Furthering public engagement – challenges, outcomes and future direction

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Funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust
RATIONALE

• Why should universities engage with the public?

PUTTING ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE

• How can you engage with the public?
• How do universities need to change to embrace public engagement?
• How can you measure the impact of that engagement?
WHY ENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC?
Irrelevant and out of touch with society

Secretive and untrustworthy

Unaccountable and a waste of tax payers’ money

Elitist and reinforcing inequality
‘UK HE currently faces a number of possible futures. The most positive of these would see the increasing integration of institutional interest with the wider public good, placing universities at the heart of economic and social advancement. ..’

HOW?
• ‘By ensuring that universities continue to remain fully engaged in society at all levels, understanding its needs and developments’
‘Engagement implies strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world’

Association of Commonwealth Universities
ENGAGEMENT ‘PRESSURE POINTS’
Consumer opposition: The public, and especially organisations such as Friends of the Earth, have not taken to the idea of genetically modified crops, or 'Frankenstein foods' as they are commonly known.
Pressure points

trusted

• Researchers are trusted to act ethically and responsibly

• New, controversial areas of research are debated and public attitudes are taken account of
The Engaged University

Pressure points:
- trusted
- relevant
- accountable
- socially responsible
82% agree science is such a big part of our lives that we should all take an interest

43% feel informed about science and research
Pressure points

relevant

- Research is more finely tuned to society’s needs
- Young people see research careers as relevant and attractive
- Innovation flourishes as new ideas / insights flow into HEIs
- Research outputs are easily accessible and widely used
The Engaged University

- trusted
- relevant
- accountable
- socially responsible

Pressure points
accountable

• Those with a stake in the impact of research feel they can influence investment priorities

• The purposes and impact of research are understood and valued by wider society
The Engaged University

- trusted
- relevant
- accountable
- socially responsible

Pressure points
Pressure points

Socially responsible

• Research institutions are seen to act in socially responsible ways, minimising their environmental footprint and supporting social mobility
THE BEACONS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
Barriers to science communication

• Sixty-four per cent said the need to spend more time on research was stopping them getting more engaged (the top response);
• 29% said that time taken away from research was the main drawback for engaging with the public;
• 20% agreed that scientists who engage are less well regarded by other scientists;
• 3% cited peer pressure as a barrier.
This initiative aims to create a culture within UK Higher Education where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels, and for students.
Manchester Beacon
connecting people, place & knowledge

The Beacons for Public Engagement are funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and Research Councils UK in association with the Wellcome Trust, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Scottish Funding Council.
Universities across the UK are signing up to our manifesto for public engagement

Are you new to this?
Easy ways to get started with public engagement

How to engage
We’ve created a toolkit for people who want to engage the public.

Ways we can help
- Join our public engagers’ network
- Ask us for advice

Sign up for our newsletter
Enter your email address

Latest

Universities already signed up include:
- University of the West of England
- University of Bristol
- We also run vinspired students

The NCCPE is part of the Beacons for Public Engagement
PUTTING ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE
INSPIRING

Inspiring, involving and informing the public about research
How engage with the public?

INSPIRING

festivals  media

public lectures and talks
How engage with the public?

INSPIRING

festivals

media

public lectures and talks

CONSULTING

Actively listening to the public’s views, concerns and insights
How engage with the public?

INSPIRING
- festivals
- public lectures and talks
- media

CONSULTING
- public dialogues
- advisory groups
How engage with the public?

INSPIRING
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- public lectures and talks
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COLLABORATING

Working in partnership to solve problems, drawing on each other’s expertise
How engage with the public?

INSPIRING
festivals
public lectures and talks
media

CONSULTING
public dialogues
advisory groups

COLLABORATING
citizen science
co-produced research
knowledge mobilization
Help explore the ocean floor
CHANGING CULTURE:
THE ENGAGED UNIVERSITY
Our Mission
To be a world-class research-intensive university, to deliver teaching and facilitate learning of the highest quality and to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England.

Latest News

Garden birds shun organic
The notion that birds and animals prefer organic feed has been called into question by new research from Newcastle University.

Report on ‘fair access’ praises Newcastle University
A landmark report on ‘fair access’ to leading UK universities has cited examples of how Newcastle University is attracting students from a broader range of backgrounds.

Greenland glacier study will help improve sea level forecasts
Predicting sea levels could become more accurate thanks to a new discovery about how melting ice in the summer affects the movement of glaciers.

Events
Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts
21st January 2011 - 30th June 2010, Time: 10:00 - 07:00

Info-Gap Theory: Visit and Workshop
17th May 2010 - 20th May 2011, Time: 10:00 - 17:00

IoT Seminar
20th May 2010, Time: 16:00 - 17:00
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Focal points for embedding public engagement

PURPOSE
Embedding a commitment to public engagement in institutional mission and strategy, and championing that commitment at all levels
Focal points for embedding public engagement

PROCESS
Investing in systems and processes that facilitate involvement, maximise impact and help to ensure quality and value for money
The Researcher Development Framework
Focal points for embedding public engagement

PEOPLE
Involving staff, students and representatives of the public and using their expertise and feedback to shape the strategy and its delivery
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
IMPACT!
For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.

**Impact** is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.

Impacts or benefits arising from engaging the public with the submitted unit’s research will be included.
Who are we engaging with?

- Public sector
  - Schools, colleges and lifelong learning
  - Cultural and leisure services
  - Health and well being agencies
  - Quangos and govt agencies
  - Local / regional / national govt
  - Local authorities / strategic bodies
- The media
- Communities of interest
- Communities of place
- Non Governmental Organisations
- Community organisations and societies
- Voluntary organisations and charities
- Social enterprises
- Businesses and industry

- Policy community
- Community and 3rd sector
- International community
- Business community
- The public
How are we engaging?

INSPIRING
- festivals
- public lectures and talks
- media

CONSULTING
- public dialogues
- advisory groups

COLLABORATING
- citizen science
- co-produced research
- knowledge mobilization
What impact are we creating?

Impact domains

- Culture and society
- Economic and commercial
- Health and welfare
- Public policy and services
- Environment
- Practitioners and services
Indicators of Impact

**Impacts on society, culture and creativity**
- Visitor or audience numbers and feedback.
- Evidence of public debate in the media or other fora.
- Evidence of sustained and on-going engagement with a group.
- Measures of increased attainment and/or measures of improved engagement with science in non-HE education.

**Economic impacts**
- Jobs created or protected.

**Impacts on the environment**
- Traceable impacts on particular projects or processes which bring environmental benefits.
- Documented case-specific improvements to environment-related issues.

**Impacts on practitioners and professional services**
- Traceable references by practitioners to research papers that describe their use and the impact of the research.

**Impacts on public policy and services**
- Documented evidence of policy debate (for example, in Parliament, the media, material produced by NGOs).