

# Open University Impact Framework

RCUK Aims and Objectives	OU PER Catalyst Objectives	Activities	Evidence of change	What would we do differently?	What next?
<p><b>AIM 1</b> Create a culture within grant holding HEIs where excellent public engagement with research is embedded</p> <p><b>AIM 2</b> Build on experience of Beacons and other HEIs</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic commitment to public engagement</li> <li>• integration of PE into the core activities of HEIs, including measuring quality and impact of PE activities</li> <li>• reward and recognition of staff involved in PE</li> <li>• encouraging and supporting researchers and staff at all levels to become involved</li> <li>• creating internal networks</li> <li>• contribution to a wider network supportive of public engagement</li> <li>• develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of PER</li> </ul>	<p>The overarching aims of our project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work with Open University researchers at all levels to create the conditions where engaged research can flourish.</li> <li>• To raise the profile of the Open University's international reputation for excellence in engaged research.</li> </ul> <p>More specifically, our aims and objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the roles and responsibilities that different academic domains value in providing leadership.</li> <li>• Support discussions to develop a shared understanding of engaged research as it applies in different research domains.</li> <li>• Change our promotion criteria, and implement an awards scheme, recognising</li> </ul>	<p>We used the NCCPE's 'EDGE Tool' to make an initial assessment of the OU's commitment to engaged research. We applied the nine categories outlined by the EDGE Tool to assess the University's support for engaged research in November 2011, comparing this with where we planned to be by March 2015 at the end of the project.</p> <p>This process highlighted the need for the institution to change, and provided a framework to organise how this could be achieved. As such, each of the nine elements in the EDGE Tool relates to an objective and a project work package.</p> <p><b>Leadership:</b> We introduced a <a href="#">senior leadership role</a> to work as the operational lead for the project, connecting senior executives with faculties and researchers at all levels. We also embedded strategic planning for research impact as a requirement for faculties' unit plans and the OU's ongoing <a href="#">Research Plan</a>.</p> <p><b>Mission:</b> We secured approval to become a signatory to the NCCPE's <a href="#">Manifesto for Public Engagement</a>; and developed and promoted a university-wide definition of <a href="#">engaged research</a>.</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> We developed a communication strategy for engaged research: introducing an <a href="#">OU-wide blog</a>; co-producing videos about aspects of engaged research, including a <a href="#">Spotlight</a></p>	<p>Our overarching aim was to transform The Open University's research culture from a 'developing' phase, following the assessment in November 2011, to a 'gripping' or 'embedding' phase by March 2015.</p> <p>We made progress in all nine of the work packages; in two of them we went beyond our planned targets, consolidating the Open University's international reputation for excellence in engaged research.</p> <p>We became a signatory to the NCCPE <a href="#">Manifesto for Public Engagement</a>.</p> <p>Informed by interventions with researchers working at all grades, and endorsed by our Research Committee and Senate, we produced a university-wide definition of engaged research as the first stage in laying the foundations of an open and engaged research paradigm.</p> <p>We changed the OU's <a href="#">promotion criteria</a>, introducing KE profiles. Richard Holliman, operational lead on the OU's PER Catalyst, was promoted to Professor of Engaged Research, using the new profiles.</p> <p>We developed and ran an <a href="#">Award Scheme</a> in 2014 and 2015; we recognised the work of 16</p>	<p>Reflecting on how we have worked, it is clear to us that understanding the relationship and interplay between strategic direction and emergent change has been crucial. Such an approach requires 'buy-in' from researchers. As such, ideally we would have liked to representatives from all nine Central Academic Units as members of the project team; funds did not allow this.</p> <p>Changing promotion criteria requires senior leadership 'buy-in' and time. For us, it was important to spend time explaining the reasoning behind the profiles with a range of stakeholder groups.</p> <p>If we were to run our Award Scheme again we would reintroduce the Postgraduate Researcher category and explicitly judge entries according to</p>	<p>The OU's Research, Scholarship and Quality (RSQ) Unit have responsibility for mainstreaming engaged research as a core part of our research culture, promoting a progressive vision across the HE sector by engaging meaningfully with relevant stakeholders, user communities and members of the public.</p> <p>To this end, the OU has chosen not to develop separate central support structures for engaged research, but to embed support within its Research and Enterprise Office. We have established an 'Impact Lead' in this office, working alongside those supporting research and knowledge exchange activities and bidding. Central funding for dedicated activities will likewise be embedded in existing funds, e.g. through the OUs HEIF budgets and its central research fund.</p>

	<p>excellence in engaged research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the requirements and support mechanisms that can facilitate effective digital engagement with research.</li> <li>• Explore how researchers plan, enact and evaluate their engaged research, creating engaged communities of reflective practice.</li> <li>• Build on existing work in career development and doctoral training programmes for researchers and postgraduate research students.</li> <li>• Issue calls to researchers for seed funded projects on engaged research, providing a network of support.</li> <li>• Offer structured opportunities for publics, students, user communities and other stakeholders, to engage with OU research.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">interview</a>; and organising an engaged research <a href="#">seminar series</a>. We have also published an open access <a href="#">final report</a>, <a href="#">research outputs</a> and other <a href="#">forms to consolidate and sharing learning</a>.</p> <p><b>Learning:</b> We provided training and professional development opportunities for researchers at all grades, also developing <a href="#">legacy resources</a> for use by researchers across the sector.</p> <p><b>Reward:</b> We changed the University's <a href="#">promotion criteria</a> to include Knowledge Exchange routes for career progression and introduced an <a href="#">Award Scheme</a> to recognise and reward excellence in engaged research.</p> <p><b>Support:</b> We investigated how researchers <a href="#">plan, enact and evaluate</a> their engaged research work and explored the <a href="#">support mechanisms</a> they require to improve performance.</p> <p><b>Staff:</b> Building on our researcher findings, we focused on the tools researchers require to collect evidence of impact from engaged research, mentoring <a href="#">three seed funded projects</a> as they developed mechanisms for capturing research impact, and worked to upgrade the University's blogging platform.</p> <p><b>Students and Publics:</b> We offered structured opportunities for stakeholders, user communities, students and members of the public to engage with Open University research, e.g. <a href="#">Participation Now</a> and a <a href="#">Public Arts Initiative</a>.</p>	<p>projects, with nine winning and seven highly-commended entries. We developed a communication strategy for engaged research: introducing an <a href="#">OU-wide blog</a> featuring to date more than 100 posts from more than 30 OU researchers and nearly 20 external stakeholders ; co-producing more than <a href="#">30 videos</a> with 30 postgraduate and early-career researchers and 40 school students, viewed more than 5000 times; and organising an <a href="#">engaged research seminar series</a> with live and archive webcasts (the latter generating more than 14,500 hits).</p> <p>We provided training for more than 1,100 academic researchers through more than 60 interventions; also developing <a href="#">legacy resources</a> for use by researchers across the sector.</p> <p>We published our <a href="#">final report</a> in early August 2015. Nearly 250 printed copies have been circulated to funders, university researchers (both OU and externally), and other stakeholders. Since publication the report has generated more than 2,000+hits and 900+ downloads. We have also contributed invited articles, e.g. <a href="#">Euroscience</a> and <a href="#">ACU Engage</a>. Our <a href="#">research paper</a> exploring some of the findings from our initial diagnostic exploration has been accessed more than 4,700 times.</p>	<p>the experience of the entrant. Recognition would focus on publicity rather than financial prizes.</p> <p>The main lessons learned through the digital engagement infrastructure work relate to the communication, negotiation and leadership required for systemic change. Communicating with all the parties was critical for gaining an understanding of the practices and needs of researchers and stakeholders, and enabled a strong argument for the requested services to be established.</p> <p>Our work goes beyond the Open University, to include wider policies and governance of engaged research. For example, our work has informed BIS and Sciencewise, and we are supporting two of the ten Catalyst Seed Funded Universities. We have also worked extensively with the NCCPE and with the RCUK PER team.</p>	<p>Several members of the OU's now disbanded PER Catalyst project team are continuing to consolidate the learning from the project, e.g. by authoring publications, publishing <a href="#">legacy resources</a>, etc.</p> <p>Members of the team will continue to contribute to the OU's Career Development Programme, e.g. through workshops, and <a href="#">bespoke support for researchers</a> as they develop grant proposals.</p> <p>We will also continue to support the OU's contributions to DTP consortia, e.g. <a href="#">NERC-funded CENTA</a> and AHRC-funded CHASE.</p> <p>More pragmatically, the OU's blogging platform is undergoing an upgrade and will be maintained; further work to improve the web-analytics reports has been taken over by the RSQ Unit.</p> <p>Finally, Richard Holliman is a consultant advising Cambridge and Oxford Universities, respectively, as they work on their Catalyst Seed Funded projects.</p>
--	--	--	---	--	--