National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

Public and Community Engagement in the KEF: preparing your submission

Summary of workshop discussions

Tuesday 15th September 2020

18/09/20

Introduction

The NCCPE offered this workshop for people in the process of finalising their KEF Public and Community Engagement narrative.

60 people joined the event, including three members of the Research England KEF team. Some delegates brought 'work in progress' to share with colleagues.

This event report summarises the discussions, and includes links to all the resources that were referred to in the meeting. It also includes a list of Q&As addressed at the event.

We would like to thank delegates for their contributions, and for sharing their reflections on the process so openly and generously.

Welcome and introduction

The event began with a quick reminder of the KEF development process, and a little bit of history.
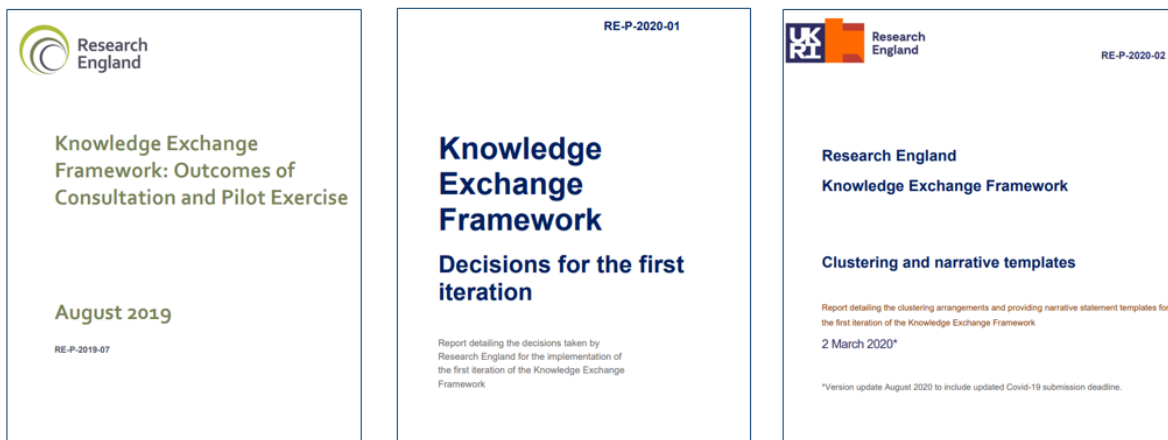
Key KEF publications

A key challenge in developing the Public and Community Engagement Perspective in the KEF has been finding a robust metric to represent the activity. The suggestion to use HEBCI survey data was not well received during the consultation and pilot phase.

The suggestion that a self-assessment score might be a workable compromise arose from the consultation and pilot – and that's now been implemented. The jury's out – and the approach will be reviewed. The NCCPE produced a briefing pack to accompany the March guidance, summarising the guidance and template documents:


ASPECT	DESCRIPTION
Strategy	Developing your strategy with the needs of users in mind
Support	Practical support in place to support public and community engagement
Activity	Activities undertaken to deliver your strategy
Results	Evidencing outcomes and impact
Acting on results	Communicating and acting on results

Self-assessment score	Stage of development
1	Planning phase, nothing yet in place
2	Embryonic, in the early stages of development
3	Developing, and implementation taking place
4	Fully developed and implemented in most but not all areas with outcomes and impacts becoming apparent
5	Fully developed and embedded across the institution to an exemplary level, with a culture of continuous improvement and good evidence on outcomes and impacts

NCCPE KEF Briefing pack

Self-assessment
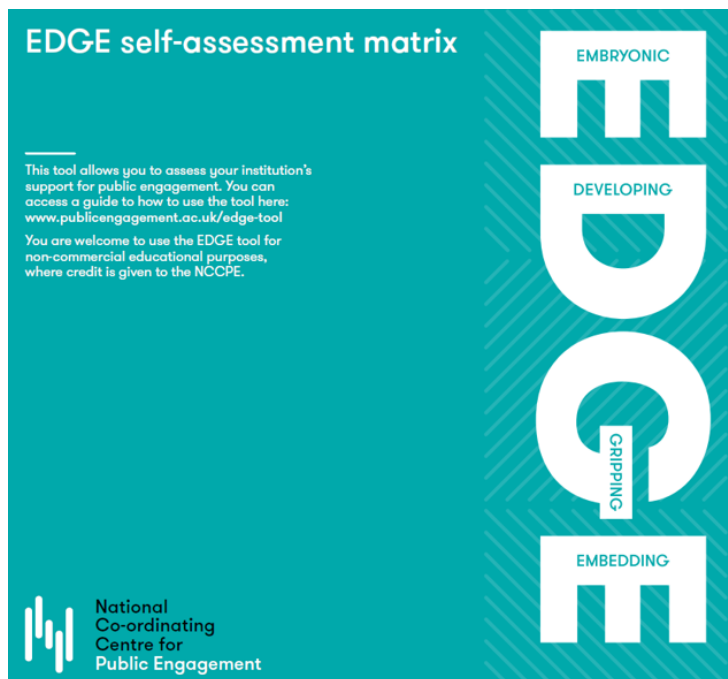
Purpose
Mission
Leadership
Communication

Process
Support
Learning
Recognition

People
Staff
Students
Publics

The NCCPE's EDGE tool

The KEF's approach built on a self-assessment tool that the NCCPE launched in 2012, and which has been widely used across the sector to support organisations to review their support for public engagement. It mirrors some of the categories in the KEF template (like Support) and the ideas of four states (from 'Embryonic' to 'Embedding') which informed the KEF's five 'levels', from 'at the planning phase' to 'fully embedded'.

THE EDGE TOOL

	FOCUS	EMBRYONIC	DEVELOPING	GRIPPING	EMBEDDING
PURPOSE	Mission	There is little or no reference to public engagement in the organisational mission or in other institution-wide strategies.	PE is referenced sporadically within the institutional mission documents and strategies, but is not considered a priority area.	PE is clearly referenced within the institutional mission and strategies and the institution is developing an institution-wide strategic approach.	PE is prioritised in the institution's official mission and in other key strategies, with success indicators identified. It is a key consideration in strategic developments in the institution.
	Leadership	Few (if any) of the most influential leaders in the institution serve as champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as informal champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as formal champions for public engagement.	The VC acts as a champion for PE and a senior leader takes formal responsibility. All senior leaders have an understanding of the importance and value of public engagement to the institution's agenda.
	Commun-ication	The institution's commitment to public engagement is rarely if ever featured in internal or external communications.	Public engagement occasionally features in internal and external communications.	Public engagement frequently features in internal communications, but rarely as a high-profile item or with an emphasis on its strategic importance.	PE appears prominently in the institution's internal communications; its strategic importance is highlighted, and resources and strategic support have been allocated to sustain this.
PROCESS	Support	There is no attempt to co-ordinate public engagement activity or to network learning and expertise across the institution.	There are some informal attempts being made to co-ordinate PE activities, but there is no strategic plan for this work. Some self-forming networks exist, not supported by the institution.	Oversight and co-ordination of PE has been formally allocated (e.g. to a working group or committee) but there is minimal support and resource to invest in activity.	The institution has a strategic plan to focus its co-ordination, a body/ies with formal responsibility for oversight of this plan, and resources available to assist the embedding of PE. There are a number of recognised and supported networks.
	Learning	There is little or no opportunity for staff or students to access professional development to develop their skills & knowledge of PE.	There are some opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE, but no formal or systematic support.	There are some formal opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE.	Staff and students are encouraged and supported in accessing professional development, training and informal learning to develop their skills and knowledge of engagement.
	Recognition	Staff are not formally rewarded or recognised for their PE activities.	Some departments recognise and reward PE activity on an ad hoc basis.	The university is working towards an institution-wide policy for recognising and rewarding PE activity.	The university has reviewed its processes, and developed a policy to ensure PE is rewarded & recognised in formal and informal ways.
PEOPLE	Staff	Few if any opportunities exist for staff to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties.	There are opportunities for staff in a handful of faculties or departments to get involved in PE, either informally or as part of their formal duties.	There are structured opportunities for many staff members to get involved in PE; but not in all faculties or departments. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties, and are encouraged and supported to do so.
	Students	Few opportunities exist for students to get involved in PE, either informally, through volunteering programmes, or as part of the formal curriculum.	There are opportunities for students to get involved, but there is no coordinated approach to promoting and supporting these opportunities across the institution.	Many (but not all) students have the opportunity to get involved in PE and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All students have the opportunity to get involved in PE, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement.
	Public	Little or no attempt has been made to assess community need, or to support 'non-traditional' groups in engaging with the institution.	Some attempt has been made to analyse community need and interest; and to begin to tackle access issues to open up the institution and its activities to the public.	The institution has committed resources to assessing community need and interests, and to using this insight and feedback to inform its strategy and plans.	The institution has assessed need & committed resources to supporting a wide range of groups to access its facilities and activities, and to systematically seek their feedback and involvement.

The University of Plymouth – the story so far

Allice Hocking, Head of Research Impact and Partnerships shared some reflections on the process, and how she was approaching it.

The University of Plymouth's KEF journey

I'm head of research, impact and partnership at University of Plymouth. It's a really broad role and I'm responsible for writing all three of the KEF narratives: local growth and regeneration, the public engagement narrative and the overarching narrative statement.

We first started thinking about the Public Engagement narrative about a year ago, as part of the KEF pilot. The pilot narrative was actually much easier because it allowed us to focus very much on our activities and projects. We realised the most useful thing was actually sharing it with some of our colleagues and with the public and getting people to critique it, to suggest what we could add and what was left out. What we learned from the pilot is the importance of being distinctive, and really trying to tell our story about public engagement.

And then we fast forward a year – the pandemic, working at home – and we saw the new template which we realised was going to be a much trickier thing to write for us, as it focused more on strategy, resources, impact and didn't allow us just talk about the great work to do in Plymouth, but tried to put more of a structure to it.

At that point, we decided, rather than just worry about writing the narrative, we'd actually use this as an opportunity to develop our whole work around public engagement, and to approach it as a long term commitment - not just a 2000 word narrative. So we started with a mapping exercise where we went out to all academics and professional services staff, and we asked them about the public engagement they were doing. We thought we would know probably 80% of the activity going on, but actually lots of great projects came out that we didn't know about. So it was really interesting to see what everybody's doing.

We also asked them in the spreadsheet to talk about the impact and evaluation work they were doing, which allowed us to open up a whole discussion around evaluation and how they were capturing impact, and how they wanted to measure themselves going forward. So that's been really helpful.

At that point we took a step back, and we thought we'd really value getting somebody external to look at the work we're doing on public engagement. So fortunately, we knew Kerry Leslie, who's an expert in public engagement and we asked her to come and work in partnership with us over a short period to help us think about our public engagement, not just for the KEF narrative, but also moving forward for the next few years, and getting us ready to apply for an NCCPE Watermark award. She did numerous interviews with senior people at the university and staff who deliver public engagement activity. She also worked with us on looking at strategies and at our impact. And from there, we've started to pull together our narrative.

The way we approached it is we started by just bullet pointing everything we wanted to try and get into the narrative. And I don't know if anybody else has tried to do it that way, but If you do that, you'll probably have a similar challenge of squeezing 'War and Peace' into a 2000 word narrative. We realised that it wouldn't all go in – we had just got too much information. It was really tough working out what will go in and what won't go in.

The responsibility for writing it sits with me. And my first draft was probably in the region of 10,000 words and I need to get down to 2000. It's involved a lot of editing, a lot of rethinking, and a lot of discussion. And one of the things I would say is that writing the narrative from home is quite a lonely job. So the more

people that can get involved at your university, the better really. So we've all been looking at it and thinking 'Am I just writing about this because it's one of my favourite projects?' We've had to be quite tough about what we wanted to include. So a key challenge for us has been the word limit. In comparison, the local growth and regeneration narrative was much easier to write and keep to the word limit.

Another challenge is tone – getting the right tone of voice. We tried to think about a couple of our partners that we work with regularly, but who are external to our sector. So some of our voluntary sector partners and some of our city council partners. And my plan is to run it past them before we submit to see whether it makes sense to them, because I think they would be the sort of people I'd hope would read it. I also think that there's a tendency when I write in public engagement to get a little bit too enthusiastic and use too many adjectives. So I've been quite strict with myself and cut those back as much as I could .

I think one of the other challenges has been the priorities. So we decided we were going to focus on three things that we really want to get across about our public engagement at Plymouth, things that were really important to us. And we'll try and run those themes through all the five aspects, for instance one of the things that's really important to us is our role with our city , so we will talk about our civic mission throughout

One of the other things we want to get across is how we're developing this area of work - so that we don't see this as the endpoint. This is a journey for us, and we've got lots of plans for the next two years about things we want to do in public engagement, how we want to take it forward.

Finally, I would just say, don't be shy about sharing it with other people, that it really helps if you have a couple of colleagues looking at it. Share it with colleagues, share with external partners, share it with other people at universities that you might work with regularly. It does help to really hone in on what's important, and not on not just your favourite things, which I think is one of the tendencies with writing something like this.

So these are some of the key learning points. I'd be really happy if anybody wants to get in touch with me at Plymouth and talk about it more, and share, good practice.

You can also access [Allice's blog about the KEF](#) on the NCCPE website

Some reflections on the process

Before setting up breakout groups to look at different aspects of the template, the NCCPE offered quick reflections on some of the challenges raised by delegates in their booking forms.

Word count

A number of delegates (including Allice in her presentation) raised the issue of the limited word count: it is proving very challenging to summarise all of the required information in just 2000 words.

The Research England KEF team offered this response:

We do appreciate that the word count is challenging, particularly for large and/or broad based institutions. Feedback from the KEF pilot was that this length would provide the best balance between being a brief document that would be read, while enabling HEIs to give a strong picture of their work under this perspective for the reader. Remember that we encourage the use of

Evidence

Delegates were also concerned about how best to approach the sharing of evidence. The Research England team was keen to emphasise that evidence does not need to be provided to them:

We won't be 'assessing' the statements (as they are self-assessments) - but we will be reviewing them at a very high level before publication, essentially to check that they do contain some substance to support the scores. For example, if an HEI scored itself a 1 in an aspect and provided very little evidence, that wouldn't be an issue - but if they scored a 4 and provided very little supporting narrative then we may question that.

By evidence, we are looking for evidence based statements that should be based on verifiable evidence and we reserve the right to ask for further information, but we do not intend to audit statements as a matter of course and the primary evidence does not need to be submitted to Research England alongside the statements or collated into a central repository.

Surgery session

Delegates then joined two different breakout groups, examining different parts of the narrative template. Groups were invited to reflect on specific challenges with each aspect, to offer 'top tips' from their experience, and to share work in progress with each other.

Feedback from the groups was gathered in chat, and is summarised below. Many of the questions raised by the groups were then picked up in a final Q&A.

GROUP 1: SUMMARY SECTION AND ASPECT 1 – STRATEGY

Challenges
- Finding out and then representing the full gamut of activity occurring across institution
- How to avoid coming across as generic, making it distinct, especially when wanting to convey breadth of initiatives.
- A concern that if we focus on particular things, it might seem like cherry-picking.
- Challenge of accommodating different understandings of public engagement
- Public engagement with research vs wider community engagement activity (the breadth is incredible: the challenge is how to focus that)
- Achieving balance between STEM and arts – fairly representing all faculties while work in some is stronger than others
- The template seems to operate on the assumption that a University already has a public engagement strategy – not all do
- Frustration that some of the best elements fall outside census period
- Sometimes work with community groups is fairly well hidden and therefore hard to report on
- Shame that there is not more of a focus on/space for articulating plans for developing public engagement
- Responsibility for public engagement often shared across several directorates and in the portfolio of several senior managers without anyone overall in charge
- Lots of student-led community engagement activity, but this does not always link closely to research - important to be able to evidence improvement in future

Top tips
- We like the Plymouth approach of having a number of key priorities that permeate each section.

GROUP 2: SUPPORT

Challenges
- Struggling with evidence and with timeline
- Confusion about what to include and what not to include - should we include everything? Or just what is done centrally?
- Is open access relevant or too academic? Should WP be included? Does it have to be linked to research? Regarding WP and student activities within the community - do they actually count? (Some including non-research activities, e.g. facilities for public engagement like using sports facilities with local groups)
- How do you score – positively? Room for improvement?
- Where is PE's home?

Top tips
- PE/CE should be global, not just local
- Include incentivisation – awards, workload model (hours in contract that have to be spent on KE), highlight if it is part of career development
- Maybe include organisational charts
- For P&C involvement in steering groups / governance – Cambridge runs a patrons group overseeing Festivals. You can also include public panels for healthcare work.
- Include HEIF funding
- Include training
- A themed approach, playing to your strengths, can work really well. Rather than simply listing the actual activities, making them examples of the themes/strategic aims/values is a more meaningful approach.

- Creating a dedicated microsite with further information on individual projects or elements to link to was also considered a great idea.
- The importance of including student engagement activity was also thought to be important - the Concordat actually mentions that.
- Some institutions have broken this section into key themes with specific examples under each to illustrate (they have used the guidance to focus in on the themes)
- Some institutions took the approach of looking to answer all of the exam questions (e.g. mapping and corroborating evidence and then focusing on the stronger more evidence-based areas and noting the weaker areas for improvement)
- Some institutions will highlight intended learning and plans (e.g. acting on results of NCCPE institutional public engagement with research survey)

GROUP 3: ACTIVITIES

Challenges
- Capturing data across university and measurement.
- Likewise, the word count, as there are so many activities and such a range of activities.
- Balance between scale of activities has been difficult – quality v quantity
- How to avoid duplication – themes can help (see below)
- Trying to reflect voluntary work outside of curriculum – is anyone capturing this? A lot of this takes place. One example provided was a mechanism that allowed for the capture of hours undertaken outside of university: questions both over how to effectively capture this, and then whether to include it. May be opportunity to look at this as an institutional approach to put into KEF.

Top tips
- Central repository came up as challenge – one solution suggested was partnering with academic divisions and gaining representative from each to sense-check and verify content/activities
- Another approach was looking at what's needed for successful KE Strategy – taking a bottom-up approach.
- Useful sources of info: NCCPE Watermark report - NCCPE come in and work to evaluate your PE, you have to submit a hefty report and evidence base against their criteria.
- Impact case studies.
- Nature of activities and structure – for many, this was a mix of research-based and communication based activities.
- Common themes people used to cluster activities include: social mobility, mental health and wellbeing, creative capital.
- Other headings / themes to structure the narrative include:
    o Public engagement with Research
    o Community/Cultural Engagement – major contributions to educational, social and cultural life of community
    o Public engagement – engagement in ongoing and embedded public engagement programmes
    o Social Innovation – lots of links with social entrepreneurship.
- Another delegate shared a categorisation of community based activities, problem solving activities, commercialisation activities and people based activities. This was presented visually which received very positive feedback from the group.
- National programme that might help called 'The Civic University'
- Infographics seen as very useful for structuring content.
- Consensus that a headings approach works well

- Other approaches include using hyperlinks to demonstrate breadth.

GROUP 4: RESULTS AND LEARNING

Challenges
- Where there isn't a strategy or is being refreshed it is challenging to write results and learning sections.
- Not much strategy around PE - a lot of activity, but it falls down on evaluation and learning
- Evaluation so hard to implement, additional burden
- Most of us finding sections 4 and 5 the most challenging to write. Felt there was some repetition between 4 and 5 (such as 'LG': should this have been one section?)
- It is quite tricky to see where the crossover between 4 & 5 - e.g. something could go in 4 but also in 5.
- Representing the diversity of what we do, but bringing out the specific evidence based examples (some people within the institution may not understand why something has been 'left out').
- Lack of strategy makes evaluation challenging.
- A lot of activities taking place but not evidenced.
- HE-BCI table 5 - incentivising use of HEI space over working in the community.
- Data challenges - measuring the big numbers rather than rich outcomes.

Top tips
- Provided an opportunity for a KE audit, helping us identify our strengths and learn what 'we' are doing.
- Helpful to draw distinction between individual PE activities vs activities supporting PE culture.
- Remember this is a test run, and is not being assessed like REF.
- Some institutions have carried the same type of activity/vehicle across each section.
- Some institutions found it easiest to ask people who own parts of the narrative vs provision of data (this is often linked to people who are in KEF-related positions)
- Link to case study booklet including testimony. Use media mentions?
- For drafting this section, there is benefit in starting at higher level and then moving down to a lower level - e.g. total number of projects funded, then a couple of examples such as online or museums.
- It would be really helpful if institutions, particularly academics, could come to see evidence gathering for PE activity for KEF in the same way as impact evidence gathering for REF.

GROUP 5: ACTING ON RESULTS

Challenges
- Found this and section 4 hardest to complete - concern that this can come across as quite piecemeal as examples are spread across the institution and some areas do more thorough evaluation than others.
- It can be challenging for some specific examples where staff have left.
- Does this risk coming round to becoming a publicity exercise?
- Challenging section – re-highlighting previous work feeding into new to-be-developed strategic plans.
- What to do if you don't have an institutional approach.
- How many examples to use – how much details do you give?

Other general reflections on the process from the different groups

Creative and practical challenges in crafting the narrative

- Finding the focus that runs through the whole narrative (noting that each section could be read independently).
- Experimenting with tables and bullet points and trying to move away from beautiful prose to actually summarise it.
- We are hoping that there isn't a right and a wrong for responding to the KEF.
- Some (understandable) retrofitting is taking place for this first submission (while still being transparent).
- Different aspects have different word lengths: we aren't trying to make each section equal.
- Word balance is proving to be challenging for all us (e.g. no extra consideration for COVID-19 response?)
- Levels of input – some of us are not in the position to seek multiple input or have the capacity to do so. For some of us, getting internal input is ok, but seeking the external view might be more complex/challenging (though we agree it's a good thing to do)
- Scoring challenge! From each perspective, the picture looks different.
- Being honest – for instance if you don't have a strategy, don't pretend. Use this iteration to create a baseline – and aim for improvement in future years. The fact that you are asked to evidence your claims makes honesty the best policy!
- Is this 'holding up a mirror'? or trying to create a positive filter on our work? Different institutions are taking different lines on this
- The difference between strategy and activity. Everybody felt their institutions have many really good examples of activities and really excellent practice, but that isn't necessarily underpinned by strategy and support. Therefore, they're likely to have a slightly skewed response, with quite low scores in some areas and quite high in others

The value of the process

- KEF is good at picking up gaps (but not at addressing them): this is where the KE Concordat starts to step in.
- The value of the exercise has been in identifying gaps and weaknesses, and helping to flag up direction of travel.

- It provided an opportunity for a KE audit, helping us to identify our strengths and learn what 'we' are doing. We are planning to do a strategy in the future if we had investment - what should we do in the future?
- Has made us made think more widely: this is far bigger work than the 2000 words may make it appear
- The exercise is already proving useful for thinking through some bigger picture things – for instance, how we can start to capture evidence more systematically?
- What do KEF want to hear? Is KEF a tool to get us thinking?
- The process has really focused attention on KE in our institution – and has led to some concrete changes, for instance our Research Committee's remit and name has changed to reflect a new focus on KE.

Internal challenges posed by the process
- Every organisation has a different approach to writing up/collating/making sense of the narrative and signing off, but all have some level of senior leadership approval. Different senior leadership may look at the KEF through a different lens, so we need to have a sense of confidence of focus highlighted.
- The absence of a link to funding makes it difficult to move it up the priority list. The current focus is all on teaching and research
- Who owns KEF within an institution, and who is commenting, reviewing and participating?
- Worries about why some projects are picked over others - e.g. internal academic competition.

Other reflections

- We talked about how our universities have such different relationships with HEIF, and the pros and cons of how HEIF funding (OR lack of it) can help or hinder when writing the narratives
- We discussed our different relationships with the local community, for example at SOAS a lot of our 'local' engagement is overseas rather than just in Bloomsbury, and how it will be good to see how everyone's local work is so unique.

Q&A

A final Q&A session picked up on a number of questions raised by delegates, and has been further developed in consultation with the KEF team at Research England.

Readers may also be interested to refer back to a webinar hosted by Research England and involving the NCCPE team, which included a briefing about the guidance and a Q&A session.

The recording is available here:
https://ukri.zoom.us/rec/share/xItLI5vN0UFLU4nvsRyDVY0IL4vFeaa8h3JN_fAKz0-85hQmlaeS3b0jKZKBxqrV

The slide pack and Q&A transcript are available on request from KEF@re.ukri.org .

Question	Response
Several questions asked about the 'scope' of Public and Community Engagement in the KEF • What are the parameters of public engagement for the purposes of the exercise? Does this include Widening Participation? Or should it be all research-related in some way? • Is open access relevant or too academic? Should WP be included? Does it have to be linked to research? WP and student activities within the community - do they actually count? • Trying to reflect voluntary work outside of curriculum – can we include this?	The definition used in the guidance is as follows: "Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of the higher education and research can be shared with the public and communities. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit." A simple rule of thumb for deciding what to include is to ask – is the purpose of the P&CE activity linked to knowledge exchange of not? If the purpose is to widen your participation or recruit students, then it wouldn't be in scope. But if it is focused on exchanging knowledge with the wider community, then it is. A by-product of that activity might be to enhance reputation or recruitment, but the core needs to be an interaction underpinned by the exchange of knowledge. An example might be student volunteering which is working with community organisations to support their research capacity, for instance.
• There is some confusion about what to include and what not to include - should we include everything, or just what is done centrally?	It is impossible to include everything – so a key part of the process is working out how to synthesise activity (for instance using themes). It is very easy to drown the reader in detail – so think about using sub headings and infographics etc. to help them see the 'wood for the trees'.
• How should we choose which evidence to include, and how much should be included? • There are so many different things to link to, do you have to give evaluation for everything listed in the activities? Is it better to give lots of examples to show breadth and then the evidence is light, or go into detail about a few? • Evaluation is so hard to implement, creating an additional burden	It is important to emphasise that Research England do not expect (and will not accept) evidence to be submitted with the narrative (e.g. as an annex). The evidence you cite should be accessible if requested by Research England, but does not need to be collated in expectation of this. Deciding how to reference the evidence – and what kinds of evidence to reference – is also a challenge. It is sensible to take an overview of the evidence you've got, perhaps against different thematic areas. You have very limited space so you can't describe every bit of evidence you've collected. One approach would be to work out what evidence you do have against key areas of activity. You might then describe how you go about monitoring the area and provide one or two examples (e.g. of KPIs you collect).
• How can you reference evidence that isn't available online?	Not all evidence needs to be available online – but it should be possible to provide to Research England in the unlikely event that they ask for corroboration of claims made in your narrative. This would not be done as a matter of course, only

	in the unlikely event that there was cause for concern about the accuracy of a statement.
• To what extent should we be writing about what we plan to do, rather than what we have done? The process has really focused us on the actions we want to take to progress our support for P&CE	The KEF is retrospective – it is not asking you to outline future plans. This is what the Concordat is asking for in the action plan you will submit. Of course, you might want to make brief reference to your trajectory and direction of travel – but this shouldn't be a significant focus of your narrative. The most sensible place to include this is aspect 5, 'Acting on Results'. If you don't currently have a PE strategy, then you might also want to talk about your plans to address this in aspect 1.
• How honest should we be? • How do we resist pressures to score our institution as highly as possible, rather than as honestly as possible?	It is important to focus colleagues on the actual evidence that you can martial to underpin your self-assessment. If that evidence is lacking, then there is reputational risk in 'over claiming'. It is also important to emphasise that a primary goal of the KEF is to be a useful source of information and data on KE activities to understand, benchmark and ultimately improve performance. So the focus of this first iteration of the KEF is to build a credible approach that offers really meaningful and valuable intelligence, internally and externally. The more honest we can be collectively, the more likely that the KEF will evolve into a powerful tool. Research England are definitely not expecting 'sales pitches' for your HEI, rather an honest reflection of what you do and how the activity is focused. If your self-assessment has resulted in a relatively low score in this first iteration, it will still create a useful baseline – and will provide an opportunity in subsequent years for you to evidence significant improvement. The KEF is designed through the seven perspectives to demonstrate and celebrate the diversity in our sector and Research England do not expect all providers to excel in all perspectives. Instead it will demonstrate the differing missions, strategic objectives and 'shape' of English institutions.
• Why does the KEF self-assessment have five 'levels' whereas the NCCPE EDGE tool has 4? • Would self-assessment scoring be better with descriptive model of EDGE tool 'embryonic, developing, gripping, embedding' etc. rather than 1-5 implying poor-excellent?	The Research England team wanted to allow for greater differentiation across the sector. '1' is really entry level – where very little is in place. And '5' goes beyond the 'embedding' level in the EDGE tool, and requires evidence that support is fully embedded and exemplary. The expectation is that very few HEPs will be currently at level 5. If every HEIs scored themselves very highly, it may not support the continuation of this methodology. Research

|		England stress the value of honest and evidenced reflections and scores.
•	We'd like to know after these are published - who is reading and using them? What can we learn from this?	The intention is that the KEF returns will be used by people outside the HE sector who are interested in understanding what universities are doing in this area, and how better to engage with them. Having this external audience in mind is really important. Plymouth's approach to involving partners in the process of drafting it, and getting feedback upon it is a really sensible approach. You might also use existing fora (such as advisory groups, or governing bodies) to provide feedback.
•	Is the existence of a public engagement strategy being overly prioritised in the form to the point where the existence of a lot of excellent embedded engagement practice is being undervalued?	The reason for the focus on Strategy and Support can be traced back to lessons learned from the pilot. The pilot template focused mainly on activity, but the resulting narratives were very hard to assess, as they provided little evidence of the underpinning rationale for the activity, or of the results and impact. This informed the new template. The rationale for foregrounding the existence of a strategy (and of support) was based upon a logic model approach. The diagram below illustrates how this was explained in a Research England webinar earlier this year: The underpinning strategy and support functions are viewed as 'inputs' which make a material contribution to the quality of the 'outputs' (the activities that are undertaken). This focus on inputs and outcomes is reflected in the KE Concordat principles and enablers, hopefully making it easier for HEPs to link between the two exercises.
•	How should we balance global versus local engagement?	There is no expectation about the geography in which you P&CE takes place: every institution (and every team within

	those institutions) will have different engagement 'footprints' that can be reflected in the narrative. This links to a wider point – though everyone is working to a standard template and set of prompts, the hope and expectation is that this will generate a rich diversity of approaches, reflecting the distinctive activity, cultures and contexts of different HEIs and their collaborators
• Some felt that there are programmes/activities that fit in both PCE and LG templates. It is challenging to decide what should go where	It is helpful to go back to the purpose of the activity. If the purpose is enhancing economic and social growth in the local area, it might more naturally fit within the Local Growth perspective. If the focus is on engaging with your communities, then in the Public and Communication perspective. If there is significant overlap (for instance, 'civic' activity could fit in both categories) it is sensible to explain how you have chosen to define and categorise activity. Definitions and boundaries are quite fluid in this area, so explaining how you have categorised activity might help (remembering that this also needs to make sense to an audience outside HE).
• What are sections 4 and 5 separated? It is hard to work out what should go into each	Given the absence of a conventional metric for the P&CE Perspective, it felt important to foreground the importance of evaluation and monitoring in the narrative. The distinction between the two sections is that 4 is asking - 'are you evaluating in a strategic and meaningful way?', while 5 is then asking – 'and what do you do with the results of that evaluation? Are they actually being used to inform your work and enhance your performance? Are you sharing those results widely?' Research England will review how well this has worked – it isn't out of the question that these sections might be merged in future iterations.
• How would Research England like hyperlinks to be provided in the narrative – as full urls? • Should links go to your own website or to external websites?	It would be helpful for providers to provide full URLs in their statements. These will not be included in the word count. Providers may link to any sites that they consider are most appropriate to support their narrative statements. Research England also note that while they encourage the use of hyperlinks to support the statements care should be taken that this should be to supporting / expanding information only. It is important that the picture of your institution that you are providing comes across in the statement itself with the URLs providing a reader looking for additional depth with places they can go if they wish.

What's next?

The workshop closed with a quick update on next steps with the roll out of the KEF and the KE Concordat, and a reminder of the timelines.

The Concordat for the Advancement of Knowledge Exchange in Higher Education
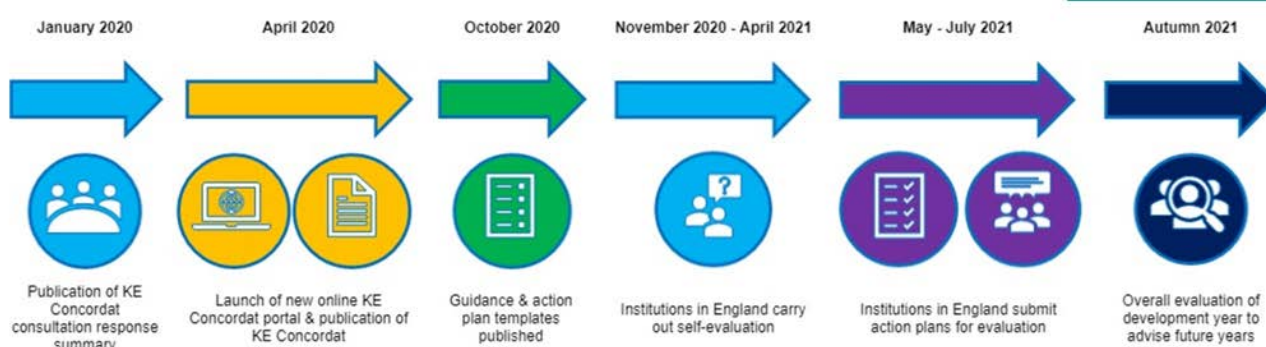
The Concordat for the Advancement of Knowledge Exchange in Higher Education complements the KEF. While the KEF is 'backwards looking', reflecting on activity and achievements, the KEF is 'forward looking', laying out HE Providers' (HEPs) forward plans. The Concordat does not aim to pass or fail anyone, nor does it seek to rank HEPs against each other. Instead it is very much a self-evaluation exercise, allowing every HEP to reflect on how they go about doing KE (looking internally and externally) and making a statement (an action plan) of what a HEP intends to do to improve the way they do KE in future.

Current timeline
• Request to sign up to Concordat and its principles, plus publication of guidance and action plan templates – October 2020
• Panel ready to receive first submissions of self-evaluation and action plan May-July 2021

This is a development year for the Concordat; in Autumn 2021 an overall evaluation of the whole process will be carried out.

The results of that will advise future years of the Concordat, including the decision over what the cycle of action plan evaluation might be (likely between 3-5 years).

Not all HEPs have to take part in the development year (self-assessment and the submission of an action plan for self-assessment), however for HEPs in receipt of HEIF, Research England would expect a HEP to participate as a means to prove commitment to continuous improvement. In future years, whilst sign up will remain optional, any institution "signed up" to the concordat principles would be expected to complete an

action plan, submit it for evaluation and make it public; RE will still expect participation from those in receipt of HEIF.

More information can be found on the KE Concordat website: https://www.keconcordat.ac.uk/

Next steps with KE Policy
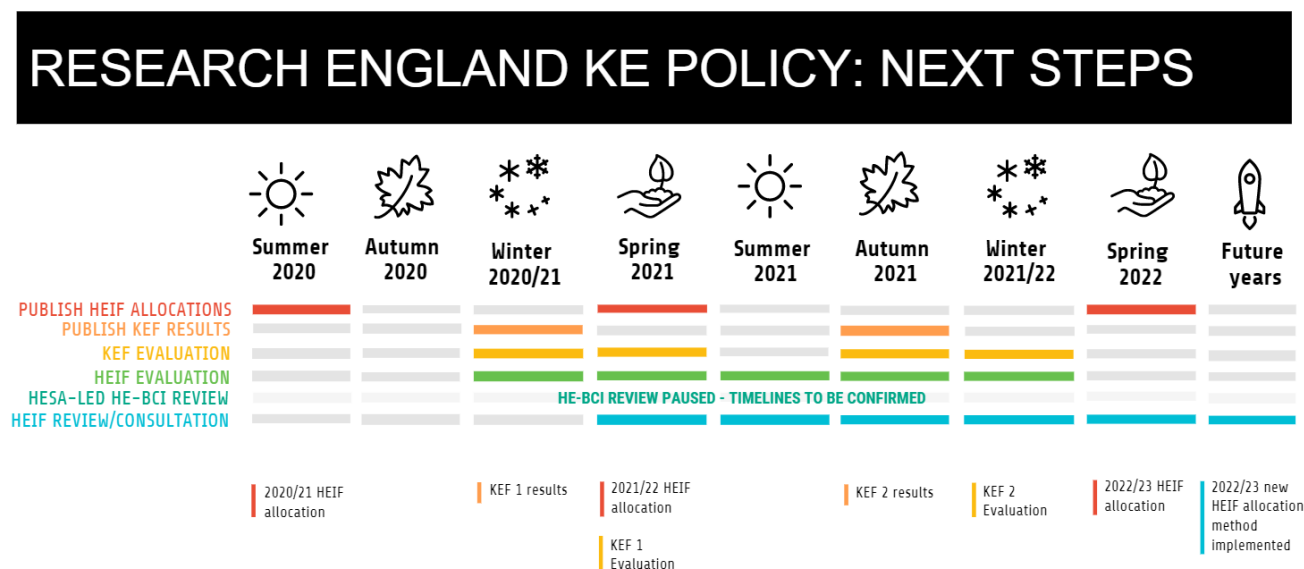
This diagram was used by Research England in their recent webinar on KE policy looking forward. A recording of that webinar is available here, with the relevant section at roughly 1'43" into the recording.

The slide pack and Q&A transcript are available on request from KEPolicy@re.ukri.org .

The slide sets out the time scales for the different policy strands.

HEIF allocations

HEIF allocations were made in August this year though Research England anticipate being able to share institutional allocations with providers in the Spring next year, and hope that this will be the case in future years.

KEF results

The publication of KEF 1 results was originally due to be released in the Spring 2020. Due to COVID, results are now expected in December of this year, following the submission of institutional narratives in October.

RE are looking to recover the original timescale for publishing KEF results in the early Summer, but this will take a phased approach whereby they plan to publish KEF 2 results in Autumn 2021, KEF 3 results in late Summer 2022 – and finally, KEF 4 results in early Summer 2023.

KEF evaluation

In terms of KEF evaluation: at present, Research England plan to undertake an evaluation of the framework following publication of results. This will support continuous improvement for future iterations of the framework

HEIF evaluation

Research England expect to take forward a full evaluation of the HEIF programme in 2021 to collate evidence on the value of HEIF for spending review purposes.

The HE-BCI review

Timelines for the HE-BCI review are to be confirmed following the 'pause' by HESA earlier this year. However, Research England understand the review is to be un-paused and for HESA to confirm timelines shortly.
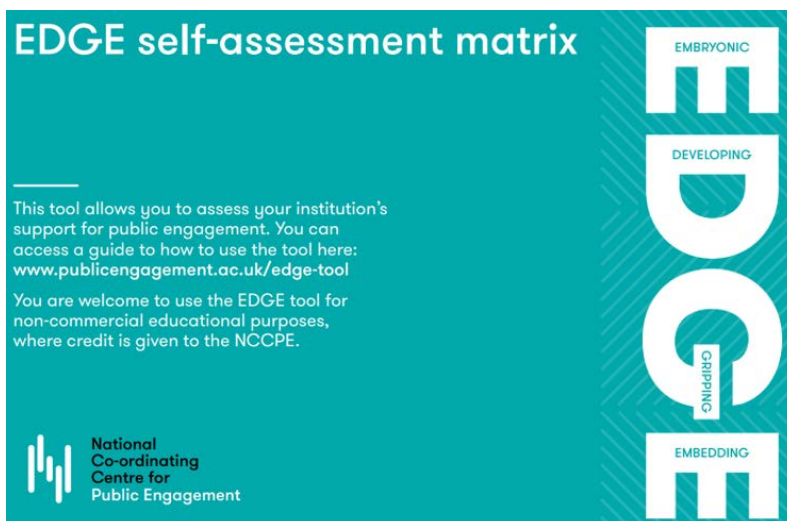
Consultation and review of HEIF

Consultation on the HEIF review is due to begin next Spring (2021) together with a body of technical work, with an expectation that the KEF may form the basis of allocations from 2022/23.

NCCPE tools and resources

Those universities who have used the NCCPE's **EDGE tool**, **EDGE tool survey** or who have undertaken our **Watermark process** will recognise many of the prompts in the template, and will have gathered data which could be submitted to help evidence your self-assessment.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss any of these resources or support services with us, or would like any further advice.
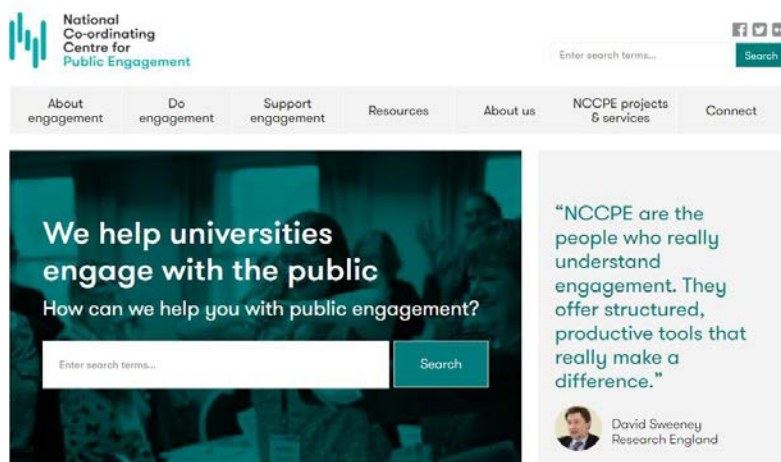
nccpe.enquiries@uwe.ac.uk

The **NCCPE website** includes a wealth of resources, useful tools and exemplars of practice.

A useful place to start is in the **Support Engagement** section. This includes details of the NCCPE's **Engaged University Manifesto**. Over 80 HEIs have signed this, expressing their strategic commitment to public engagement.

The NCCPE joined a Research England webinar in March 2020, which launched the new KEF guidance and included a section specifically focussed on Public and Community Engagement. You can access the recording of the webinar here (with the relevant section from 55" in to the session)