Tools for talking about public engagement

Slides you can adapt to support purposeful discussion about public engagement – what it is and why it matters
Why does public engagement matter?
Why is public engagement important?
Which of these arguments best represents your view?

A. It’s our duty / responsibility to engage with the public
B. Engaging with the public helps us do better research and teaching
C. We should engage with the public because funders increasingly expect it
D. In the grand scheme of things, public engagement isn’t a priority
Why do universities need to engage with the public?
Why do universities need to engage with the public?
Secretive and untrustworthy

Irrelevant and out of touch with society

Elitist and reinforcing inequality

Unaccountable and a waste of tax payers’ money
Why public engagement matters

**RELEVANCE**
- Research and teaching are more finely tuned to society’s needs
- Innovation flourishes as new ideas & insights flow into HEIs
- Research outputs are easily accessible and widely used

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
- The purposes and impact of research are understood and valued by wider society
- Those with a stake in research feel they can influence investment priorities
- University governance is transparent and effective

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- Universities are seen to act in socially responsible ways, contributing to social mobility and addressing societal challenges
- Universities are experienced as good neighbours by the communities around them

**TRUST**
- Universities are trusted to act ethically and responsibly
- New, controversial areas of research are debated and public attitudes are taken account of
What is Public Engagement?
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Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement
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Researching Age-friendly Neighbourhoods: This project involved older people in Greater Manchester as co-researchers. It was they who led this study designed to improve the quality of life in low income communities.
The engaged university
Public engagement with research
Actively involving the public in the research activity of the institution

Knowledge exchange & sharing
Increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and wider society

Engaged teaching
Developing teaching activities which positively impact on the community, and enhance students’ engagement skills

Social responsibility
Seeking to maximise the benefits that the institution can generate for the public
Ways of engaging
Ways of engaging...

INSPIRING
Inspiring, involving and informing the public about research

CONSULTING
Actively listening to the public’s views, concerns and insights

COLLABORATING
Working in partnership to solve problems, drawing on each other’s expertise
Who are the public?
Who are ‘the public’?

CIVIL SOCIETY & THIRD SECTOR
Charities and associations; societies and clubs

POLICY
Policy makers, regulators, civil servants

BUSINESS
Companies, SMEs, entrepreneurs

PUBLIC SECTOR
Professionals and practitioners
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Who are ‘the public’?

COMMUNITIES OF PLACE AND INTEREST

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BUSINESS
Companies, SMEs, entrepreneurs

PUBLIC SECTOR
Professionals and practitioners

VOTER

CITIZEN

CUSTOMER

EMPLOYEE

PATIENTS & CARERS

SERVICE USER

PUBLICS

www.publicengagement.ac.uk
Who are ‘the public’?

DEMOGRAPHICS:
age, ethnicity,
gender, economic
status, level of
education, income level and
employment

COMMUNITIES OF PLACE AND INTEREST

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PUBLIC SECTOR
Professionals
and practitioners

PATIENTS & CARERS

SERVICE USER

VOTER

CITIZEN

CUSTOMER

EMPLOYEE
When can public engagement happen?
WHEN can you engage with the public?

- Conception
- Proposal
- Initial research
- Intermediate research
- Final research
- Post project
WHEN can you engage with the public?

BEFORE
Typical methods include:

• Focus groups
• Advisory groups
• Co-design processes
• Network-building
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• Consultation
• Co-production
• Citizen science
WHEN can you engage with the public?

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**AFTER**
- Typical methods include:
  - Exhibitions
  - Presentations
  - Festivals
  - Outreach
  - Training and development

www.publicengagement.ac.uk
The [NCCPE website](https://www.nccpe.org.uk) hosts a wealth of other tools and resources to support your public engagement work.

You can also access a guide to accompany this resource pack [here](https://www.nccpe.org.uk/resources).