



Strategy for Supporting Public Engagement with Research

Scope

This document sets out a strategy for supporting public engagement with research across the University of Edinburgh. It contributes to the University's aim of 'Delivering Impact for Society' by putting in place the mechanisms to enable the widest possible range of audiences to understand and make use of our research, and to ensure that our research is placed *in the service of* communities locally and internationally (an attribute of a civic University that sets the cultural tone for engagement).¹

Whilst PE can be considered as a form of knowledge exchange (KE), the target audience is more diverse than typical KE activities and the core-objectives of the engagement are more wide-ranging. This diversity requires the researcher to understand and assess the best means of engagement and to seek the most appropriate University support.

Aim

The overall aim is to embed a culture of public engagement with research at the University of Edinburgh and, in so-doing, to enable the University to have a reputation for engagement and impact that matches its reputation for world-class research.

Who are the Public(s)?

The public is diverse and plural, and includes but is not limited to: individuals, political groups and leaders; business and business leaders; civil servants and policy makers; charities; community-based and voluntary groups (see Annex 1). Whilst the appropriate public(s) will differ for each research programme, we will actively seek to engage with people, institutions and communities who can directly benefit from the research, those most affected by the research outcomes, those who can act as translators or facilitators, and those who are generally curious about the research area.

How Will We Engage?

Public engagement encapsulates diverse approaches including communication, consultation, participation and co-creation: approaches which need to be tailored to the needs of particular audiences and research programmes and delivered to a high standard to be effective. A key feature of public engagement activities is that they should be accessible and mutually beneficial for the researcher(s) and the public groups involved, enabling people to make informed decisions in their private, professional and public lives and providing researchers with new perspectives on, and stakeholders in, their work. As such, PE activity will lead directly to the development of the long-term and deeper relationships and partnerships that are needed to create meaningful positive impact. Engagement, therefore, is intended to be a transformative process.

- Methods of engagement will include:
- Science shops² and citizens' science
- Deliberative, interactive and participatory methods, including citizens' juries
- Festivals, shows, exhibitions and performance
- Bespoke and co-curated community events and public group sessions
- Broadcast, film and print media
- Popular publications
- Social media, blogs, and websites
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- Policy Delphi³

¹ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/strategic_plan_2016.pdf

² <http://www.livingknowledge.org/science-shops/about-science-shops/>

³ <https://www.projectsmart.co.uk/delphi-technique-a-step-by-step-guide.php>

In essence, our excellent researchers will be found not only on campus, but also online, at festivals, in museums and galleries, on TV and radio, at shopping and community centres, in schools and colleges, in cafés and pubs, and in Scottish and other parliamentary think tanks.

Our Vision for 2021: Key Objectives

Publics	Researchers	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are aware of the value to them of the relevant world class research being carried out by the University• Can find and access this research and researchers from across the University• Are engaged in dialogue, (where possible and appropriate) about research that affects them directly• Have their views respected and sought out by our researchers• Individuals, communities, and institutions, both at home and internationally, can benefit from being involved in research relevant to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are confident, able and keen to engage stakeholders and publics with their work in some form• Understand the reasons for and value of engagement activities for their research area and society and be able to track its impact• Feel supported to undertake public engagement activities and that quality engagement is recognised, rewarded and incentivised by their colleagues, school and college• Are able to develop sustainable and meaningful relationships and partnerships with public group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides senior leadership and role models• Recognises, celebrates, rewards, incentivises and promotes high quality public engagement• Coordinates the recording and development of engagement activities, outputs and outcomes by ensuring that our research activities, outputs and (where appropriate) our researchers are accessible to the public both online and in person• Supports the professional development of researchers and professional PE staff to enable quality engagement activities

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