

Museum-University Partnerships

Ending a Partnership



National
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Ending a partnership

People can often worry about ending a partnership. However, it may not always be possible or desirable to continue a partnership forever, and considering how to end a partnership well is important.

It is helpful to consider how you will end a partnership at the start of working together. Managing expectations, and being honest about what you may be able to commit to, is a great basis on which to start a relationship. Often partnerships exist to deliver a project, and things may end naturally when the funding is over. However you may want to consider whether you intend to continue working in partnership (now or in the future), and what form this might take.

If, for whatever reason, your partnership has come to an end, then you may want to manage this in a formal way. If things have not ended well, you might need to get legal advice, before acting. However, assuming the end of the partnership is amicable, then why not write a formal letter along the following lines:

- Summary of the project and its achievements
- Acknowledgement of any shared resources, and a reiteration of any agreed rules of use
- If applicable, an indication of other ways to stay in touch (signing up to a newsletter etc.)
- A statement confirming that the partnership in its current form has been concluded

Questions to consider

- Has this partnership been successful? Have you met all of the aims/expectations outlined at the start of the partnership? If not, what remains to be done? Who is responsible for doing these things?
- Do all partners believe there is value in continuing with the partnership? Is there an opportunity to take things forward, e.g. a new funding opportunity to apply for, new aims to work towards?
- If not, would the partners like to stay in touch? How will you do this? Who will be the main contact at each organisation? What will happen to the partnership if these contacts leave their organisation?

Actions you could take

- Mark the end of the project with a celebratory event bringing together all those involved, and celebrating the work you have done together.
- Consider light-touch ways to stay in contact – this could be on a purely informal basis, or perhaps through adding key contacts to invite lists.
- Begin with the end in mind, and make sure that if you end the partnership it doesn't come as a shock to those involved

- Make sure you have delivered against what you have promised, and if you are unable to do this, be honest and talk it through with your partners.

Resource created by NCCPE and Gracie Divall.



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The NCCPE is supported by the UK Higher Education Councils, Research Councils UK and Wellcome, and has been hosted by the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England since it was established in 2008.

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The Museum-University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) was supported by public funding from Arts Council England. It sought to enable museums and universities to meet together and develop mutually beneficial partnerships. A range of resources have been created, drawing on the learning from the MUPI project. You can find all these resources on the NCCPE website.



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