The Languages Research Database for Policymakers: Guidelines for Academics

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Languages Research Database for Policymakers?**
   The database offers concise, accessible summaries of language-related academic research, specifically tailored for policymakers. Its goal is to highlight the wide scope of languages research and demonstrate its relevance and value for informing policy decisions and solving societal challenges. The database welcomes contributions from all areas of language research, across any language and academic discipline.

2. **Why is making my research accessible to policymakers important?**
   Making your research accessible to policymakers is important because it bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world decision-making. Policymakers often face complex challenges and need evidence-based insights to create effective policies. By translating your research into clear, concise, and relevant summaries, you help ensure that valuable findings don't remain confined to academic circles but instead contribute to shaping policies that impact society.

   Making your research more accessible can also raise the visibility of your work, demonstrate its practical impact, and foster collaborations beyond academia.

3. **Is my research suitable for a Languages Research Database summary?**
   Yes - if your research has impact-focused outputs. These summaries are designed to be impact-led as this is of the most use to policymakers. Impact can be understood broadly here. While policy engagement is a common avenue for impact in languages research, there are other examples such as: public engagement; cultural and creative industry innovation; education and curriculum design; language revitalisation and preservation; or heritage practices.

4. **What stage of my research is best suited to a summary?**
   Summaries are intended to highlight the impact of research; therefore, projects that are nearing completion and have produced tangible impact outcomes are typically most appropriate. However, if a project has achieved impact at an earlier stage, a summary may still be submitted. If your research has multiple strands or distinct outcomes, you can submit more than one summary. This is encouraged, as it allows each summary to remain focused and avoids overcrowding a single entry.

5. **Can I edit my summary?**
   Yes. You can submit a revised summary at any time. The new version will replace the original. This is particularly useful for ongoing projects where the impact continues to develop, and if you wish to update or expand the summary to reflect new outcomes.

How to Complete Your Own Summary:

Please download the provided template and follow these guidelines closely to ensure your summary is clear, concise, and impactful.

This document outlines key principles and formatting expectations for academics completing the research summary template. The aim is to ensure research is communicated clearly and effectively to policymakers, who often work under tight time constraints and may not have an academic background in your field.

1. Write in Plain, Accessible Language:

Your summary should be written for an audience without specialist knowledge. Avoid academic jargon, complex sentence structures, and field-specific terminology wherever possible. The goal is to make the content understandable to a broad audience, including civil servants and parliamentary assistants.

To check the readability of your summary, we recommend using the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Tool:
All text should be written to achieve a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of **no more than 13-14**, which equates to a reading level suitable for an 18-year-old. Please check each section individually.

To check this in Microsoft Word:

a. Go to Review > Editor > Document Stats
b. A dialogue box will appear with readability stats, including the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level.

The tone of your summary should be clear, concise, and focused on real-life impact. The purpose is not to showcase academic achievement but to translate academic insights into information that can inform policy decisions or support policy work.

Always ask: What does a policymaker need to know from this research - and why should they care?

2. Style Consistency

To maintain consistency across all summaries, it is essential that you do not modify the template provided. Please avoid changing the layout, margins, or font settings. Please include translations in square brackets for any non-English text.

Title: Calibri, Size 11, Bold
All other text: Calibri, Size 11, Normal

3. Provide Accurate Project Details

Ensure the opening information sections are fully completed:

a. **Academic Team:** List all lead researchers involved in the project and their current institution.
b. **Host & Funding:** Include the host institution(s) and the names of all funding bodies and relevant scheme awards if applicable. Please include the total amount of funding provided in GBP if applicable.
c. **Project Website:** Provide a working link to your project's website or online presence where further details can be found.
d. **Date:** Enter the dates covering the full duration of the project. If the project extends beyond the funding period, please include the specific funding dates in the Host & Funding section.
e.

4. Adhere Strictly to Word Limits

Each section of the template has a clear word count, which must be followed closely. These limits are designed to ensure that only the most essential and policy-relevant information is communicated.

a. Title (max. 10 words)
Provide a short, engaging title that captures the essence of the research. Avoid overly academic or technical phrasing.

b. Problem (max. 25 words)
Clearly define the real-world problem or societal issue that your research addresses.

c. Areas of Study
Select two disciplines from the list below:

Anthropology
Cultural Studies
Digital Humanities
Disability Studies
Education Studies
Environmental Studies
Gender Studies
Heritage Studies
History
Human Geography
International Relations
Language Learning
Legal Humanities
Linguistics
Literary Studies
Medical Humanities
Memory and Museum Studies

Multilingualism Studies
Postcolonial Studies
Queer Studies
Sociology
Sound Studies
Theatre and Performance Studies
Translation Studies
Transnational Studies
Urban Studies
Visual Culture Studies

d. Outcome (max. 50 words)

Outcome is understood here as your key research finding and/or main output (e.g. toolkit, database, or theatre performance). You should not list academic articles or chapters here. Begin with an underlined title that clearly identifies the outcome. Then briefly explain the primary details, such as the content, use, and intended audience. If available, include a working URL link for access.

e. Methodology (max. 35 words)

Then briefly describe the approach or methods used in the research. Focus only on what's necessary to help a non-specialist understand how the findings were produced. It is particularly important to avoid highly specialist terms in this section.

f. Real-Life Impact (max. 80 words)

This is the most important section for policymakers and is, therefore, the longest section in the summary. In a numbered bullet-point list, explain how the research finding/output has made an impact (e.g. improving well-being, influencing policy, supporting NGO work, enabling international collaborations, or driving social change). Where possible, use concrete examples to highlight impact and avoid generic or future claims.

g. Policy Recommendation (max. 25 words, optional)

This optional section allows researchers to suggest specific policy recommendations or demonstrate how their research is relevant to the UK context or a UK government department. It is especially important to complete this section if your research has an international focus - it would be desirable to suggest how this focus might apply to general contexts (e.g local, regional, or national) and to the UK in particular.

h. Research Outputs

Include no more than three research outputs. Of these, no more than two should be academic journal articles/book chapters. Do not include monographs, as policymakers rarely have the time or access to read lengthy academic texts. Instead, prioritise practice-based outputs (e.g., briefings, toolkits, policy notes) where available or digital content (e.g. videos, blogs) that support understanding. Each output should be listed with a full citation and a clickable URL where possible.

5. Tagging

To help policymakers easily find the research most relevant to their area of work, all submissions must include tags indicating:

a. Geographic Relevance
b. Main Research Themes

These tags will support indexing and searching within the database.

Tagging by Location
Please select all applicable geographic areas where your research is relevant. Choose only the areas directly relevant to your data, case studies, or impact. You can tag by:

a. Nation(s) (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)
b. Global Continent(s) (e.g., Africa, Europe, South America)

Tagging by Research Theme
Please select a maximum of two main themes from the drop-down list that best capture the core focus of your research. Too many tags can dilute the relevance and make it harder for policymakers to find. The tags are intentionally broad to accommodate a wide variety of research topics and approaches:

a. Economic Development
b. Education and Skills Policy
c. Health & Welfare
d. Heritage
e. International Relations
f. Migration
g. Policy & Governance
h. Social Justice & Human Rights
i. Society
j. Technology

You may find it helpful to look at existing summaries to see how different tags are used and the types of research associated with each one.

6. Submit Your Summary

Questions regarding the database or potential summaries should be sent to Dr Olivia Glaze: olivia.glaze@sas.ac.uk.

Once your summary is ready, attach it as a Word document and email it to contact@ucflangs.com.

You will receive a confirmation of receipt within a few days, and your summary will be reviewed to ensure it meets the word count and readability requirements. If edits are required, you will be asked to resubmit.