

Research Engagement Toolkit

Resource and Development eBook

Quick Start Guide to Public & Community Engagement

2022-23

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Welcome

This booklet is ***Getting Started with Public & Community Engagement*** and provides further information and details about the process of public engagement with research.

Aims of this eBook:

- Specifically focuses on widening engagement (this is largely focussed on the public engagement of research but also touches upon elements of widening participation and enterprise), with useful links and tools
- Provides detailed information about the training and development available
- Designed to help plan your attendance and participation in appropriate training
- Used alongside PDR and Development Plans to identify development opportunities
- Support decision making and work in areas of research impact, finding funding for research and in preparation for the REF and KEF processes as well as supporting individual and organisational objectives
- Sets out expectations and limitations of the training to help focus time and resource appropriately
- Facilitates preparation in advance of attendance and participation
- Encourages reflection and self-evaluation throughout the development process
- Sign-posts to useful resources, tools, tips and techniques
- Promotes goal setting and development of confidence and capability

Essential information at a glance:

We have a dedicated intranet space with further information and resources.

Please go to:

[Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Additional links and resources have been provided throughout this booklet to continue your development journey.

Overview: Getting started with public & community engagement

Salford's researcher development programme is aligned with the University's Innovation Strategy 2021-2026, the Academic Career Framework and sectoral standards such as the national Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which sets out the knowledge, behaviours and skills of successful researchers.

This guide links to information, resources and support to enhance your development journey and is split into an **Introduction** and **three key sections**:

1. Section 1: Identification and planning
2. Section 2: Developing and connecting
3. Section 3: Evaluation and management

Additional resources and reading are also provided at the end of this guide.

The guide sets out some key ideas to get you started but will require further follow-up time to apply to your research or practice. Before you begin, it may be helpful to clarify what your aims are for research engagement using this brief checklist:

Getting started checklist – aspirations, activity and action

Aspirations: What do you hope to achieve (short-term or long-term)?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ✓ To break down barriers between researcher and communities | ✓ To raise the profile of the research or yourself | ✓ To communicate and disseminate your research to a wider audience |
| ✓ To communicate the impact and value of your research to key stakeholders, end users or policy makers | ✓ To generate interest in your research through social media platforms | ✓ To influence or change policy, process and/or perceptions |
| | ✓ To develop an impact case study | ✓ To progress towards a key milestone such as publication, grant, REF or KEF submission |

Activity: What sort of activities do you have in mind?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Presentations or lectures | ✓ Blogs, vlogs, short articles | ✓ Inform, educate and tell a story |
| ✓ Videos or TEDX style talks | ✓ Festivals and in person events | ✓ Co-create the research and agenda |
| ✓ Live online streaming | ✓ Schools and young people activities | ✓ Specialist and industry related activities |
| ✓ Participative and cocreated | | |
| ✓ Community or specific groups | | |

Overview: Getting started with public and widening engagement (cont'd)

Action: What are your initial thoughts on next steps to take?

Tip:

Need some inspiration as to what research engagement could look like?

Take a look at the Research with Impact blog: <https://blogs.salford.ac.uk/research/>

Introduction: The engagement cycle

Two types of engagement

There are two cycles: ***your cycle of development*** – aligned to your research, aims and personal goals and ***the engagement cycle*** – the journey of the engagement with your target audiences and those you are engaging with.

Your development cycle

This cycle is explored in more detail in this guide and involves identifying what it is you want to do and how this aligns to your research and personal or professional goals.

This cycle can be split into three phases:

Identification and Planning

This is working out the ‘what, why and how’ of public engagement in the context of your research and personal/professional goals. Public engagement does not have to be a standalone activity. It can be very much integrated into your research or practice and part of the identification and planning process is to explore these possibilities.

Developing and Connecting

This process often involves the conversion of research into a format that can connect or consumed by your intended audience, stakeholders or participants. There’s opportunity for the public to drive and inform and even co-create and integrate into the research and the more integration that’s possible, the greater the impact of the research for all involved.

Evaluation and Management

Managing and sustaining the process is important to see long-term impact and to continue to develop relationships. We also need to consider a method of evaluating the work we do to measure the impact and value; this can be self-evaluation and/or more formalised independent evaluation.

The engagement cycle

This guide signposts to and provides tips for developing the engagement cycle and how you will connect and engage your target audience through public engagement. Engagement happens throughout your development cycle and the end user or target audience is considered at all stages. The process can align to the methods and approaches used in your research and requires a similar level of thought and preparation. For example, in the same way you may consider planning research and research design such as how data is gathered, participant information, ethical and integrity challenges, your public engagement may require similar approaches and resources. A public engagement opportunity may provide an excellent way of gathering data for research. It may also be a good way to test or consult on an idea and to communicate outcomes of the research. The engagement cycle is a cycle within a cycle and will be informed by what it is you are trying to achieve. The challenge is making this accessible and focuses on the needs of your target audience. There are some great tools help consider how to best engage different audiences such as the NCCPE’s guide: [Introducing the Edge Tool.pdf \(publicengagement.ac.uk\)](#)

Tip:

For some ideas and inspiration on different engagement activities in your discipline or across a range of disciplines, please explore [What’s on - Research with Impact \(salford.ac.uk\)](#)

Section 1: Identification and planning

Exploring what you can do

There is a range of activities that can be undertaken to involve the public and non-expert audiences in your research. Some recent examples of these types of activities at Salford can be found on the blog: [What's on - Research with Impact \(salford.ac.uk\)](https://www.salford.ac.uk/research-impact/)

There are three main considerations when exploring what you can do:

1. Motivation and reason for engagement: What, why and how
2. Type of event or activity: the practical arrangements and reach
3. Impact of the activity: what it means to you and your target audience – how this is measured e.g. through numbers attended, outputs or retweets etc.

The following tools and templates are provided to help consider these areas in more detail and start with the planning.

Motivation and reason for engagement

Spend a few minutes identifying your What, Why and How?

- What?
- Why?
- How?

It may be useful to explore the motivation for engagement from your end users' perspective: firstly identify who they are (may be a number of different people or groups and therefore it is helpful to repeat this exercise for each group).

Once you know who they are, ask the question 'Why is my research important to them?' Make a note of your response. To this response, ask the question, 'Why is this important?' and note your response. Repeat this until you can no longer ask the question – it may take 3-5 attempts. What you are left with is the underlying reason your research is important to your target group. This is an excellent place to begin planning your activity as you have identified what is important to them and can consider how this will shape your plans and activities.

Tip:

Take a look at The Ordsall Method that was developed by a former researcher at Salford as part of a local project and seeks to engage with the target audience at each step of the research development. The link outlines the 15 steps taken and how this was achieved:

[Ordsall Method: The 15 Steps – The Ordsall Method \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.wordpress.com)

Section 1: Identification and planning (cont'd)

Type of event or activity

There are lots of possible ways to engage with the public and integrate this into your research. When considering the practical arrangements and reach, thinking about the level of involvement is useful. Are you wanting to inform, consult, involve or directly involve and delegate involvement? This can also affect the reach and size of group that you are engaging with: more people may read a book or short blog post, fewer attend a lecture and fewer still may be prepared to connect with you in a consultative space.

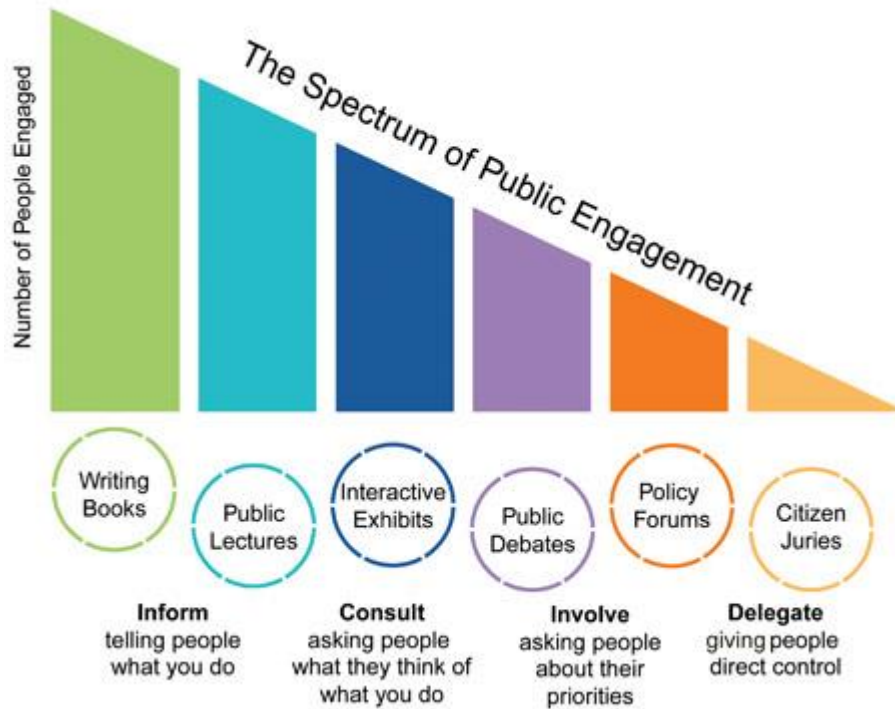


Figure 1: Beltanenetwork.org

To help explore your ideas and audiences, you may find it helpful to use the GROW tool:

Generate ideas:	Reality – what's realistic:
Options and opportunities:	Way forward:

Section 1: Identification and planning (cont'd)

Tip:

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement has a series of planning tools and resources that may be useful for planning and progressing your ideas: [Planning | NCCPE \(publicengagement.ac.uk\)](https://publicengagement.ac.uk)

Impact of the activity

What does your activity mean to you and your target audience? What does success look like? Considering how this is measured is important and critical to consider in the planning phase: will you collect feedback or use other methods to measure impact, e.g. through numbers attended, outputs or retweets etc.?

Here are a few getting started prompts:

1. What does success look like?
2. What is the single most important take-away message?
3. What do you want to avoid?
4. Complete this sentence: 'It would be good if participants did.....'
5. How will you document your event or activity?
6. Who else needs to be involved?
7. How long should the impact last (during the event only or after?)
8. What is the 'call to action' for participants?
9. What data is needed, are there any constraints and restrictions on how this collected or stored?
10. Who should evaluate this: will you or will someone independent?

Space for your ideas:

Some evaluation toolkits and examples that maybe useful to explore:

- NHS Evaluation Toolkit: <https://nhsevaluationtoolkit.net/>
- Government Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-inclusion-evaluation-toolkit>
- Queen Mary London Public Engagement Evaluation Toolkit: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/goodpractice/evaluation-toolkit/>

Tip:









The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement has a range of evaluation tools and resources to get you started: [Evaluating public engagement | NCCPE](https://publicengagement.ac.uk)

Section 2: Developing and connecting

Developing your event

There are many different formats to develop your event. This table showcases a few ideas that you may wish to use to help engage with your target audience. The table also explores different environments and different ways to interact.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL SPECTRUM

Toolkit	Controlled Environment	Mixed Environment	Open Environment
 <p>Toolkit</p> <p>We work with our client communities at the beginning of each project to apply the right tools from our Toolkit. Over the years we have learned to expect the unexpected, be flexible and always keep our eyes and ears open at meetings of all sizes and types. We have facilitated numerous projects that include the following kinds of public engagement:</p>	 <p>Online Surveys</p> <p>The ease and accessibility of the internet allows a greater number of participants who can interact from the privacy of their homes.</p>	 <p>Live/Work/Play Maps</p> <p>Many public events have participation boards on display. Like a live/work/play map to gain insight on the most popular locations for the above categories.</p>	 <p>Story-telling</p> <p>These stories are usually told by those personally invested in the study area and are designed to help others imagine the community from someone else's perspective.</p>
 <p>Social Media</p> <p>Use of social media networks to advertise and engage the public in future or on-going outreach programs.</p>	 <p>Email Blasts</p> <p>Emails are a more targeted way of communicating with the community. The list of email recipients usually consists of stake holders and other specific participants chosen by the client.</p>	 <p>Charettes</p> <p>Similar to visioning workshops, charettes consist of an evening presentation, numerous public meetings, design sessions, evening pin-up sessions, and a closing presentation over a 2-3 day period.</p>	 <p>Targeted Youth Workshops</p> <p>These workshops engage the younger population in communities to help visualize the future of their community through a series of interactive activities.</p>

Starting the development process

There are some tools you can utilise to start the development process and identify how you can connect to your target audience or pilot events.

<p>Planning – the development</p> <p>Break down your plans into eight steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People 2. Places 3. Policy 4. Practice 5. Preparation 6. Presentation 7. Pilot/Proof of concept 8. Purpose 	<p>Planning – ‘a virtual walk-through’</p> <p>Test your ideas by walking through your event with PDCA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan • Do • Check • Act
<p>Connecting – reviewing your approach</p> <p>Review your development through a SWOT analysis and identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths • Weaknesses • Opportunities • Threats 	<p>Connecting with your audience – using SAID</p> <p>Developing your message and connection points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story – what is it and why does it matter? • Audience – what are your audience needs? • Information – what is the take-home message? • Duration vs. Detail –the more time you have, the more detail you could afford.

Section 3: Evaluation and management

Measuring reach, impact and success

The evaluation stage is part of the planning and is an integral part of this process, that is why we have emphasised this in the planning section. In this section, we will focus more on the longer-term process and examples of practice.

A critical part of public engagement is impact and assessing this over time. This NCCPE Discussion Paper explores public engagement through a REF lens and provides interesting insights into how this is viewed within the REF process and beyond: [Discussion Paper \(publicengagement.ac.uk\)](https://publicengagement.ac.uk/discussion-paper)

Developing a longer-term public engagement strategy enables the impact and reach of the engagement activities to be measured over time. In the shorter term, it can help you to identify and articulate the value of the activities which can be helpful to illustrate on grants, or as part of the PDR process.

Strategy Development:

What are your key activities and/or outputs?
How will you measure their success and when?
What are the key stories or messages – from your target audience? (Current or anticipated)
Key dates and deadlines (You may wish to use this space to map out a timeline for your strategy, considering key milestones in the next couple of months to the next couple of years)
Resources, requirements and next actions:

Tip:

Further evaluation and management resources can be found on the NCCPE webpages: [Resources | NCCPE \(publicengagement.ac.uk\)](https://publicengagement.ac.uk/resources)

Templates and resources

Links and webpages

Influence locally with the Salford Learning City Group

The Learning City Group is a consortium of organisations based in Salford and led by Salford City Council to support the wider community and their access to life-long learning. The group meets regularly and has a web presence to promote activities, connect and communicate to the Salford community. Further details about the group can be found here: [Salford Learning City | mycity Directory](#)

If you would like to have an informal chat about joining the group, please contact Dr Stephen Ling (s.m.ling@salford.ac.uk) or Davina Whitnall (d.c.whitnall@salford.ac.uk)

Find out more about the public engagement training and development opportunities

There is a range of public engagement training and development including self-led activities, information sessions, workshops and mentorship to support you in all aspects of development, delivery, evaluation and embedding of engagement activities: [Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Participate in a University-led public engagement activity

We have a rolling schedule of festivals, public talks, events, projects and consultations to participate in, develop, lead or initiate. Further details of what is coming up can be found at: [Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

How to develop engagement projects safely

Access a toolkit of compliance resources for public engagement – safety, ethics, participant information and data protection: [Academic Ethics for Public Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Explore previous examples of public engagement from across the University

The University blog is filled with stories, case studies and reports from diverse university-led events across all disciplines and Schools. It is a great place to start, be inspired or gather vital lessons learned for developing your own engagement opportunities and stories: [Research with Impact Blog \(salford.ac.uk\)](#)

Case studies and examples

Getting started with festivals

Case Study 1:

THE ESRC FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The [Festival of Social Science](#) is a national event that has been running for the past 20 years. Salford partners with the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University to produce a local programme of events to showcase recent developments in social science research across the Greater Manchester area. Past events have covered contemporary themes including ageing and health, education, virtual reality and AI. Calls for applications go live in May of each year and this is a great opportunity for researchers across the University to acquire some funding to get involved.

[Read more....](#)

Case Study 2:

MANCHESTER SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Salford University is the lead educational partner for [Manchester Science Festival](#), which is organised by the Science and Industry Museum to create innovative, inspiring and educational experiences around Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. In past festivals we have showcased innovative sci-art experiences created with our industrial and artistic partners. [Read more....](#)

Case Study 3:

RESEARCH PODCAST SERIES

The University of Salford Research Podcast at <https://anchor.fm/repod-salford> contains short interviews on a range of recent research activities, led by Professor Andy Miah, Chair of the University's Engagement Forum. [Read more.....](#)

Develop your Impact – with advice and support

Support and advice in developing your impact and engagement activities is available centrally and through School leads: [Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Tip:

Be part of the next Festival – drop us an email to find out more at d.c.whitnall@salford.ac.uk

Contacts

Research and Enterprise

For all general engagement enquiries, please contact:

Emma Sutton (REF, KEF and Impact Manager, R&E) at
research-impact@salford.ac.uk

For more specific policy and engagement training enquiries, please contact:

Davina Whitnall (Researcher Development Manager, R&E) at
d.c.whitnall@salford.ac.uk

Stephen Ling (Researcher Development Officer, R&E) at
s.m.ling@salford.ac.uk

Marketing, Recruitment and External Relations

The Public Affairs team supports colleagues across the University in engaging with political stakeholders and policy makers across local, regional and national government.

For all policy engagement-related enquiries, please contact:

Charlotte Morris (Corporate & Regional Affairs Manager, MRER) at
c.e.morris@salford.ac.uk

Ciaran Roche (Prospects and Political Research Officer, MRER) at
c.t.roche@salford.ac.uk

Further reading, references and practice

Engagement, influence and impact – Vitae resources

What areas of knowledge and skill should you be developing for success in engaging and influencing others?

Links to related advice and resources in this section and similar content from around the site:

[Engagement, influence and impact — Vitae Website](#)

Developing you, as well as your practice

A public engagement lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been developed by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), the Beacons for Public Engagement, Research Councils UK and Vitae, in consultation with individuals and organisations with an interest in public engagement. It focuses on the knowledge, behaviours and attributes that you develop as a researcher and how these can be acquired through or used in public engagement activities:

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/public-engagement-lens-on-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-rdf-apr-2013.pdf>

Exercise: 5 minutes to focus on your goal

Reflect on your goal

Consider what you want to do and why? What are your next steps?

What I need to think about.....

People to talk to.....

Things to do.....

Key dates and deadlines

We encourage you to explore the training and development opportunities on the Development Calendar and on the Advantage booking system. Please consider any forthcoming milestones, deadlines and PDR dates to help target or progress your development. This space has been provided to identify a list of the key dates, deadlines and development opportunities to help you focus on and move closer to your goal.

Date	Details

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Stay in touch..... for further information and contacts, please go to: [Academic Staff Training & Development \(sharepoint.com\)](#)