Getting Started

How To: Public Engagement with Research

I want to do public engagement, where can I get help?

The University has a central **Public Engagement with Research (PER) Team** which supports all students and staff across all Colleges who want to develop and deliver activities that engage public audiences with University of Birmingham research. We offer support for those at any career stage across six key areas:

- Engagement opportunities
- Activity design and delivery
- Funding sources and guidance
- Training and resources
- Impact and evaluation
- Partnerships and networking

Where can I find more information?

We have a dedicated blogsite at **ThinkPE.net** which is full of inspirational case studies as well as information on the team, PER news, and our active UoB community.

We share **public engagement opportunities and news in our monthly newsletter**, sign up at **tiny.cc/UoBengage**

Information also goes out directly through **College communications every fortnight**. If you don't receive it, let us know who your local communications contact is.

We are also very active on Twitter **@uobengage**, give us a follow to stay in the loop

Or why not look at what current events we're running through **Eventbrite**, our organiser name is 'Public Engagement with Research Team'

How can I contact PER Team?

There are lots of ways to get in touch with us:
Email: **engage@contacts.bham.ac.uk**
Telephone: 0121 414 8481
In person: at our informal **Breakfast Brainstorm** drop-ins in Starbucks Muirhead Tower (upstairs), 9-11am on the last Wednesday of each month #uobbrainstorm

ThinkPE.net   **@UoBengage**   engage@contacts.bham.ac.uk

How do I decide what engagement to do?

We always recommend following a theory of change or logic model process when planning PER activities. You'll be glad to know this is far less complicated than it sounds. In short, this means focussing first on what outcome you want to create. Once you've defined what you want to achieve and why, it's then fairly simple to decide the specific 'who' of your intended audience and then the 'how' of what method you might use. This approach is summarised in the diagram below:

PURPOSE	PEOPLE	PROCESS
Why do you want to engage? What do you want people to know or do?	Who are the audience(s)? Stakeholders, children, at risk groups?	Which types of activity? How and when? How will you know it's worked?

It's also really important to remember that public engagement is defined as being a two-way process so you need to think about what learning you are getting from interacting with the public. You should also consider how collaborative or participatory your engagement could be, as we know that people understand more and are more likely to do something if they have been involved. It's even better if you can include the public from the start to be sure your plan meets their needs.

I think I've got it, but can you give me examples?

Ok. Say you work on the biochemistry of diabetes and you'd like to change the perception of when diet is important (i.e. long before onset/symptoms). PURPOSE = improve public diets many years before they're at risk. PEOPLE = youngers, possibly aged 6-10, who are still forming dietary behaviours. PROCESS = something attractive to 6-10 year olds, say a game or role-playing activity in local after school groups. Or maybe you work on ancient texts and you want to show the relevance of lost stories and characters to our modern lives. PURPOSE = encourage more people to use the classics in current topical debate. PEOPLE = young, local activists or equality groups. PROCESS = workshop to create protest banners that draw on ancient sources.

Ok, I've got an idea. Now what?

If you want upskill yourself to be good and ready, why not sign up to one of our current training opportunities or our annual conference, PER Day.
You may well need money to get this off the ground. Write PER into research proposals wherever possible or apply for PER specific schemes. Where you'd like PER Team input please, please, get in touch with us as early as you can. We usually need at least 3-5 days' notice for a face-to-face discussion or to review an application.
For ideas that only need seed-corn funds, we also have an internal PER Fund that awards up to £2,000 quarterly or up to £250 on a rolling basis.
Finally, evaluation. How will you test that your activity meets your aims and whether your participants have taken anything from it? Start easy and develop; counting heads, simple votes and post-it comments are all much more valuable than nothing!

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