

Museum-University Partnerships

University Jobs Decoder



National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

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Modern Universities are large organisations with complex internal structures. Typically, a university will group subjects and disciplines based on their academic synergies and institutional strengths. Academic subjects will be grouped into structures such as a Faculty, department, institute or school. Whilst similar disciplines are often grouped together, don't be surprised to find similar disciplines located in different parts of the university.

Universities recognise this complexity can act as a barrier for external organisations. Almost every university has a central gateway that can broker connectivity between external organisations and subject areas or individual academics. This service is often promoted on the university's website, but you may have to look hard. It may be highlighted with words such as Business Engagement/ liaison; Public Engagement; Community Engagement; Corporate Social Responsibility; Cultural Partnerships; etc.

Here are a few pointers to get started:

Research expertise: If you are looking to develop a research partnership, think hard about the type of knowledge you are looking for. Academics tend to be interested in developing new knowledge, or for opportunities to apply their research outside of the university. The easiest way to find out if and how the university might support your research idea, is to contact the public engagement office – if they have one. **Public Engagement Professionals** support academics to engage the public with their work – and tend to be really well connected in the University.

If there isn't a public engagement professional, another group worth contacting are the **Impact Officers**. These professionals tend to work in each faculty, and support academics to make their research impactful outside of the university. They would be able to find relevant people in the university who you could speak to.

Student Volunteers: Most universities have a student volunteering service. This often acts as a broker for organisations wanting to work with student volunteers. This is often run through the Student Union.

Student placements: Unlike volunteering, student placements are more formal opportunities to work with students. Usually the students' work will be accredited as part of their studies. Approaches can be called engaged learning; curriculum based learning; or placements. If you are looking for someone to evaluate your work, develop your website, or help you develop a more resilient business, you might find it helpful to work with students keen to develop their skills in working with organisations outside the classroom. Student placements offer the opportunity to develop a useful project, although they can be labour intensive for the partner who hosts the students.

Widening Participation: WP teams work in universities to support students from the most deprived areas of the UK accessing higher education. Typically WP teams are interested in working with schools, and offer a range of activities from open days, to workshops in schools. However they might be a great option if you are developing work with their target groups.

Key things to bear in mind

- Do you or your organisation already have existing contacts within the university that you wish to engage with? If so you may only be one step away from finding the right contact.
- What areas of the university might be interested in a conversation with you? For example; art and design, performance, digital subjects or History/Heritage?
- Look out for people with job titles that include the following words:
 - Research,
 - Innovation,
 - Collaboration,
 - Business Development
 - Engagement
 - Impact
 - Communities
 - Partnership

Resource created by NCCPE and Jo Stark, University of Portsmouth



**National
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Public Engagement**

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) is internationally recognised for its work supporting and inspiring universities to engage with the public. We work to change perspectives, promote innovation, and nurture and celebrate excellence. We also champion meaningful engagement that makes a real and valued difference to people's lives.

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

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

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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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