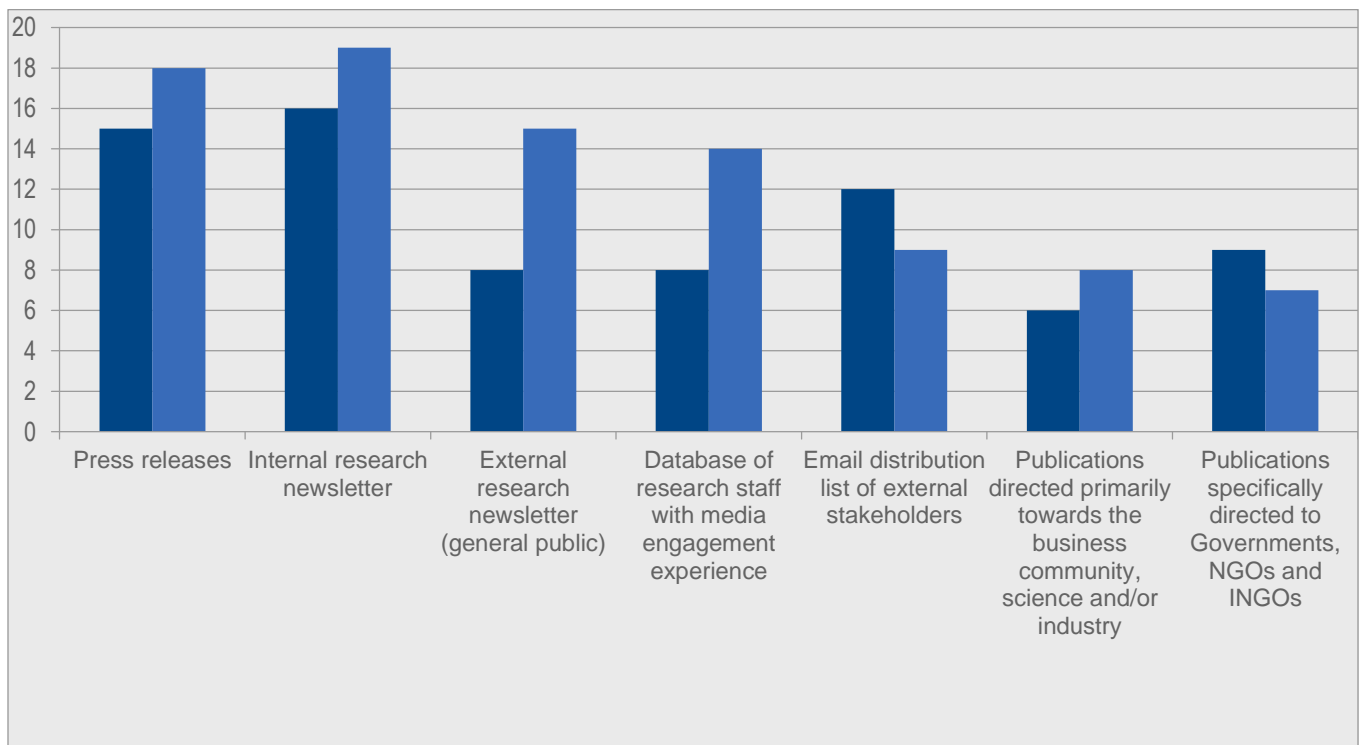
Source: DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2012 (sample: 23); DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey 2014 (sample: 22)

5. The impact of DRUSSA

In the 2014 survey, a new question was introduced to explore the degree to which DRUSSA is seen to have influenced change and/or attitudes towards research uptake management, specific to each section theme. For ease of reporting, findings from these four questions have been collated from these original four sections and aggregated and analysed here.

Measuring the impact of DRUSSA on institutional change

Each section of the benchmarking survey concluded with a question about the extent to which DRUSSA is perceived to have impacted upon institutional change, relating to each section's focus area in particular. Respondents could choose between *not very significantly; somewhat; significantly;* and *very significantly*; as well as *don't know.*

Perceived DRUSSA impact on **research uptake strategy**	Count	%
Don't know	1	5%
Somewhat	7	32%
Significantly	8	36%
Very significantly	6	27%
Grand total	**22**	**100%**

Perceived DRUSSA impact on **research uptake processes**	Count	%
Don't know	1	5%
Not very significantly	1	5%
Somewhat	4	18%
Significantly	12	55%
Very significantly	4	18%
Grand total	**22**	**100%**

Perceived DRUSSA impact on **stakeholder engagement**	Count	%
Don't know	1	5%
Not very significantly	2	9%

Somewhat	10	45%
Significantly	7	32%
Very significantly	2	9%
Grand total	**22**	**100%**

Perceived DRUSSA impact on **communication of research**	Count	%
Don't know	1	5%
Not very significantly	3	14%
Somewhat	9	41%
Significantly	7	32%
Very significantly	2	9%
Grand total	**22**	**100%**

Correlating with earlier findings suggesting that attitudes towards research uptake have changed most amongst university leaders and senior management, it is in the area of **research uptake strategy** where we see DRUSSA have the most significant impact in influencing change. 27% of respondents reported that DRUSSA has had a *very significant* impact in this regard, with 36% reporting *significant* impact (a total of 63% positive impact overall). No respondents reported that DRUSSA has had no impact at all on research uptake strategy, although roughly one third reported the programme had only *somewhat* impacted upon strategic change.

As regards research uptake strategy, one respondent told us that DRUSSA has enabled the creation of a 'platform for discussion for the development of possible strategies. Researchers and public relations staff from different sections of the university had the opportunity interact and share ideas regarding improving research uptake activities'. Another indicated that 'Working with the top executive offices of the university (VC and DVC) has increased research uptake awareness. More staff members are now questioning the relevance of their researches and incorporating research uptake strategies in their proposal at the onset of formulation. There has been increased engagement with different stakeholders by the university in trying to understand what the needs and problems of our society are in our effort to solve and address these through research'.

Regarding **research uptake processes,** we found there was a lower level of *very significant* impact reported, but a higher level of positive impact overall. A majority of respondents, 55%, reported that DRUSSA has had a *significant* impact on influencing research uptake processes, with a further 18% reporting that the impact has been *very significant* (totalling to 73% positive impact overall). One respondent indicated that the programme has *not very significantly* impacted upon research uptake processes between 2012 and 2014.

Respondents also provided examples of the impact of DRUSSA on these processes. One respondent told us that 'Before the inception of the DRUSSA programme, the research office had very little information on the extent of impact and research uptake. This has also resulted in a number of policies aimed at improving the impact and research uptake. Therefore it can be stated that the way research has been funded has changed due to the

DRUSSA programme.' Another, though, offered a note of caution: 'This is [a] work in progress. DRUSSA must understand that this is a very ambitious project and we don't have the ideal implementation capacity to move this along speedily'.

On balance, it is in these first two sections – research uptake strategy and processes – where we see the highest levels of perceived impact for the DRUSSA programme thus far.

A total of 42% of respondents reported a positive impact on **stakeholder engagement** (32% reporting *significant* impact, and 9% reporting *very significant* impact), while a further 9% thought the impact had been *not very significant.* Of the four sections, it is in stakeholder engagement where we see the highest level of respondents indicating that DRUSSA has *somewhat* impacted institutional change – with 45% of respondents selecting this option.

In this section, respondents told us that impact may be slower to measure than in other sections. 'The area of stakeholder engagement has been indirectly influenced by DRUSSA in that we have to date focused on the research activity processes and not on the management of stakeholder[s],' said one. Another said that stakeholder engagement is 'still new and [we are] building capacity. Impact will be realised later', while others told us that attitudes towards the importance of such engagement have changed, even if the realisation of markedly improved stakeholder engagement remains a work in progress.

Finally, as regards DRUSSA's impact on the **communication of research**, we see similar numbers to the section on stakeholder engagement, with 45% of respondents reporting positive impact (32% *significant,* and 9% *very significant,* as before), though there is a slightly higher rate (14%) of those reporting that impact has been *not very significant.* One respondent told us that attitudinal change has been achieved, but that more needs to be done to translate such change into new models of communication. 'Despite the awareness created by DRUSSA, [our office] lacks capacity in science communication,' said one respondent. Another respondent reported that the DRUSSA campus visits and activities 'have driven us to work more deliberately with the institutional marketing department. However, we have a long way to go to ensure an improvement in public relations at the project level i.e. at each and every project level. The goal thus is to influence practice. Thus at this point the influence has been largely at a higher institutional level.'

These differences in how respondents attribute institutional change to the DRUSSA programme are perhaps natural, given that the scope of activity covered in each of the survey's sections varies as well. Research uptake strategy and processes, for example, are areas of work that perhaps fall more fully under the exclusive remit of the universities themselves. They are therefore able to convene regular meetings of research active staff and offices engaged with research uptake; to design or amend university policy to reflect an institutional emphasis on research uptake; and to coordinate research agendas with approaches to getting research into use. Areas of work such as stakeholder engagement and wider communication, however, begin to involve actors external to the university in a more central way, therefore ascribing change and impact can be longer-term in nature and somewhat more complex. Circumstances in which agents of government, industry, or civil society are not seen to have fully subscribed to the utility of university research, for example, can discourage respondents from assigning significant change to these spheres of work. Continued monitoring and evaluation in this area, however, may begin to measure some important changes and impact flowing from the programme as it progresses into its second phase.

Differentiating institutional change

In addition to asking respondents to assign impact to the DRUSSA programme in terms of influencing change, we also asked respondents to specify types of change, particular challenges in realising change, and particular successes in realising change, as the programme progresses into its second phase.

Changes

Research uptake strategy

We saw a high number of responses from universities reporting change in their research uptake strategy, with 21 respondents providing examples of changes – either to university strategy documents themselves or to the way in which research uptake is considered at the level of university management. One respondent told us that 'research uptake is at this point a standing item of the Senate Research Committee. In addition, it is now located within the office for Strategic Initiatives (DVC Office) and thus has a more focused institutional management effort'. This suggests that buy-in for developing uptake has been achieved at the strategic level, and a commitment to processes and resources may be anticipated.

As evidence of this at another university, one respondent reported that they 'have started to monitor the distribution of funds and the productivity of research at the institution, as well as the amount of external and internal collaboration between projects. Research funding is also more focused towards impact and problem-solving than just funding research to do research'. Another told us they have embarked upon the 'hiring of staff, including someone who will be in charge of its research management and support services that makes research information easily accessible'. These resource commitments require strategic support and can help to provide university leadership with ways to measure change in research uptake efficacy.

Regarding the way in which research uptake dialogue and strategy is structured across the institution, one respondent told us that 'regular meetings and efforts to win the support of the chamber of commerce collaboration [have commenced] … [Also] discussing with journalists, to train them for appropriate health reporting among other similar issues for DRUSSA'. Another similarly indicated that they are beginning the process of 'restructuring of the Research Innovations and Outreach division', while another said that 'collaboration patterns between all units that share the responsibility have improved. These units are communicating more, better and [are] collaborating more [often]'.

This interdepartmental collaboration, and the integration of various institutional functions to achieve strengthened research uptake management, can be seen as outflows from a more deliberate and focused strategic vision towards getting research into use.

Research uptake processes

As sustained institutional processes necessarily flow from strategic decisions, respondents were also keen to emphasise changes they have seen at the process and procedure level. 18 respondents reported changes in research uptake processes, many of which concerned the establishment of discrete research uptake offices or the embedding of research uptake management within existing offices.

One respondent told us that they are 'in the process of setting up a research uptake and management office [and are] populating the database of completed and ongoing research to inform research uptake management initiatives'. This commitment to new resources was also seen at another institution, where a requirement to include uptake components has been built into internal research proposals, as well as externally funded research

projects. They reported that they 'are placing a much greater emphasis on research dissemination. Previously it was mostly externally funded projects that were highlighted. In 2014, we will include all projects funded by [the university] as well'.

Some changes to process concern participants' approaches to dissemination and engagement (which we will also return to again later, in the section on the communication of research). One university said that they have developed a 'special issue of the university newsletter, showcasing all research with significant uptake potential to appear soon, [and] more regular reporting of research and related events using the university radio and the public relations office'. As seen in some of the comments in the section on strategy, we also received a range of responses regarding changes to research uptake processes which emphasised joined-up, cross-institutional approaches, and steps towards utilising a range of existing internal offices, functions, and expertise.

Stakeholder engagement

As noted in the earlier section on DRUSSA's perceived impact, measuring change in stakeholder engagement is perhaps a longer-term endeavour than measuring change to institutional processes and strategy. We received 17 comments regarding changes to stakeholder engagement over the course of the DRUSSA programme thus far. These often focus on the university's emphasis on engaging stakeholders more vigorously, and embedding engagement into the research cycle, although there are also examples of how stakeholders have responded and taken advantage of universities' efforts to get research into use.

Regarding internal attitudes to stakeholder engagement, one respondent told us that 'the university realised that it needed a different approach to its funding and adopted a more outward-looking and engaging research strategy, leveraging funding and research opportunities with industry and other partners by matching funds obtained from external sources'. Another reported that 'Stakeholder engagement is one of the pillars of our ten-year research strategy. Therefore, there is now a strategic perspective and various actions are being planned to improve this area of operations'.

These strategic applications of research energies directed towards engaging specific power-brokers and policymakers are good first steps. Other respondents provided evidence of a more concerted engagement with industry as well. One reported that they have established a new 'Office for [the] Director for Community Service and [an] Office for University Industry Linkage and Technology Transfer' over the course of the programme. Others are designing systems to demonstrate how research staff are considering the need for stakeholder engagement within their own proposals, telling us that they are developing 'annual performance plans which include stakeholders' engagement'.

While some respondents again illustrated their pan-institutional efforts towards improved engagement (one reported that they are pursuing the 'harmonisation and organisation of scientific conferences and workshops by the different schools and departments', while another told us they are designing 'measures to improve collaboration with the cooperation office on the one hand, and the research management and teaching/programmes offices on the other hand'), others alluded to how the stakeholders themselves are brought closer to this process. One respondent is looking at the creation of 'more enabling platforms for direct external stakeholder-university technical staff exchanges', while another has proactively involved 'stakeholders at the [research] board level'.

Communication of research

Compared to other sections, we had fewer responses regarding specific examples of change in approaches to the communication of research, with 12 universities giving us examples of what has changed (compared with 21 examples of change in research uptake strategy). We have seen change, as noted in other areas of this report, in

the ways in which different units, offices and departments collaborate to communicate research more effectively to the public, usually involving offices responsible for the website, the public relations and marketing offices, and libraries.

One respondent told us that they have 'redesign[ed] the university website and successful deployment of research blog' to provide a public platform dedicated exclusively to research results. Another has emphasised efforts towards knowledge translation, with an 'improved synergistic relationship between research and innovation management and the marketing function'. Several responses also emphasised a renewed focus on the dissemination of research findings through university radio or through engagement with mass media.

Another university told us that they are 'publishing a report for the 2013 Annual Research Dissemination Conference' which they hope will lead to further discussion and new learning regarding good practice in public engagement. Such initiatives, as always, require a degree of strategic and financial commitment in order to be realised. However, one respondent indicated that this is in place: 'the university has voted in more money and has dedicated more hours for line staff to disseminate research results to the wider community'.

Challenges

Research uptake strategy

While there have been some noteworthy changes in universities' approaches to the strategic management of research uptake over the DRUSSA programme so far, there are of course some challenges that participating institutions have faced along the way. Some of these challenges, as might be expected, concern the allocation of requisite resources to enhance uptake, while other challenges concern longer-term efforts to influence research culture towards an emphasis on uptake. Through the survey, we received 21 examples of challenges in the area of research uptake strategy..

Several institutions echoed the sentiment that 'staffing and the lack of funding as well as the active implementation of the policy' were barriers to rapid change in uptake strategy, with another university reporting that they face 'limited resources, both financial and human'. Marshalling the necessary resources to focus on uptake also depends in large part upon the depth and breadth of attitudinal change within a university: 'Research uptake will need a lot of buy-in from faculty members, plus [the] lack of dedicated funds for carrying out intensive research uptake campaign [is a challenge]', explained one respondent.

This alludes further to changes in research culture which are slow-moving and may only become more evident in time – for example, 'changing the mindset of researchers to incorporate the whole cycle in research planning, i.e. to focus on the end result, and to plan for research uptake,' said one respondent. Others raised the difficulty of institutionalising change. One told us that 'communicating research from the different units is still difficult', while another affirmed that they 'still are not able to capture the full extent of our research impact and uptake'.

Research uptake processes

Challenges in facilitating strategic change can also exacerbate challenges in implementing policy and processes. 20 universities replied with examples of challenges to effecting change in research uptake processes.

One university reported that 'staff complain that [a] shortage of funds often results in cutting down the budget for dissemination of research results, which is discouraging them from adopting RU strategies', drawing the link between strategy and process quite explicitly. Another noted: 'There is no designated member of staff that is charged with the responsibility of research uptake monitoring and management', alluding again to resource allocation.

Several respondents focused instead on the challenges faced by individual researchers and research teams, rather than challenges directly associated with strategy. These challenges ranged from those of time management to those of influencing change in research culture. One respondent reported that there was 'inadequate motivation on the part of the researchers, inadequate time [and] insufficient research funding to cater for these activities'.

One university provided a detailed response to this particular challenge: 'Challenges relate to implementation at the level of active researchers. Plans and ideas have been formed, but we have not implemented, for example, further workshops, other than those convened by DRUSSA. The overall time spent on managing this institutionally is a challenge, given that it competes with other strategic priorities. Resources may be required for a dedicated research uptake manager. We have to spend more time at lower levels e.g. ensuring that research uptake becomes a standing item at faculty level meetings. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is the changing of mindsets.'

Stakeholder engagement

Some of the challenges faced in achieving sustained stakeholder engagement flow from challenges relating to strategy and process. However, some challenges arise in environments external to the university as well. In all, 18 respondents to the survey cited examples of the difficulties faced in generating stakeholder engagement with research outputs.

Related to the challenge of achieving a more uniform institutional drive towards research uptake, one respondent told us that they 'are still developing this entrepreneurial culture of engagement which means that there are still a number of units and departments that do not [see] engagement at a desirable level with external stakeholders'. Another told us that while awareness of the need for stakeholder engagement has been achieved, there is a lack of 'policies to guide the implementation'. Another reiterated that 'only awareness has been increased. There is a need to implement the stakeholder engagement as well'.

Even in cases where the university is actively focusing on new approaches to such engagement, there remain challenges to achieving buy-in from external end users. One respondent noted that 'political changes at [government] level tend to affect relationships with stakeholders – we have no control over this'.

Communication of research

Efforts to generate strengthened models of communication have faced hurdles, but respondents provided fewer examples of challenges in this section than in any of the other three areas. 15 respondents reported examples of challenges in effecting change in the communication of research.

A common theme that emerges concerns challenges in joining up the relevant offices and units to ensure that research is comprehensively communicated from all departments, and in a consistent way. One respondent told us that 'the public engagement systems are under the control of another directorate, which is also responsible for protocol for visitors to the university. It is difficult to engage them in other activities'. Another respondent echoed this, telling us that 'due to decentralisation, obtaining information on research from the departments is a major challenge'.

There are two separate challenges alluded to here – the challenge of joining up units with a responsibility (or potential responsibility) for communication (including PR offices, research management office, libraries, and others), and the challenge of collating research activities from all university faculties and departments in an equal manner. Research cultures as regards uptake can vary between academic disciplines, which complicates the difficulty in coordinating the communication of research results.

One respondent told us that they have 'no expertise in science communication', suggesting that knowledge translation itself is a principal challenge that they face. As concerns the next generation of researchers, another respondent told us that 'mechanisms to involve students in engagement activities [are] not fully developed'. This is a critical point, as it will be new academics coming into the system who will arrive with, it might be argued, relative openness as to what the full research cycle ought to involve (research uptake included).

Successes

Research uptake strategy

Despite some of the very real hurdles that member institutions face in effecting change towards greater research uptake, there have been many strong examples of successes across each of the four sections of the survey. For this section, 19 respondents provided explicit examples of successes so far in effecting change in research uptake strategy.

One area of success has been an institutional commitment to developing the requisite human resources to enable strengthened uptake, either through training or through taking on new, dedicated personnel. One respondent indicated that 'members of staff have undertaken training in research uptake theories and practices and are beginning to incorporate this aspect in their proposal writing', which suggests strategic engagement of researchers themselves. Another respondent told us that they 'have interns coming to the [office] annually to assist with dissemination. Besides the research newsletter, we are also embarking on a project to increase visibility through the development of a webpage dedicated to research activity and output'. Another said that '[a new office has been] established with the sole purpose of implementing research uptake plans for the university'.

These initiatives will have grown out of strategic decisions at the highest level of the university, and other universities provided examples of such decisions being taken *in situ.* One told us that 'DRUSSA stimulated further interest on research impact as highlighted in research strategy and led to the approval of a review of [our] research to establish its impact over the last 30 years [so as] to learn lessons for research uptake strategy'. Another also reported formal changes to their research strategy to incorporate an emphasis on uptake, with the result that 'more projects are demonstrating impact and uptake than in the past since we started to put emphasis on monitoring the level of uptake'. This is an important final point: in order for research uptake strategy to be proven as effective, efforts to monitor the level of uptake more closely will be of great value to the university.

Research uptake processes

Some of the above examples relate also to successes in research processes. In this next section, respondents provided more in-depth case studies of successes in this area.

20 respondents gave us examples of successes in research uptake processes, including the establishment, or repurposing, of specific offices with responsibility for research uptake. One university told us that they 'successfully got management to agree to help set up the RUM office' and also 'successfully undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise' as part of this. Another has established an 'office related to research dissemination', which also involved the active engagement of university management. Another university foresees similar initiatives coming to bear in the near future, telling us that 'management has indicated that it would support change in the structure to create the position of Director of Research and Extension, as well as implementing a communication policy which recommends a strengthened communication structure. An extension policy is also being developed to support taking research to the end user'.

While these new processes and functions do require university leadership, some respondents asserted that they have been able to move towards new processes in a more staggered way, according to the particular needs and resources found in units across the institution. One said that 'one of the university institutes is establishing a research uptake fund to support research initiatives that incorporate uptake', which suggests a degree of independence in their ability to resource enhanced uptake.

Stakeholder engagement

Respondents provided some strong examples of success in the area of stakeholder engagement, with 15 universities providing responses in total. Some of these concern the development of new (or established) offices specifically to oversee stakeholder engagement, while others provide evidence of an increase in the number of projects that have achieved uptake or that involve external stakeholders.

One respondent told us that they are now coordinating research groups with the donors and funders of research in order to 'make efforts to reach target beneficiaries'. One result from these coordinated groups has been that 'research findings from agronomy have been widely adopted by the participating farmers and many have success stories to tell'. Another respondent corroborated this, telling us that 'there are now a greater number of joint research projects with external stakeholders, some of which are also target groups and beneficiaries of the research'.

While some research has already been successful in engaging with beneficiaries and target groups, other respondents reported the development of internal systems to train and support systems for future engagement. One university told us that they are 'setting up university technical teams to discuss training and research needs with production and technical staff in the private sectors', while another said they have 'organised one workshop on stakeholders dialogue in 2013 to discuss how the university and stakeholders can work together'. Further to this, another university provided an example of how they seek to make stakeholder engagement a sustained aspect of the research cycle, with a proposal in place to create 'the position of Director of Research [which] will institutionalise the management of research uptake, [as well as] the development of a communication policy which, when implemented, will ensure that the communication office is strengthened with an expanded mandate on engaging with stakeholders'.

Communication of research

In addition to the changes reported earlier regarding the communication of research, ten respondents provided particular examples of successes in communication, public engagement and wider dissemination. These included open days, trade fairs, and functions designed for public engagement specifically. Others involved new approaches to utilising university and mass media in the communication of research findings.

One university told us 'a university radio [station] is established that will help disseminate research related activities', while another reported that they held a 'successful community engagement conference in September 2012'. Part of institutionalising such successes can also come from the establishment of policy in public engagement, and one university told us that 'an extension policy [is] being developed to enhance research uptake and research communication. A proposal to create the position of Director of Research and Extension [will also] work closely with the communication office and research units, as well as managing the research processes'.

In several sections, we have seen both challenges and successes in coordinating research uptake activity across different units and departments. One respondent told us that they are making an explicit effort to 'work closer with the marketing department [which] has resulted in more visibility of research, and an increase in focus on research output'. In addition to working with the marketing team, they are also working more closely with the IT and web

management team to communicate of research results, telling us that they 'are using the web more vigorously to publish output and results'.

6. Research uptake plans

At a symposium held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013, representatives from each of DRUSSA's member universities composed a draft research uptake plan for their respective institutions. These plans were the product of individual knowledge and experience, refined through constructive criticism from peers external to the university. Each plan was university-specific and sensitive to the individual contexts, strengths, and challenges at the institution concerned. They were also influenced by each university's current engagement with the DRUSSA programme, with those institutions that had hosted a DRUSSA team visit at a more advanced stage of planning than those who were yet to receive such a visit. The plans were based on a standard template, which asked participants to list a series of component activities – grouped under seven broad headline areas – to be undertaken at their university. The template also required participants to suggest timelines for the completion of the suggested activities, as well as indicating the people or units who would be responsible for delivering on those activities.

The following is a brief analysis of the trends that emerged in the plans that were submitted. At the time of writing, 13 of 24 plans have been submitted.

Actions to ensure university engagement in promoting research uptake management

There is uniform consensus across the universities that the DRUSSA leaders and champions have a prominent role to play in this area, particularly as many of the DRUSSA leaders are at deputy vice-chancellor level and are therefore part of their university's senior management team. High on the list of proposed activities is the introduction of research uptake issues as a standing item at regular high-level meetings (senate research committee meetings, for example) and, more broadly, at faculty level research meetings. Other priority action areas are the development of 'terms of reference' (ToR) for the DRUSSA implementation teams at each university, clearly stating what is expected of team members, and the hosting of DRUSSA 'road shows' within individual faculties/units across the university. These would be facilitated by DRUSSA implementation team members and/or university staff members who have attended the DRUSSA short courses or degree programmes, and aim to inform a broader base about research uptake initiatives.

Actions to establish university-wide DRUSSA implementation teams

There is considerable overlap between this section and the previous one, and the character of each university's development in this area will depend on who they choose to participate in the implementation teams and how they elect to structure their institution's ToRs for their respective teams. How universities choose to organise their teams, however, and effective communication between team members, the institutional DRUSSA leader and champion, and the broader DRUSSA programme, is deemed critical. There is no one prescriptive method for how this 'should' be achieved and each university is encouraged to pursue methods that they believe will work best for their members. Regular meetings between DRUSSA team members, the establishment of an institutional discussion platform for team members, greater use of the DRUSSA Coffee Station, or combinations of all three were suggested as avenues for progress.

Actions related to policies relevant to research uptake

It is important to note that 'stand-alone' research uptake policies have been broadly rejected by DRUSSA member universities in favour of a process of adapting or re-drafting existing research (and possibly human resource) policies to include elements specific to research uptake. With this in mind, there are significant individual differences in this section, as each of the universities is at a different stage of the process. Some are in the process of drafting policies that will include research uptake elements; some have completed drafts that are currently under consideration by the university senate or equivalent body; and others have an approved policy and are examining implementation strategies. DRUSSA will be looking to facilitate greater inter-university networking on this issue, connecting universities who are at a similar stage in the process – as well as linking universities at a relatively advanced stage with those at a modest level of development – in order to foster shared good practice.

Once such policies have been implemented, universities will need to give thought to how to implement and publicise new policy issues relevant to research uptake. Current suggestions indicate that universities will be looking to leverage those staff members who have engaged in DRUSSA short courses and degree programmes, as well as the broader DRUSSA implementation teams, to achieve these objectives. An issue only infrequently addressed in the current draft plans is the need for a process to monitor and evaluate research uptake policy elements once they have been implemented. This is crucial for the effectiveness and sustainability of the policies, and will need to be given careful thought by member universities as they progress through the process of implementing new policies in this area.

Actions to address recording and access to records of university research

Actions in this section centred on the establishment of institutional repositories for research, as well as the most effective strategies to ensure that existing repositories are maintained, accessible, user-friendly, and kept up to date. Universities could greatly benefit from a DRUSSA toolkit section on this issue to help identify good practice in this area.

Actions to engage with key stakeholders to promote research uptake

Under this section, many of the draft plans submitted list the need to record and maintain contact with current stakeholders, the use of targeted media engagement to interact with key stakeholders (including the use of institutional websites, other media assets, and university open days), and the appropriate leveraging of alumni connections. While these can all be effective ways of engaging with external stakeholders, they do not specifically assist in **identifying** who a university's key stakeholders are. Exercises to help identify key external stakeholders are conducted at DRUSSA university planning workshops, and universities are encouraged to re-examine past attempts at research uptake (successful or otherwise) to identify what has worked in the past, which stakeholders are receptive to what, and where their institutional strengths and weaknesses lie.

Actions to engage local media to improve their understanding of research and research uptake

Different strategies identified to address this issue include establishing regular contact with the media (regular open days, periodic press releases, and so on), providing training in media engagement for academics (and, crucially, developing capacity within the university to carry out and reinforce this training), establishing closer links

between academics and university public relations offices, and the targeted use of university media assets (such as radio, for example). These are all legitimate avenues to achieve greater traction with local media but, as observed in Section 5, contextualising approaches is key; universities need to identify and target strategies that play to their current strengths.

Conclusions

As in 2012, the 2014 DRUSSA benchmarking process involves three major phases:

- The initial benchmarking survey, used to collect, compare, and analyse quantitative data and particular examples of research uptake activity
- The 2014 Leadership and Benchmarking Conference, at which leaders and champions of the programme convene to discuss in greater detail ways in which institutional change has been achieved and is being developed
- The final DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey Report, which will include the data included in this summary, as well as further summaries and conclusions from the conference and deeper analysis of the trends that emerge from the conference discussions

This initial survey summary, then, is a tool to inform the final survey report (to be disseminated in due course), as well as informing discussions at the Leadership and Benchmarking Conference. It aims to familiarise leaders and champions with the trends that have emerged in research uptake management at DRUSSA member universities over the past two years, and to highlight particular commonalities – as well as unique examples – from the ways in which universities are strengthening their uptake strategies and processes.

The findings from the survey give us a strong basis to measure not only the current state of play at member universities, but also the degree of change that has been seen since the first benchmarking survey and report in 2012.One notable area of change reported amongst some universities involved either the establishment of new offices to provide management of research uptake activity, or the incorporation of research uptake management into existing offices or structures. There has also been a significant growth in reported collaboration between offices and units within universities which share an interest or a potential role in the management of research uptake, including libraries, public relations offices, marketing offices, IT units, vice-chancellors' offices, extension offices, and research management offices.

The survey findings also suggest a trend towards an increased awareness of, and support for, research uptake amongst university leaders. The highest levels of university management were perceived, on balance, to have the highest level of enthusiasm for research uptake activity, which is an essential component to realising greater implementation of uptake processes across an institution.
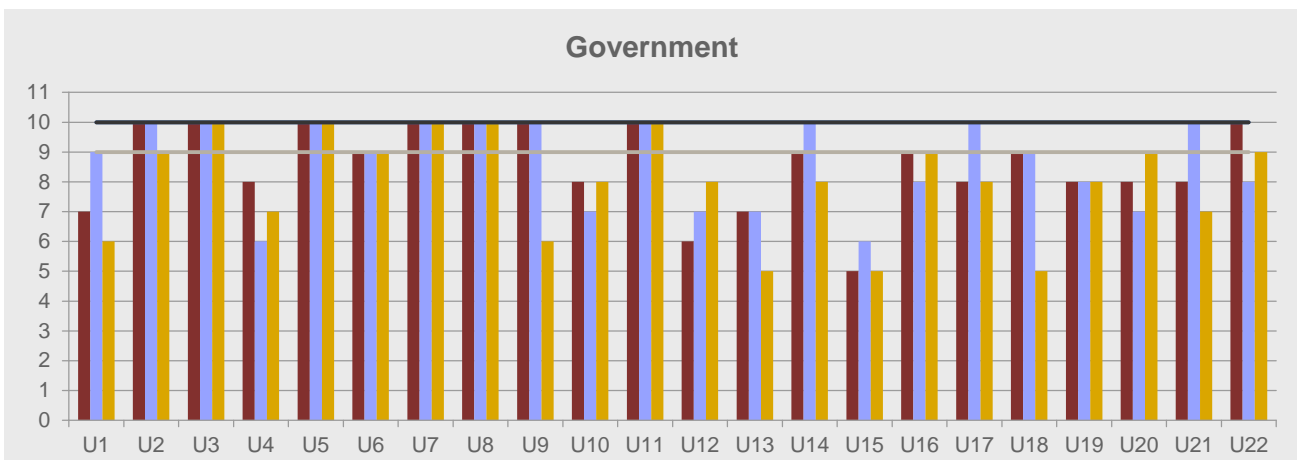
We have also seen strong examples of stakeholder engagement and the wider communication of research, with evidence of growth between 2012 and 2014 including the establishment of new channels of university media (such as radio stations and dedicated research webpages), as well as the introduction of research findings to university radio programming. The majority of survey respondents told us that they now regard engagement with external stakeholders to be either a high or a very high priority. This represents a dramatic change from 2012, when most respondents expressed interest in research uptake, but said it had not yet been established as an institutional priority amongst most universities.

As the DRUSSA programme moves from its first to its second phase, we proceed with some clear indicators of change, and lessons as to how to support member universities further in their plans for rolling out and institutionalising research uptake in the future. The final DRUSSA Benchmarking Survey Report 2014 will provide further detail on what has been achieved and what is being planned, as DRUSSA members look ahead to building on the successes they have achieved so far.
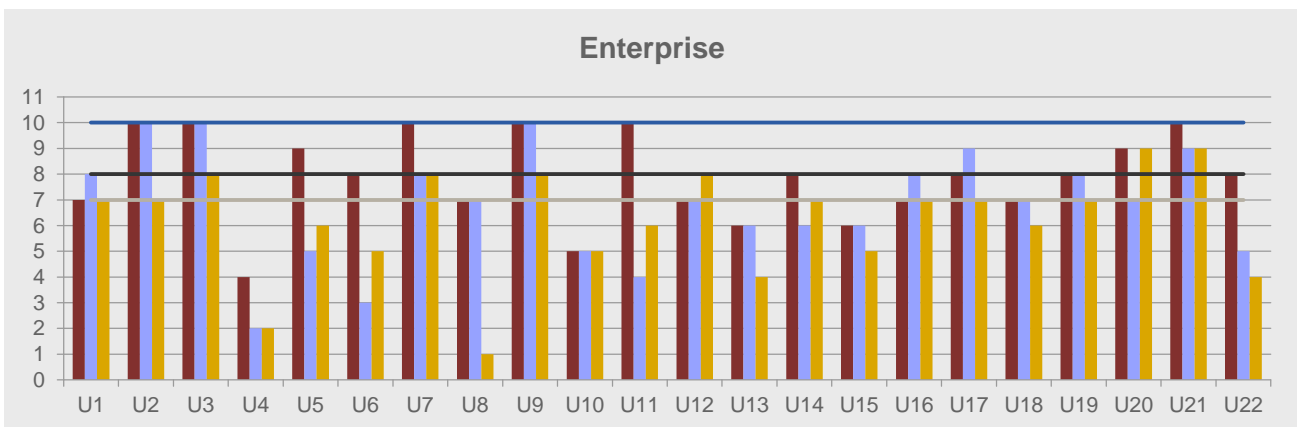
Appendix: university-external stakeholder relationships

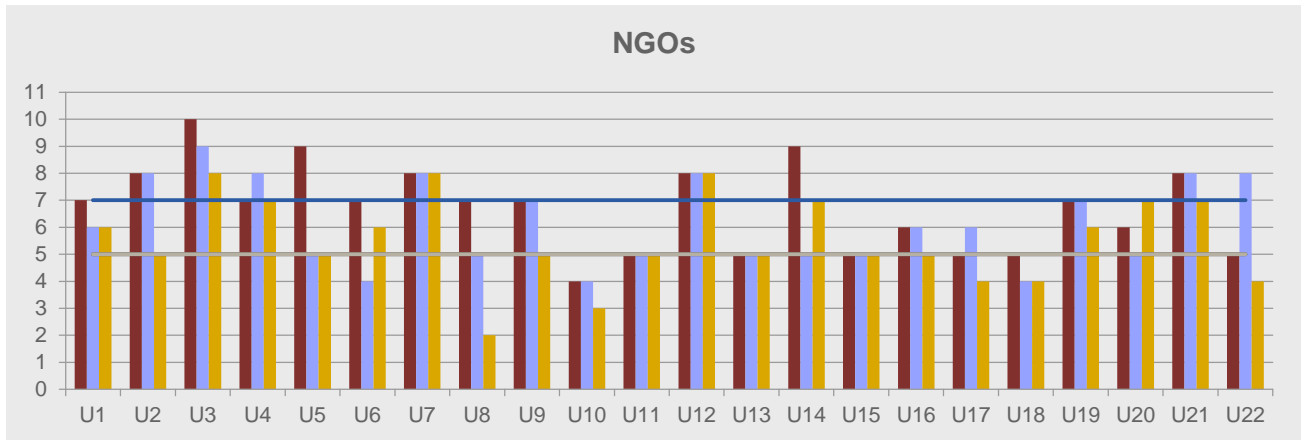| KEY		
PRIORITY	**POWER**	**STRENGTH**
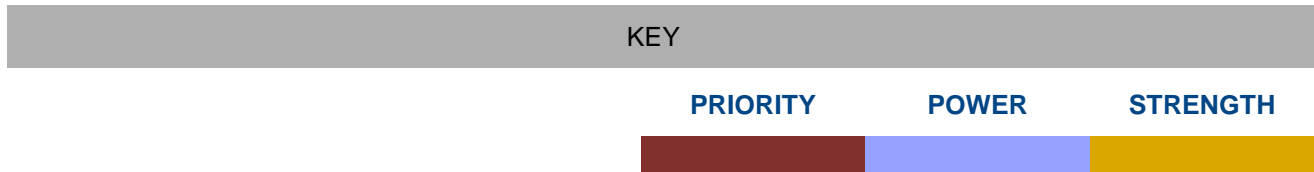
The horizontal lines on the graph indicate the **MODE averages** reported. For example, on the graph titled 'Enterprise', the most frequently reported rating regarding the **PRIORITY** of the universities' relationship with enterprise is 10. The most frequently reported rating regarding **POWER** to shape social change with enterprise is 8; and the most frequently reported rating regarding the **STRENGTH** of the university's relationship with enterprise is 7.

Government

The mode average for **PRIORITY** is also **10**

Enterprise

NGOs

The mode average for **POWER** is also **5**

Farmers

Health

The mode average for **POWER** is also **8**

Teachers

The mode average for **POWER** is also **7**

Environmental

The mode average for **PRIORITY** is also **6**

Other universities

Funders

Media
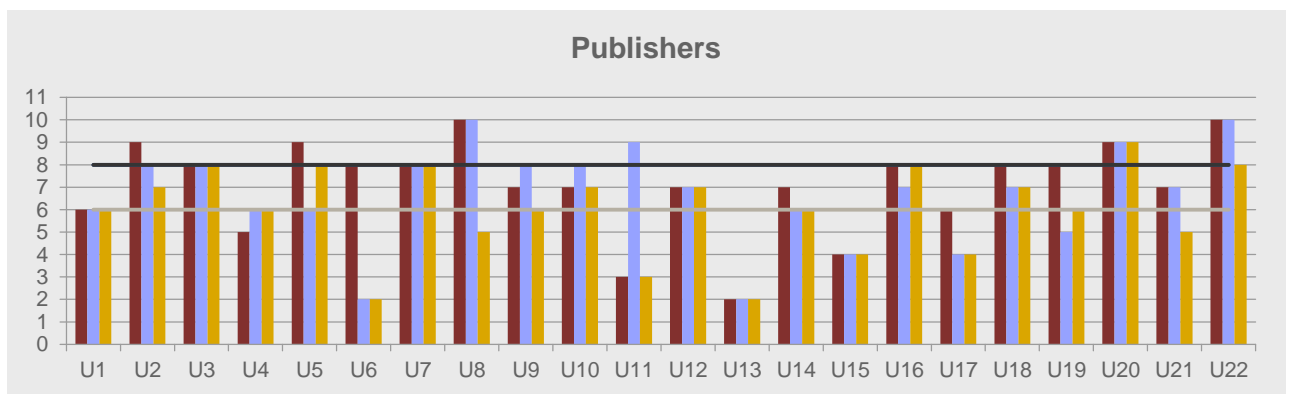

The mode average for **POWER** is also **6**

Publishers

The mode average for **PRIORITY** is also **8**