

# Realities and impacts of museum-university partnerships in England

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The Museum University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) is a collaboration between Share Academy and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), funded by Arts Council England (ACE).

The project aims to maximise the potential for museums and universities to work together to mutually beneficial aims. This report was written to share, with museum and HE professionals, the results of a specific component of MUPI, a pilot study involving a literature review, a survey and in depth qualitative interviews. The pilot study explored:

- The realities and impacts of museum university partnerships in England.
- Power asymmetries in museum university partnerships, and how they can be minimised.
- How funding could be (re-)structured to facilitate more successful museum university partnerships.

The MUPI project involved a range of activities alongside this review, including:

- Networking events ('sandpits') to bring together university and museum staff to develop project ideas.
- A review of Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact case studies.
- A review of other strategic partnership initiatives.
- A stakeholder event where the interim findings of the project were shared (March 2016)
- Advisory group meetings and funders' forum.

Full details of the MUPI project can be found on the NCCPE website, where other outputs can also be accessed: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/museum-university-partnerships-initiative>.

# Realities and impacts of museum-university partnerships in England

## REPORT

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### Key findings about museum university partnerships in England

##### *Structures and content*

- Most museum university partnerships are geographically defined, with partner institutions located in the same region of England.
- There is a relative over-representation of national museums compared to local authority and independent museums, considering that the latter are more numerous across England.
- A higher number of partnerships are located in the North East, North West and London regions, but the reasons for this need further and more in-depth examination.
- New opportunities might be emerging for smaller museums over time, as the larger museums become progressively more overwhelmed and selective about the number and kind of partnerships they can and are willing to support.
- A substantial part of museum university partnerships revolves around student learning and exhibition-centred models that also become opportunities for enriching and opening-up museum collections.

- The number of digitally focussed partnerships is limited and about a third of partnerships entailing digitally enabled work are connected to student education programmes.
- There is, in both the museum and HE sectors, the desire for funding that specifically allows crossing and pushing disciplinary boundaries through partnership work.

### ***Development and governance***

- Motivations for initiating museum university partnerships include: enabling research; nurturing resilience; steering innovation; developing institutional identity; supporting student learning; delivering public engagement; developing new audiences; exchanging expertise; generating and evidencing impact.
- Most partnerships are initiated by universities.
- The role of professional liaisons ('brokers') is growing and becoming more widespread, particularly in universities; however, the majority of partnerships are still currently brokered by academics who do not hold such liaison roles.
- The work of professional liaisons is generally perceived to be useful, but liaisons' efforts need greater coordination with initiatives taken by academic and museum staff.
- The greatest challenges to the establishment of museum university partnerships are sector differences (including differences in resourcing) to overcome which networking and knowledge exchange initiatives are considered key.
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are perceived to be useful for the healthy life of museum university partnerships, but less so if they are brought in very early in the process of establishing new relationships.
- More substantial awareness raising and advocacy initiatives are needed to limit direct or indirect institutional resistance towards the establishment of new partnerships, particularly on the part of university administration.
- Balanced governance practices are reported for the majority of museum university partnerships in England, as indicated by the fact that, in most cases, decision-making and benefits are said to be shared by all partners.
- The development and governance of partnerships could be improved if related to longer-term vision and strategies, which requires dedicated partnership funding.

### ***Resourcing and funding schemes***

- The main way in which museum university partnerships are resourced at present is via funding or in-kind resources from one or more of the partnering institutions.
- The primary external funder of museum university partnerships is the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).
- The most frequently reported level of satisfaction towards the ways in which the funding system is enabling museum university partnerships is medium-to-low.
- A number of interventions at the levels of funding goals, structures and administration could make the development of museum university partnerships more effective.

- The following areas were evidenced as in need of greater attention and support from funding bodies: nurturing institutional relationships beyond a specific project; covering the travel expenses incurred by students on placements; buying out museum staff time when these professionals are involved in student-centred partnerships or the write-up of impact case studies, for example; delivery of partner-facing outputs; secondments enabling museum and university staff to spend time at each other's institutions.
- The creation and maintenance of a database to facilitate match-making between museums (particularly smaller ones) and universities is considered useful by staff in both sectors.

### ***Evaluation and impacts***

- Museum university partnerships were reported as having significant impact for the institutions involved: above all, they resulted in the attraction of new audiences and in the skilling-up of staff.
- Longer-term change in institutional workflows and methodologies was not frequently mentioned as a measure of impact. A possible reason for this might be that, at present, the majority of partnerships are project-based and short-term.
- Partnering brought in additional funding in nearly half of the observed cases.
- The large majority of partnerships also had a positive impact on local communities.
- Museums are often gateways for universities to engage with regional audiences and local communities, whilst universities can be gateways for museums (especially smaller ones) to connect up with national and international stakeholders.
- Evaluation insights of some sort are currently available for the majority of museum university partnerships.

### ***Power imbalances***

- There are substantially greater possibilities of accessing funding for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Independent Research Organisations (IROs) than for museums that are not recognised as having research capacity.
- Smaller and non-national museums are numerically under-represented in museum university partnerships.
- Museum staff are under-represented as brokers of museum university partnerships, compared to university staff.
- Museums and universities located in the southern and central regions of England (with the exception of London) are under-represented in museum university partnerships.
- There is a degree of imbalance between the key role that Early Career Researchers (ECRs) play to ensure the success of museum-university partnerships (when they are involved) compared to ECRs' formal and nominal authority.

## 2. Introduction

The Museum University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) is a collaboration between Share Academy and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), funded by Arts Council England (ACE).<sup>1</sup>

This report communicates and discusses the results of a specific component of MUPI, a 45-day long pilot study to begin:

- Characterising the realities and impacts of museum university partnerships in England;
- Identifying power asymmetries in museum university partnerships, and understanding how they can be minimised;
- Examining how funding could be (re-)structured to facilitate more successful museum university partnerships.

The research started with a literature review aimed at mapping existing published material on the topic of museum university partnerships within the wider landscape of partnerships between cultural organisations and higher education institutions. The review considered academic literature, reports, summary papers and other documents and presentations. Publications focussing on projects or programmes produced by museum university partnerships were not included unless they contained specific observations about the partnerships themselves. Relevant material was searched online using combinations of keywords and starting from journals in the areas of museum, organisational and heritage studies, higher education and cultural policy.<sup>2</sup> Calls for unpublished materials of immediate relevance were also issued via the Twitter, and three JISC mailing lists (HERITAGE, MCG and CCResearchers).

This review informed the design of a social survey and a qualitative programme of semi-structured interviews. The survey was administered online and consisted of closed and open questions (see Appendix A). It was launched on 4 March 2016 and remained active until the end of the month (30 March 2016). During this time it was publicised widely across England via mailing lists, the personal contacts and networks of the project team and social media. The survey produced 91 responses from professionals working for museums (34% of respondents), universities (59% of respondents) or both museums and universities in England (9% of respondents) (**Figure 1**).

Nine interviews were also undertaken with museum and higher education professionals based in England (five and four respectively). Some had experience working in both kinds of institutions. Two participants were professional liaisons (one in a museum and one in a higher education context), whilst the others had curatorial, outreach or lecturing positions. Two were women and seven were men. Three participants were based in each of the following geographic areas: North East and North West; London region; South West and East (excluding the London

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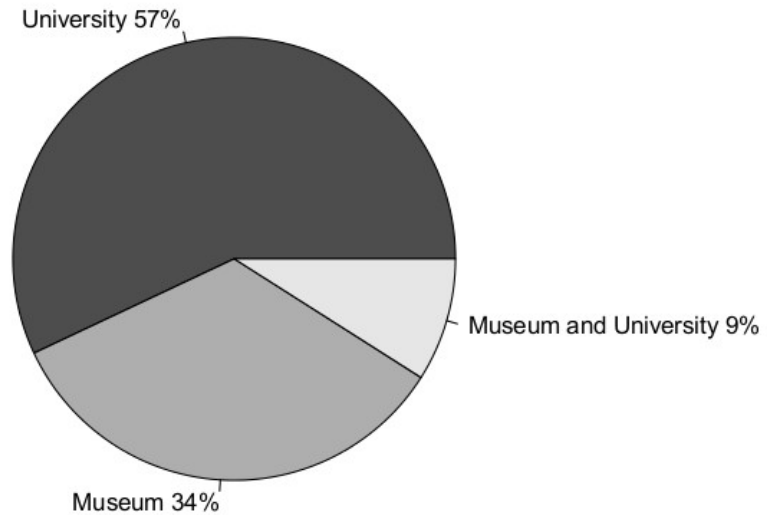
<sup>1</sup> For more information on Share Academy and NCCPE, see 6. *Authorship*.

<sup>2</sup> Combinations of keywords included 'museums', 'higher education', 'heritage', 'arts and culture', 'cultural organisations', 'relationships', 'inter-organisational relations', 'collaborations' and 'partnerships'.

region). Participants were interviewed for up to one hour, and the information they provided was anonymised.

Figure 1. Institution/s in England where survey respondents are based (survey data).

### Institutions in England where survey respondents are based



## 3. Literature Review

### *Main sources*

There are four key publications specifically addressing museum university partnerships in a synthetic manner, and two of these are grey literature reports with a regional focus. *Shared interest: developing collaboration, partnerships and research relationships between higher education, museums, galleries and visual arts organisations in the North West* (Dawson and Gilmore 2009) was commissioned as a joint consultancy research project by Renaissance North West, Arts Council England North West and the North West University Association. Conversely, the two-year study on museum university partnerships undertaken by Share Academy (2013) examined the London area. There are also two edited volumes, *Museums and Design Education* (Cook et al. 2010) and *Museums and Higher Education Working Together* (Boddington et al. 2013), which were produced by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design (CETLD<sup>3</sup> 2005-2010), UK.

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<sup>3</sup> Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design (CETDL) was a partnership between the University of Brighton, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Royal College of Arts and the Royal Institute of British Architects that was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (Hinton 2010: xvii). CETLD was set up to promote research-led teaching and learning in the field of design, thus encouraging collaborative work between HEIs and museum-based professionals (Hinton 2010: xvii).

Key works useful for situating museum university partnerships in a wider context of partnering are those concerned with:

- a. Partnerships between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the arts and cultural sector (Impacts 08 2009; Oakley and Selwood 2010; Fisher 2012; Little 2015);
- b. Partnerships between HEIs and the creative economy (Comunian and Gilmore 2015);
- c. Collaborations undertaken by cultural organisations (Ellison 2015).

Finally, there is a group of journal articles, reports and other unpublished documents that deal with specific aspects of HEI-museum, HEI-cultural organisation or creative industry partnerships from strongly case study-based perspectives.<sup>4</sup> Most of the journal articles presenting specific case studies have a learning-related focus, whereas short reports and documents often stem from funded projects (e.g. by Nesta, or CreativeWorks). Guidelines to support partnering were prepared by The National Archives and Research Libraries UK (TNA and RLUK 2015) and by Share Academy (2013).

### ***A brief history***

Over the past 70 years there has been a growing 'drive to partner' in the UK that has emerged from both cultural organisations and policy (Doeser 2015: 33). Collaborative work between museums and universities has not only increased but also become progressively more formalised.

The 1990s were a turning point in museum university partnerships for a number of reasons. The New Labour government emphasised the importance of 'partnering', and the latter started to be pushed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (created in 1994) as a requirement for securing grants (Clare 2013; Doeser 2015). In parallel, and while asked to prove the value of public funding, museums began to expand and enhance their educational functions, seeking new audiences and looking for measures of their impact. Education-oriented partnerships with museums were inspired by new approaches that better acknowledged learners' central role. For their part, universities have boomed since 1992 and have been increasingly recognised as knowledge sharing hubs with the power to inform and spark the activity of businesses, museums and arts and cultural institutions (Oakley and Selwood 2010).

During the Coalition government the museum and university sectors continued to experience a massive restructuring (Speight et al. 2013). As a consequence of the most recent economic and financial crisis, the number of curatorial posts as well as that of outreach and educational staff working in local authorities and heritage has fallen dramatically (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 11; see also e.g. Thomas 2014). At the same time, pressure to demonstrate the social and economic impact of museum and university spending began to grow even higher (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 11), and today HEIs are urged to document their contribution to the arts sector, the creative economy and local, national and international communities via the Research Excellence Framework exercise (Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 10; Gilmore and Comunian 2016).

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<sup>4</sup> Journal articles are published primarily in the *Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, the *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, the *European Journal of Education*, and the *Journal of Museum Education*.



Preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) began in 2011, and brought about significant changes in the HE research landscape. The REF (see <http://www.ref.ac.uk>) is the means by which the quality of HEIs research is assessed by expert review. The REF replaced the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and for the first time required researchers to evidence the impact of their research 'beyond academia'. Departments created impact case studies to describe the impacts achieved, and these were submitted in 2014. This so-called 'impact agenda' has pushed academics to engage new and diverse audiences for their research and teaching activities (Fisher 2012; Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 22; Little 2015: 3), and to be more effective in addressing the needs of local regions. In this context, museums can be strategic partners, acting as interfaces with local communities and helping to drive social change. In turn, museums are now encouraged to be not only 'traditional centres of scholarship and curatorial expertise, but also [...] teaching institutions, mass entertainments and, increasingly, moderators of scientific knowledge and agents for social change' (Travers 2006: 8). To express these complex roles in a situation of decreased financial and staff capacity, synergies with universities are sought where HEIs provide or share educational functions, resources, skills and knowledge (Fisher 2012; Share Academy 2013). As areas of overlap between the aims of universities and museums are increasing, it becomes more urgent to understand how partnerships between these two kinds of institutions can act to their mutual benefit.

### ***The funding context***

Even though, in recent years, HE and cultural policy strategies have generally encouraged partnerships, there have been few specific programmes designed to facilitate such collaborative work. The UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC; the principal public funder for arts and humanities research in the UK) has started a number of schemes that either require or strongly favour partnerships involving universities and cultural organisations. Amongst these are the Collaborative Doctoral Awards and programmes such as Cultural Value, Cultural Engagement, Connected Communities, Digital Transformations and Care for the Future. In addition, the AHRC, together with – mainly - Leverhulme, British Academy, Wellcome Trust and the Mellon foundation, has been asking for greater knowledge transfer/exchange as a general condition to award funding (Yates 2015). Several major public sector funders for culture and heritage (ACE and HLF) have also been promoting partnerships with HEIs, and direct support to museum university partnerships specifically has come from the Share Academy project, financed by Arts Council England. In 2013, Share Academy offered grants of up to £10,000 to undertake pilot work involving at least one museum professional and one academic.

Partnerships between HEIs and the cultural sector or creative industries more widely have also been financed through vouchers and other small funding schemes that have targeted especially, although not exclusively, digitally-based collaborations. Amongst these is the Digital R&D Fund for the Arts promoted by Nesta, Arts Council England and the AHRC to enable projects researching and applying the use of digital technologies to expand the audiences of arts and culture organisations or to explore new business models. Two further examples are the Creativeworks London's Creative Vouchers and London Creative and Digital Fusion's Collaborative Awards, which have aimed at increasing collaboration between academics in the

arts and humanities and professionals working in the creative industries. Both schemes succeeded in this intention and generated substantial social and cultural impacts (Shiach et al. 2015: 25-26), and some of the organisations surveyed for the 'Art of Partnering' report mentioned that support from Nesta or a university was key to develop digital prototypes (Ellison 2015: 16).

More generally, there is evidence that funding has had a positive impact on partnerships in the cultural sector. However, Gilmore and Dawson's (2009: 7) analysis of museum university partnerships revealed that partnerships relied primarily on project-related one-off funding and, according to the authors, this contributed to their limited sustainability over the longer term. In fact, as Oakley and Selwood (2010: 6) highlight, there is a particular need to fund the creation of spaces where ideas and innovation can flourish as partnerships between HEIs and cultural and creative organisations.

Finally, greater possibilities to access funding directly by museums and cultural organisations might be helpful, since, in the context of HEIs' research grants, money is transferred from funding bodies to universities who then administer it and pass it on to the museums (e.g. Yates 2015). This can create power imbalances and delays payments to museum professionals, especially if universities are of larger size and thus more likely to have complicated administrative structures (Share Academy 2013; Yates 2015).

### ***What do we mean by 'partnership'?***

There has been very little research into what partnering in the arts and cultural sector really means (Ellison 2015: 12), but some key traits characterising partnerships have been identified.

- *Partnering implies equality.* Ellison draws on sustainable development literature and calls 'partnership' 'an ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared' (The Partnering Initiative 6 and the Partnership Brokers Association, cited in Ellison 2015).
- *Partnering implies longevity.* Sarah Fisher, for example, clarifies that, while collaborations can be short, partnerships are a long-term commitment (Little 2015: 18).
- *Partnering implies shared objectives and risks.* Dawson and Gilmore (2009: 9) state that a partnership between an HEI and a museum, gallery or visual arts organisation is an ongoing relationship between these organisations which has: 'longevity; shared objectives, aspirations and risks; benefits for both partners independently and together'. Other commentators, however, seem not to consider shared benefits as a quality that defines the very nature of partnerships but, rather, their level of success (see Maxfield's view reported in Little 2015: 5).

### ***The partners***

'Museums' and 'universities' are umbrella terms comprising a large amount of different kinds of organisations that vary according to a range of factors such as size and type, to name just two possible ones. In the UK, universities are mainly publicly funded and have an either research or teaching-led mission. They contribute to the cultural sector of which museums form a part

(Oakley and Selwood 2010). Together with other cultural organisations and the creative industries, museums and universities make-up the ‘creative economy’ (Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 7); other authors have situated them in the ecology of arts and humanity learning and practice (Salazar-Porzio 2015: 274) and in the cultural knowledge ecology (Fisher 2012). At present, however, there is virtually no information on what kinds of museums and universities (e.g. in terms of size or type) tend to be more likely to partner and how.

Partnerships seem to concentrate in three areas of England more than others: the North West, the North East and London (Oakley and Selwood 2010). The reasons for their higher concentration in the North of England have not been examined in depth as yet and neither has the situation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A second trend identified for both museum university and cultural organisation partnerships is that these collaborations tend to develop within relatively small geographic areas and have larger mass in metropolitan ones (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 14). In the ‘Art of Partnering’, Ellison (2015: 12) confirms that many partnerships between cultural organisations are defined in geographic terms. This resonates with the aims of regional development policies, and the idea of museum university partnerships acting as ‘community services’ (Chatterton and Goddard 2000).

### ***The content of relationships***

The existing literature presents a few examples of museum university partnership classifications, and these are mostly constructed on content-related criteria, i.e. the kind of exchange taking place between the partners (**Table 1**).

**Table 1. Types of partnerships identified in literature.**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Partnership types</b>
Ellison 2015: 3	Cultural organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Goal-oriented</li> <li>● Resource-based</li> <li>● Network-based</li> </ul>
Impacts 08 2009	Museums and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching and provision for students</li> <li>● Knowledge exchange</li> <li>● Research and evaluation</li> <li>● Networking and conferences</li> <li>● Resource sharing</li> </ul>

TNA and RLUK 2015: 12-14	Archives and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student placements/work experience</li> <li>● Exhibition and outreach programmes</li> <li>● Digitisation projects</li> <li>● Research</li> <li>● Collaborative Doctoral Award (Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships)</li> <li>● Shared services</li> </ul>
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The categories mentioned in **Table 1** can be useful, but a more effective approach could be to classify partnerships depending on the specific kinds of institutional function/s (research and evaluation, training and education, communication, conservation, display, etc.) and/or resource/s that are exchanged (staff, materials, etc.). It often happens, in fact, that more than one function is exchanged and, especially in the North of England, we find cases where universities are taking over most if not all of the functions of museums and arts and cultural organisations, acting as safety nets in the aftermath of cuts to public funding (e.g. the University of Derby and Derby Playhouse, Ellison 2015: 13).

The partnerships identified in the literature fall into three main groups. A first group focuses on learning and, particularly, object-based learning (Boddington et al. 2013; Hannah et al. 2013; Speight et al. 2013). Examples of partnerships that have an education or training remit are those that aim at providing service learning (Jones 2014), the ones where museum spaces are used to teach certain academic courses (e.g. Kalin et al. 2007; Roberts 2013) or for more general skill-building (Friedlaender 2013: 156). Recently, however, there has also been a growing number of educational collaborations following less traditional and perhaps participatory models (see Share Academy 2013).

A second group of partnerships links together functions of training and education with those of communication and display and, sometimes, research and evaluation too: e.g. collaborative work where university students are involved in undertaking museum evaluation or public outreach activities while gaining hands-on training experiences (Zinicola and Devun-Scherer 2001; Payne et al. 2005; Owen and Visscher 2015). Slightly different are cases where museums and design departments work together to deliver education programmes with the university providing the content and the museum offering the context where the work of students can be displayed and somehow also tested (Winstanley 2013: 125).

A third group reunites partnerships that are mainly either research- or communication and public engagement-led. A primarily communication and public impact-led model is, for instance, that of the partnerships promoted through the Beacons and Public Engagement with Research Catalyst programme (Watermeyer 2013). Partnerships centred on research usually address topics related either to education and museum practice (e.g. Lemelin and Bencze 2004; Silverman and Bartley 2013), or to specific themes relevant to the museum collections (e.g.

Mitchell 2015). Projects such as those seed-funded and evaluated by Share Academy (2013) have also managed to push research collaborations into more creative and interdisciplinary directions.

Across the groups mentioned above, the number of digitally oriented partnerships is rather low (Ellison 2015: 16) for a number of reasons including lack of capability within the sector and of relationships with major digital platforms (Ellison 2015: 16). Nevertheless, these partnerships are recognised to be important, for example in order to enable a new form of ‘distributed museum’ that supports geographically diffused learning experiences and ideas of open culture and networked communities (Bautista and Balsamo 2013; e.g. Bonacchi et al. 2015).

**Structure and governance**

Little is known about the structure of museum university partnerships. The majority of these are established between two organisations, and tend to involve the same individuals repeatedly. Ellison (2015: 13) also found that a quarter of the partnerships between cultural organisations are led by national institutions, and the majority (72%) are with organisations of different size. However, it remains to be proved whether this trend applies also to museum university partnerships specifically.

As might be expected, trust, reciprocity and incentives were found to be key to the success of museum university partnerships (Cropper et al. 2008). Incentives are a quite contested topic (e.g. see **Table 2**), because those that motivate museums may contrast with the ones that motivate universities. Not infrequently, museums have an interest in opening-up access to large and homogeneous sections of their collections, whereas academics can be led by thematically narrower and more focussed research interests.

**Table 2. Incentives facilitating museum university partnerships (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 20).**

Incentives facilitating museum university partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for research funding including museums</li> <li>• Dedicated resources in terms of liaison posts or funding to promote the brokering of partnerships</li> <li>• More opportunities/fora to develop shared research interests</li> <li>• Research councils to commission exemplar projects</li> <li>• Universities to realise a core role in promoting public engagement and to see in partnerships with museums a meaningful way to achieve this</li> </ul>

Partnerships between cultural organisations are not always detailed in writing, and only 70% of the respondents surveyed for Ellison’s report (2015: 25) claimed to have a written agreement of some form. Whether and how this applies to museum university partnerships in particular is unknown, as preliminary findings in this area seem contradictory. Dawson and Gilmore (2009: 10) claim evidence of resistance to sign MOUs for fear of the obligations deriving from these agreements, and they underline how the success of partnerships largely depends on the extent

to which people with shared interests actually want to work together (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 10; Fisher 2012). However, initial evaluative work conducted by Share Academy has showed that Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between museums and universities can ease partnership management.

A further component of governance is leadership. In the current landscape of partnerships between cultural organisations, leadership seems to be more a property of the group of people who work together than a quality belonging to a specific individual (Oakley and Selwood 2010). A leading role is assumed in turn by different individuals according to their functions at different stages of the collaboration. Strong support at high managerial level (e.g. CEO, director, etc.) is also key to the development of relationships (Fisher 2012: 6).

### ***Brokering processes and motivations***

Most collaborations between HEIs and arts and cultural organisations are driven by a mix of personal enthusiasm and institutional agendas, and arise in informal ways as part of a 'gift economy' (Oakley and Selwood 2010: 5-6). As shown by the study undertaken by Share Academy for the London region, there are different drivers for each sector. Universities are motivated by an increasing emphasis on student employability and a need to evidence public engagement, while museums are motivated by loss of curatorial expertise, lack of time to carry out research and a desire to engage with enterprise and innovation.

In the majority of cases, they stem from relationships between individuals who know and trust each other rather than being strategically coordinated 'from above' (Share Academy 2013; Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 16). Some consider it useful to have a dedicated 'partnership broker' role within an institution (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 4), but there are also concerns about the difficulty of filling such a role and the fact that its funding would detract resources that could instead be used to activate new partnerships.

The literature highlights the position of students as bridges between universities and museums (Salazar-Porzio 2015: 289). When partnerships start from a student's initiative (e.g. an internship or a dissertation), the student and the museum professional/s are likely to have a central role, with sensibly less direct involvement from the academic supervising the student. In these cases, however, it is important that museum partners bear in mind what students can and cannot actually deliver and that they leave space for failure (Owen and Visscher 2015). Furthermore, even though the role of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and students in brokering and maintaining partnerships can be significant, involvement of staff from all levels remains the ideal (Little 2015: 19; Facer and Enright 2016).

Networking events and research networking are useful to broker new partnerships, even though they seem to work better when they are planned around a theme and are 'self-organising, rather than imposed from elsewhere' (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 4, Little 2015: 19). Various authors also discuss how 'third spaces' can support the development of partnerships between HEIs and cultural organisations including museums (Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 5). The term 'third spaces' comes from sociological literature on community building and has also been

extensively used in geography (Comunian and Gilmore 2015: 17). Third spaces are described as having both physical and intangible nature; they are realms where 'very different working cultures collide' and new and unique identities for inter-organisational entities can be shaped; these identities will be different from those of the individual partner organisations (Little 2015: 16). Comunian and Gilmore (2015: 18) found that these spaces tend to be rather ephemeral and to emerge spontaneously rather than to result from top-down and strategic interventions. The importance of third spaces is also highlighted in the context of social science and humanities research, as their role in 'designing and curating particular kinds of socio-spatial interaction can be central to the practice of interdisciplinarity' (Callard et al. 2015: 3).

At the institutional scale, it is usually HEIs that broker partnerships with (often) smaller cultural institutions (Oakley and Selwood 2010: 6). This is partly a result of the way in which funding is structured, and partly because academics tend to know the collections they want to examine and only rarely 'stumble upon new objects ... they didn't know before and which they are interested in researching' (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 11). This, together with the fact that museums frequently do not fully realise their potential in terms of the resources they can give (even if in kind, Yates 2015), may create power asymmetries.

### ***Challenges and drivers of success***

Cultural differences between museums and universities are often mentioned as barriers to partnering. Share Academy research for the London region has specified how universities and museums have different planning horizons, objectives and seasonality, budget constraints, language and ways of communicating. Since two distinct government departments coordinate UK HEIs and museums, it is unsurprising that the latter two do not always have aligned missions, funding and evaluation procedures (Speight et al. 2013: 11-13). Another problem stemming from the cultural differences of HEIs and museums is that, when talking to a member of faculty, museum staff may believe to be interacting with the entire institution whereas this is not necessarily the case (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 13). Museums also tend not to realise how complex university administration is, and the fact that HEIs' legal and financial structures can make it particularly difficult to process grant payments, appoint project staff and pay freelancers (Share Academy 2013). On the other hand, universities do not always fully grasp the precarious economic state of museums and overestimate their real capacity (e.g. see Yates 2015). An additional challenge is that of 'buying off' curators' time to let them focus on the delivery of a project. This is much easier for academics than museum curators, who often hold a number of very diverse responsibilities that are core to the healthy functioning of their organisations (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 10-11). Beyond identifying these barriers, however, existing literature does not detail whether some or all of the existing sector differences are preventing, slowing down, or decreasing the quality and benefits derived from partnerships and for whom (see also section 4.1.).

Key drivers of success in partnerships pertain primarily to processes and, more specifically, to the implementation of mechanisms of good communication and dialogue (**Table 3**). Some commentators have stressed the importance of museums and universities taking the time to discuss their aims, timescale and risk assessments from the very beginning, and developing a

feel of shared ownership over the partnership in order for this to be fruitful (Gilmore and Dawson 2009: 4; Owen and Visscher 2015).

**Table 3. Drivers of success and factors contributing to determine failure in museum university partnerships (Share Academy 2013) and in HEIs cultural organisation partnerships (Ellison 2015: 20-21).**

Ellison 2015	Share Academy 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vision/shared values leading to clear shared goals</li> <li>• Mutual benefits</li> <li>• Benefits for all parties</li> <li>• A sense of fairness</li> <li>• Engagement of all parties in the partnership</li> <li>• Buy-in/stability/commitment from the top</li> <li>• Structure and organisation of the partnership</li> <li>• Need for a project manager, or someone taking the lead</li> <li>• Human relationships within the partnership</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Producing unexpected outcomes</li> <li>• Lead to future projects/future long-term collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brokering services or events which bring people together to discuss ideas are key to generating non-traditional partnerships</li> <li>• Developing a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines each partner’s responsibilities at the start of a project helps ensure the smooth running of the project</li> <li>• Museums and universities have different timetables and planning structures so it’s important to check that project timescales work for both partners</li> <li>• Successful partnerships deliver on the core priorities for both organisations</li> <li>• Trust and good communication is vital for successful collaboration. Face-to-face contact is better than relying on email</li> <li>• Working with students brings considerable numbers of challenges and benefits. Students bring enthusiasm and new ideas but require considerable guidance. They may also need room to fail</li> <li>• The challenge of two different cultures coming together can result in exciting outcomes but partnerships are labour intensive and not necessarily a way to save time or money</li> </ul>

***Evaluation, benefits and impact***

There is a need for both arts and research organisations to develop a clear public narrative that articulates the impact of their partnerships (Little 2015: 19). This is particularly evident in reviewing the literature on museum university partnerships. Altogether, this literature appears very fragmented with substantial overlapping of concepts and virtually no (published) longitudinal evaluation being conducted (with a few exceptions e.g. Payne et al. 2005). However, Share Academy did find evidence that even small grants of less than £10k can have a



big impact. Possible categories of the benefits that might derive from HEI-museum and HEI-cultural organisation partnerships are mentioned by Dawson and Gilmore (2009: 8), Share Academy (2013), Little (2015) and TNA and RLUK 2015 (**Table 4**).

**Table 4. Benefits deriving from partnerships between universities and cultural organisations including museums.**

Author	Partners	Benefits
Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 8	HEIs and museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widening participation</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer / exchange</li> <li>• Employer engagement</li> <li>• Collaborative research</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Creative practice</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul>
Share Academy 2013	HEIs and museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational learning</li> <li>• Delivery of high quality public engagement</li> <li>• Development of workshops and teaching resources</li> <li>• Leveraging further funding</li> <li>• Improved confidence</li> <li>• Skill development for volunteers</li> <li>• Media coverage and publicity</li> <li>• Improved customer experience</li> <li>• Enhanced organisational status</li> <li>• Follow-on events and publications</li> <li>• Acquisition of new objects for collections</li> </ul>
Little 2015	HEIs and arts and cultural organisations	<p><u>For arts and cultural organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining a reflective critical partner, access to a range of new skill sets</li> <li>• Access to new technologies and a wider research community</li> <li>• Strengthening of the arts organisation’s presence in the arts and cultural research community as a whole (in turn this increases impact given the possibility of making research outputs available to a generally wider audience)</li> <li>• Increased rigour and credibility in research for the arts organisation (in turn making the arts organisation a more attractive partner for future funding bids/endeavours)</li> <li>• Increased eligibility for funding streams for the arts organisation</li> </ul>
TNA and RLUK	HEIs and archives	<p><u>For arts and cultural organisations:</u></p>

2015: 11-12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion (through profile raising thanks to association with prestigious partners and new opportunities to generate publicity)</li> <li>• Knowledge exchange</li> <li>• Audience development</li> <li>• Increased capacity</li> <li>• Funding (access to new funding schemes thank to HEIs' involvement)</li> <li>• Motivation (fresh approach to collections and reinvigoration of existing staff)</li> <li>• Innovation (demonstration of innovative approach to service delivery)</li> </ul> <p><u>For universities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access (to source material to support the generation of new research outputs)</li> <li>• Knowledge exchange</li> <li>• Public engagement</li> <li>• Skill development</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
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Partnerships can help universities and museums involve people who are traditionally under-represented amongst their respective users (Salazar-Porzio 2015: 277-278). For 88% of the cultural organisations that responded to Ellison's survey (2015: 10) one of the aims of the partnership was to engage broader audiences (Ellison 2015: 10). Another benefit of partnering is cross-fertilisation, i.e. the opportunity for universities and museums to update and hybridise their practices (Brown 2013; Manfredi and Reynolds 2013: 143-44), or to access new skills and equipment (e.g. Roberts 2013). Hybridisation also seems to be increasingly moving from the realm of individual projects and programmes to that of professional identities.

Partnerships enhance students' chances to find employment in academia and beyond especially when students initiate them (Julian Richards in Little 2015: 4; Owen and Visscher 2015). Over the longer-term, this could also lead to HEI and museum staff having greater understanding of each other's institutions (Silverman and Bartley 2013). Additional benefits deriving from education-led partnerships where students undertake activities in the museum space are: (for students) making/reviewing 'career choices and aspirations'; (for museums) besides obtaining 'fresh insights and updated theory', 'meeting and observing potential employees' although the possibility of exploitation and of institutions taking advantage of volunteers/interns is also noted; (for universities) recognizing that 'internships provide their students with highly specialised on-the-job training' (Beckmann 2013: 50).

Finally, partnering has been identified as a way to 'provide stability in hard economic times' (Salazar-Porzio 2015: 281). Resilience is potentially unlocked by a number of the benefits mentioned above such as the attraction of new and diverse audiences, access to resources or the increased employability of students, particularly in the arts and humanities field, which is

especially suffering from unemployment. Museum university partnerships also open up new financial pathways to museums (Dawson and Gilmore 2009: 10), and can contribute to the development of civic learning and local regions (Chatterton and Goddard 2010; Salazar-Porzio 2015).

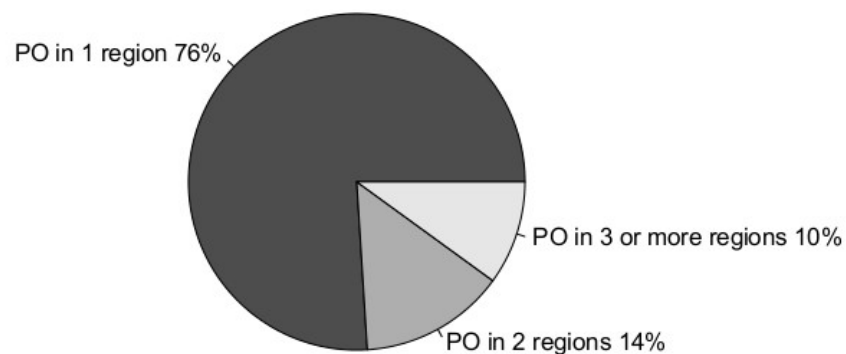
#### 4. Survey and Interview Findings

##### *Museum university partnerships in England*

The methodology used for the survey and in depth interviews has been briefly presented in the Introduction section of this report. Here findings will be presented starting from those emerging from the survey, which are then integrated by observations arising from the interview programme. Survey findings confirm the trend emerged from literature that partnerships are mostly supported by organisations located in the same region of England (76% of the cases reported; N=88<sup>5</sup>), whilst only 24% of partnerships include partners distributed across two or more regions (Figure 2). The primacy of the North East and London regions as the location of most partner organisations is also confirmed (Figure 3).

**Figure 2. Location of partner organisations (PO) in museum university partnerships as shown by survey data.**

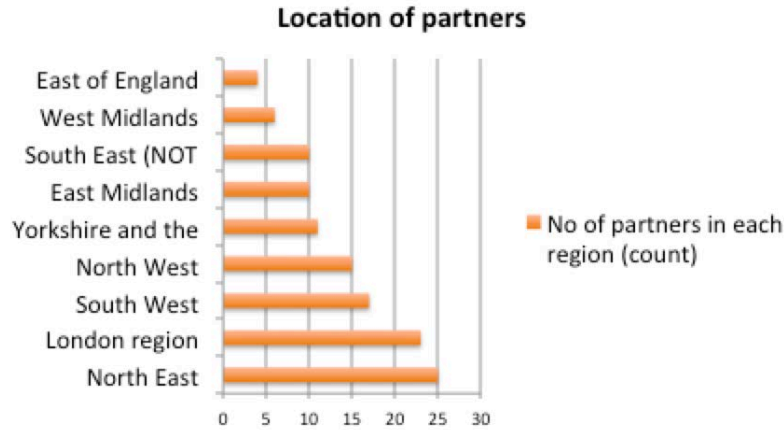
##### **Location of partner organisations (PO) in museum university partnerships**



**Figure 3. Location of partner organisations (PO) in museum university partnerships as shown by survey data. The graph indicates the number of partners in every region of England.**

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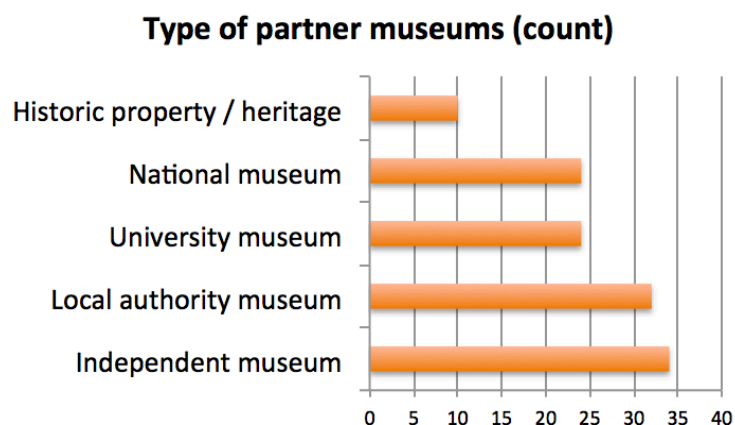
<sup>5</sup> N indicates the sample base for each of the questions that were posed (i.e. the number of valid responses to each of those questions).



The majority of partnerships (68%) involve museums of one type only (N=87). In absolute terms, these are mainly local authority and independent museums (**Figure 4**), but considering the higher number of local authority and independent museums compared to national museums across England, there seems to be an imbalance and a greater representation of national (and larger) museums in relative terms.

However, interviews indicated that new opportunities might be opening up for smaller museums, as the desire on the part of universities to establish new partnerships with museums is increasing and larger museums are becoming more selective in choosing whom to partner with and to what ends. The latter are found to be generally easier to collaborate with because they have less red tape, greater flexibility and greater interest in entering partnering agendas.

**Figure 4. Types of partner museums as shown by survey data. The graph indicates the number of museums of each type taking part in museum university partnerships.**

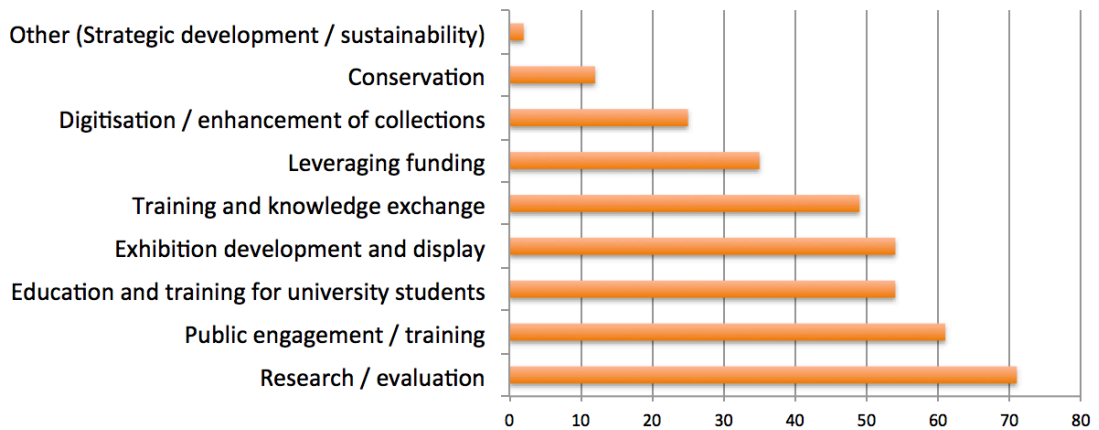


The graph below (**Figure 5**) shows the functions shared or exchanged by museum and university partners. About a third of the partnerships (30 out of 88 described; N=88) aimed at exchanging or sharing a combination of three core functions: research, student education and training, and exhibition development and display. Amongst these 30, 26 also included an element of public engagement and training, and a third of the partnerships which entail collection enhancement and/or digitisation work was also combined with these educational tasks. This shows that a substantial part of museum university partnerships still revolves around a learning and

exhibition centred model that may become the opportunity for contributing to the enrichment of collections. However, as underlined by one of the participants in the qualitative interviews, educational activities as part of museum university partnerships have changed substantially over the last five to ten years, and now entail much more active and creative participation from students.

**Figure 5. Functions that are shared or exchanged by organisations taking part in museum university partnerships, as shown by survey data.**

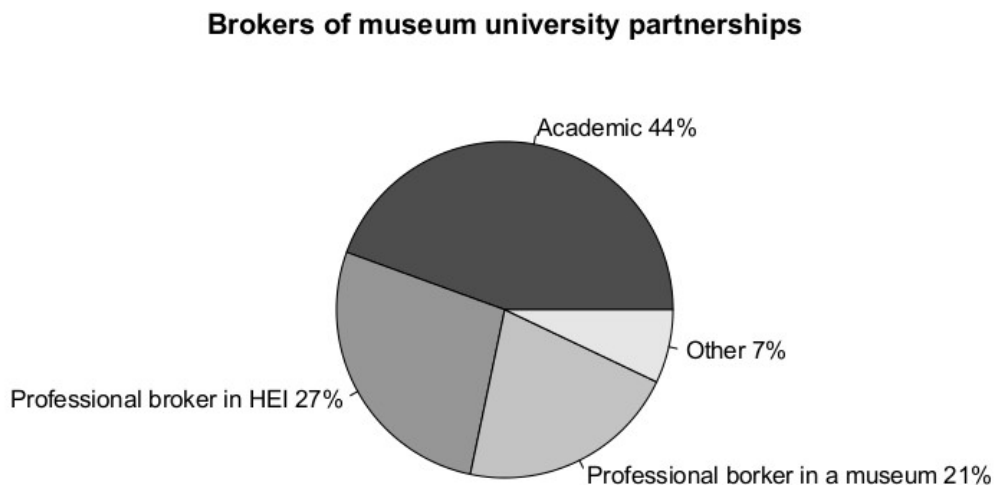
**Functions shared / exchanged through the partnership (count)**



**Developing partnerships**

Most partnerships are initiated by universities (this is the case for 71% of the partnerships that were reported; N=84) and, within these, by academics (44% of documented partnerships) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Brokers of museum university partnerships as shown by survey data.**



Professional liaison roles are supporting the establishment of partnerships on behalf of universities much more than museums, as a result of the increasing efforts of HEIs to invest in these professional profiles in order to sustain their strategic development and financial growth. The role of liaisons was generally perceived to be useful by the interviewees who mentioned it.

[...] people / organisations in that role can provide a space where academics and museum people could come to together through workshops, conferences [...] that's probably where the value of that sort of role would lie.

Professional liaisons were seen as the first contact point to get in touch with the right people within institutions. However, difficulties in acting as a professional liaison were also highlighted and included the potential mismatch between institutional strategy and the more personal or micro-institutional agendas that members of staff can have. A more effective model to implement in the longer term might be that of an informal liaison role established by training a small number of academics and museum staff in each organisation. In some cases, such a liaison position has been taken *de facto* by staff responsible for a specific area within their organisation (e.g. digital programmes of outreach and engagement), who have embedded partnership nurturing as a strategic method for achieving professional goals.

[...] I've organised a couple of events where we simply get people together in a room from a university end and a museum, not with the specific idea of having a project at the end of it but to better understand our own practice and our own aspirations and our own research; so when it comes to pulling together funding applications, we are more organically connected than a university coming to us at the last minute and saying: "we've got an idea, can you be that partner?"

In larger institutions, which already have a professional liaison in place, departmental 'partnership champions' could contribute to linking up the institutional and individual scale of partnership development – distinct areas that currently look rather disjointed. Incentives, however, are needed in order to highlight the value of this suggested liaison role.

Movement of staff to and from institutions and the award of honorary status are factors favouring the more fluid development of museum university partnerships, and both of these evidence the important role that is played by personal relationships. Sandpits and networking meetings facilitate the creation of new partnerships as well, and research has highlighted the existence of multiple kinds of such events. Some are organised by liaisons and aim to bring together 'the right people' (as one liaison said). Others emerge more organically from individual staff members' interests and tend to be thematically focussed.

Motivations for developing new partnerships were reported by respondents and grouped in the ten motivational categories listed and exemplified in **Table 5**.

**Table 5. Motivational categories extrapolated from answers to the survey question: “What are the main motivations that led your organisation to get involved in the partnership?”. Example of survey answers for each motivational category are also provided.**

Motivational categories	Examples of survey responses from which the motivational category was extrapolated
Enabling research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to professionals and research within the university</li> <li>• Developing research projects</li> <li>• Researching and interpreting collections</li> <li>• Fit with research expertise in the Faculty</li> <li>• Increasing museum research capacity</li> </ul>
Nurturing resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• To bring in more funding (HLF, AHRC)</li> <li>• Building resilience</li> <li>• To make the partnership members more resilient in an uncertain economic climate</li> <li>• A good way to create a quality product with a low cost/a good experience</li> <li>• Increased organisational resilience</li> </ul>
Steering innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have new and enthusiastic input on exhibitions</li> <li>• Tapping in to new ideas and enthusiasm Exploring innovative ways of presenting research</li> <li>• To support innovative work in the sector</li> <li>• To develop innovative and dynamic museum practice through action research</li> </ul>
Developing institutional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also dovetails with university's broader aims and objectives re civic identity</li> <li>• Building / enhancing institutional relations Building profile</li> <li>• Reputation</li> </ul>
Supporting student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exciting opportunity for students to work on live project</li> <li>• Involvement of students and the offer to show collections in storage</li> <li>• Close proximity to university and having a large local student population</li> <li>• Opportunity to be a ‘teaching museum’</li> <li>• Training on museum and heritage issues for students</li> <li>• Developing research projects and partnerships for student placements</li> </ul>
Delivering public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for regional and national outreach</li> <li>• To fulfil public engagement objectives</li> <li>• Public engagement</li> </ul>
Developing new audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadening our audiences</li> <li>• To reach new audiences</li> </ul>
Maintaining existing relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and extending existing relationships</li> <li>• Enhancing institutional relations</li> <li>• To build on past teaching partnerships</li> </ul>
Exchanging expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museum gets capacity and expertise</li> </ul>

	whilst university gets experience and expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge Exchange</li> <li>• Knowledge Transfer</li> </ul>
Generating and evidencing impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEFCE and RCUK Impact agenda</li> <li>• Impact and access to networks</li> <li>• Need to evidence impact and value of the museum's most distinctive areas of work</li> </ul>

The main challenges to establishing museum university partnerships can be summarised under three broad headings: sector differences, short-termism and institutional resistance. The first category comprises institutional differences resulting in difficulties of understanding one another's organisational cultures and of trusting partners.

I think the problem is that most museums, apart from the very large ones, don't have an understanding of academic funding structures - why would they, too – and, vice versa, most academics don't have an understanding of cultural sector (galleries, libraries, museums) funding.

The greatest divide between museums and universities at present seems to be resourcing. On the whole academia is perceived as being better funded and, in higher education contexts, securing Full Economic Cost<sup>6</sup> (fEC) research grants is a priority. Museums, and local authority museums especially, instead have been strongly exposed to cuts in public funding and are less well resourced, with a high proportion of organisations having small numbers of staff members who juggle a high number of responsibilities, amongst which research is not an immediate priority. In fact, as underlined by one of the interviewees, most museums do not even have access to journals and publications which sit behind pay walls. Research co-production models and funding schemes seem particularly useful to bridge this gap and facilitate collection-based studies that fully involve and acknowledge the roles of both academic and museum-based investigators.

Other sector differences include, for instance: universities' greater stress on the release of publications, sometimes 'at the expenses of any other benefits' (quote from one of the research participants); conflicting timetables; and different views over the meaning of both impact (e.g. how it is defined by the REF) and research. An example mentioned by one of the interviewees relates to digital research: there still seems to be a division between the ICT and curatorial areas within the majority of museums, whereas this divide has been conceptually overcome in most academic circles. This makes it difficult for academics to find interlocutors within museums on subjects relating to the application of digital technologies and web-based methods to curatorial practice.

Short-termism is a further challenge, expressed by the prevalence of project-based partnerships. This is mainly dictated by the current structure of funding schemes and can be accounted for by universities' greater focus on the generation of immediate outputs (e.g. number of publications or public engagement activities) rather than on slower but

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<sup>6</sup> fEC is an approach to costing that takes into account directly incurred costs, directly allocated costs, estate costs and indirect costs.



transformational change within pockets of society. A generally short-termist approach to partnering is also the result of the high proportion of fixed-term staff working on projects; for obvious reasons these professionals have fewer possibilities (and potentially less motivation) to plan longer-term.

Institutional resistances, whether intentional or unintentional (deriving from organisational structures) are the third core obstacle to the development of museum university partnerships. Examples range widely from the difficulty in understanding who should be contacted for a specific kind of collaboration within an institution due to lack of clarity (usually a university), to the bureaucracy of universities, including the slow processes of securing ethical and legal approval from committees inside the university departments involved. Resistance from middle management is also highlighted:

[...] Most junior and most senior academic staff are enthusiastic about partnerships, whereas middle management is not because it introduces new practices they are not familiar with and they will try and resist that change.

Suggestions about the ways in which the challenges above could be overcome were also put forward and the most pertinent and operational are listed below. Recommendations regarding the funding system are discussed in the next section.

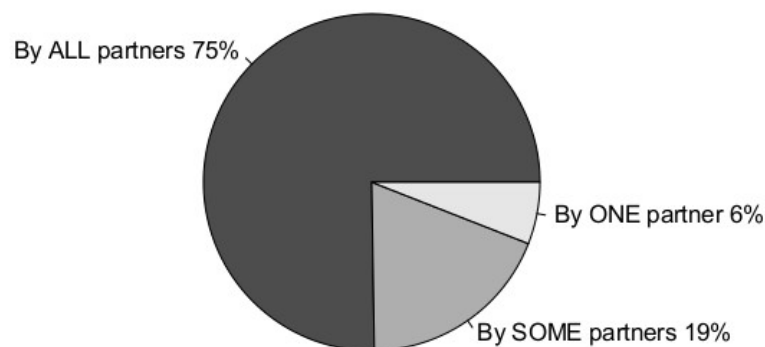
- Thorough, clear and early planning
  - Thought-through timescale, outcomes, goals
  - Careful expectation management
- Internal advocacy
  - Developing staff confidence to engage with partnership work
  - Encouraging administrative structures to facilitate the formation of partnerships
  - Sharing good practice
- Involving the 'right' people
  - Involvement from higher-level museum and university staff
  - Having dedicated liaisons where possible
  - Liaison posts split between universities and museums
  - Creating more opportunities to meet people
- Cultural change
  - Strategic thinking
  - Need for HE policy to regard the generation and measurement of impact less as a shop-front and more about real change for society and business
  - Greater respect for one another
  - Universities to improve the ways in which they position and communicate their expertise
- Recognition
  - Offering more incentives for collaboration
  - Build partnership development into academics' work load and promotion requirements

### **Resourcing and governance**

In over three fourths of the partnerships observed (76% of responses; N=86), all partners have worked together to make the decisions relevant to their partnership, and in only 6% of the partnerships reported there was one partner accountable for all the decisions that were made (**Figure 7**). On the whole, this seems to suggest balanced governance practices across the majority of museum university partnerships in England. This is confirmed by the ways in which benefits were shared. In 69% of cases (N=87), respondents said that in the partnerships in which they had been involved all partners had about the same share of benefits, whilst one or some partner/s had more benefits than others in, respectively, 6% and 19% of cases.

**Figure 7. How decisions are mostly made in museum university partnerships as shown by survey data.**

#### **How decisions are mostly made in museum university partnerships**



MOUs were mentioned as useful to clarify and manage expectations and responsibilities as part of museum university partnership initiatives. However, it was also noted that introducing these written agreements too early might have negative effects on the establishment of partnerships.

A little over two thirds of partnerships (69%) are supported by one funding source only, whereas a minority of cases have reported receiving sustained funding by two or more sources (ca. 30% in all; N=75) (**Figure 8**). The primary way of resourcing museum university partnerships remains that of tapping internal institutional resources either in kind or of financial nature. Amongst external funders, the one that has played a greater role in fuelling museum university partnerships is the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, followed by 'other research grants'. The role of ACE and HLF seems to be less prominent possibly because they do not accommodate the Full Economic Costing required by universities (**Figure 9**).

Figure 8. Number of financial sources (FS) supporting each museum university partnership (MUP) as shown by survey data.

**No of financial sources (FS) supporting museum university partnerships (MUP)**

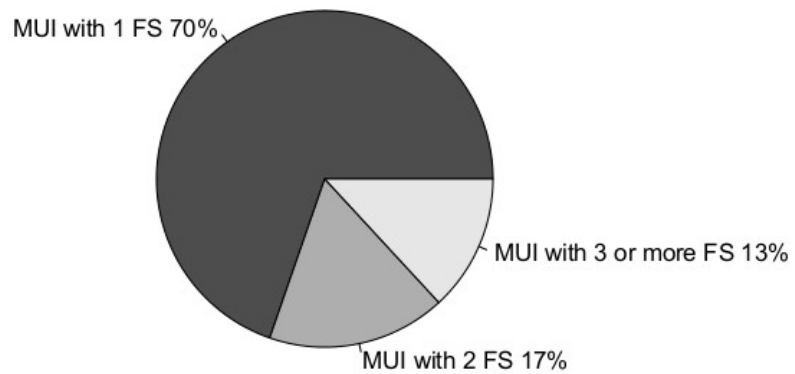
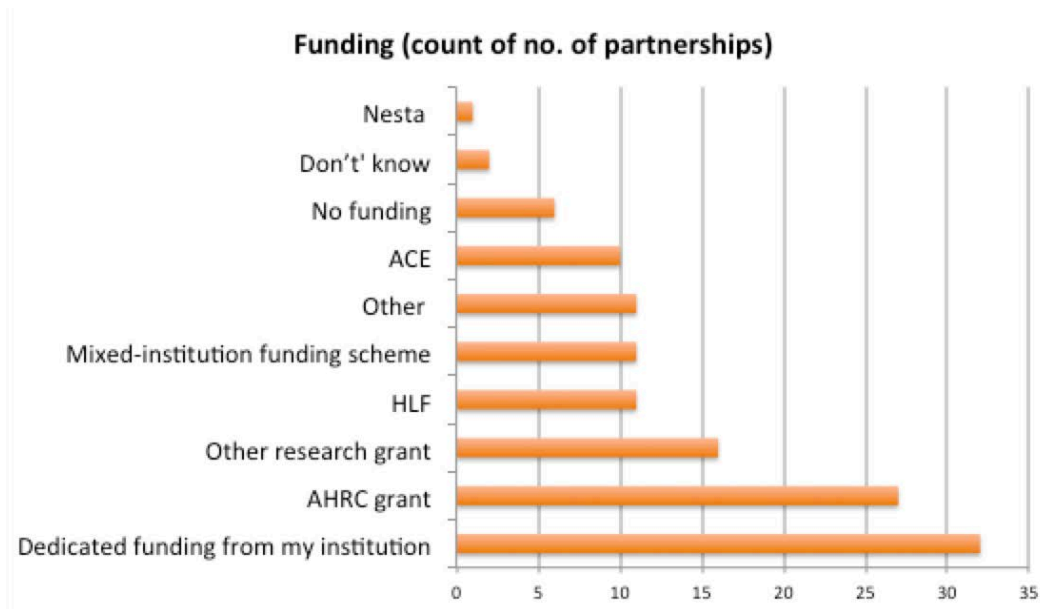
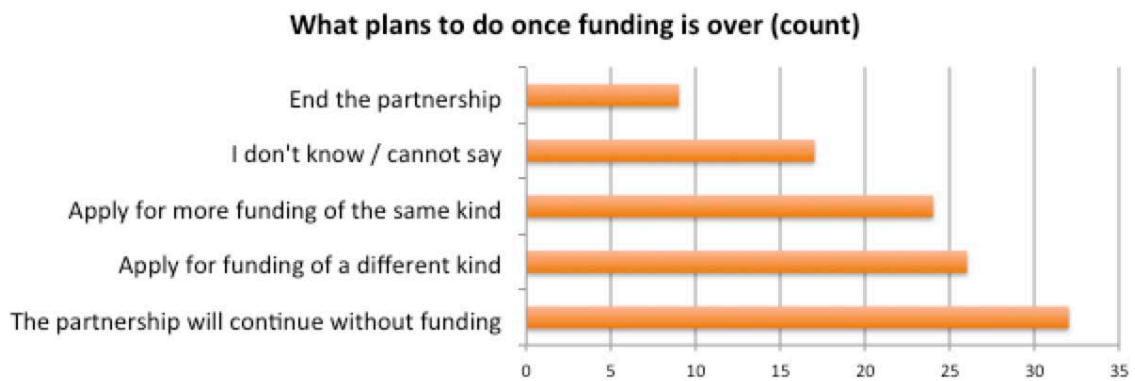


Figure 9. Kind of financial sources supporting museum university partnerships as shown by survey data.



Just a small number of the partnerships reported in the survey (11% of the total; N=81) were said to have ended/certainly end once funding was/is over; whereas about 40% of survey respondents were planning to continue their partnerships also without funding (**Chart 10**). This indicates a widespread will to act strategically and invest in longer-term relationships by museums and universities. Such efforts, however, are not currently supported by funders through dedicated schemes. Finally, between 30% and 32% of the partnerships were considering applying for additional funding either from the same source or from a different one.

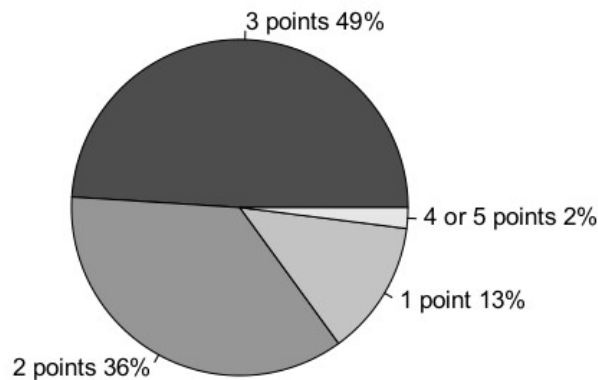
**Figure 10. What partner organisations plan to do once funding for their museum university partnerships is over, as shown by survey data.**



When asked whether, in their opinion, the funding system is adequately supporting museum university partnerships in a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much), about half of the survey respondents (49%, N=84) expressed a middle position, choosing a score of 3 (**Figure 11**). Ca. 49% gave grades of 1 or 2 and only 2% was more positive and selected 4 and 5 scores. This reveals a prevalent medium-to-low level of satisfaction towards the funding system (**Table 3**, N=38).

**Figure 11. Extent to which the funding system is perceived as adequately supporting museum university partnerships in a scale from 1 to 5, according to survey respondents.**

**Perceived adequacy of financial support for museum university partnerships**



To improve the funding system in order to support museum university partnerships a series of interventions can be made and have been identified by research participants.

*Funding Structures and Administration*

- Re-structuring the funding system so that it becomes less project-based and unlocking dedicated funding for partnerships.

- More equal access to funding for museums and universities (e.g. establishing a combined fund for research and public engagement available to both sectors).
- University procedures of administering funding should change to better accommodate partnership work (e.g. efforts in decreasing the time needed to make payments).
- Development of a database to support searches for partners and match-making between museums (particularly smaller ones) and universities.
- Awarding smaller grants allowing greater flexibility about the ways in which the money is spent by both institutions.
- Re-purposing part of the internal university funding available by institutions to cover activities undertaken in partnership and different from research.
- Funding staff exchange programmes to enhance opportunities for cross-fertilisation and the build-up of collaborations.

#### *Funding goals*

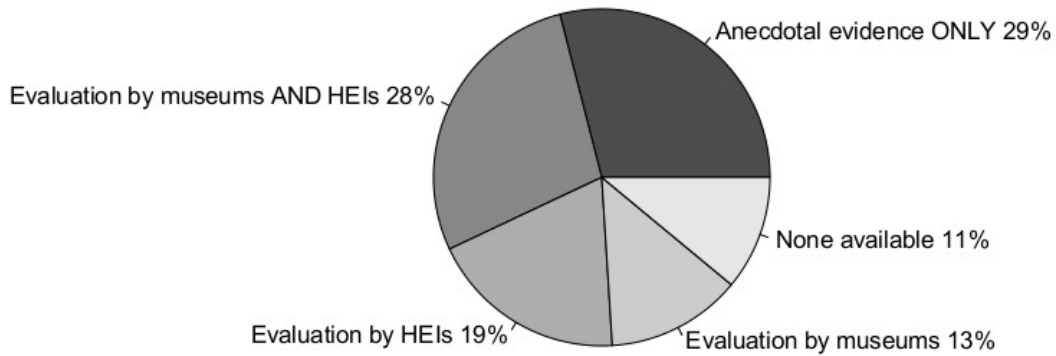
- Funding to foster ambitious and interdisciplinary projects undertaken collaboratively by museums and universities.
- Grants for curators to broaden their expertise and skills by working collaboratively with academics.
- Ring-fenced funding for public engagement undertaken in partnership by museums and universities.
- Funding to cover travel expenses for students on placements (from HLF and ACE).
- Funding for events where stakeholders can meet and network.
- Funding for secondments so that staff from museums can spend significant time working in universities and vice versa.
- Continuing funding for Collaborative Doctoral Awards to foster cross-fertilisation.
- Funding to buy museum staff time to help write impact case studies, and support student projects and placements.
- Funding to support the delivery of partner-facing outputs (e.g. reports, project de-meetings etc.).

#### *Evaluation and impact*

The majority of partnerships (60% of the total of those reported in the survey; N=84) were evaluated in some form at the university and / or museum end (**Figure 12**).

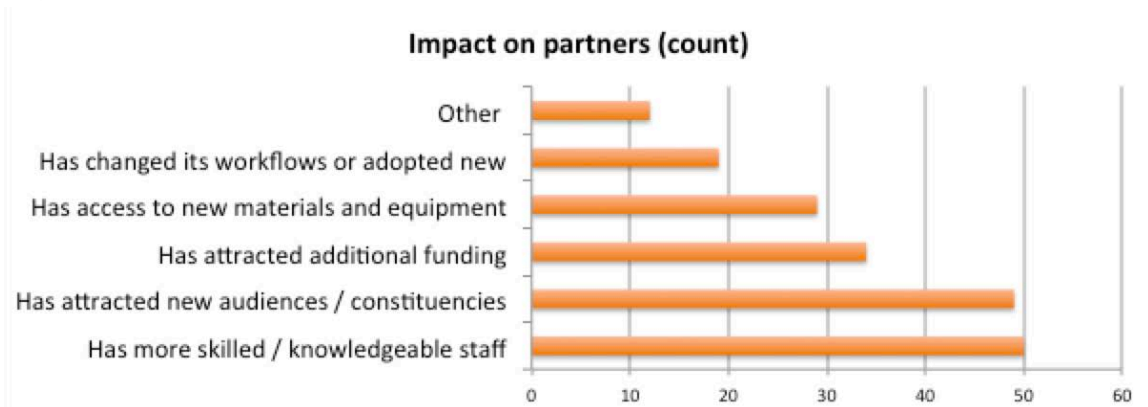
**Figure 12. Evidence that museum university partnerships have/have not delivered against its aims, as shown by survey data.**

**Evidence that museum university partnerships have/not delivered**



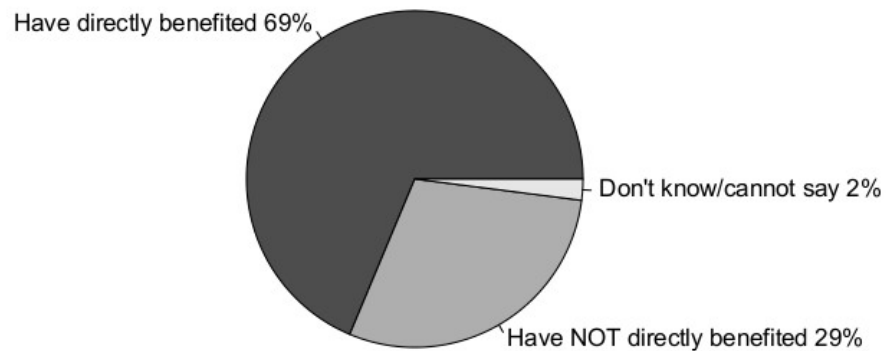
Partnerships were reported to have positive impact on the institutions involved, resulting particularly in the attraction of new audiences and in more skilled and knowledgeable staff (58% and 60% of reported cases, respectively) (**Figure 13**). Perhaps because of their project-based nature, fewer partnerships (23% of the total) led to substantial changes in organisational workflows or in the longer term adoption of new methodologies. Finally in 40% of cases (N=88) partnerships brought in additional funding, and 68% of them had a positive impact on local communities (**Figure 14**).

**Figure 13. Impact of museum university partnerships on partner organisations as reported by survey respondents.**



**Figure 14. Claimed positive impact of museum university partnerships on community local to partner organisations as shown by survey data.**

**As a result of the partnership, communities local to partner organisations...**



## 5. Conclusions

The current reality of museum university partnerships is largely geographically defined, with the majority of partnerships being supported by organisations located in the same region of England and in the North East, North West and London areas more than in others. Their spatial configuration is in line with their functions, which are primarily education and learning-centred, albeit with increasingly active and creative roles played by students. The geography and prevalent functional typologies of museum university partnerships are not however accompanied by an even participation of museums of different types and size. National institutions seem to be playing a bigger role and to be preferred by universities that want to connect with their regional constituencies.

This situation, together with the less privileged position of national authority and independent museums in accessing funding, creates strong power imbalances which could be corrected with the design of dedicated funding schemes for research and public engagement that can be accessed by both HEIs and museums. Advocacy and awareness raising events are also needed in order to make the administrative structures of universities more welcoming, flexible and faster in accommodating collaborative work with museums of different size. This task could be taken forward by professional liaisons working at HEIs, who could be perhaps usefully aided by the appointment of an informal 'liaisons champion' in each university department. The latter could play a key role in the facilitation and coordination of partnering strategies, acting as a link between professional liaisons and other staff.

Partnerships have produced positive impacts on museums, universities and local communities, but a much more profound cross-fertilisation of methodologies and transformation of workflows could be fostered if dedicated partnership funding were unlocked. This would also allow better planning, management and communication, the ongoing maintenance of dialogue between institutions and the progressive overcoming of at least some of those difficulties in

understanding one another's institutional cultures that represent the main challenges to the establishment of museum university partnerships in England. Furthermore, seed funding to allow museum and university staff to meet and discuss potential new partnerships could be useful to ensure that emerging collaborative work has real value to all the partners involved.

Finally, both museums and university staff could be more effectively skilled-up in initiating and handling partnership work. Whilst the priority for museums is that of becoming more effective and confident negotiators, academics might want to focus on discussing the incentives that their institutions could offer to those who invest time and resources to the forging of new collaborations with museums, and the cultural and creative sectors more generally.

## **6. Authorship**

The main author of this report is Chiara Bonacchi, who has worked as post-doctoral researcher as part of and in close cooperation with the Share Academy research team led by Judy Willcocks and Helen Chatterjee and including researcher Katie Dent. The research has also benefitted from input and direct collaboration with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

Share Academy is a partnership between University College London (UCL), University of the Arts London (UAL) and the London Museums Group (LMG), and has spent the past four years scoping the potential for collaborative working between universities and museums in the London region. Share Academy also has extensive experience of brokering and evaluating partnerships between museums and higher education institutions. More recently, Share Academy has been developing methodologies for sharing intelligence on collaborative practice with museums and universities across the country. While Share Academy is led by museum services in academic institutions, the programme's strength lies in its links with the wider museum sector and in its focus on small to medium sized museums.

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) was established in 2008 as part of the Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative. Funded by the four UK Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust, the NCCPE helps inspire and support universities to engage with the public. The Centre is hosted between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England. During the last eight years NCCPE have developed an expert understanding of how universities engage with partners beyond the academy and, in 2014, the Centre was responsible for co-ordinating a major project around school-university partnerships. Funded by Research Councils UK, the School-University Partnerships Initiative (SUPI) supported 12 universities to work in partnership with local schools to generate more effective engagements between researchers and pupils.



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## **8. Acronyms**

ACE: Arts Council England; <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk>.

AHRC: UK Arts and Humanities Research Council; <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk>.

CETLD: Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design;  
<http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/cetld>.

fEC: Full Economic Costing.

HEI: Higher Education Institution.

HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England; <http://www.hefce.ac.uk>.

HLF: Heritage Lottery Fund; <https://www.hlf.org.uk>.

IRO: Independent Research Organisation.

JISC: Joint Information Systems Committee; <https://www.jisc.ac.uk>.

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding.

REF: Reference Excellence Framework; <http://www.ref.ac.uk>.

TNA: The National Archives; <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.

RLUK: Research Libraries UK; <http://www.rluk.ac.uk>.

## 9. Appendix A: Online survey

The online survey was designed and managed using Google Form and is still available for reference from: <http://bit.ly/1nI3BYT>.

# Museum University Partnerships

Hello,

Share Academy and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement are running a survey to map and study partnerships between museums and universities in England, with funding from Arts Council England. These partnerships are growing and their potential is huge. Our research aims to collect information to understand how these partnerships are structured, their impact and challenges. This is important in identifying ways to help universities and museums establish and maintain new partnerships in future.

Please help with our research by completing this anonymous questionnaire.

NOTE: the survey is not fully supported by Internet Explorer; please open it with Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari.

Thank you for your time!

Chiara Bonacchi  
c.bonacchi [at] ucl.ac.uk  
<https://museumuniversity.wordpress.com>

### I. PARTNERS

If you work for an organisation based in England, please answer the following questions referring to the MOST RECENT museum university partnership in which you have been involved on behalf of your organisation. Please refer to the SAME partnership throughout the questionnaire unless otherwise indicated.

Museum university partnerships can be more or less formal. They entail activities carried out by at least one museum and at least one university over a length of time (e.g. internships, student projects, collaborative digitisation and research of collections, etc.).

#### **You are based at:**

A museum in England  
A university in England  
Other:

**1. Number of organisations involved in the partnership:**

	0	1	2	3	More than 3
Number of Museums					
Number of universities					
Number of other partners					

**2. Location of partner organisations (tick all that apply):**

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- East of England
- South East (NOT London region)
- London region
- South West

**3. Types of partner museums (tick all that apply):**

- National museum
- Local authority museum
- University museum
- Independent museum
- Historic property / heritage site
- National Trust property
- Other:

**II. PARTNERSHIPS**

**4. Who brokered the partnership?**

- A professional liaison staff member at a museum
- A professional liaison staff member at a university
- An academic (not holding a specific liaison role)
- A museum professional (not holding a specific liaison role)
- Other: ...



**5. What are the main motivations that led your organisation to get involved in the partnership?**

.....

**6. How were decisions mostly made?**

ONE partner made the decisions

SOME partners worked together to make the decisions

ALL partners worked together to make the decisions

**7. What functions were shared / exchanged through the partnership? Tick all that apply.**

Research / evaluation

Education and training for university students

Exhibition development and display

Public engagement / training

Conservation

Training and knowledge exchange between professionals

Digitisation / enhancement of collections

Leveraging funding

Other:

**8. How was the partnership funded? Tick all that apply.**

AHRC grant

Other research grant

Heritage Lottery Fund grant

Nesta grant

Arts Council England grant

Mixed-institution funding scheme

Dedicated funding from my institution

Other:

**9. What are you planning to do once this funding is over? Tick all that apply.**

Apply for more funding of the same kind

Apply for funding of a different kind

The partnership will continue without funding

End the partnership

I don't know / cannot say

Other:

**III. EVALUATION**

**10. Would you say that, as a result of the partnership...**

- ONE partner had more benefits than others
- SOME partners had more benefits than others
- ALL partners had about the same share of benefits
- Other:

**11. As a result of the partnership, YOUR organisation (tick all that apply)...**

- Has changed its workflows or adopted new methodologies
- Has attracted new audiences / constituencies
- Has more skilled / knowledgeable staff
- Has access to new materials and equipment
- Has attracted additional funding
- Has developed / implemented new business models
- Other:

**12. As a result of the partnership, YOUR organisation (tick all that apply)...**

- HAS / HAVE directly benefited from the partnership
- Has / Has NOT directly benefited from the partnership
- I don't know / cannot say

**13. What evidence do you have that the partnership has / has not delivered against its aims? Tick all that apply.**

- Evaluation undertaken by the university/ies
- Evaluation undertaken by the museum/s
- Anecdotal evidence / accounts
- Other:

**Based on your overall experience...**

**14. What are the main challenges to establishing, developing and sustaining museum university partnerships?**

.....

**If you have suggestions on how these challenges might be overcome, please write them below.**

.....

**15. Is the funding system adequately supporting museum university partnerships?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all						Very much

**If you have suggestions on how the funding system could better support museum university partnerships, please write to them.**

.....

## Museum University Partnerships

Thank you! Your response has been recorded.

Would you like to keep up with our research findings?

Check <https://museumuniversity.wordpress.com>

## 10. Appendix B: Interview questions

Good morning, thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study about museum university partnerships in England [informed consent forms had been signed by the participant]. This pilot study is part of the Museum University Partnerships Initiative, a collaboration between Share Academy and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, funded by Arts Council England.

I would like to start by asking if you could please talk about the most recent museum university partnership in which you have been involved on behalf of your institution.

1. Who were the institutions and individuals involved in the partnership?

*Prompts*

- Academic, museum-based, other
- Size, type and location of institutions
- If individuals/institutions had worked together before

2. What was the aim of this partnership, what was it trying to achieve?

*Prompts*

- Functions/resources exchanged/shared

3. Could you please talk a bit about how the partnership started and developed?

*Prompts*

- Motivations, funding, who brokered? some individuals had a key role? Role of physical proximity (geography), networking events? Spaces where activities were conducted, if ended/why

4. How was the partnership managed?

*Prompts*

- Written agreement? Informal arrangements?
- Who led the project?

5. What outputs and outcomes resulted from the partnership?

6. Have you measured or do you have a sense of how this partnership changed the people/institutions involved?

*Prompts*

- Changes to way of working, new methodologies developed and implemented, increase in collaborative work undertaken, greater staff capacity and increased resilience, etc.
- Relation to local community

7. How would you describe the relationships between partner institutions?

*Prompts*

- How were decisions made? How were responsibilities shared?
- How was funding administered and were there conditions posed by the funders? Did this cause any imbalances?
- If there were any imbalances in your view? Who was at the upper end?
- Were there specific challenges to how the partnership could work

More generally and based on your experience...

8. What do you think are the main challenges in establishing a partnership between a university and a museum?

*Prompts*

- Funding structures, cultural differences between institutions, etc.

9. Do you have any suggestions as of how these challenges could be overcome?

10. How could the funding system better support museum-university collaborations in your view?

*Prompts*

- Support for networking between university and museums staff; seed fund for project development; etc.

11. Do you feel that the strategic drivers for university museum partnerships have changed over time?

*Prompts*

- Has austerity had a significant impact? The impact agenda? Changes in Arts Council policy?