

# Museum-University Partnerships

## Guide to University KPIs



National  
Co-ordinating  
Centre for  
Public Engagement

# Using KPIs to measure success

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a measure used to assess progress, and can help people keep track of how their partnership is going.

It is important for all organisations involved in a partnership or collaboration to evaluate and measure progress. Whilst we should expect a large proportion of the desired outcomes between a university and a museum to be the same, there may be additional and unique measures for each of the partnering organisations. Some partners will be interested in the process of working together, whilst others might consider the impacts of the partnership as more important. There are no rights and wrongs – but it is important for partners to be clear with one another.

It is therefore helpful if, at the outset of working together, organisations discuss and agree success measures, or KPIs. To do this the partners will need to consider how important process, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts are, and how these will be assessed.

Depending on the purpose of the partnership, a university might wish to measure the partnership in terms of:

- Staff and student access to specific artefacts or archives
- The number of collaborations and/or projects generated from the partnerships and their value (economic, social, cultural, and otherwise)
- Publications where the partnership has made a contribution
- Number of student placements, or project briefs given
- Any positive press/marketing that has been generated as a result of the partnership.
- Change in the life or life opportunities of the community for which the partnership is intended

A museum may be more interested in measuring the partnership in terms of:

- New knowledge of collections
- New audiences accessing the museum and/ or its collections
- Better understanding of the effectiveness of the museum's approach to engaging with audiences
- Staff and/ or volunteers' skills development
- Increased awareness of the museum and its collections amongst key audiences
- Increase in numbers of volunteers
- New collaborations arising from the partnerships

Clearly the best way to find out what is important to the partners involved, is to talk about it! You may find the MUPI purpose cards helpful in exploring what you hope to achieve from working together.

KPIs enables you to be specific about what you hope to achieve. Here are some example KPIs for some of the measures above:

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Example KPIs</b>
Staff and student access to specific artefacts or archives	Number of people who have accessed a specific archive/ artefact
The number of collaborations and/or projects generated from the partnerships and their value (economic, social, cultural, and otherwise)	Number of collaborations Money saved; generated Enhanced skills for museum audiences; staff; volunteers
Publications where the partnership has made a contribution	Academic journal articles Case studies Course materials for students
Number of student placements, or project briefs given,	Number of placements Number of projects delivered by students Student skills development /improved attainment
Any positive press/marketing that has been generated as a result of the partnership.	Press coverage – number; reach Online readership of related press items Number of emails/ comments arising from press activity
Change in the life or life opportunities of the community for which the partnership is intended	Skills development Improved educational attainment Increased numbers of volunteers Learning related to project To what extent participants have enjoyed participating in the event New networks
New knowledge of collections	Increased documentary information about key artefacts/ collections
New audiences accessing the museum and/ or its collections	Increased visitor numbers More diverse groups participating in museum events assessed through demographics information
Better understanding of the effectiveness of the museum's approach to engaging with audiences	Staff / volunteer knowledge increased Enhanced visitor experience – learning; enjoyment; engagement
Staff and/ or volunteers' skills development	New skills Increased confidence in key areas of work Career progression
Increased awareness of the museum and its collections amongst key audiences	Knowledge of the museum and what it has to offer in key audience groups Increased visitor numbers Increased enquiries

## Questions to consider

- How do the current KPIs of the various organisations involved in the partnership align with each other? Are you sure that you generally want the same things from each other?
- To what degree are the partners willing to accommodate individual measures?
- Who are the key non-academic/non-museum stakeholders (users/beneficiaries of the project) in your proposed area? What matters to them? What are the funders or stakeholders particularly interested in?
- For those you are hoping will benefit from the project, what is their current situation? (This will help you determine the baseline from which change can be measured.) What is the issue or need? How will you define the expected change outcomes?

## Actions to take

- Discuss what a successful partnership looks like for each organisation at an early stage
- Understand each organisation's drivers and internal objectives
- Agree a balanced list of measures. Give and take is the key to success, but make sure that there is equity of value across the measures agreed. For example an academic might value a journal paper really highly, whereas a member of staff at a museum might value attracting more visitors really highly. Therefore try to ensure that the things that matter get considered in equal ways.

**Resource created by NCCPE and Jo Stark, University of Portsmouth.**



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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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