
Are we realising our vision?

Invitation for proposals for an evaluation of the NCCPE

Background

Since it was established in 2008, the NCCPE has worked with people and organisations across the UK higher education system, and beyond, to inspire and support culture change. We are focused on mobilising higher education (HEI) and knowledge institutions to realise the value for long-term change of public and community engagement (P&CE) in research and innovation. We aim to inspire collective action across and beyond the HE system and promote environments and cultures in which high-quality and equitable engagement is recognised, rewarded and can flourish. The NCCPE is co-hosted by the University of the West of England, Bristol and the University of Bristol. It is core funded by UKRI, Research England, DoENI, SFC, MEDR and Wellcome.

Our vision

An inclusive higher education sector where communities can contribute to, and benefit from, knowledge, teaching and research.

Our mission

To mobilise universities and research organisations to realise the value of public and community engagement for long-term change. We aim to inspire collective action across and beyond the HE system and promote environments and cultures where high-quality and equitable engagement activity is recognised, rewarded, and can flourish.

The NCCPE is primarily an enabling organisation, working with institutions to inspire and support change in the HE system. To help realise its vision, the NCCPE offers expert services and consultancy, training and accreditation, and research and policy activity to help inform assessment, policy and funding frameworks in the UK higher education sector.

Aims of the evaluation

The NCCPE is seeking proposals for an evaluation, covering the period 2015–2025, of its work, capabilities, influence, outcomes, activities and services, which will enable the NCCPE and its funders to understand and interpret the extent to which it is successfully realising its vision, its contribution to sector learning and the value and quality of the return on funders' investment.

As an enabler of others, the NCCPE's impact and influence is often indirect, relational and system-facing. We therefore anticipate that the evaluation plan will need to be framed in a way that enables it to be iterative and agile. While we suggest it should address three main evaluation questions (below), your proposal can include other questions you believe to be relevant and plans for how you will adapt the evaluation in response to emerging evidence.

- ***To what extent has the NCCPE been a significant influence in mobilising HEIs to realise the value of P&CE?***
 - To what extent has NCCPE influenced the embedding of engagement within HEIs, in the context of changing sectoral challenges?
 - How has the NCCPE been affected by and responded to changing sectoral challenges?
 - What has been the contribution of the NCCPE in effecting:
 - changes in knowledge and understanding of the value of P&CE?
 - changes in networks and capability?
 - organisational change in the P&CE sector?
 - mobilisation of support for place-based engagement and community engagement
 - enabling and supporting resilience and morale in the HE sector?
- ***To what extent has the NCCPE been successful in inspiring collective action across and beyond the HE system to promote cultures and environments of high-quality and equitable engagement?***
 - What has been the contribution of the NCCPE to supporting the development of robust and appropriate cultures of engagement?
 - How effective has the NCCPE been in leveraging funding, projects, and partnerships to embed engagement across the HE system?
 - To what extent has the NCCPE facilitated the realisation of funders' visions to support sector-wide embedding of engagement?
 - To what extent is the NCCPE meeting the ambitions of its Inclusion Statement and drawing new and diverse participants to its work?
 - Where are the key challenges facing the centre, and how have these been addressed, what learning has emerged from this work.
- ***To what extent has the nature of the NCCPE as an infrastructure organisation been important in delivering against its core aims?***
 - What have been the key enablers or barriers to the NCCPE working effectively as an infrastructure organisation?
 - In what ways does the design of the centre, its approach, and its funding contribute to addressing its objectives?

Related project

This evaluation will be linked to a second project to explore options for the future role of the NCCPE. The two projects are intentionally separate but linked: the evaluation will provide a retrospective evidence base of the NCCPE's contribution to the sector, reflecting on if and how it has been successful and the business model underpinning it; the second project (the brief for which will be published later in the year) will draw on that evidence, alongside wider system insight, to explore future options.

We welcome proposals from people and organisations wanting to undertake one or both projects.

Approach

We anticipate the evaluation will take a mixed methods approach, including desk research drawing on the NCCPE's published reports, papers, evaluations and other outputs, reports, papers and other material from the wider HE sector and interviews, focus groups and/or surveys with key NCCPE partners, clients, team members, and others from the wider HE sector. As noted above, we anticipate the evaluation will evolve in response to emerging evidence.

The NCCPE will facilitate access to documentary evidence in its archive and to key people.

Required outputs

We are open to discussing a range of outputs from the evaluation work, but it should include:

- A short report including key findings (maximum five A4 pages)
- A longer, detailed technical report, including methods used, summary of data gathered and findings (maximum 15 A4 pages)
- Up to three use cases exemplifying HEIs' engagement with NCCPE to achieve or sustain culture change, which can be used on the NCCPE website and in communications (maximum six A4 pages)
- An infographic setting out the key findings in an accessible visual format, for use in presentations and social media

Budget and timeline

The total budget available for this project is £40,000 exclusive of VAT. This will be payable in **two** tranches:

50% on signing of the contract

50% on completion of the project to the satisfaction of the steering and advisory group and the NCCPE

This evaluation will be funded from NCCPE's core funding.

Management, monitoring and oversight

This project will be managed by **Dr Ann Grand, NCCPE Research Fellow and Policy Analyst**. A small **steering and advisory group** will be established, with members nominated by NCCPE and its core funders. This group will help define the parameters of the evaluation, facilitate access to people and documents and offer feedback. The appointed evaluator/organisation will be expected to provide brief monthly progress reports, including emerging findings.

Timeline

Deadline for receipt of emailed proposals: 10am on **Monday 29th June 2026**

Shortlisted proposals are likely to be invited to an online interview in the week beginning **27th July 2026**

Notification to successful organisation by: **10th August 2026**

The evaluation must begin no later than **7th September 2026**

Kick-off workshop – in-person at the NCCPE's office in Bristol or another mutually convenient location. Date to be arranged but no later than **six weeks after award of contract**

All outputs must be satisfactorily delivered to NCCPE no later than **26th February 2027**

These dates are provisional and may be altered by NCCPE at its discretion. Notice will be given on the NCCPE website of any change in these dates.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed on:

Appropriateness of the proposed methodology and methods in terms of securing valid and robust data	35%
Experience in evaluation and monitoring of the proposing organisation and people	25%
Understanding of the context of the place and role of engagement in the UK higher education sector	20%
Feasibility of completing the proposed work to a high quality in the time available	10%
Overall value for money	10%

The proposal

Submitting a proposal

At the NCCPE, we strive to live our values. We put learning and reflection at the heart of all our activities to enable us to realise our commitments to inclusive practice. Our commitment to inclusion is public; you can read more about it here [NCCPE Statement of Inclusion | NCCPE \(publicengagement.ac.uk\)](https://publicengagement.ac.uk)

In line with our inclusive culture, we will welcome proposals from people and organisations with a wide variety of backgrounds, life experiences and organisational knowledges, recognising that they bring rich experiences and different perspectives that are of great benefit to our work, alongside their skills and expertise.

Please email your proposal to nccpe.enquiries@uwe.ac.uk by **10am on 29th June 2026**

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the brief before you submit your proposal, please email ann2.grand@uwe.ac.uk

Your proposal should be no longer than five A4 pages. It should include:

- Your organisation's name, legal status, contact details and name of the lead contact
- Reasons why you are interested in submitting a proposal for this evaluation
- Outline of your proposed methodology, methods and approach
- Details of the relevant professional experience and expertise of the people who will undertake the work
- Summaries of at least two other evaluations that your organisation has/you have delivered which are similar in focus, scope and tone to this evaluation (can include links to published outputs)
- Details of any potential risks, sensitivities or conflicts of interest and how they will be managed and mitigated
- Any other information you feel may be relevant

You should include a second document covering:

- A proposed timeline, with milestones
- Budget, including a detailed breakdown of how costs will be allocated in terms of evaluators' workload, travel, VAT, etc