Societal Impact, Business Schools, and Libraries: Beginning the Discussion

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Social Impact and the AACSB Standards

In the 2020 Standards Societal Impact was defined as a "force for good."[1]

A February 2023 AACSB paper further defined it as "activities undertaken by business schools that over time lead to meaningful, discernable change for the betterment of people, economies, and the environment."[2]

Standards Section	Societal Impact Component
Strategic Management and Innovation (Standards 1–3)	1.4 The school demonstrates a commitment to positive societal impact as expressed in and supported by its focused mission and specifies how it intends to achieve this impact.
Learner Success (Standards 4–7)	4.3 The school's curriculum promotes and fosters innovation, experiential learning, and a lifelong learning mindset. Program elements promoting positive societal impact are included within the curriculum.
Thought Leadership, Engagement, and Societal Impact (Standards 8–9)	8.3 The school's portfolio of intellectual contributions contains exemplars of basic, applied, and/or pedagogical research that have had a positive societal impact, consistent with the school's mission. 9.1 The school demonstrates positive societal impact through internal and external initiatives and/or activities, consistent with the school's mission strategies, and expected outcomes.

1. https://www.aacsb.edu/-/media/documents/accreditation/2020-aacsb-business-accreditation-standards-june-2023.pdf?rev=c19884b1643f4f37851b0d3e342ec6d7&hash=981B7C7B17A68FC40F715BAAF907B663
2. https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/briefings/aacsb-and-societal-impact

Societal Impact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Optional table 9-1[3] provided to measure Societal Impact based on the UN SDGs.

UN SDGs chosen by AACSB as the "nomenclature."[4]

Librarians can use existing resources IFLA[5] and the ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.[6]

Table 9-1: Outcomes of Societal Impact Activities and Initiatives Across all Areas of the Standards (Table is Optional for both CIR and Initial Reports)

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	Societal Impact Strategy (Standard 1)	Outcomes Related to Curriculum (Standard 4)	Outcomes Related to Scholarship (Standard 8)	Outcomes Related to Internal and External Initiatives and/or Activities (Standard 9)
1 – No Poverty				
2 – Zero Hunger				
3 – Good Health and Well-Being				
4 – Quality Education				
5 – Gender Equality				
6 – Clean Water and Sanitation				
7 – Affordable and				

4. https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/briefings/aacsb-and-societal-impact
5. https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdg-storytelling-manual.pdf
6. https://www.ala.org/aboutala/ala-task-force-united-nations-2030-sustainable-development-goals

Library Support - Standard 4: Learner Success

4.3 The school's curriculum promotes and fosters innovation, experiential learning, and a lifelong learning mindset.

Program elements promoting positive societal impact are included within the curriculum.

1. Curriculum support:
    a. Identification of sustainability and social justice resources for new programs and courses
    b. Review of OER materials for courses
2. One-shots and consultations helping students to find sources for sustainability and social justice assignments.
3. Tutorials and micro badging including sustainability and social justice scenarios.

Library Support - Standard 8: Thought

8.3 The school's portfolio of intellectual contributions contains exemplars of basic, applied, and/or pedagogical research that have had a positive societal impact, consistent with the school's mission.

A 2023 Sage study[7] of business academics found that:

- 31% of business academics say there is no incentive to apply their research outside of academia
- 76% said journal impact factor was important/highly important

A February 2021 *Insights* article[8] addresses this conflict between journal impact factors and societal impact, emphasizing the need to prioritize societal impact in faculty publications and measure outcomes of the article (real world impact) over output (number of cites).

S. Kabadayi and G. Jason-Dibartolo (2021)[9] interviewed 26 administrators from 24 business schools and recommended schools "require and give additional weight to positive societal impact contributions during merit and/or tenure/promotion decisions." Another recommendation was to compose a list of publications that specialize in societal impact in the field.

Bar chart values: NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT: 14; NOT HIGHLY IMPORTANT: 11; NEITHER UNIMPORTANT OR IMPORTANT: 61; IMPORTANT: 87; HIGHLY IMPORTANT: 200
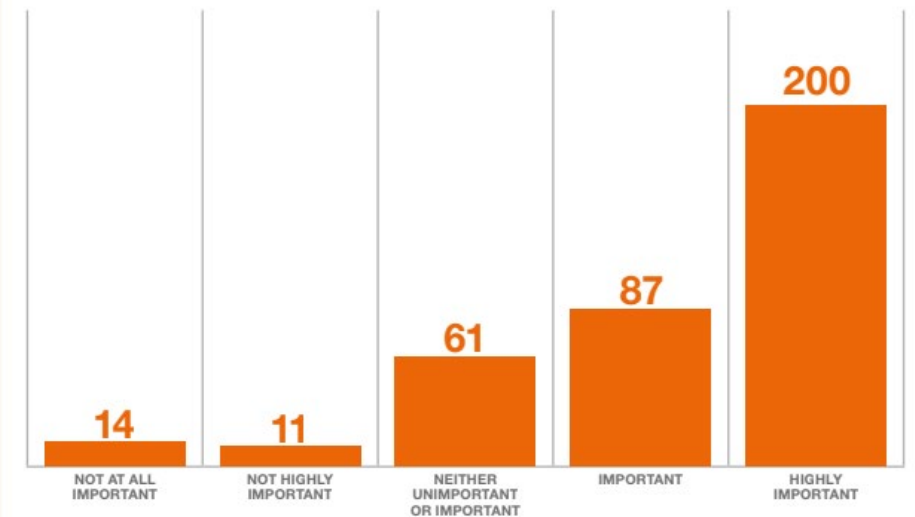
FIGURE 4. Importance of research getting published in highly cited journals/journals with high impact factors (as measured by Journal Citation Reports) (n=373 academics)

7. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4306589
8. https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2021/02/encouraging-business-scholars-to-address-societal-impact
9. 10.1080/08832323.2021.1997885

Library Support - Standard 9: Societal Impact

9.1 The school demonstrates positive societal impact through internal and external initiatives and/or activities, consistent with the school's mission strategies, and expected outcomes.

Develop library programming around sustainability and social justice--We are already doing this!

See how it can be tied into the business school.

1. Micro-credentialing
2. Extra credit
3. Faculty speakers
4. Provide a Venue

Offer research support to extracurricular experiences--case competitions, internships, community partnerships, entrepreneurial development within the social justice focus.

Regularly answer the question "what have you done to create societal impact…Impact should not be an afterthought."[10]

10. https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2022/12/societal-impact-at-the-core

Pages to Follow

AACSB https://www.aacsb.edu/

Principles for Responsible Management Education https://www.unprme.org/

AACSB Exchange https://theexchange.aacsb.edu/

- Business Libraries & Research Centers Community
- Societal Impact Community
  https://theexchange.aacsb.edu/societalimpactcommunity/home