



**Students:
Experience,
Engagement and
Communities**

**Report to HEFCE by
York Consulting**

January 2017

Author and Contact Details

Date: October 2016

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
APEP	Applied Personal Excellence Pathway (University of Manchester)
AQD	Academic Quality and Development (University of Winchester)
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAKE	Community Action and Knowledge Exchange (University of the West of England)
CFCR	Centre for Floods, Community and Resilience (University of the West of England)
CoC	Centre of the Cell (Queen Mary University of London)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPE	Centre for Public Engagement
CRIS	Current Research Information System (University of Winchester)
CRM	Customer Relations Management
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CUPP	Community University Partnership Programme
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOS	European City of Science
EnRRICH	Enhancing Responsible Research and Innovation through Curricula in Higher Education
ESOF	European Science Open Forum
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EUSG	Engaged University Steering Group (University of Bristol)
EWB	Engineers Without Borders
FE	Further Education
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HiP	Humanities in Public (Manchester Metropolitan University)
LBTC	London Bubble Theatre Company
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MA	Master of Arts
MIG	Manchester Immunology Group
MLP	Manchester Leadership Programme (University of Manchester)
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
MoMiMa	Monsters, Microbiology and Maths (Manchester Metropolitan University)
NCBE	National Centre for Biotechnology Education (University of Reading)
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NUS	National union of Students
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PE	Public Engagement
PER	Public Engagement with Research
PESE	Public Engagement and Student Enterprise (Queen Mary University of London)
PESEAG	Public Engagement and Student Enterprise Advisory Group (Queen Mary University of London)
PETL	Public Engagement with Teaching and Learning
PGCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PPI	Public Patient Involvement
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (Manchester Metropolitan University)
QMUL	Queen Mary University of London
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RDF	Researcher Development Framework
REAP	Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnerships (University of Bradford)
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RIS	Research and Innovation Services (University of Sheffield)
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SPAIS	Sociology, Politics and International Studies
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STFC	Science and Technology Facilities Council
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCL	University College London
UEL	University of East London
UoM	University of Manchester
WRAP	Winchester Research Apprenticeships Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This study was commissioned to York Consulting by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in April 2016. The research explores the relationship between public engagement (PE) and the student experience in higher education institutions (HEIs).
2. This study identified approaches to public engagement (PE) through the student experience across a sample of ten higher education institutions (HEIs) and focused in on a small number of specific projects to highlight the range of activity taking place. The importance of both PE and student experience was found to be well-understood across the sample HEIs. However, the extent to which these two concepts were directly linked was less clear; student experience was not consistently linked to PE across the sample but was an emerging area of practice.

How is PE understood by HEIs?

3. The term PE was defined in many different ways and was often understood differently in different institutions; for example, as community engagement, civic engagement or social responsibility. PE activities related to the student experience that were identified covered all categories of PE and all types of learning.

How does PE fit into the institution?

4. PE was identified as a feature within the approach of all those that participated in the research.
5. PE with research (PER) was recognised by all the institutions interviewed and in many cases was one of the areas with the most developed activity in the PE space. A number of them had received pump prime funding, such as Research Councils UK (RCUK) Beacon and Catalyst funding, to embed PER and to support culture change in PE. The majority of those interviewed recognised that there had been an increasing emphasis on PER and in the view of many this had been driven by the impact agenda.
6. The focus on PER was clearer than PE with teaching and learning (PETL); PER was seen as relatively mature (driven by funder requirements and the broader impact agenda). PER activity was more likely to involve researchers and postgraduate students; although some engagement of undergraduates was identified, they were less likely to be involved.
7. HEIs recognised the importance of student experience and this has become central to the institutional message to prospective students, parents and staff. References to PE and student experience were strong in a number of corporate strategies, but were not always directly linked to operational delivery. There was some evidence, within the sample, of credit bearing modules being developed which provided students with recognition for PE related learning.

8. The case study universities had all started to create a climate whereby research staff, and to a lesser extent teaching staff, were encouraged to identify PE opportunities.

PE and the student experience

9. Compared with PER, PETL was typically seen as still evolving and was patchier across different faculties. PER was more likely to involve postgraduate students whilst PETL activity was more likely to involve undergraduate students.
10. Some institutions within the sample had proactively embedded a clear focus on PE within their postgraduate training programmes. This helped to raise awareness of the benefits and value of PE to researchers and their research and funding applications. Postgraduate researchers identified benefits such as increased confidence, communications skills and opportunities to test out theories or gather data. Students believed that their involvement in PE activities enhanced their human capital¹, their employability and their curriculum vitae (CV).
11. Some HEIs were implementing the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) as a mechanism to re-enforce their commitment to informal and non-formal learning including PETL, others were developing Customer Relations Management (CRM) systems to capture student involvement in PE activity. Students benefitted from seeing the results of their activities, increased confidence, communications skills and the opportunities to enhance their learning.
12. Activities linked to PE and the student experience included attendance at festivals; school related activities; research with external organisations; citizen science projects; Public Patient Involvement (PPI) and volunteering/work experience. Particular areas of support were PE talks/awareness sessions; PE surgeries; direct project support; PE ambassadors; awards/celebration events; funding calls; support with identifying costs in making funding bids; PE training; and hubs to facilitate external engagement.

Evaluation of PE activities

13. There was an evolving evaluation culture of PE activities linked to the student experience. Some institutions undertook annual assessments or evaluations of their PE activity overall or focused on collections of activities, such as festivals. Evaluation at the activity level was varied and not always an explicit requirement. A good range of evaluation research techniques were used to balance appropriate methods against scale of activity. Some PE teams undertook evaluation training for staff, researchers and students.

¹ Human capital is a term popularised by Gary Becker. "The abilities and skills of any individual, esp those acquired through investment in education and training, that enhance potential income earning" Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved November 7, 2016 from www.dictionary.com/browse/human-capital

Development plans for PE

14. Universities had a range of areas in the PE space that they wished to grow or develop. These plans were dependent on their stage of development. All HEIs had a broad ambition to increase the volume of PE activity. Key areas for HEIs were recruitment of senior staff to lead on PE; increased PE activity for undergraduates; increased activity in targeted areas, for example, PPI and community projects; scheduling of PE activities to improve planning and awareness; establishing PE as an explicit element of staff reward and recognition processes; implementing systems for monitoring and evidencing PE activities; and improved evaluation.

Reflections

15. There was a developing awareness of appropriate and effective ways to integrate PE into the student experience and the benefits this can bring to students and a range of stakeholders. The projects identified in detail, as part of the case studies, provide examples of current practice and serve as a starting point for practitioners to consider how students can be more actively involved in existing PE that can benefit their learning experience.
16. Evaluation remains challenging within the PE space. This is recognised by PER and PETL practitioners and emerges strongly as an area where the majority of our sample felt they needed to develop further.

1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 This report presents the findings of a research study commissioned to York Consulting by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in April 2016. The aim of the research was to identify how public engagement (PE) relates to the student experience in higher education institutions (HEIs) and the added value PE within student experience activities may bring to students and the student offer.

About PE

1.2 There is no single definition of PE within higher education². PE overlaps with concepts such as community engagement, civic engagement and business engagement³. What all these terms have in common is a description of an aspiration to better connect the work of universities and research institutes with society. A distinction is often made between PE with research (PER) and PE with teaching and learning (PETL).

1.3 Many of the definitions of PE overlap even though some are more narrowly focused on particular themes, such as: STEM subjects⁴; understanding the concept of student engagement⁵; and involving ‘specialists’ having dialogue with ‘non-specialists’⁶.

1.4 The broadest definition of PE, used as part of this study, is provided by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE):

“PE 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.”⁷

1.5 The ‘Science for All’ working group developed a broad characterisation of PE, summarised in their concept of an engagement triangle⁸. This framework identified three axes on which to consider engagement, depending on whether the aim is to transmit, receive or collaborate; there is no hierarchy implied between the different objectives. The NCCPE used a similar categorisation, three “*broad, if often*

² Hart, A, Northmore, S., & Gerhard, C. (2009) NCCPE Briefing Series Number 1: Summary: Auditing, Benchmarking and Evaluating Public Engagement

www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/EvaluatingPublicEngagementSummary_1.pdf

³ <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/business/communityengagement>

⁴ TNS (2015) Factors affecting public engagement by researchers – A study on behalf of a Consortium of UK public research funders. Wellcome Trust: London. https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/wtp060033_0.pdf

⁵ Trowler, V. (2010) Student engagement literature review. Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/studentengagementliteraturereview_1.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

⁶ HEFCE (2006) Beacons for Public Engagement: Invitation to apply for funds. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_49/06_49.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

⁷ NCCPE (2016) What is public engagement? Available at: www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/what-public-engagement (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

⁸ Science for All (2010) Public Engagement Conversational Tool. Version 6. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121205091100/http://scienceandsociety.bis.gov.uk/all/files/2010/10/pe-conversational-tool-final-251010.pdf> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

overlapping” purposes of PE. These are: Informing – Inspiring, informing and educating the public, and making the work of higher education more accessible; Consulting – Actively listening to the public’s views, concerns and insights; and, Collaborating – Working in partnership with the public to solve problems together, drawing on each other’s experience.

- 1.6 The NCCPE expressed the importance of PE in terms of benefits to universities and the public, expectations of funders and policy makers and the need for HEIs to adapt to their external environment.⁹
- 1.7 PE activities can help HEIs to address issues such as *“accountability and transparency, values and purpose, and trust and licence to practice”*¹⁰. However, some of the challenges associated with developing PE include lack of time¹¹, academic culture¹² and attitudes of academic peers¹³.
- 1.8 There has been a significant investment over the last ten years in PE to address the barriers identified in the PE space, with specific funding for a range of initiatives, the development of the impact agenda and growing calls for greater PE in policy making¹⁴ more generally and specifically related to science¹⁵.

Investment and Policy Developments

- 1.9 Recent investment initiatives and policy developments that have supported PE included:
 - Beacons for PE (2008-11)¹⁶. Research Councils UK (RCUK) partnered with the UK Funding Councils and Wellcome on university-based collaborative centres to support, recognise, reward and build capacity for PE work. Six Beacons were established to pilot new methods to embed PE within their organisations.
 - PE with Research Catalysts¹⁷. Building on the Beacons for PE, and recognising that further support was needed to embed PE within the sector, RCUK

⁹ NCCPE (2016) Why is it important? Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/why-it-important> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁰ NCCPE (2016) A changing world. Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/why-it-important/changing-world> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹¹ The Royal Society (2006) Survey of factors affecting science communication by scientists and engineers. Available at: https://royalsociety.org/~media/Royal_Society_Content/policy/publications/2006/1111111395.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹² Science for All (2010) Report and action plan from the Science for All Expert Group. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121212135622/http://bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/s/s-science-for-all-report.pdf> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹³ ScoPE (2009) Public culture as Professional science. Available at: http://eprints.kingston.ac.uk/20016/1/ScoPE_report_-_09_10_09_FINAL.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁴ Livesey, F. (2015) Attitudes to public engagement and the role of experts in decision-making. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/01/08/attitudes-public-engagement-and-role-experts-decis/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁵ RCUK (no date) What is public engagement? Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/peupdate-pdf/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁶ NCCPE (2016) Beacons. Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/completed-projects/beacons> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁷ NCCPE (2016) Catalysts project. Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/catalysts-project> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

invested £2.4 million to incite culture change within eight HEIs to help them embed PE with Research (PER), within their policies, procedures and practices.

- Catalyst Seed Fund¹⁸. RCUK provided flexible funding to create a culture where excellent PER is better embedded within the HEI.
- School-University Partnerships Initiative (2012-15)¹⁹. This RCUK initiative aimed to create structured and strategic mechanisms for HEIs to work in partnership with secondary schools and further education (FE) colleges.
- Enhancing Responsible Research and Innovation through Curricula in Higher Education (EnRRICH)²⁰. Relatively recently, Living Knowledge: the International Science Shop Network received EU funding²¹ for the EnRRICH project (2015-2017). This aimed to “improve the capacity of students and staff in higher education to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to support the embedding of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in curricula by responding to the research needs of society as expressed by civil society organisations (CSOs)”.
- Manifesto for Public Engagement²². Many HEIs have signed up to the Manifesto for Public Engagement; by doing so they sign up to a series of PE commitments.
- PE Lens on the Researcher Development Framework²³. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) has been developed by and for researchers working in higher education as an aid to planning, promoting and enhancing professional and career development. The PE Lens highlights how PE is an important part of the professional development of researchers.
- Impact Agenda and PE. In August 2006, the Worry Report²⁴ advised on how Research Councils could deliver a major increase in the economic impact of their investments. RCUK have introduced Pathways to Impact²⁵ to encourage researchers to think about what can be done to ensure research makes a difference. Public engagement is recognised as a pathway to impact. The Research Excellence Framework²⁶ (REF) 2014, required case studies to be submitted which articulate how particular research outputs have created impact ‘beyond academia’. Public engagement featured in a wide variety of the impact case studies submitted.

¹⁸ NCCPE (2016) Catalyst seed fund. Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/catalyst-seed-fund> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

¹⁹ RCUK (2014) RCUK School-University Partnerships Initiative. Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/PartnershipsInitiative/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

²⁰ Living Knowledge: The International Science Shop Network (no date) EnRRICH. Available at: <http://www.livingknowledge.org/projects/enrich/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

²¹ Horizon 2020 CSA – Coordination and support action

²² <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/manifesto-public-engagement> (Accessed: 7 November 2016)

²³ Vitae (2014) Public engagement lens on the vitae researcher development framework 2011. Available at: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/public-engagement-lens-on-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-rdf-apr-2013.pdf> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

²⁴ RCUK (2014) The Worry report. Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/archive/TheWorryReport/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

²⁵ RCUK (2014) Pathways to impact. Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

²⁶ REF (2014) REF 2014. Available at: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

Student Experience

- 1.10 The term ‘student experience’ has been used in a variety of settings and has now come to summarise the importance of considering students’ overall experience of their time at an HEI²⁷. This encompasses the academic aspects of teaching, learning and curriculum as well as the wider life of a student including extracurricular activities such as volunteering and work experience^{28,29}. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) defined student experience as “*the totality of a student’s interaction with the institution*”³⁰.
- 1.11 The greater emphasis on student experience has been reflected in additional questions being considered for the National Student Survey³¹. Other survey analysis³² indicates that 63% of students surveyed took part in formal volunteering since starting university. A large majority of students who volunteered (95%) said they were motivated by a desire to improve things or help people, while nearly half (49%) were also looking to enhance learning from their university course through volunteering.
- 1.12 The related term of ‘student engagement’ is well recognised and, according to Trowler (2010)³³, there is good evidence of a link between student involvement in “*educationally purposive activities*” and “*positive outcomes*” such as “*satisfaction, persistence, academic achievement and social engagement*”. She describes student engagement as “*...concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution*”. Other definitions focus on the willingness or desire of students to engage³⁴.

²⁷ Benckendorff, P., Ruhanen, L., & Scott, N. (2009) Deconstructing the Student Experience: A Conceptual Framework <http://isiarticles.com/bundles/Article/pre/pdf/19882.pdf> (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

²⁸ Harvey, L. (2006) What is the student experience anyway? Academy Exchange, 4 (Summer 2006), pp. 14–15. Hersh, R. H., & John M. (Eds) (2005) <http://escalate.ac.uk/downloads/2809.pdf> (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

²⁹ Harvey, L., Burrows, A., & Green, D. (1992) Total student experience: A first report of the QHE national survey of staff and students’ views of the important criteria of quality. Birmingham, UK: QHE <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/TSE.pdf> (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

³⁰ Temple, P., Callender, C., Grove, L., & Kersh, N. (2014) Managing the student experience in a shifting higher education landscape https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/managing_the_student_experience.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

³¹ Callender, C., Ramsden, P., & Griggs, J. (2014) Review of the National Student Survey Report to the UK Higher Education Funding Bodies by NatCen Social Research, Institute of Education, University of London and Institute for Employment Studies. Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/indirreports/2014/Review.of.the.NSS/2014_nssreview.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

³² Brewis, G., Russell, J., & Holdsworth, C. (2010) Bursting the Bubble: Students, Volunteering and the Community Research Summary. Available at: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/bursting_the_bubble_summary_report.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

³³ Trowler, V. (2010) Student engagement literature review https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/studentengagementliteraturereview_1.pdf (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

³⁴ <https://soundout.org/defining-student-engagement-a-literature-review/> (Accessed: 28 September 2016)

Learning and PE

1.13 Although learning often takes place within formal settings and learning environments, a great deal of valuable learning also takes place either deliberately or informally in everyday life. Student experience encompasses ‘formal learning’, ‘informal learning’, and ‘non-formal learning’.

1.14 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) offers the following definitions³⁵, while other similar definitions exist³⁶:

“Formal learning is always organised and structured, and has learning objectives. From the learner’s standpoint, it is always intentional: i.e. the learner’s explicit objective is to gain knowledge, skills and/or competences.”
OECD (2016)

“Informal learning is never organised, has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner’s standpoint. Often it is referred to as learning by experience or just as experience. The idea is that the simple fact of existing constantly exposes the individual to learning situations, at work, at home or during leisure time for instance.”
OECD (2016)

“Non-formal learning is rather organised and can have learning objectives. The advantage of the intermediate concept lies in the fact that such learning may occur at the initiative of the individual but also happens as a by-product of more organised activities, whether or not the activities themselves have learning objectives. Non-formal learning gives some flexibility between formal and informal learning, which must be strictly defined to be operational, by being mutually exclusive, and avoid overlap.”
OECD (2016)

1.15 These definitions help to provide a frame for understanding how dimensions of PE may interact with the learning process and ultimately the learning experience.

1.16 In this research we allowed case study institutions to interpret student experience within their own context, although they were guided to focus on the students’ engagement with their learning. However, where deemed relevant by the interviewees, the relationship between public engagement and the broader student experience was reflected upon, for example, the relationship between students and the local community.

³⁵ OECD (2016) Recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/recognitionofnon-formalandinformallearning-home.htm> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

³⁶ Cedefop (2008) Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe. Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4073> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

Investment and policy developments

1.17 Recent developments linked to student experience and learning include:

- The Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group³⁷ promoted the idea of life-long learning and criticised the focus on one final outcome rather than a wider recognition of achievement. The Steering Group proposed the development of a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) to record all university-level undergraduate higher education student achievement in all UK HEIs. HEAR³⁸ was launched in 2008; many of the case study HEIs were implementing or planning to implement it.
- The development of the HEAR provided an opportunity for students participating in PE to gain acknowledgement for this activity.
- NCCPE developed a 'Framework for the Assessment of Student Learning from Public Engagement'³⁹, which provided academics with a tool for thinking about how outcomes could be incorporated into their assessment of student learning.
- The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is currently being introduced to recognise and reward high quality teaching, and ensure that prospective students can make informed choices. HEIs will be able to choose to articulate their teaching provision through the TEF aspects of quality: Teaching Quality; Learning Environment; and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. Practitioners in the PE with student experience space reflected during the research that there was potential for TEF to act as a driver for this element of the student experience.

Summary

1.18 This research project aimed to identify examples of PE linked to the student experience, thereby highlighting the range and diversity of activities, and examples of current practice.

1.19 The term 'student experience' was well understood, by those interviewed, as an important focus across all institutions. However, the extent to which PE was directly linked to student experience was less clear.

³⁷ Burgess Group (2007) Beyond the honours degree classification: The Burgess Group final report. Available at: http://www.hear.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Burgess_final2007.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

³⁸ HEAR (2015) Home page. Available at: <http://www.hear.ac.uk/> (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

³⁹ Owen, D., & Hill, S. (2011) Embedding Public Engagement in the Curriculum: A Framework for the Assessment of Student Learning from Public Engagement. Available at: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/assessing_student_learning_from_pe.pdf (Accessed: 8 July 2016)

2 APPROACH

2.1 This section summarises the scope of the research, the sample of HEIs selected and the methodology employed.

Scope

2.2 The purpose of this research was to address the following key questions:

- How does PE relate to the student experience in HEIs/departments in England? How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?
- What added value does PE within student experience activities bring to the student offer?
- What added value does PE within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

2.3 The study was required to consider the relationship that PE theory, methods and application may have with the student higher education experience at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Sample

2.4 A purposive sampling approach was adopted, by HEFCE, to identify a set of HEIs active in PE. Participating HEI's are listed below;

- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Queen Mary University of London
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of East London
- University of Manchester
- University of Sheffield
- University of the West of England
- University of Winchester.

Method

2.5 The method involved the development of topic guides, agreement of the case study structure, drafting of individual case studies for each HEI and reporting.

Development of topic guides

2.6 A set of topic guides (Annex A) was developed tailored to the four different interviewee groups that were anticipated:

- Strategic leaders
- Academics
- Students
- External Stakeholders.

Case study structure

2.7 Within each HEI the following roles were targeted for interview during a one day case study visit, with some follow-up telephone conversations where necessary:

- HEI Strategic Leader e.g. Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Learning
- HEI Professional Services Support e.g. Student Services
- HEI Academics (teaching/research)
- Current students (across different levels of study)/alumni
- Student Union officer for academic learning
- Relevant external stakeholders linked with student experience/PE activities, for example, a local school, employer or community organisation.

2.8 The method involved an initial approach to a key PE individual (through HEFCE contacts) by telephone to agree a date between May 2016 and September 2016 for a visit.

2.9 Each case study was led by one of the research team and involved a review of key online documents available through the public domain prior to each visit.

2.10 The summer holiday period fell during the fieldwork period which limited the range of students that could be interviewed as part of the fieldwork. In all cases we spoke to the head of PE or similar. The numbers of participants in each HEI case study ranged from three to ten.

Drafting of individual case studies for each HEI

2.11 Individual case studies were drafted and discussed with the HEFCE project manager as the project evolved. Each case study was signed off by each HEI (see Annex B for case studies and Annex C for contact details).

Overarching report

2.12 This report summarises the key findings covering the literature review and drawing on the range of data collected as part of the case study visits.

3 ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The analysis compares and contrasts approaches, drawing out examples of current practice, where they were identified.

How Is PE Understood by HEIs?

- 3.2 The way that PE is translated into an institution's vision varies. Some HEIs have alternative descriptions and philosophies that drive their culture. Although these terms are subtly distinct they are interpreted as covering their understanding of PE. A summary of the different terminology used by the ten case study institutions is outlined below.

Table 3.1: Terminology used within case study HEIs

Terminology	Number of institutions
PE	5
Civic engagement	2
Social responsibility	1
Engagement	1
Community engagement	1

Source: York Consulting research, 2016

- 3.3 Where an alternative to PE was used, this was seen as valuable to stress the importance of that particular dimension within the institution. There was no particular correlation to the type of institution. For simplicity, throughout this report the term PE will be used as a synonym for the terminology used in particular institutions.

How Does PE Fit into the Institution?

- 3.4 The extent to which PE was referenced in an institution's overall strategy varied. In some cases, one particular aim or objective was explicitly connected to PE or the wider terminology adopted by the HEI. In the case of the University of Manchester 'social responsibility' encompassed their commitment to PE linked to student experience.

Example: University of Manchester

The 'Manchester 2020' strategic plan⁴⁰ has three core goals:

- world-class research; outstanding learning and student experience; and social responsibility.

- 3.5 In others, PE was seen as a cross-cutting theme linked to multiple strands, aims or objectives. For example, in the case of Manchester Metropolitan University PE was considered to be a cross-cutting theme across all strands of its corporate strategy.

⁴⁰ <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=11953>

Example: Manchester Metropolitan University

The current Corporate Strategy (2012-17)⁴¹ has five strands covering:

- student experience; research; innovation; international; and sustainability.

- 3.6 Most of the sample institutions developed their strategy towards public engagement with research (PER) through different forms of funding used to ‘pump prime’ their initial approach. Typically, the following infrastructure was supported by the funding: establishment of a job role to co-ordinate or lead PE activity; in some cases this included a specific team of staff to deliver PE within the institution strategic PE advisory group; a PE strategy for the institution.
- 3.7 Since the period of this pump priming activity, in some cases dating back to 2008, some institutions have retained these elements. However, others have seen the PE team shrink and in some cases the PE strategy has not been continued. This has occurred for different reasons: in one case it was about resource availability, in others there has been a strong push to develop a wider institutional responsibility for PE. Some HEIs have continued to fund PE activity through their own funds.
- 3.8 The broad picture for the case study institutions across these four categories was:
- Nine out of the ten HEIs had an explicit operational lead role for PE.
 - Seven of the HEIs had a team related to PE or a similar subject. Two institutions had a single person in this role. However, across the sample there was a distributed model with individuals responsible for PE within different faculties and areas of the HEI working as a virtual team, linked to the lead role, with a common purpose to progress PE activity. For example, some HEIs have PE Ambassadors across the institution, who act as advocates and signpost other staff as necessary.
 - Four of the HEIs had strategic steering/advisory groups focused on PE activity.
 - Four of the ten HEIs had or were developing a PE strategy. The others saw PE as a part of the overall institutional corporate plan or as a faculty level responsibility.
- 3.9 A distinctive model was operating at the University of Brighton where a pre-existing initiative, the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP), was used as the vehicle to develop PE activities.
- 3.10 There was no common approach to where the PE co-ordinator and/or team sat within the institutional structure. PE activity was generally regarded as an institution-wide service, sometimes sitting alongside other similar support services such as Careers and Volunteering. However, with the advent of the impact agenda within research, there was evidence of some institutions moving this role into their

⁴¹ <https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/about/corporate-strategy/MMU-corporate-strategy.pdf> [Accessed 1 October 2016]

research support services, for example, Research and Knowledge Exchange and similarly named departments.

Influencing PE Activity

- 3.11 Irrespective of the organisation of PE co-ordination – using a lead job role, having a support team, operating a strategic steering group or having a PE strategy – all PE staff expressed the importance of their role to influence the wider institution. Some talked about culture change, especially around developing PE linked to teaching and learning. This view of culture change was typically re-enforced by senior strategic staff.
- 3.12 There was no systematic evidence that any particular combination of these elements was more or less effective than another at promoting and supporting PE. However, some HEIs had clearer views of how they planned to develop responsibility among academics, researchers and students to undertake effective PE. Most interviewees explained that ‘directives’ were not a very effective route to achieving such goals. Therefore, the strategies included awareness raising, training and support to develop ideas and projects.
- 3.13 Most interviewees were aware of the engagement triangle or continuum. All could cite examples within the different categories. There was a range of strategies being employed:
- Some had strategies that focused more around the transmission element, often through the festivals approach.
 - Others were trying to achieve a portfolio approach recognising benefits of all three elements.
 - In a few cases the ambition was to move further towards the collaborative element, seeing this as having the greatest potential to achieve institutional objectives.
- 3.14 Other ways of influencing PE activity and communicating an institution’s commitment include staff reward and recognition processes and quality marks:
- Most of the HEIs had established PE as an element of their staff reward and recognition processes. In some cases, these changes were made as part of previously funded activity, such as Beacon funding. Establishing PE as an element of staff reward and recognition processes is believed to help emphasise the importance of PE and to motivate staff to undertake PE activities. PE staff explained that PE activity has often been referenced in institution-wide communications about a staff member’s promotion, which further publicises its value.
 - Eight out of the ten HEIs were signatories to the PE Manifesto published by the NCCPE. One university (QMUL) was in the pilot process for the NCCPE Watermark for PE. The university saw this as helping to signal to their staff, students, peers and broader local and national external stakeholders both

their achievements and the importance that they place on sustainable support for a broad range of PE.

PE and the Student Experience

- 3.15 Across our sample there were examples of projects and initiatives which sought to support students through opportunities and infrastructure to undertake PE through research (their own and others) and learning.
- 3.16 For many interviewed, the impact agenda was a key driver for academic engagement with PE. Within the sample alongside the module-focussed work discussed below, examples of students driving research with a PE element or methodology and participating in established research which incorporates PE were identified. In some cases these led to undergraduate students developing ideas for projects with research potential and in other cases to postgraduate research funded projects working with undergraduates in the development and delivery of PE activities.

Example: Student led investigation and management of neglected tropical diseases in Madagascar – University of Manchester (UoM)

Dr Stephen Spence founded the Madagascar Medical Expeditions in 2014 whilst still a student at the University of Manchester. Supported by his lecturers he developed the project and involved other students. In 2015 two alumni along with two students took part in the first student-led medical research expedition from the UoM as part of their APEP (Applied Personal Excellence Pathway). The aim was to find the most important diseases affecting communities in one of Madagascar's most remote and isolated areas.

In May 2016, a group of students travelled back to the same villages in Madagascar to investigate the burden of Schistosomiasis on these communities. The children were treated for Schistosomiasis with medication which was donated by the East Lancashire NHS hospitals. The project was further supported by funding grants including the UoM Learning Enrichment Fund and The Royal Geographic Society. This together with other funds raised by the students enabled them to conduct high quality research in the area.

Example: The Berkeley Excavation Project – University of Bristol

The Berkeley Excavation Project (known as Dig Berkeley), led by Professor Mark Horton and Ash Tierney, archaeological experts, began in 2014. Students were a key part of the project and were supported by a Teaching Assistant from the University of Bristol, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology to engage with the archaeological excavation site's local community. Initially it involved public talks and tours but this was very much one-way communication and the dig team wanted to develop a more engaged experience. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from Archaeology and Anthropology courses were offered a voluntary opportunity to participate in developing the dig's PE capacity.

The project was supported by funding from a university teaching development grant, and actively supporting their strategic commitment to engagement in the student experience. Students were involved in a number of activities from delivering a local Festival of Archaeology involving artists, historians and the local community, to family engagement activities, to schools' engagement. Through engagement with local individuals and businesses the students developed an embedded community exhibition of site finds displayed in homes and businesses. This activity supported better relationships between students from the university and the local community.

- 3.17 Alongside these specific projects some HEIs had also embedded a clear focus on PE within their postgraduate and doctoral training programmes (for example QMUL, the UoM and others). This helped to raise awareness of the benefits and value of PE to researchers as well as in research and funding applications.
- 3.18 Interviewees generally felt that PE was more established within the postgraduate student and research portfolios. PE linked to teaching and learning at undergraduate level was considered to be at an early stage. Good examples were identified through the case studies where teaching staff had incorporated more PE activity into undergraduate and postgraduate learning programmes. Some PE staff hoped that the advent of the TEF may have a similar effect to the REF. Dialogue with senior strategic staff responsible for teaching and learning indicated that the extent to which PE was woven into formal learning programmes was patchy across faculties and departments.
- 3.19 The main challenge identified by staff seeking to embed PE within teaching and learning was resource limitations (more to do with staff time than funding). This was particularly the case where dialogue was required with multiple external organisations or individuals. This speaks to the findings of 'Factors Affecting Public Engagement'⁴² which highlights time as a challenge for researchers undertaking PE.
- 3.20 Teaching staff explained that "*it was hard work*" establishing relationships with external organisations. It required a real commitment to repeat such approaches year on year, as well as an informed, skilled resource to manage relationships, such as in the School of Geography example below.

Example: School of Geography partnership with Citizens UK – QMUL

The School of Geography hosts a Citizens UK⁴³ representative, which helps to link the school's research with community organisations. A second year Methods class in Human Geography involves practical PE activities as an assessed module requiring the engagement of local communities. Students plan and implement their research, linked to an identified campaign. For example, in 2016, the focus

⁴² TNS (2015) Factors affecting public engagement by researchers – A study on behalf of a Consortium of UK public research funders.

⁴³ http://www.citizensuk.org/about_us The declared objectives of Citizens UK are for the benefit of the public: (i) to develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of Britain and Ireland in such a way that such members are better able to identify and meet their needs and participate more fully in society; (ii) to assist by directly promoting the more effective working of local and national capacity building institutions designed to pursue that aim.

was on the London Mayoral campaign. The London branch of Citizens UK hosted a debate into which students contributed their findings. The focus was on housing across London and in particular in east London. There were many issues raised such as costs, tenure and types of landlord. Students had to use different interactive research techniques to gain the insight and information required. Groups of eight students worked together to undertake research with community groups such as churches and football clubs. Each group was paired with a research assistant who acted as a group mentor and also helped assess the participatory grading for the students.

Example: Business Planning in SPAIS (Sociology, Politics and International Studies) – University of Bristol

The SPAIS MSc in International Development contains an optional unit, which requires students to write a business proposal for a non-governmental organisation (NGO)⁴⁴. This unit offers students a service learning⁴⁵ opportunity to deploy key engagement skills in a live setting and for an NGO to be provided with work to support their business planning. In 2015/16, 10 teams involving 41 students participated with a range of NGOs including Babassa Youth Empowerment Project, Bristol Women and Community in Partnership Knowle West.

- 3.21 A number of HEIs within the sample were establishing clear targets around incorporating more opportunities linked to learning, such as the University of the West of England.

Example: Prioritising practice-oriented learning – University of the West of England

As part of the review of progress towards achieving Strategy 2020, one of three key areas pertaining to engagement and the student experience identified included prioritising practice-oriented learning. Further emphasis has been placed on this as a core value and placement opportunities are offered to all students irrespective of their chosen course of study. The aim is to develop ready and able graduates that have key employability skills; character traits that employers value; and developed core career-specific skills that employers require.

The practice element is increasingly integrated within the curriculum, particularly in courses, where traditionally the practice element seems less obvious. For example, students studying sociology have a compulsory module on Developing Self and Society in year two, which provides an opportunity to develop graduate employability skills. In other courses, the practice element is often tied to requirements demanded by external bodies leading to professional accreditation.

- 3.22 The above examples often contributed to overall course assessment but are not always credit bearing.

⁴⁴ Tweddell, H. (2015) Business Planning in SPAIS. Bristol: University of Bristol

⁴⁵ Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

- 3.23 Credit bearing programmes of learning linked to PE have been developed by some institutions. In some cases, they were linked to particular disciplines, such as Unit X at MMU, whereas others were generic and related to all disciplines. In the case of the University of Brighton the module was originally taught by CUPP staff, but responsibility then passed to individual faculties who now teach the Community Learning Module.

Example: Unit X for Art Students⁴⁶ – MMU

Unit X is a project spanning Media, Art and Design undergraduate courses at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University. Students can choose Unit X, which is an interdisciplinary credit-bearing unit that involves undertaking PE activities in collaboration with external partners/cultural providers. Students work with studios, venues and businesses across the city in a novel and dynamic form of teaching and learning, culminating in a city-wide arts festival. During their first year students work collaboratively to explore their practice, second year students experiment to develop professional approaches to their practice, and third year students focus on engaging with professional issues in relation to their discipline.

Example: Community Learning Module⁴⁷ – University of Brighton

The Community Engagement: Theory into Practice Module aims to provide a different learning experience for students. It offers the opportunity to explore students' personal values and aspirations while working for a notional 30/50 hours on a relevant placement within a local not-for-profit organisation. It is offered in 10 and 20 credit modules at levels 2 and 3, and assessment is based on reflective as well as analytical assignments which encourage students to look at their own personal journey as well as the policy and practice of the organisation in which their placement is based. As such the module focuses on the student, where they are heading and the development of skills and experience relevant to this, and the different services, organisations and policies that operate in this field.

Activities

- 3.24 A range of school related activities were identified across the case study institutions. These typically had combinations of objectives: to support schools and the learning of school pupils; to support the development of skills among university students or researchers; and, development tools and strategies for future school-based learning.
- 3.25 Some approaches were based around externally designed programmes such as the Speech Bubbles programme developed by the London Bubble Theatre Company. Whereas, others were designed by the students in discussion with schools.

Example: Young Scientists programme – London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

⁴⁶ <https://projectunitx.wordpress.com/about/>

⁴⁷ <https://about.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/whatwedo/student-community-engagement/students/cpd-module.html>

(LSTHM)

The Young Scientists programme has been running for over 10 years and involves bringing 14–18 year olds into the LSHTM to work with the PE Coordinator, staff and students. These adolescents are given a crash course on research over a two-week period, in the form of ‘work experience’. They are treated as ‘researchers’ and have to collect, analyse and present their data to academics on a biomedical research problem. The young people are also encouraged to peer review each other. It is described as a ‘very intense’ experience for the young people involved, but there is evidence that they develop significantly over the two weeks, both in terms of specific skills, but also in terms of being competitive at job interviews.

Example: Speech Bubbles – University of East London

Speech Bubbles is a weekly participatory drama workshop project engaging young people aged five to seven in schools in the London Borough of Newham. Speech Bubbles is an expansion of the award-winning Speech Bubbles programme run by the London Bubble Theatre Company (LBTC) and is designed to help children improve their social and communication skills. Civic engagement funding enabled the recruitment, induction and training of students using the Speech Bubbles philosophy to take place. During the successful pilot year of the project, six students were trained and engaged with 60 young people across three schools in Newham. For students, this represents a continuing professional development (CPD) verified programme.

The standard model for students needed to be amended to incorporate additional support and provision at particular points. This was done to recognise that students were the key delivery agents and that the offer was open to students from schools other than drama. The Director found that students studying Special Education or Psychosocial degrees provided an additional positive dimension to delivery.

- 3.26 All HEIs’ activities involved aspects of volunteering and some also described them as forms of work experience.
- 3.27 Many HEIs also had volunteering programmes that ran throughout the institution. For example, the University of Winchester established the programme described below. Others included the University of Manchester with the Manchester Leadership Programme and the University of Brighton’s Active Student Programme.

Example: Volunteering module – University of Winchester

One of the university’s overarching strategic aims reflects on developing teaching and learning, such as better graduate employability and links with employers; it is *“about supporting students to go on and be successful”*. PE is key to delivering this aim, for example, through the volunteering module. The module runs across the whole of the university, and last year saw 400 students enrol and gain a placement in a charity related to their programme of study, for example, Winchester Young Carers or Oxfam.

- 3.28 In the case of the Speech Bubbles project students were required to make a real commitment to volunteer throughout the programme, as it was only considered to be effective for the schools and school pupils if volunteer involvement was consistent through the programme.

Example: Speech Bubbles – University of East London

Students identify their interest in participating and attend an induction session which determines their aptitude to take part in the project. Students need to be reliable, enthusiastic, have good communication skills and be willing to commit to working weekly over the course of an academic year. Two students work with a member of school staff to deliver drama sessions with two groups of ten pupils at a specific primary school. A student majoring in drama is paired up with a student studying another discipline. This works particularly well because, as a pair, the students provide complementary skills. It also supports the development of teamwork skills.

An introductory event is used to provide interested students with a taster of how the sessions are run. This also provides an opportunity for the project managers to informally assess which students are ready/not ready to successfully engage in the project. Student commitment is key to project success. Students need to be willing to deliver sessions at their allocated school, each week, across the academic year (24 weeks). Consistency and routine are particularly important for the students as important relationships are built up as the project develops.

Support

- 3.29 Support was provided for PE in a variety of ways across the institutions identified including:
- Awareness raising
 - Surgeries
 - Volunteering/work experience
 - Direct support for project activity
 - PE ambassador programme
 - Celebration events and awards
 - Hubs to facilitate external engagement with the institution.
- 3.30 All PE staff undertook awareness raising sessions across their institutions. For some it was focused at the start of term on teaching and research staff. In other cases it was a scheduled activity throughout the year. In some cases the sessions also involved raising awareness of grants available, and the bidding process, to support PE activities.

- 3.31 In a few cases there were presentations to undergraduate students, although this was not common.
- 3.32 Some PE teams offered surgeries at set times when they would be available for discussions with researchers and teaching staff to discuss potential projects or bids for funding related to PE. In the case of QMUL, this tended to be useful as part of the wider portfolio of support made available across the university by the Centre for PE (CPE).

Example: PE Surgeries – QMUL

The Centre for PE make staff available at certain times, which are published on their PE webpage and in various university newsletters. Fortnightly surgeries enable staff and students to access the PE team regarding projects, funding, logistics and other issues. The team are then able to connect individuals to many different programmes and resources across the university.

- 3.33 In some HEIs direct support was provided to implement PE activity. This tended to occur where PE teams existed or had a well-established, distributed system of PE staff. Many PE staff saw their role as more of a co-ordinator and sign-poster to resources and support rather than a direct provider of support.
- 3.34 A good example at the University of Bristol involved a member of the wider PE team assisting through the identification of NGOs to enable the course leader to then offer a list of NGOs to the students. This activity required dedicated input to make contact with NGOs and explain the reason behind the university's approach.
- 3.35 Half of the HEIs operated some form of PE Ambassador programme. These programmes involved members of staff across the institution receiving training and having a responsibility to encourage, enthuse and support other staff and students to undertake PE activity. In some cases they had a dedicated amount of time to support colleagues, while in other cases they acted more to sign-post colleagues to the PE team or relevant funding source.
- 3.36 One university specifically chose not to have an ambassador approach to PE as they see PE as everyone's responsibility and did not want it to be seen as the responsibility of particular individuals.
- 3.37 A number of HEI PE teams have strong relationships with staff and researchers who have PE responsibilities. This helps to create a network of contacts across faculties and departments and is perceived to encourage wider ownership of responsibility for PE. Two examples included:
- At QMUL, PE staff were located in other areas of the university outside of the Centre for PE. For example, a Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) PE Fellow in Physics is based in the Centre of the Cell⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Centre of the Cell (CoC) is a biomedical science education centre, educational website and outreach project aimed at children and young people aged 9 to 19, families and youth and community groups. CoC is the first

- At Bristol University, there was a range of staff linked to the PE Team who have responsibility and a small amount of resource/time to encourage and support individual initiatives; for example, Academic Liaison Officers and a Community Based Learning Co-Ordinator⁴⁹. These PE staff added additional expert capacity to the PE infrastructure within the university which supports the student experience.

3.38 Most HEIs operated internal celebration events and awards. They also encouraged individuals leading PE projects to put themselves forward for national awards.

3.39 An example of a project that achieved a university award was the Madagascar Medical Expeditions project at the University of Manchester. PE staff felt that such awards were valuable for helping to spread the message and establish advocates across the institution.

Example: Outstanding PE Award – University of Manchester

Following his voluntary mission to find the most important diseases affecting communities in one of Madagascar’s most remote and isolated areas, Dr Stephen Spence was awarded third prize in the Alumni Category at the University of Manchester ‘Volunteer of the Year 2015’ awards which celebrate the volunteering work of the university community. The expedition team also won first prize in the ‘Outstanding PE’ category at the University of Manchester’s Social Responsibility ‘Making A Difference’ awards.

3.40 Some HEIs have started to develop hubs to facilitate external engagement with the university to assist with making connections that can facilitate PE.

3.41 The Skills Bridge involving the University of West England and The University of Bristol and the CUPP Helpdesk at the University of Brighton perform similar brokerage roles to connect local organisations and community groups with students at the respective universities. When they are promoted effectively these are seen as valuable to help external organisations navigate what can be an overwhelmingly large and complex institution to approach.

Stakeholder perceptions

3.42 Students often spoke of the following benefits as a result of participating in PE activities:

- Greater understanding of how they can apply skills they have learnt, where activities are linked to structured learning
- The importance of practical experience

science education centre in the world to be located within biomedical research laboratories. The 'Pod' (resembling a 16 cell human embryo) is dramatically suspended above the laboratories and provides young people with a unique interactive insight into what scientists do and how their work influences real life.

⁴⁹ The Community Based Learning Co-Ordinator role was tested through Green Capital funding and found to be successful. Therefore, it has now been continued; funded centrally by the university.

- The satisfaction of being involved in activities that benefit others
- Seeing the results of their activities

3.43 In some cases evaluation of the results of projects identified benefits to students aligned with institutional strategies and priorities, such as the Berkeley Excavation Project.

Example: The Berkeley Excavation Project – University of Bristol

Through the Berkeley Excavation Project, students' learning was enhanced and the work supported them to develop their skills in a number of fields, in particular: credibility; press engagement; critically assessing archaeology as presented in the media; communication strategies; ethical issues; social media representations of their field; and public engagement. The evaluation findings⁵⁰ identified that the project *“delivered a diverse, engaging and high quality learning experience to University of Bristol students, one which fostered their love of the subject, and also enhanced their graduate attributes”*.

The skills developed aligned well with the university's Education Strategy (especially Priority 3 *“Ensure students have a fulfilling, demanding and intellectually stimulating experience while at University, that prepares them for employment and worldwide opportunities when they leave”*) and the Engaged University Strategy (especially, *“Support and promote dialogue between staff/students and the public”*).

3.44 Postgraduate researchers and academics interviewed as part of this study identified the following benefits of participating in PE activity:

- Confidence building and learning how to explain complex ideas more effectively to different audiences
- The potential for ideas generation and to test out theories with different groups from the general public to school pupils studying STEM subjects
- Opportunities to generate data and observation from PE activity
- Opportunities for community and socially positive outcomes

3.45 Students participating in activities linked to their learning, with aspects of assessment and accreditation, recognised the benefits of challenging themselves when undertaking activities in new areas, such as the QMUL Human Geography partnership with Citizens UK.

⁵⁰ Tierney, A. (2015) Report on the Engagement Team – Berkeley Castle Project. Bristol: Department of Archaeology & Anthropology.

Example: School of Geography partnership with Citizens UK – QMUL

The School of Geography hosts a Citizens UK⁵¹ representative. This helps to link the school's research with community organisations and groups. Student feedback included:

- Students enjoyed hearing about a lecturer's research.
- Students enjoyed the experience of real fieldwork, although they did find it challenging, but recognised that they developed confidence, project management skills and the importance of preparation to avoid embarrassment (for example, by not knowing background information when talking to a community actor).
- There were also challenges for the students to work together as a group. There was a degree of dependency on each other *"which is good preparation for the work place"*.

A final group presentation was considered stressful by students and challenging but, they also enjoyed the experience and felt they got a lot out of it. They particularly enjoyed the process of peer review.

Many students enjoyed the fact that the subject matter was relevant and real and some went on to be further involved in the London branch of Citizens UK activities.

- 3.46 Students at the University of Bristol also identified many benefits from the International Relations NGO project. In many cases these types of activities can be valuable in building confidence and experience, as two quotes by one student demonstrate: *"I now have a greater understanding of how I can apply the skills I have learnt"* and *"Practical experience is vital"*.

Example: International Relations NGO project – University of Bristol

Key feedback from students that participated in this project included:

- Students felt that they developed lots of useful employability skills, for example, team work and understanding the importance of prioritisation.
- Students felt well prepared to engage with their partner and that they received good support from the university.
- Students believed that the experience enriched their learning and course work.
- Students felt they had provided something useful to the partner NGO.
- Students would definitely recommend the project to other students.

⁵¹ http://www.citizensuk.org/about_us The declared objectives of Citizens UK are for the benefit of the public: (i) to develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of Britain and Ireland in such a way that such members are better able to identify and meet their needs and participate more fully in society; (ii) to assist by directly promoting the more effective working of local and national capacity building institutions designed to pursue that aim.

- 3.47 PE projects with schools created opportunities for researchers to develop their communication skills but also to test out how different approaches might work in the classroom. One researcher at LSHTM found that the experience helped him in his communications with his PhD supervisor which should ultimately improve the quality of his research. This in turn can then contribute to improving teaching skills at the university.

Example: Young Scientists Programme – London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

Chris Jarvis, a research degree student, has been involved in this programme as a mentor. It has helped him to develop skills in supervision, and consider how to communicate his knowledge in a way that is appropriate to a younger, inexperienced audience. It has also helped him to see things from a different perspective, listening to the views of young people who are not familiar with research. He has also developed connections across the school through the programme, and is more able to understand the perspective of his own PhD supervisor, and how to communicate with him more effectively.

Through mentoring intensively on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis for two weeks across a breadth of seven or eight projects, he believes that his teaching skills have improved. He learnt how to pick up when the young people were losing interest, and how to explain things in different ways. He has found this particularly useful in teaching 40 MSc students of varying levels, ages and backgrounds. He feels that he is a more effective teacher and because of his approach, his students are more likely to admit at an early stage that they are not able to understand, thus getting better results in the long term.

- 3.48 The teaching staff interviewed saw PE as adding value to the student experience and were committed to its inclusion in a range of activities. Some HEIs within the sample have developed credit bearing units and modules that recognise the value of PE activity. According to PE staff there was room for improvement in terms of the scale and scope of PE through teaching and learning.
- 3.49 From the perspective of senior staff the links between PER and the student experience was typically more relevant to researchers and PhD students than undergraduates. The role of undergraduates was often seen as more supportive (such as helping to organise external events/festivals) and passive (as recipients of the events/festivals).
- 3.50 Evidence from the case studies suggests that PE through teaching and learning was at an early stage. There were fewer structures and systems in place to facilitate and support the development of PE aspects to programmes of learning. There was some evidence of barriers in terms of resource costs associated with some activities; although the benefits identified by students and the development of the TEF suggested that there may be increased motivation to overcome these barriers in the future.

Evaluation of PE Activities

- 3.51 A range of evaluation activities took place at various levels across the sample of HEIs. All HEIs recognised the importance of evaluation of individual activities although programme evaluation was less common. Typically, activity evaluation was a report from the project manager or project beneficiary at the end of the project. PE staff recognised there was a variation in terms of the rigour of evaluation activities across projects. Some HEIs had developed evaluation training courses delivered by PE staff for research and teaching staff.
- 3.52 Evaluation often took place at an 'activity' level, for example, an evaluation of a festival in terms of stakeholder/public participation and feedback collected in many ways.
- 3.53 The range of techniques used to collect feedback on activities, projects and events included: informal discussions; student feedback; partner feedback; postcards; post-it walls; email evaluation forms; voting systems (using dedicated voting devices or smartphones/tablets); diary rooms and video recording facilities; and formal evaluation of specific projects led by academics/researchers.
- 3.54 Staff indicated that it can be difficult to gain feedback due to the reluctance of participants to complete structured surveys. Therefore, they valued and prioritised more proactive methods among those above.
- 3.55 Project level feedback highlighted a range of learning to staff, students and institutions. For example, the LSHTM project used a combination of surveys and qualitative feedback. The University of Bristol excavation project used social media mechanisms, in addition to surveys and interviews, to generate feedback and to measure the extent of engagement achieved by the project. In particular, they operated a very open, trust-based model of engagement to empower the students and local public.

Example: Young Scientists Programme – LSHTM

The programme is always evaluated, both for schools (where mentors review the progress of the young people on the programme) and for the LSHTM (participants on the programme complete surveys, and informal feedback is received from schools).

Example: The Berkeley Excavation Project – University of Bristol

Through the Berkeley Excavation Project, the key lesson learned by those delivering the project was *“that it is a positive thing to place trust in our students and the community. That trust is valued and respected and demonstrates a respectful, inclusive attitude from the university. By appointing students as mini-managers and allowing them to direct their own workload, a workplace setting was emulated, which encouraged the students to improve their adaptability, team working and creativity”*.

Social media was a key mechanism to share information about the project and to evaluate the level of profile achieved locally.

3.56 At the level of the PE team the following indicators were monitored by some HEIs as part of their approach to evaluating their general PE effectiveness:

- Volume of repeat requests for support
- Growth of activity
- Successful funding applications
- Feedback through university-wide professional services surveys
- Increasing use of the PE team as advisors
- Increased number of external partners

3.57 There was evidence that more thought was being given to the development of frameworks to guide the institutions’ approaches to evaluating PE activity.

Example: evaluation framework – University of East London

One of the responsibilities for the new Director of Civic Engagement will be to develop an evaluation framework to capture the impact of existing civic engagement activity. Thought is being given to developing a longitudinal survey of current and past students who have engaged in a range of projects. This may include a control group of students who have not participated, to assess the extent to which students have become change agents within society/active citizens.

3.58 Some HEIs have undertaken broader evaluations covering impact of their PE related activities. These vary in focus. The University of Manchester study is more centred on the institution’s overall impact. The experience of the University of Brighton indicates how challenging this process can be.

Example: Measuring the difference: the economic and social impact of the University of Manchester⁵², 2013 – University of Manchester

This report is described as an “*holistic approach to the concept of economic valuation adopted in this study [that] encompasses all dimensions of the university’s impact, including socio-cultural impacts as well as environmental and financial impacts*”.

As well as assessing the economic impact of the whole institution it focused on some PE-related activities such as:

- Volunteering as part of the Manchester Leadership Programme: 53,500 volunteering hours, valued at £266,500 at the prevailing minimum wage
- Public service and the school governor initiative: 116 staff serving as school governors, 1,400 days involved, valued at £765,500 based on a consultancy charge out rate

Example: Impact Approaches – University of Brighton

CUPP, at the University of Brighton, has worked with a number of different approaches to try to measure the impact of engagement activities across the University. They tried the Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnerships (REAP) approach (Pearce⁵³ et al., 2007), developed by the University of Bradford, however, while it was a good conceptual framework, they found that not all projects had the capacity to collect the required data.

CUPP has also undertaken an audit of engagement activities across the university. However, this also proved challenging to develop workable definitions and to separate out activities that were primarily outreach and widening participation. Rather than continue with future audits, the university are developing a Customer Relations Management system (CRM) to help capture key information and focus on publications celebrating success.

3.59 There was limited evidence of evaluation around PE in formal learning.

Development Plans for PE

3.60 Universities had a range of development plans related to their stage of development. All had a broad ambition to increase the volume of PE activity, some focussed on the student experience and others looking to develop PE more generally. Key areas covered were:

- Recruitment of staff – two HEIs were in the process of recruiting senior staff to newly created roles:

⁵² University of Manchester (2013) Measuring the difference: the economic and social impact of the University of Manchester. <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=21569>

⁵³ <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02863.pdf>

- University of East London were recruiting for a Director of Civic Engagement to maintain momentum and develop PE activity across the institution.
- University of the West of England were recruiting a new Assistant Vice Chancellor for Regional Engagement.
- Increasing PE activity for undergraduates. Six HEIs were focusing on either developing a more systematic programme or broadening existing programmes to include more students. In two cases (University of Bristol and University of Sheffield) they had defined targets. For example, in the case of the University of Sheffield by 2019 all departments will be involved in Achieve More, which is the university's programme to support students to achieve PE activities through their subjects. At the University of Bristol the ambition by 2019 is that all learning programmes will include elements of Bristol Future Pathways as part of their credit bearing curriculum.
- Increasing activity in targeted areas. Two universities had ambitions to develop activity in specific areas such as public-patient involvement and community projects.
- Scheduling of PE activities. Two HEIs planned to develop rolling programmes of activities including festivals and other events to provide a clearer plan for stakeholders across the institution.
- Establishing PE as an explicit element of reward and recognition processes. One HEI was working towards a system where PE formed a clear aspect of staff development.
- Systems for monitoring and evidencing PE activities. Three HEIs had ambitions to develop internal systems to capture PE activities more effectively. All institutions agreed that it is difficult to be comprehensive about every single activity. Approaches included implementing HEAR and establishing CRMs to better record student activity.
- Evaluation. All HEIs had intentions to develop the level of evaluation in terms of individual activities and in terms of their overall approaches to PE.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This study has sought to identify approaches to PE through the student experience across a sample of ten institutions and to focus in on a small number of specific projects to highlight the range of activity taking place. The term PE is understood slightly differently in some institutions, for example as community engagement, civic engagement or social responsibility.

How does PE relate to the student experience in HEIs in England?

- 4.2 The importance of both PE and student experience is well-understood across HEIs. However, the extent to which these two concepts are directly linked is less clear.
- 4.3 While all institutions were aware of the potential value of PETL, the focus on PER was clearer. PER was seen as relatively mature (driven by the impact agenda) but PETL was typically seen as evolving and was patchier across different faculties. PE activities related to the student experience covered all categories of PE (transmit, receive and collaborate) and all types of learning (formal, informal and non-formal).
- 4.4 The case study institutions had all started to create a climate whereby research staff, and to a lesser extent teaching staff, were encouraged to identify PE opportunities. However, the extent to which undergraduate students and postgraduates were encouraged to identify PE opportunities varied across the sample.

How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?

- 4.5 There was an evolving evaluation culture of PE activities linked to student experience. A few institutions undertook annual assessments or evaluations of their PE activity overall or focused on collections of activities, such as festivals. Evaluation at the activity level was varied and not always an explicit requirement. A good range of evaluation research techniques were used to balance appropriate methods against scale of activity. Some PE teams undertook evaluation training for staff, researchers and students.

What added value does PE within student experience activities bring to the student offer?

- 4.6 HEIs recognised the importance of student experience and this has become central to the institutional message to prospective students and parents. References to PE and student experience were strong in a number of corporate strategies, but as mentioned earlier not always directly linked. There was some evidence at a number of HEIs of PE, or similar, credit-bearing modules being developed which provided students with recognition for PE related learning.
- 4.7 Some HEIs were implementing HEAR as a mechanism to reinforce this commitment, others were developing CRM systems to capture student involvement in PE activity.

What added value does PE within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

- 4.8 PER was more likely to involve researchers and postgraduate students. PETL was more likely to involve undergraduate students.
- 4.9 This research and the ten resulting case studies give testament to the multifarious ways in which PE activities operate and how they benefit many stakeholders, including students and researchers. Students benefit from seeing the results of their activities, increased confidence, improved communications skills and opportunities to enhance their learning. Researchers benefit in terms of increased confidence, improved communications skills and opportunities to test out theories or gather data. Students and researchers believe that their involvement in PE activities enhances their human capital⁵⁴, their employability and their curriculum vitae (CV).

Reflections

- 4.10 There was a developing awareness of appropriate and effective ways to integrate PE into the student experience and the benefits this can bring to students and a range of stakeholders. The wide-ranging projects identified in detail, as part of the case studies, were examples of current practice and serve as a starting point for practitioners to consider how students can be more actively involved in existing PE that can benefit their learning experience.
- 4.11 Evaluation remains challenging within the PE space. This is recognised by PER and PETL practitioners and emerges strongly as an area where the majority of our sample felt they needed to develop further.

⁵⁴ Human capital is a term popularised by Gary Becker. "The abilities and skills of any individual, esp those acquired through investment in education and training, that enhance potential income earning" Collins English Dictionary – Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved November 7, 2016 from www.dictionary.com/browse/human-capital

Annex A: Topic Guides

Topic Guide: Strategic Staff

Notes to interviewers:

- We should collect information on issues associated with student experience as the interviewee reports them and not probe specifically for broader student experience elements.
- Interviewing the strategic leaders is designed to get a sense of the institution's overall approach, so the 'Bigger Picture' should be prioritised with this group.

A) How does public engagement relate to the student experience in higher education institutions/departments in England?

1) Name, role and involvement

Institution level

- 2) How do you approach PE within the student experience at your institution?** PROBE: Do you have a formal strategy? Do you operate a specific model? Is it more informal?
- 3) How would you define the public engagement which the students are undertaking: transmitting, receiving, collaborating?** PROBE: Does it vary by initiative, discipline, level?
- 4) Does PE with SE feature within the formal learning experiences of students, informal learning experiences of students or both?**
PROBE: To what extent is PE within the student experience formalised within student learning? (e.g. embedded in curriculum?)
PROBE: To what extent is PE within the student experience an informal contributor to student learning?
- 5) How is your approach communicated?** PROBE: To different stakeholders/communities? (students, staff, potential students, partners)
- 6) How is your approach resourced?** PROBE: Types of staff and funding sources
- 7) How was the current approach developed?**
- 8) Who is responsible for co-ordinating this?** PROBE: What teams or departments are involved
- 9) How do your activities connect with different areas within your organisation that undertake PE including PE with research?**
- 10) Can you describe some examples?**

Level of specific good practice example [Senior staff may not know this level of detail]

- 11) Please describe the activities involved in this good practice example**
- 12) What is the policy/model?** PROBE: How is this connected to

faculty/department/institutional policy

- 13) **How would you define the public engagement which the students are undertaking: transmitting, receiving, collaborating?** PROBE: Does it vary by initiative, discipline, level?
- 14) **How was this example identified?** NOTE: in some cases the activity may have been developed by students separate to any direct drive from the university.
- 15) **To what extent is this example embedded in formal learning or structures?** (e.g. embedded in curriculum?)
- 16) **How is your approach communicated?** PROBE: To different stakeholders/communities?
- 17) **How is your approach resourced?** PROBE: Types of staff and funding sources
- 18) **How was the current approach developed/conceived?**
- 19) **Who is responsible for co-ordinating this?** PROBE: What teams or departments are involved
- 20) **Does the activity relate to formal learning, informal learning or both?**
PROBE: Formal/informal learning, broader student experience? What are the benefits?
- 21) **How do your activities connect with different areas within your organisation that undertake PE including PE with research?**

B) How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?

For each of the above levels (where it is identified that a respondent has the capacity to respond)

- 1) **To what extent are activities to date perceived to be effective by different stakeholders?**
- 2) **What aspects have worked well/not so well?**
PROBE: Has/have the approach/approaches been evaluated? PROBE: Results, reports, findings (note be careful to distinguish between ad hoc and programme evaluation)
- 3) **To what extent do these activities enhance the student experience (formal/informal learning, broader student experience)?**
- 4) **What types of challenges have been encountered in implementing these activities?**
- 5) **Are you planning any further developments in this area?**

C) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the student offer?

For each of the above

- 1) **How is the added value of your institution's activities promoted to potential students, parents and other relevant stakeholder groups/communities?** PROBE: Is it specific to an initiative or is it institution wide?

- 2) **How is your approach understood/received by potential students?** PROBE: What evidence exists to support this? PROBE: Is it valued?
- 3) **Do you have any plans to develop the approach further to potential students, in the future?** PROBE: Please explain further

D) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

For each of the above

- 1) **What are the main benefits to students from participating in public engagement?**
PROBE: e.g. confidence, employability skills, networking, other skills
- 2) **Are there longer term benefits?** PROBE: To what extent have these been realised or are they anticipated?
- 3) **How are the benefits identified?** PROBE: How do you make sure the activities stay effective?
- 4) **Have you identified any benefits to other stakeholders/communities?** PROBE: Please describe to whom?
- 5) **Do the approaches and benefits vary depending on different factors** e.g. level of study?
- 6) **To what extent are there areas for improvement to make this more valuable to students?**
- 7) **Are there any challenges involved in the inclusion of public engagement – particularly that are underpinned by research – into the student experience that you would like to highlight?**

Topic Guide: Operational Staff

Note to interviewers:

- We should collect information on issues associated with student experience as the interviewee reports them and not probe specifically for broader student experience elements.
- Interviewing operational staff is designed to get a sense of the approach undertaken within the central service team, department, faculty/school or specific example; questions will need to be balanced against the extent of knowledge of each staff member especially between teaching/research staff.

A) How does public engagement relate to the student experience in higher education institutions/departments in England?

1) Name, role and involvement

Institution level

- 2) How does your university approach PE within the student experience at your institution?** PROBE: Do you have a formal strategy? Do you operate a specific model? Is it more informal?
- 3) How is the approach communicated?** PROBE: To different stakeholders/communities? (students, staff, potential students, partners)

Department/faculty level

- 4) How do you approach PE within the student experience at your institution/in your department/in your faculty?** PROBE: Is it formalised or is it more informal/organic?
- 5) How would you define the public engagement which the students are undertaking: transmitting, receiving, collaborating?** Interviewer note: Be prepared to explain these terms for respondents PROBE: Does it vary by initiative, discipline, level?
- 6) Does PE with SE feature within the formal learning experiences of students, informal learning experiences of students or both?**
- PROBE: To what extent is PE within the student experience formalised within student learning? (e.g. embedded in curriculum?)
- PROBE: To what extent is PE within the student experience an informal contributor to student learning?
- 7) How is the approach communicated within the department/faculty?** PROBE: To different stakeholders/communities? (students, staff, potential students, partners)
- 8) How is your approach resourced?** PROBE: types of funding sources, practical support
- 9) How was the current approach developed?**
- 10) Who is responsible for co-ordinating your approach/approaches?** PROBE: What

teams or departments are involved?

- 11) **How do your activities connect with different areas within your organisation that undertake PE including PE with research?**
- 12) **Can you describe some examples?**

Level of specific good practice example (where respondent is able to talk about a specific example)

- 13) **Please describe the activities involved in this good practice example**
- 14) **How would you define the public engagement which the students are undertaking: transmitting, receiving, collaborating?** PROBE: Does it vary by initiative, discipline, level?
- 15) **How was this example identified?** NOTE: in some cases the activity may have been developed by students separate to any direct drive from the university.
- 16) **To what extent is this example embedded in formal learning or structures?** (e.g. embedded in curriculum?)
- 17) **How is your approach communicated?** PROBE: To different stakeholders/communities?
- 18) **How is your approach resourced?** PROBE: Types of staff and funding sources
- 19) **How was the current approach developed/conceived?**
- 20) **Who is responsible for co-ordinating your approach?** PROBE: What teams or departments are involved?
- 21) **Does the activity relate to formal learning, informal learning or both?** PROBE: Formal/informal learning, broader student experience? What are the benefits?
- 22) **How do your activities connect with different areas within your organisation that undertake PE including PE with research?**

B) How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?

For each of the above

- 1) **To what extent are activities to date perceived to be effective by different stakeholders?**
- 2) **What aspects have worked well/not so well?** PROBE: Has/have the approach/approaches been evaluated? PROBE: Results, reports, findings (note be careful to distinguish in your write up in particular between project and programme evaluation)
- 3) **To what extent do these activities enhance the student experience (formal/informal learning, broader student experience)?**
- 4) **What types of challenges have been encountered in implementing these activities?**
- 5) **Are you planning any further developments in this area?**

C) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the student offer?

For each of the above

- 1) **How is the added value of your institution's activities promoted to potential students, parents and other relevant stakeholder groups/communities?** PROBE: Is it specific to an initiative or is it institution wide?
- 2) **How is your approach understood/received by potential students?** PROBE: What evidence exists to support this? PROBE: Is it valued?
- 3) **Do you have any plans to develop the approach to potential students?** PROBE: Please explain further

D) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

For each of the above

- 1) **What are the main benefits to students from participating in public engagement?** PROBE: e.g. confidence, employability skills, networking, other skills
- 2) **Are there longer term benefits?** PROBE: To what extent have these been realised or are they anticipated?
- 3) **How are the benefits identified?** PROBE: How do you make sure the activities stay effective?
- 4) **Have you identified any benefits to other stakeholders/communities?** PROBE: What are they? To whom?
- 5) **Do the approaches and benefits vary depending on different factors e.g. level of study?**
- 6) **To what extent are there areas for improvement to make this more valuable to students?**
- 7) **Are there any challenges involved in the inclusion of public engagement – particularly that are underpinned by research – into the student experience that you would like to highlight?**

Topic Guide: Student/SU

Note to interviewers:

- We should collect information on issues associated with student experience as the interviewee reports them and not probe specifically for broader student experience elements.
- Points specifically for student union representatives are in red, depending on whether they are directly involved themselves or speaking separately.

A) How does public engagement relate to the student experience in higher education institutions/departments in England?

- 1) Name, course, year, **wider responsibilities** (e.g. student union role)
- 2) Is public engagement part of your/the student experience at your university?
- 3) Describe and agree the good practice example(s) that form the subject of this interview (typically you will know this from earlier interviews, but check you are discussing what you expect and allow the respondent space to contextualise with their broader experience in this area)

Level of specific good practice example identified

- 4) **Are you able to describe an example?** (this will need to be rephrased depending on the response to the above) What does it involve? How did you become involved?
PROBE: Where is the example based: SU, department, faculty, university-wide?
PROBE: Who is involved and what are their roles? Staff, students (PGR, PGT, UG), external organisations
 - 5) **Does the public engagement work primarily involve...**
 - a) transmitting information e.g. giving talks
 - b) consulting e.g. working with groups to better understand their needs and experiences
 - c) co-creating solutions or research questions
 - d) or a combination
 - 6) **How did you/students first become involved?**
 - 7) **In your experience do the activities relate to wider activities in the university?**
PROBE: Are they connected to different departments? Do they contribute to university activities such as research, recruitment or widening participation?
 - 8) **Are you aware how this approach originally developed?**
-

B) How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?

- 1) **Has the project been successful from your perspective?** PROBE: How do you know?
- 2) **What aspects have worked well/not so well?**
- 3) **Are you/participants asked for your/their views?**

C) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the student offer?

- 1) **Did you/students find out about this activity before you started your course?**
- 2) **Could it be promoted better to prospective students?** PROBE: Why do you say this?
- 3) **What did you/students hope or expect to gain when you/they first became involved?** PROBE: What evidence exists to support this? PROBE: Is it valued?

D) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

- 1) **What are the main benefits to you/students from participating in the activities you have described?** PROBE: e.g. confidence, employability skills, networking, other skills
- 2) **Are you able to provide examples of how this activity has added value to your/students' student experience?** PROBE: In what ways?
- 3) **To what extent would you say the activity has enhanced the student experience?** PROBE: Formal (e.g. credit bearing)/informal (e.g. not credit bearing) learning, broader student experience (be prepared to define the terms as necessary)?
- 4) **Are there ways that this or similar activities can further support your/students' student experience in the future?**
- 5) **Would you recommend this activity to future students?**

Topic Guide: Stakeholders

Note to interviewers:

- We should collect information on issues associated with student experience as the interviewee reports them and not probe specifically for broader student experience elements.
- Beware not to overuse terminology that stakeholders may not be familiar with.

A) How does public engagement relate to the student experience in higher education institutions/departments in England?

- 1) **Name, role**
- 2) **How did you first become involved?** PROBE: Were you approached by the university/students/students union?
- 3) **To what extent have you/your organisation been involved in similar activities linked to this/another university previously?**

Level of specific good practice example identified

- 4) **Please describe the activities involved in this good practice example**
- 5) **Who has been involved in these activities?** PROBE: From the university? From your organisation?
- 6) **Are the activities the students are involved in focussed on...**
 - a) transmitting information e.g. giving talks
 - b) consulting e.g. working with groups to better understand their needs and experiences
 - c) co-creating solutions or research questions
- 7) **How was the activity originally developed?** PROBE: Did you co-create the approach with the university, student body, student union? Were you approached?
- 8) **Are you likely to continue with this activity?**

B) How do institutions, students and partners know the activities are effective?

- 1) **What value has the project/work added to your activities?**
- 2) **What aspects have worked well/not so well?** PROBE: How do you assess this?

C) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the student offer?

- 1) **What do you expect students will gain from this activity?** NOTE: some stakeholders will

not be aware of how the student offer is presented.

D) What added value does public engagement within student experience activities bring to the experiences of students at the identified institutions?

- 1) **What value do you feel the project/work adds to the experiences of the students involved?** PROBE: e.g. confidence, employability skills, networking, other skills
- 2) **Do you have examples of how this activity has added value to students' student experience?** PROBE: In what ways?
- 3) **To what extent are your activities linked with the students' study?** Probe: Are they linked to formal learning?
- 4) **Are there ways that this or similar activities can further support students' experience and your activities in the future?**

Annex B: Case Studies

University of Bristol

The University of Bristol can trace its roots back to 1876. It is among the top five UK universities for research¹. In 2015/16² they taught 17,100 undergraduates and 5,150 postgraduates. Faculties are Arts; Biomedical Science; Engineering; Health Sciences; Science; and Social Sciences and Law.

Engagement and the institution

The University of Bristol aims to deliver its commitment to engagement, including public engagement, through the University Strategy³ 2016 and the 'Engaged University' strategy⁴ which sits under the University Strategy. The Engaged University strategy is driven by the Engaged University Steering Group (EUSG) which brings together different engagement functions⁵ and is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise. The university is a signatory to the PE Manifesto published by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

Through its strategy the university seeks to support and encourage *"a two-way process of interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit"* by engaging *"a wide variety of partners to enrich the direction, quality and outcomes of research and teaching"*⁶. The 'Engaged University' seeks to provide a *"lens"* through which engagement activities can be viewed. It does not aim to *"dictate or mandate any specific activities"*, but to prompt questions about whether engagement activities enrich research and educational programmes.

The university's public engagement priorities⁷ include:

- Working with a range of partners, to enrich the university's work and deliver better outcomes.
- Providing a supportive environment for engagement which is embedded in research and teaching.
- Recruiting and retaining staff who bring a range of expertise and experience to the development of relationships.
- Embedding engagement in the student experience and curriculum for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Being reflective about engagement, evaluating activities and learning from appropriate theory and practice.

¹ University of Bristol (2016) Our vision. Our strategy. A roadmap for the next phase of our University's development. Bristol: University of Bristol. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/strategy/>

² <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/facts/>

³ University of Bristol (2016) Our vision. Our strategy. A roadmap for the next phase of our University's development. Bristol: University of Bristol

⁴ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/public-engagement/documents/Engaged%20University%20Strategy.pdf>

⁵ The EUSG is a cross-institution group, including: Communications and Marketing; Public Engagement; Student representative; Academic representatives; University Research Institutes; Research and Enterprise Development; Industrial Liaison Office; Alumni Relations; Careers Service; and, Human Resources.

⁶ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/public-engagement/about/how-we-got-here/>

⁷ Correct as of August 2016 but subject to update when new priorities are published

Public engagement is underpinned by a core team of 4.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff in the Public Engagement team, plus an additional 4.7 FTE⁸ temporary or project-specific staff alongside further staff embedded within other teams/departments who are line managed through the Public Engagement team. This model has developed over time and has evolved to create a lattice-work structure throughout the institution.

The university also supports public engagement through embedding it in operational processes such as promotion criteria (since 2010), awards recognising excellence, departmental reviews (since 2010) and co-hosting the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

Engagement and the Student Experience at Bristol is underpinned by two strategic commitments:

- Providing a supportive environment for engagement which is embedded in research and teaching.
- Embedding engagement in the student experience and curriculum for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The extent to which the student experience embodies aspects of public engagement is considered to be exemplified in research and in some areas of teaching but is seen as a “*work in progress*” in other areas of teaching. There is a recognition that more can be done to improve public engagement and the student experience within some disciplines.

It is important to recognise that there are differing views across staff members about the primary objective of public engagement and the student experience. For some it is about supporting the development of rounded individuals, for others about employability or becoming a member of a sustainable society. There is a degree of licence to ensure that many different approaches can evolve and develop. Senior staff talk of creating a “*permissive environment*” in which ideas and innovation can flourish.

Overall, public engagement is regarded as “*part of the fabric of the institution and is well respected in academic life*” [staff member]. Developments around engagement and the student experience are informed by a reflective dialogue with staff and students and represent students’ desire for additionality to the core curriculum, expressed as “*wanting a stronger sense of community engagement*” [senior staff member].

How does it operate?

Bristol delivers its commitments to engagement and the student experience through a number of formal and informal avenues from institution wide initiatives to locally developed subject specific activity.

Bristol Futures is an institution-wide initiative that is designed to provide all students with the opportunity to develop graduate attributes, through three Personal and Professional Development pathways which involve a range of external engagements from business to the third sector to communities:

⁸ As of October 2016

- Innovation & Enterprise
- Global Citizenship
- Sustainable Futures.

This initiative is an example of the institution responding to student demand for a diverse educational experience. Students are central to its development which involves bringing together staff and students to collaborate on the development of the Bristol Futures curriculum. The initiative currently holds engagement with business, the third sector and communities at its heart and seeks to support students to develop key skills including PE skills to be successful.

The university also seeks external investment to support student driven initiatives that are dependent on public engagement principles and skills. One of the outcomes of the Green Capital Student Capital project, delivered in partnership with the University of the West of England and supported by HEFCE Catalyst funding, was the creation of a framework to help students propose public engagement activities linked to the curriculum. This tool has improved and formalised public engagement practice in this area. Students value the framework and describe it as helping them to make more effective cases to university staff. There is feedback that this has improved communication with approaches and ideas being well-received by teaching and research staff.

The degree to which public engagement is present within the student experience reflects disciplinary diversity with a strong professional central public engagement team able to support individual disciplines. Individual student preferences can influence their propensity to engage, *“some students choose not to become involved in public engagement activities for a variety of reasons including availability of time”*.

A range of support exists to facilitate the development of student experience activities. There is a range of staff linked to the Public Engagement team who have responsibility and a small amount of resource/time to encourage and support individual initiatives; for example, Academic Liaison Officers and a Community Based Learning Co-ordinator⁹. One staff member explained that student voice research and the National Student Survey results have been invaluable as a source of evidence to inform discussions with teaching staff. These PE staff add additional expert capacity to the infrastructure within the university which supports the student experience.

What are the key plans for development?

The development of student experience through engagement is very much seen as a *“journey of change”* for all staff across the institution. The university began by recognising and validating existing practice and are now working towards a strategic vision populated by activities generated by students and staff within faculties and departments: *“we try not to be over-corporate but to create a transparent structure to allow support to evolve and to be developed”*.

⁹ The Community Based Learning Co-Ordinator role was tested through Green Capital Student Capital funding and found to be successful. Therefore, it has now been continued; funded centrally by the university.

Through Bristol Futures the university plans to articulate the development of transferable skills and attributes, through the introduction in 2017 of three optional non-credit-bearing courses aligned with the three pathways. Some of the anticipated benefits of Bristol Futures include: “*providing students with an opportunity to develop their core academic skills further through application outside their own discipline*”. It is envisaged that the university will work with partners in the city and the wider region, to coordinate more opportunities for professional and community engagement, linked to Bristol Futures. The ambition is that these enhanced opportunities will give students an early insight into careers and help them to develop and apply their skills in a non-academic context.

By 2019, it is intended that all programmes will include elements of the Bristol Futures pathways as part of their credit-bearing curriculum – the way in which these are embedded will vary between disciplines.

How is it evaluated?

Effectiveness is monitored in a range of ways including

- Informal discussions
- Volume of repeat requests for support
- Growth of activity
- Successful funding applications
- Professional services survey feedback which has been positive
- Student feedback
- A degree of partner feedback
- Increasing use of the PE team as advisors.

Externally funded projects such as the Green Capital Student Capital¹⁰ project are evaluated within formal frameworks and currently are the best sources of in-depth information in this space. For example, the National Union of Students Green Capital Student Capital evaluation^{11,12,13} identified a range of benefits including over 126,009 hours of student engagement in project activity equating to over £1.1 million of economic benefit; over 8,000 students engaged with over 400 organisations.

It is recognised that evaluation methods have varied across different work streams. There are plans to measure the impact of developments on student experience more consistently as the Bristol Futures activity develops and is embedded.

¹⁰ Clayton, W., Longhurst, J., & Willmore, C. (2016) Review of the contribution of Green Capital: Student Capital to Bristol's year as European Green Capital. Project Report. <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/30273/>

¹¹ Clayton, W., Longhurst, J., & Willmore, C. (2016) The Bristol Method, Green Capital: Student Capital. The power of student sustainability engagement. www.bristol2015.co.uk/method/

¹² Runkle, Q. (2016) Green Capital: Student Capital Student-led Evaluation – An evaluation report prepared for the University of the West of England, the University of Bristol, the Students' Union at UWE, and Bristol Students' Union. London: National Union of Students.

¹³ USE (2016) GREEN CAPITAL: STUDENT CAPITAL Final Monitoring Report

Project Example 1: Business Planning in SPAIS (Sociology, Politics and International Studies)

The MSc in International Development in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, offers an optional unit which requires students to write a business proposal for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)¹⁴. This unit offers students a service learning¹⁵ opportunity to deploy key engagement skills in a live setting and for an NGO to be provided with work to support their business planning.

In 2015/16, 10 teams involving 41 students participated with a range of NGOs including Babassa Youth Empowerment Project, Bristol Women and Community in Partnership Knowle West.

Students and partners were asked to provide feedback anonymously on their experiences. This was largely positive as can be seen below with students commenting, “I now have a greater understanding of how I can apply the skills I have learnt” and “Practical experience is vital”. NGOs highlighted some practical improvements which would allow the activity to run more smoothly in the future.

Students	Partners
Felt that they developed lots of useful employability skills; for example, team work and understanding the importance of prioritisation.	Felt that the students’ work made a positive difference for their organisation and stated that students met their expectations.
Felt well prepared to engage with their partner and that they received good support from the university.	Were happy with the information the university provided.
Believed that the experience enriched their learning and course work a lot.	Would recommend the project to other organisations.
Felt they had provided something useful to the partner	<i>“The university needs to provide more detailed information for the NGO from the outset.”</i>
Would definitely recommend the project to other students.	<i>“Students also need to be clear what is expected from them.”</i>

The team of MSc students were regarded as great ambassadors for the university. One NGO explained that they were “a bit sceptical about [students’] contribution and commitment” but that by the end of the process “they were satisfied with [students’] final work”.

¹⁴ Tweddell, H. (2015) Business Planning in SPAIS. Bristol: University of Bristol

¹⁵ Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

The majority of comments were positive with NGOs citing that students made useful suggestions towards the NGO's future fundraising and volunteer recruitment strategies, brought energy and enthusiasm that motivated staff and came with fresh outside perspective. One partner commented that *"it has been a really positive experience for the board to work with the students. We felt through conversations and meetings that they really got to understand our business and produced a brilliant business plan that is really going to help us going forward"*.

Overall, the evaluator found *"the whole experience has been brilliant, and left the group feeling really positive. It has been a two-way process and we have shared information and had input all the way through"*.

Project Example 2: The Berkeley Excavation Project

The Berkeley Excavation Project (known as Dig Berkeley), led by Professor Mark Horton and Ash Tierney, archaeological experts started in 2014 supported by the University of Bristol's Green Apple Scheme¹⁶. Students are a key part of the project and are supported by a Teaching Assistant from the University of Bristol, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology to engage with the site's local community.

An archaeological dig has been ongoing for over 10 years at Berkeley Castle near Bristol. Initially the work was complemented by public talks and tours but this was very much one-way communication and the dig team wanted to develop a more engaged experience. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from Archaeology and Anthropology courses were offered a voluntary opportunity to participate in developing the dig's public engagement capacity.

During the project:

- 539 student volunteer hours provided
- 26 undergraduate students (first, second and third years)
- Direct engagement with 370 people (231 children, 139 adults)
- 100% positive response to the Town Museum project, including understanding the archaeological research better
- 50,000+ social media engagements.

The project was supported by funding from a university teaching development grant, actively supporting their strategic commitments to engagement in the student experience. The key elements of the project included:

- **Stage 1 Students were introduced to professional best practice examples of the use of social media.** They reflected upon how social media was used within different areas relating to their discipline and how it could enhance their employability.
- **Stage 2 Communication strategies** (assessing the ways that research information is collated, processed and then made available for public consumption) and a media tracking news activity (which traced stories

¹⁶ About embedding sustainable development in each discipline

covered in the press from their journal origin to their reimagining/reception within the public sphere). This stage and stage 1 of the model were delivered through interactive lectures and seminars, and completed in November 2014. These sessions fed directly into fieldwork opportunities (stage 3), in summer 2015.

- **Stage 3 Fieldwork community and social media team** (students were encouraged to volunteer within a community engagement and social media team where they practiced the skills developed in the classroom in a real world environment). Students took part in an Engagement Team based within the department's annual Berkeley Castle excavations.

Students were involved in a number of activities from delivering a local Festival of Archaeology involving artists, historians and the local community, to family engagement activities, to schools engagement. The student participants also sought to and were supported to innovate. Through engagement with local individuals and businesses the students developed an embedded community exhibition of site finds displayed in homes and businesses. This activity supported better relationships between students from the university and the local community.

The local community also experienced additional impacts, which were not originally envisaged. For example a local fish and chip shop experienced significant increase in revenue on the days when the students and the public were attending the Berkeley Castle site. Over time this business and others became more open to involvement in the activities on site.

Feedback was sought in a number of ways from students anonymously for each stage of the project. External stakeholders also provided anonymous feedback (community participants) which was supplemented by a collected statement from Berkeley Castle.

Students' learning was enhanced and the work supported them to develop their skills in a number of fields, in particular: credibility; press engagement; critically assessing archaeology as presented in the media; communication strategies; ethical issues; social media representations of their field; and public engagement. The evaluation findings¹⁷ identified that the project *"delivered a diverse, engaging and high quality learning experience to University of Bristol students, one which fostered their love of the subject, and also enhanced their graduate attributes"*.

The skills developed aligned well with the Education Strategy (especially Priority 3 *"Ensure students have a fulfilling, demanding and intellectually stimulating experience while at university, that prepares them for employment and worldwide opportunities when they leave"*) and the Engaged University Strategy (especially, *"Support and promote dialogue between staff/students and the public"*).

Local beneficiaries included the Berkeley Castle Project, which benefitted from *"enhanced public engagement with the local community"* and the local community, who became *"active participants and 'temporary curators' of their own past. The project... enhanced relations between all stakeholders and set a firm foundation for any future work that the university may undertake"*.

¹⁷ Tierney, A. (2015) Report on the Engagement Team – Berkeley Castle Project. Bristol: Department of Archaeology & Anthropology.

The key lesson learned by those delivering the project was *“that it is a positive thing to place trust in our students and the community. That trust is valued and respected and demonstrates a respectful, inclusive attitude from the university. By appointing students as mini-managers and allowing them to direct their own workload, a workplace setting was emulated, which encouraged the students to improve their adaptability, team working and creativity”*.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine was founded in 1899. Today the school's education provision has more than 1,000 London-based Master's and research degree students, 3,000 studying postgraduate courses by distance learning and 1,000 each year on short courses and continuous professional development¹. Faculties include Epidemiology & Population Health; Infectious & Tropical Diseases; and Public Health & Policy.

Engagement and the institution

The school has been actively involved with public engagement (PE) for many years, mainly at the project and individual level, and including an award-winning schools outreach project, the Young Scientists programme, which continues to provide work experience for adolescents from local and disadvantaged areas of London. In 2012, the institution received Wellcome Trust funding, matched by funding from the school's budget, to establish its Institutional Strategic Support Fund which has been used to develop PE, among other things. As part of this initiative, the Deputy Director & Provost chaired a Public Engagement Advisory Group with members from across the School and representatives from external bodies, including University College London (UCL), Department for International Development (DFID) and the Wellcome Trust. Its first job was to recruit a Public Engagement Coordinator, initially part-time and made into a full-time role in 2013. The coordinator and advisory group then worked together to develop the school's PE strategy (2012-2017)². The Public Engagement Advisory Group continues to meet three times a year, and works to advance a culture of embedded PE in research at the school.

In the school's current five-year strategy³, which was published in 2012, public engagement is included under the Knowledge Translation & Innovation section. A key objective is to *"communicate with the general public about our research to increase understanding and facilitate greater participation in health policy debate"* with an action to *"expand the school's portfolio of funding to cover a range of public engagement activities through cross-School initiatives and targeting both funding bodies and individual donors"*.

The school is predominantly a research institute for public and global health. Many of the health-focused research studies led by the school have public engagement components. Its education programmes are closely linked to its research themes and methodologies and many also include components that relate to engagement with the public.

What are the principles?

There are a number of principles for the school in terms of public engagement. The first is that PE should be considered from the outset of research project planning and not as a separate entity or an 'add on' at the end of a research project. Researchers are encouraged to *"build the public in"* throughout the research process from concept to

¹ <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/introducing/index.html>

² https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/introducing/publicengagement/public_engagement_strategy.pdf

³ <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/aboutus/introducing/mission/index.html>

completion. Second, the Researcher Development Framework, which underpins the school's expectations for its academic staff, recognises PE as an important platform for personal and professional development from an early stage. Third, engagement should be conducted with the goal of providing mutual benefit to both members of the public in terms of helping understand and shape research and research questions, as well as staff and students who gain relevant skills and an understanding of the wider relevance for their research. Finally, inclusivity is a key consideration for the school, ensuring that PE opportunities are available to all those who want to engage.

How does it operate?

The Public Engagement Coordinator provides advice on engagement in funding applications, provides training in PE, raises awareness of PE opportunities and researcher participation in engagement through internal and external communications, manages centrally-organised engagement activities and, where appropriate, gives one-to-one support for particular activities. Working with the Public Engagement Advisory Group, the coordinator promotes a culture of embedded PE at the school, regularly monitoring progress against the PE strategy. The number of participating staff and students delivering the PE and participant/audience numbers are captured for all PE events. In addition to centrally-organised engagement activities, a number of staff and students organise their own public engagement activities and these are reported to the Public Engagement Coordinator on an 'ad-hoc' basis.

There is strong advocacy for PE by the school's Senior Leadership Team. This is particularly demonstrated by the championing of public engagement by the Deputy Director and Provost of the school, Professor Dame Anne Mills FRS, who was the Chair of the Public Engagement Advisory Group for its first four years. Public engagement is included and specifically mentioned in the promotions criteria for academics relating to their 'external contribution' to the school's activities. Levels of public engagement activity vary across the school's Faculties, Departments and Centres. Many staff and students are known to be keen to be involved in PE; however, the challenge lies in finding activities and modes of delivery that are appropriate for each individual, and supporting them to understand the value of investing their time.

In terms of activity within each Faculty, there are many staff and students who participate in public engagement activities, including large activities in museums or at festivals, such as the Cheltenham Science Festival, and other public venues as well as smaller events such as workshops in schools. The school has developed a core group of staff and students who see PE as integral to their role and 'champion' PE activity across the institution. The Faculty of Infectious & Tropical Diseases is a particular 'hub' of public engagement activity. In 2014, the heads of the Departments of Clinical Research and Disease Control in this faculty became part of the Wellcome Trust Public Engagement Leadership programme and used this funding to develop the school's Small Grants programme that supports staff and students to organise PE activities. In January 2015, a part-time Public Engagement Officer was recruited within the faculty to manage the programme. The programme has stimulated a number of new PE projects that have been undertaken both in the UK and overseas, including a schools-based activity in Tanzania titled 'What makes you happy and healthy? What makes you sick?' where school children documented their answers to these questions in their community using photography and artwork. This was displayed for their parents in a science exhibition. Other projects

targeted specific groups such as ‘The bitter taste of sugar’ in Zambia which brought together people with diabetes to discuss their experiences of being diagnosed and living with diabetes. Their experiences were captured by a local cartoonist and shared widely in print media. Following the first year, the Small Grants programme has been funded by the faculty and has expanded to the other two departments to cover the whole faculty.

There is also diverse engagement activity in the Faculty of Epidemiology & Population Health, including two researchers who won Wellcome Trust awards, the People award and the International Engagement award. In the Faculty of Public Health & Policy, the Centre for History in Public Health received a Wellcome Trust Enhancement Award that contributed to their PE planning and delivery.

The majority of PE activity is linked to research and public health and is wide-ranging in its scope. For example, the ‘Bug Off’ campaign, which is run by members of Arctec at the School, began as a mosquito repellent awareness day and has developed into a prolonged campaign, during the main summer holiday season, where researchers engage with travellers at Heathrow airport to raise awareness of how they can protect themselves, among other engagement activities. In October, a team from the school’s Centre for the Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases will be at the Contagion-themed ‘Late’ at the Science Museum. The modellers will run a live epidemic that spreads person-to-person throughout the museum using stickers. They will track the spread of the infection with unique QR codes on the stickers and display live infection updates. Through this activity they will engage in discussion with members of the public about the tools they are using for tracking and predicting infection spread in the museum outbreak and how this relates to modelling work done during the recent Ebola outbreak.

From March to June 2016, the school put on a PE exhibition, which raised awareness and celebrated the different elements and examples of PE done at the school. One cabinet in particular was dedicated to PE done by students.

How is it evaluated?

A number of evaluation methods are utilised depending on the type of activity, with a significant use of post-event feedback surveys. Work is planned to develop these methods further, in order to ensure good practice in monitoring the impact of the activities. In terms of receiving feedback from the staff and students involved, larger events incorporate a post-event debrief and evaluation. Reports are written for larger and/or recurring events that capture qualitative and quantitative data from public participants and staff and students who are involved in their delivery to ensure lessons learnt influence the development of future events and activities.

Any staff member or student that has run an event funded through the Small Grants programme must complete a report following the event, which is then reviewed against the proposal. This may then be followed up with a semi-structured interview. The Public Engagement Officer described using feedback from one interview to encourage the involvement of an Educational Advisor, where relevant, for future applications. The application form for the Small Grants programme also includes a section which asks how the staff or student will assess their project and share learning.

Engagement and the Student Experience

“What applies to staff, also applies to the students.”

Unlike many other institutions, the school gives equal access to PE training and activities to its staff and student members; this includes representation of students from each of the three faculties on the strategy-shaping Public Engagement Advisory Group. The students currently in this role were asked to identify areas in public engagement they feel a need to develop for students, with these being progressed by the Public Engagement Coordinator – details can be found later in this case study.

The Pro-Director of Learning and Teaching reported that many of the Masters students have relevant work experience before arriving at the school. Compared with the majority of students in institutions that offer undergraduate and postgraduate education, the school's students are on average older and many have significant levels of work experience. This means that staff are working with students who are already beginning to or have established themselves in careers, which leads to a relationship where students' skills are respected and valued.

Masters students

The curriculum for some Masters courses has elements of public engagement woven in; for example, 'Designing Disease Control Programmes in Developing Countries' includes a requirement for PE. This is such an integrated part of the courses that many Masters students may not recognise that PE is a taught component; however, staff would have a different perspective, knowing that students learning experiences help them to develop skills and knowledge to support engagement with the public in a range of contexts.

It can be more challenging to get Masters students involved in PE outside of their course work than research degree students, as they are only at the school for an intensive year of learning. However, most of the Young Scientists Programme mentors are Masters students; this programme involves inviting adolescents to the school for a two week intensive 'work experience' style programme in biomedical research – discussed further in Project Example 1.

Research degree students

The induction for research degree students includes information about public engagement linked with the Researcher Development Framework which provides a structure for continuous development for researchers throughout their careers. The framework is founded on four quadrants of activity, one of which has particularly strong links to PE – 'Engagement, Influence and Impact'. There is also overlap with PE in two of the other quadrants – 'Personal Effectiveness' and 'Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities'. Students are regularly reminded of all these domains to promote holistic development. The value of PE amongst the student population is mainly understood through the direct impact of the school's research on the public and through public participation in research. Public engagement is integral to the completion and success of many research degree projects, and provides students with the skills to engage with the public in relation to 'real-life' health problems.

Support is key to encouraging PE with students, in the form of training and assistance from the Public Engagement Coordinator and Officer along with senior academics. Research degree students are encouraged to take part in the Transferable Skills programme, which consists of a set of workshops to support skill development and, from this academic year, will include PE training.

Students feel that there is ‘great support’ to get involved, and that if a student did not know how to get involved, they would be able to access information about PE through the “*high visibility of staff and students that do public engagement*”. The Public Engagement Coordinator and Officer are recognised as being very actively involved in any project that is brought to their attention, and this makes it much easier for those coordinating an activity. In addition, students feel they are given a lot of ‘kudos’ for doing PE and value its networking opportunities with other staff, students and projects across the school. One student noted that the ‘high visibility’ provided through the broadcasting of activities by the Public Engagement Coordinator makes him feel ‘important’.

What are the key plans for development?

The Public Engagement Coordinator is keen to support students to engage more fully, helping them to understand that an event can be as small or as large as they feel they can manage, and also through finding opportunities that suit each individual’s personality and skills. The coordinator is keen to reach students who have not had experience in PE, who have still to find their voice and preferred delivery mode. The coordinator is also keen to improve the systems to capture data about which research degree students do and don’t undertake PE and understand why this is. They recognise, however, that PE is not for everybody, but aim to encourage students to experiment and gain experience.

Following discussions with the students on the Public Engagement Advisory Group, a number of areas are being developed to make PE more visible and accessible to students. This has led to the recent incorporation of PE training into the Transferable Skills programme. The Public Engagement Coordinator is also currently developing a brochure for new students’ welcome packs, highlighting public engagement opportunities. Another goal is to introduce Public Engagement Awards; currently, the school has an informal recognition process in place. The plan is to have awards in different categories for students and staff at different stages of their career and recognise those that have made a significant contribution to PE.

Project Example 1: The Young Scientists Programme

The Young Scientists Programme has been running for over 10 years and involves bringing 14–18 year olds into the school to work with the Public Engagement Coordinator, staff and students. These adolescents are given a crash course on research over a two-week period, in the form of work experience. They are treated as ‘researchers’ and have to collect, analyse and present their data to academics on a biomedical research problem. The young people are also encouraged to peer review each other’s projects. It is described as a ‘very intense’ experience for the young people involved, but the staff that work closely with the students note that the students skills in designing research questions, communication, and data analysis as well as their confidence develop significantly over the two weeks, making them more competitive in university applications. The programme is always evaluated, both for participating schools (the mentors and coordinator will review the progress of the adolescents on the programme) and for the school itself (as the participating adolescents complete surveys, complemented by informal feedback from their schools).

Chris Jarvis, a research degree student, has been involved in this programme as a mentor. It has helped him to develop skills in supervision, and consider how to communicate his knowledge in a way that is appropriate to a younger, inexperienced audience. It has also

helped him to see things from a different perspective, listening to the views of people who are not familiar with research. Through the programme, he has also developed broader connections across the school and it has given him an insight into his PhD supervisor's perspective, helping him identify how to communicate with him more effectively.

In addition, Chris has taught on five statistics modules over the last year, accumulating 60–70 hours of teaching time, initially in practical classes, but now lecturing. He has also taught on the Introduction to Programming module with PhD students and manages the Stats Helpdesk. Through mentoring intensively on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis for the two weeks of the Young Scientists Programme across a breadth of seven or eight projects, he believes that his teaching skills have improved. He learnt how to retain people's attention and how to explain things in different ways. He has found this particularly useful in teaching 40 Masters students of varying levels, ages, and backgrounds. As a consequence, he feels that he is a more effective teacher and, because of his changed approach, his students are more likely to admit at an early stage that they are not able to understand, thus getting better results in the longer term.

Project Example 2: Foldscope

Ailie Robinson is currently a member of staff, but is also completing her PhD at the school, in which she is looking at whether people with malaria become more or less attractive to mosquitoes. She has organised an activity for students in Year 10 and 11, taking place in November, which revolves around microscopy and is funded through the school's Small Grants programme.

Ailie came across Foldscope, an Origami based print-and-fold paper-microscope, and felt that there was an opportunity to get young people to learn about parasites and have fun building their own Foldscope. She contacted the inventors of Foldscope, who were keen to get involved.

Ailie wanted to relate the activity to her research. In her previous work, she has done a lot of diagnostics, including sampling people with malaria in Kenya, and in order to correlate attractiveness and infection in her PhD, diagnostics are essential. She wanted to bring all her knowledge together, in a visually appealing way, to point out to young people that microscopy is the gold standard of diagnostics.

Ailie originally became involved in public engagement activities just before she started her PhD, after she was encouraged to do so by her supervisor. The previous Public Engagement Coordinator asked for her support as an entomologist, to go into a school and talk about mosquitoes, which she loved. Since then, she has also done a number of activities through STEMNET, an external organisation which supports researchers to do public engagement.

The funding from the Small Grants programme has allowed Ailie to employ an Educational Advisor, a high school teacher, who will be supporting her to design a lesson plan that is engaging and not a 'lecture' and who will provide advice on the wider curriculum context, so the lesson builds on existing knowledge.

The three sessions of activity are planned for November with two for one school and one for another. Each session will take half a day, starting with an introduction and including an assessment of the young people's current knowledge. The young people will then have

a discussion with the school's archivists about malaria diagnostics in the past, before heading to the lab where they will make their Foldsopes, and Ailie will talk to them about the parasites that they can see in the tissue sections they are observing. As the Foldscope can link to a smartphone, the young people will be able to tweet images of the parasites, and Ailie is planning to develop a blog post from the activity. The Head of Diagnostics will be present throughout the session, running rapid diagnostic tests for malaria, for the young people to observe. The day will end with a quiz to evaluate how the participants' knowledge has changed as a result of this session, with the expectation that they will have learnt about the tissue specimens and the parasites' lifecycles through the activity, as well as the importance of microscopy.

Reflecting on her experience to date, Ailie said that initially she found "*public engagement to be intimidating, but when you see that people are interested, it is very rewarding*". Ailie also does some teaching with Masters students in practical classes and tutoring for some modules. The skills, insights and confidence she has gained through her involvement in public engagement has "*massively' supported her with this*". She noted that taking part in such activities makes you reflect on how you express yourself to everyone, thus improving communication skills.

Manchester Metropolitan University

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) obtained university status in 1992, prior to which it was Manchester Polytechnic, established in 1970. In 2014/15¹ the University taught 25,810 undergraduate students and 5,545 postgraduates. As of September 2016, faculties include Arts and Humanities; Science and Engineering; Health, Psychology and Social Change; Education; and Business and Law.

Engagement and the institution

The current Corporate Strategy (2012-17)² has five strands covering student experience, research, innovation, international and sustainability. Public engagement (PE) is considered to be a cross-cutting theme across all strands. The MMU website emphasises that it aims to “*maximise engagement opportunities for the mutual benefit of our staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders*”³.

Between 2008 and 2012, MMU was involved in the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement. This helped develop and spread the existing culture, which understood the value of public engagement, throughout the institution. The university is a signatory to the PE Manifesto published by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

The Research and Knowledge Exchange Impact and Engagement Manager works with three Impact and Engagement Managers (IEM) in the Office for Research and Knowledge Exchange alongside faculty-based impact and engagement project managers. Together they provide engagement support across the university.

The MMU PE strategy focuses on three areas: provision of a support infrastructure for PE development; setting out an annual programme of PE activities; and rewarding and recognising staff who engage in PE activity. Through its strategy, the university seeks to promote PE in a variety of ways including “*generating economic activity, working with local schools and colleges to improve their own activities, organising volunteering for local charities and providing support for local community sports, and health and environmental groups*”. The strategy is embedded to varying degrees across the university faculties.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

MMU believes that PE is an important contributor to student experience, as demonstrated by student experience being the first of the five strands in the Corporate Strategy⁴. The university aims to improve student experience by embedding itself in

¹ <https://events.hesa.ac.uk/free-statistics> [accessed 1 October 2016]

² <https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/about/corporate-strategy/MMU-corporate-strategy.pdf> [accessed 1 October 2016]

³ <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/engagement/welcome/> [accessed 1 October 2016]

⁴ <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/about/corporate-strategy/MMU-corporate-strategy.pdf> [accessed 1 October 2016]

“local, city and regional communities as an open and accessible partner for positive social and economic change”.

The university believes that best-practice is two-way engagement. Some of the activity has a direct research focus, while other activity focuses on communication and understanding, for example, science literacy. There is a strong belief that PE gives the university a place in the minds of the public; many festivals across the city partner with MMU and its faculties. There is an understanding that PE activity is of equal value to any other activity undertaken in the university: *“you can be recognised and promoted for doing well”.*

How does it operate?

Responsibility for PE and the student experience is strongly connected with each faculty. This is supported by the role of the IEMs who are each responsible for specific faculties and research centres. Each faculty and research centre has an academic ‘sorcerer’, who drives forward PE and impact. The IEMs work alongside academic sorcerers to support them to embed skills, confidence and knowledge around impact and engagement. The IEMs co-design approaches to developing understanding about the Research Excellence Framework⁵ (REF), PE and capturing impact.

Through the Beacons initiative, the university changed their reward and recognition processes for PE. For example, the Public Engagement Fellowship was developed as part of this, and allowed MMU academics and staff to put forward ideas for collaborative PE projects. The projects were voted on, and winners received funding.

Four individuals across the university identified themselves through the Beacons programme. These individuals have been at the forefront of driving PE across the university, through a commitment to PE in their research, teaching and professional practice. University staff believe that processes and structure are less important in terms of how PE activity is developed and delivered. What is considered more important is a focus on the value of individuals.

There are a number of institutional methodologies for undergraduate and PE, including student volunteering and MMU Futures. The student volunteering programme has been developed through the careers service within the university. MMU Futures has been developed through Jobs for Students. Students are awarded with a Bronze, Silver or Gold award for their participation in MMU Futures, which involves PE activities through specific projects. There are also Ambassadors in place, who undertake voluntary work with visitors and prospective students.

On the research side the IEMs are responsible for identifying and managing the impact pipeline – which will form the basis for cross-institutional PE going forwards. Efforts are mainly focused on academic staff, but training on PE is also provided to postgraduate research students.

Manchester was recognised as the European City of Science (ECOS) 2016. As part of this MMU ran a schedule of PE events across the city, which involved collaborative work between the Faculty of Science and Engineering, and other faculties within the university. An example of this is the university’s involvement in the Manchester Science Festival. This

⁵ MMU (2016) Research Excellence Framework. <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/research/ref2014/>

forged new links for future research and PE activity, and brought all faculties together in a different way. In alignment with this, MMU hosted an exhibition stand and contributed talks on world-class science at the European Science Open Forum (ESOF). Involvement with ECOS and ESOF has had a significant impact on the university, in terms of further driving PE activity forward.

Arts and Humanities is home to the award-winning Humanities in Public programme (HiP), which has engaged thousands of people across the city and beyond in different areas of research. HiP is home to the Gothic Manchester Festival, which hosts a range of events and activities, each designed to showcase Manchester's Gothic dimensions during the week before Halloween. The festival has led to funding for PE from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and is underpinning much of the university's humanities-related impact. Within HiP there are opportunities for postgraduate research students and undergraduate students through things like Humanity Hallows, an online magazine run by the Manchester Metropolitan University Student Press Office, and through curation of related activities and events.

Art students can take Unit X, which is an award-winning interdisciplinary credit-bearing unit that involves undertaking PE activities in collaboration with external partners/cultural providers.

Both Faculties of Health, Psychology and Social Care and of Education are co-located in a 'community campus' in Hulme. The campus has engagement at its heart and there is a rolling programme of PE with local schools, informal learning providers, healthcare charities and bodies, community groups, patients, older people, and local residents. A lot of the engagement has been stimulated by interactions with local residents in Hulme and Moss Side.

The university offers community research awards, which provide resource for interactions with the university to community groups. The university has hosted a community learning festival, community open days, film screenings, lectures and debates, many of which are inspired by collaboration with local groups.

A key aim of PE in the Faculty of Science and Engineering is science literacy – educating the public about science, with messages around hygiene, vaccination and resistance. There is a strong focus on collaboration, and less on straight-forward transmission. The School of Research, Enterprise and Innovation organises much of the PE activity for the other schools within the faculty, and their commitment to science communication and PE is highlighted by their appointment of a Professor of Microbiology as Head of Science Communication and Public Engagement.

In the Faculty of Science and Engineering they introduced Science Communication Champions, who are awarded with £500 and a trophy for their involvement with PE activity. Students and academics can obtain £250 towards equipment needed for outreach activities through an open call, and the university also offers an annual incentivisation award of up to £5,000 to assist staff in the development of new initiatives.

What are the key plans for development?

The key plans for development are to present a rolling programme of MMU PE. There is an ambition to build on current activity by articulating a clear strategic approach. This is strongly connected with the Impact Agenda.

In addition, there is a firm belief that areas identified for improvement in a recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) can be tackled through the involvement of students in more PE activity.

How is it evaluated?

Evaluation is considered to be an area of development for the university. One part of bringing everything together is reflecting on and developing evaluation tools. The university is keen to find an approach that captures both qualitative and quantitative data, but also works with a range of activities delivered in conjunction with external partners.

The university currently utilises toolkits and frameworks which were developed through Beacons, but they are keen to develop resources at programme level. There is a desire to have a core set of evaluation questions, but also unique, tailored questions for each programme.

However, it is important to note that many of the projects centred on PE are published in peer reviewed journals, for which effective evaluation is implicit.

Project Example 1: SimZombie and SimFaction

SimZombie⁶ is a computer simulation program developed by Matthew Crossley, a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University, in conjunction with Professor Joanna Verran.

The Java package is designed to visually demonstrate the spread of zombie, vampire and werewolf outbreaks through a population. Zombie infections are slow to spread, but inexorable; vampire infections spread quickly, but are less efficient; and werewolves are only active once in a lunar month, thus the infection goes 'latent' with clusters emerging in different locations over time.

The Monsters, Microbiology and Maths (MoMiMa) group at Manchester Metropolitan University was formed in 2010, and aimed to integrate SimZombie into public engagement activities, including the Manchester Science Festival 2011, the Manchester Children's Book Festival 2012, the Manchester Science Festival 2012, Saturday Science at the Museum of Science and Industry in 2013, and Deadinburgh 2013, demonstrating its versatility, but also enabling improvement of the resource through public feedback⁷.

⁶Crossley & Amos (2011) SimZombie: A Case-Study in Agent-Based Simulation Construction. Agent and Multi-Agent Systems: Technologies and Applications, Volume 6682 of the series Lecture Notes in Computer Science, pp 514-523

⁷Verran, J., et al. (2013) Monsters, microbiology and mathematics: the epidemiology of a zombie apocalypse. Journal of Biological Education, DOI: 10.1080/00219266.2013.849283

Another PhD student in the MoMiMa group, Kate Carolan, drew inspiration from SimZombie and worked with Matthew and Joanna to develop SimFection, educational software aimed at 16-18 year olds, which maps the epidemiology of 'real life' diseases such as influenza, measles, mumps and smallpox, to teach students about this subject. SimFection is linked to GCE Biology A Level specifications, and includes an interactive quiz and supporting materials for a complete learning package.

Kate's PhD aims to understand whether SimFection can be used to improve attitudes towards the value of vaccination. Kate goes into schools on a weekly basis to deliver classes using SimFection and accompanying resources to students, and has worked with teachers and students to obtain feedback on the resource through formative evaluation in order to develop the learning package further.

In Kate's opinion, it can be quite isolating when doing a PhD, and she feels that you can get "*bogged down*", but working with the public, teachers and students has been very rewarding because she has seen them learning about science; this has motivated her to continue.

Project Example 2: Educational Resources for High School Students⁸

In 2013, James Redfern et al. conducted a survey of UK school biology teachers and established that one third did not undertake any practical microbiology in their classroom⁹. Reasons ranged from a lack of appropriate equipment to confidence and health and safety concerns. Most notably, however, teachers felt there was a lack of appropriate guidance from the curriculum/teaching specifications, and so they relied on the same, few microbiology activities. Following a review of awarding body and teaching specifications, James Redfern established that microbiology was well represented in the national curriculum and that "*developing new practical microbiology activity resources for school science education should consult the relevant curriculum and identify, for teachers, how their activity fits the specifications*".

After consulting the specifications used within the UK, James Redfern selected algae as microorganisms that could be used to illustrate aspects of the topics taught in the classroom in a new practical activity resource. He spent much of his time working collaboratively with teachers to identify five new practical activities, and tested and evaluated these formatively in the classroom environment. Using formative evaluation meant that James Redfern could see feedback improving over time. Teachers had involvement throughout the research, from initial ideas to testing the end product. The classes were linked to the curriculum, were cost effective, and materials were sourced from UK suppliers. James Redfern utilised links with the National Centre for Biotechnology Education (NCBE) at the University of Reading, and also the National Science Learning Centre (NSCL) around the country to trial resources with teachers.

Through the NCBE and NSCL James Redfern had access to a "*keen network of teachers*". From this research, James Redfern developed a printed resource, which was distributed to 750 schools. His resource is also hosted on the 'microbiologyonline' website, where

⁸ <http://femsle.oxfordjournals.org/content/362/6/fnv020>

⁹ Redfern, J., et al. (2013) Practical microbiology in schools: a survey of UK teachers. Trends in Microbiology 21(11): 557-559. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tim.2013.09.002>

there are over 100,000 unique visitors per month. James Redfern also conducted a summative evaluation, which generated very positive feedback.

James Redfern developed this school laboratory activity into a public engagement activity, 'The Good, the Bad and the Algae'¹⁰. The activity was developed for National Science and Engineering Week 2011, but was subsequently adapted for the Big Bang 2012, a national science and engineering fair. The aim of the activity was to raise awareness of the importance of algae and to encourage hands-on laboratory examination in a fun and informal manner. Over 2,200 people participated in the Big Bang activity over three days, with evaluation indicating 80% of participants had increased awareness/knowledge of algae after the event.

James Redfern could not have achieved his PhD without the involvement of teachers and students in the classroom. However, he also feels that this involvement has improved his confidence and, through having an honest relationship with teachers, the quality of his work improved, and he suspects that it will have improved the teachers and students views of the university. James Redfern noted that when you are working with the public, they can ask very "*random*" questions, which you would not get from academics in the field. Having to reflect on these less specific questions, and articulate the 'why' in a way which is friendly to the audience, has helped James Redfern to improve his skills.

¹⁰ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00219266.2013.801872>

Queen Mary University of London

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) began life in 1887 as the People's Palace, a philanthropic centre to provide east Londoners with educational, cultural and social activities. In 2015/16 the university taught 15,474 undergraduates and 4,842 postgraduates.¹ QMUL is part of the Federal University of London and is divided into three faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences; Science and Engineering; and Medicine and Dentistry.

Engagement and the institution

QMUL has a very clear focus on public engagement. One of the six values² underpinning QMUL's purpose is focused on public engagement (PE): *"We support and engage with our local community, and more widely with London, the UK and internationally"*. PE is further articulated in the fifth of six strategic aims within the university's five-year strategy. This is reinforced by the existence of a senior role (Vice-Principal for Public Engagement and Student Enterprise – VP PESE) which has a cross-cutting focus throughout the university. The VP PESE is a member of the college senior executive; governance for PE follows exactly the structures for the other cross-cutting Vice-Principals in research, teaching and international, with around five meetings per year of the Public Engagement and Student Enterprise Advisory Group (PESEAG), administratively supported by the college secretariat.

Strategic aim five of the QMUL strategy is, *"to achieve maximum impact from our academic work through public engagement and partnerships with business, government, charities, cultural organisations and others in the wider community"*. The university seeks to harness the skills and energy of students and staff to develop further engagement with the public to disseminate and enhance research.

The Centre for Public Engagement (CPE) within the university aims to fully embed PE across the full range of the university's activities, ensuring a transformative change in the ways in which they *"work with, listen to and consult with their communities"*. The CPE has five staff including a Director, Executive Officer, Public Engagement Officer and Community Engagement Officer. In addition, PE staff are located in other areas of QMUL, such as the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) Public Engagement Fellow in Physics based in the School of Physics and Astronomy. The university is a signatory to the PE manifesto published by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

Engagement and the student experience

What are the Principles?

There is perceived to be a strong ethos of PE across the university focusing on the student experience through its traditional research routes but now developing more and more in terms of teaching.

¹ QMUL Website

² http://www.qmul.ac.uk/strategy/the_strategy/values/index.html

The QMUL PE Strategy³ seeks to establish QMUL as a leader in the field of PE, “*building on the history of our founding as the People’s Palace and current excellent practice in engaging a wide and diverse range of people with QMUL research, buildings and staff*”. The university considers engagement very broadly, ranging from one-way communication to totally engaged activity.

The ethos within the office of the VP PESE is very much to “*do more (widen PE activity), do better (ensure continuous improvement), do tell (share learning and success)*”.

Consultation is currently under-way on the relevant and practical working strategy that public engagement at QMUL needs in order to continue to embed engagement activity. The cross-cutting nature of the Vice-Principals’ office, focusing on PE and student enterprise, ensures good balance across the three subject faculties.

How does it operate?

The CPE was set up in 2012 as part of the Research Council UK (RCUK) ‘Catalyst’ award. Since then PE is perceived to have become further embedded within the university’s policy and processes. They have a clear remit now to support staff in developing new activity and sustaining and strengthening existing projects.

The CPE is very much a support and advisory facility to enable effective engagement rather than doing the delivery of engagement activity. Topic Group meetings enable clear focus on particular issues each time the group meets.

The centre advises on best practice and practical steps for running successful activities through bespoke guidance and through regular surgery sessions. Fortnightly surgeries enable staff and students to access the team regarding projects, funding, logistics and other issues. The team are then able to connect individuals to many different programmes and resources across the university. The centre delivers a range of training related to engagement including one-off sessions, bespoke courses and academic modules. They aim to ensure that training and PE are embedded in the existing structures. Sessions are designed and led by engagement professionals from CPE in collaboration with individual departments.

Two internal funding competitions for engagement activities are operated by the CPE. One is a small grants round which runs on a monthly basis and the other a large grants round held once per year. Applications to both awards must be supported by at least one member of staff employed by the university and should be focussed on engaging with an audience other than academics in their field. The aim of both award rounds is to engage people with the university as a place of teaching and research as well as make the university accessible to the community around it.⁴ The centre encourages grant applications to include costing for impact activities (which can include engagement activity) as part of the pathways to impact section of many grant rounds. The team advises on how to go about doing this.

The centre has worked with staff across the university to create a collection of guides for use in different public engagement situations including: working with the curriculum; doing a basic evaluation; influencing UK policy; select committee open calls; policy briefings; and planning a public event. The university recognises outstanding

³ <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/about/strategy/120005.pdf>

⁴ CPE Large awards are between £1000 and £20,000.

achievements in PE, academic enterprise, student enterprise and public relations through an awards event that started in 2015. The event includes 14 awards spanning four different categories.

A unique example of PE linking student experience and research is the Centre of the Cell (CoC). This is a biomedical science education centre, educational website and outreach project aimed at children and young people aged 9 to 19, families, and youth and community groups. CoC is the first science education centre in the world to be located within biomedical research laboratories. The 'Pod' (resembling a 16 cell human embryo) is dramatically suspended above the laboratories and provides young people with a unique interactive insight into what scientists do and how their work influences real life.

CoC's Director, Professor Fran Balkwill OBE FMedSci, is a leading cancer researcher and science communication expert. CoC has won a number of major awards including the Museums & Heritage Excellence Award for the best educational initiative in the UK and the EngageU Award for the best innovations in university outreach and public engagement in Europe. The project was created by QMUL and its medical school, Barts and The London, to inspire curiosity and learning and to connect science to everyday life.

Embedding a science education centre for the public at the heart of a research building is enabling QMUL to generate an ethos of enthusiastic, targeted two-way communication that permeates throughout the medical school and university. CoC is deeply rooted within its diverse local communities and also acts as a catalyst to stimulate further public engagement and outreach projects across the university. CoC has an excellent track record of working with QMUL researchers and secondary schools students to bring contemporary and inspirational research contexts into formal and informal learning to enhance and enrich the curriculum. For example, local teenagers have worked with the Centre to develop activities such as *"Spores, Sores and Sickly Bugs"* and the *"WW1 Whitechapel Medical Marvels Trail"* (this was a student co-designed research space led by a History graduate).

PE is now regarded as an integral aspect of academic staff promotion criteria with reasons for promotions being clearly articulated. This often gives an opportunity to highlight the aspects of PE that academics have been involved with. PE is included in the remit for Deans of Teaching and Deans of Research. PE is supported by extensive training; it is included in the postgraduate certificate in academic practice (PGCAP), which is compulsory for all new academic staff, and in the training activity of the Doctoral College.

QMUL has a range of PE communication strategies both internally to the university and externally (including websites, blogs, newsletters, conferences, community events and many others).

What are the key plans for development?

The university was recently involved in the pilot for the NCCPE Watermark, and is awaiting confirmation of their result. They hope this will help them to capitalise on the significant embedding work already undertaken, to continue to grow and raise the profile of PE delivery and support. The university sees this as helping to signal to their staff, students, peers and broader local and national external stakeholders both their achievements and the importance that they place on sustainable support for a broad range of public engagement.

QMUL is keen to develop the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) to support documenting PE activities of students.

The university has a massive commitment to its local community in the Tower Hamlets area. An annual community festival established by the CPE provides all sorts of opportunities to profile and undertake PE activities involving students and staff, together with the local community.

One example, of how an institution can support the integration of PE is the provision to researchers of a costed menu of activities to put in their research bids. This helps them to understand how much, in terms of time and money, it will take to undertake certain activities. Other areas of development have included the CPE working with the research office management to include a check on pathways to impact statements within grant applications in order to maximise PE resources. QMUL is also keen to develop work in the area of public and patient involvement (PPI) linked to life sciences subjects.

How is it evaluated?

The key evaluation criteria for the strategic aim which covers PE includes the following:

- QMUL aim to be within the first tranche of institutions to receive recognition through the NCCPE Watermark.
- The university aims to quadruple the number of staff and students attending PE training courses.
- QMUL outreach activity will reach 2000 school students by 2018/19.

In addition to these strategic evaluation criteria they review the range of PE activity supported through grant funding each year. There tends not to be formal evaluation reports of individual activities. Results of recent reviews indicate that time and resources remain major barriers; further evidence suggests the underlying challenge is specifically about *“having the ability and space to think creatively and generate ideas and links”*.

Project Example: School of Geography Partnership with Citizens UK

The School of Geography hosts a Citizens UK⁵ Representative. This helps to link the School of Geography’s research with community organisations and groups.

A second year Methods class in Human Geography involves practical PE activities as an assessed module requiring engagement of local communities.

This has developed over the past decade through research by Professor Jane Wills, covering the development of community organisations and resulting in a various papers and articles⁶. The School of Geography has a long-term collaborative relationship with Citizens UK that shapes both research and teaching. Undergraduate students are taught

⁵ http://www.citizensuk.org/about_us The declared objectives of Citizens UK are for the benefit of the public: (i) to develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of Britain and Ireland in such a way that such members are better able to identify and meet their needs and participate more fully in society; (ii) to assist by directly promoting the more effective working of local and national capacity building institutions designed to pursue that aim.

⁶ <http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff/willsj.html>

research methods through working with local organisers and member community groups. Students have contributed in a variety of areas:

- To on-going campaigns to ensure a sustainable legacy from the 2012 Olympic games
- To hold London Mayors accountable to the people
- To lobby for the living wage for low waged workers in London.

The pattern that has developed is that around the end of August, the university identifies a campaign through dialogue with the London branch of Citizens UK, that will be the focus for research. Students then plan and implement their research to contribute primary and secondary knowledge to the subject matter. For example, last year, the focus was on the London mayoral campaign. The London branch of Citizens UK hosted a debate into which students contributed their findings. The focus was on housing across London and in particular in east London. There were many issues raised such as costs, tenure and types of landlord. Students had to use different interactive research techniques to gain the insight and information required. On the geography course, a group of eight students work together to undertake research with community groups such as churches and football clubs.

Some elements of this community engagement feed into assessment for the course. Each group was paired with a research assistant who acts as a group mentor and also helps assess the participatory grading for the students.

Student feedback included:

- Students enjoyed hearing about a lecturer's research.
- Students enjoyed the experience of real fieldwork, although they did find it challenging, but recognised that they developed confidence, project management skills and the importance of preparation to avoid embarrassment (for example, by not knowing background information when talking to a community actor).
- There were also challenges for the students to work together as a group. There was a degree of dependency on each other "*which is good preparation for the workplace*".

A final group presentation was considered stressful by students and challenging, but they also enjoyed the experience and felt they got a lot out of it. They particularly enjoyed hearing the critical feedback and providing critical feedback to each other.

Many students enjoyed the fact that the subject matter was relevant and real and some went on to be further involved in the London branch of Citizens UK activities.

Students were acknowledged as researchers as part of the report drawn up by London Citizens following the debate. There was also a response from London Citizens to explain to the students what they were going to do with their evidence. This helped them understand policy in action and how, "*sometimes, your issue does not end up being top of the list*".

PE money is used to pay London Citizens to fund the post within the university that supports this activity. Undertaking this form of social action research at a local level,

alongside representatives of the London branch of Citizens UK, is good for students and also helps develop the reputation of the university for investing in its local area and supporting relevant issues. Previous campaigns have focussed on the National Living Wage which has linked to over 16 academic articles and reports supporting the work⁷.

In addition, a Masters course (MA Community Organising) was taught in partnership with Citizens UK and students had placements to work as community organisers as part of their training. They did a wide variety of projects such as:

- A student with experience as a fund-raiser in the arts sector focussed on the work of a Lewisham Mosque and its work with south London citizens. He is now active in community organising in south London.
- Through his work with the Surrey Lane People's Organisation in Wandsworth, a student worked with a group of young men and their parents to improve the condition of a local football pitch. Through the research and development of a film he supported them to make a call for action to improve the facilities.
- The experiences of care workers were the focus of one student's activity; she made a film to document the challenges faced, while making the case for the living wage and improved terms and conditions of work.

⁷ <http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage/>

University of East London

The University of East London (UEL) can trace back fulfilling its role as an ‘anchor institution’ within the local community to 1898; gaining university status in 1992. In 2015/16 there were 19,000¹ undergraduate and postgraduate students studying courses in one of seven schools: Architecture, Computing and Engineering; Arts and Digital Industries; Cass School of Education and Communities; Health, Sport and Bioscience; Psychology; Royal Docks School of Business & Law; and Social Sciences.

Engagement and the institution

Civic engagement is a synonym for public engagement (PE) at UEL and is “*part of the DNA of the institution*”. The university’s mission includes being ‘London’s leading university for civic engagement’ which is also the title of its Corporate Plan 2015-2020².

The third of four corporate objectives, ‘Connecting students, staff and communities’, is focused around staff-facilitated partnerships that benefit both students and communities. Key performance indicators for this strategic objective are: at least 70% of students will be engaged in volunteering; more than 500 students per annum will partake in bespoke civic engagement projects or programmes; £5 million worth of donor funding will be generated to support civic engagement projects.

Whilst this objective is a ‘natural home’ for civic engagement, civic engagement is a ‘golden thread’ running through the other objectives: ‘Learning by Doing’ – creating rich learning experiences that enable students to apply their learning within the local community; ‘Creating and disseminating knowledge and ideas that make a difference’ – a focus on developing civic engagement through inspired research; ‘Developing our infrastructure and services – facilities and people’. A key performance indicator is to work towards the gender and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) mix of senior staff being representative of the population of London.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

A core value at UEL is to ‘learn by doing’ and students are encouraged to engage with real-world off-campus projects that add value to their learning experience, whilst at the same time making a difference locally or globally. The three programmes that underpin PE as it pertains to the student experience are:

- London Scholars: an umbrella that provides funding to enable staff and students to work together in order to address some of the key societal challenges experienced in east London. Although each project is aligned to academic activity, students’ confidence and skillsets are enhanced and their academic and social capital raised through the process of delivering defined community project outcomes;

¹ <https://www.uel.ac.uk/About-UEL>

² University of East London, London’s Leading University for Civic Engagement, Corporate Plan 2015-2020

- Global Scholars: provides an opportunity for students to partner with an overseas university, travel overseas and work on social enterprise projects. Global Scholars is sponsored by the Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity in Business.
- Civic Engagement Fund: An annual £100,000 fund has been established to sponsor projects that demonstrate how UEL and its students can partner with the local community.

To date, for 2016, students are participating in 33 projects³ through London Scholars, Global Scholars and Civic Engagement Fund programmes and, as part of the international dimension, 32 countries have been visited.

How does it operate?

UEL staff are encouraged to develop research⁴ proposals for Civic Engagement funding that enable students to apply their learning within a local or global context. There are no restrictions in relation to topic area as long as the proposals can demonstrate an alignment with academic and civil engagement principles at UEL.

This has led to a diverse range of projects being developed. Below we provide a snapshot of some of the projects supported through each of the three mechanisms available.

- London Scholars: Enabling students to put political theory into practice through campaigning in partnership with London Citizens to promote the business case for a living wage for companies in east London; developing bilingual non-English speakers to be interpreters/community brokers in a community setting⁵; applying creative writing in a community setting through partnering students and community elders⁶
- Global Scholars: Exploring the economy of Bahrain; contributing to the Moroccan mental health framework; entrepreneurs studying the dairy industry in Ghana
- Civic Engagement Fund: on-the-street health advocacy; extending the opening hours of UEL's Legal Advice Centre which is run by volunteers; money champions – students helping other students steer away from debt; musicians teaching gospel tuition to children

Plans for development

The formal focus on civic engagement validates an intrinsic approach to engaging with the community that has been a longstanding principle for UEL. The Civic Engagement Fund is particularly important as it provides a stimulus for new potential proposals to be considered.

Developing the Civic Engagement Office within UEL is taking a significant step forward with the recruitment of a Director of Civic Engagement, who was expected to be in post

³ <https://www.uel.ac.uk/Connect/Civic-Engagement>

⁴ University of East London Research Strategy 2014-2017

⁵ Rachel Tribe & Aneta Tunariu. Civic engagement and social justice: Making a difference through improving communication across language and culture in community settings, International Journal of Knowledge based Development – In press

⁶ East Life, an anthology of Life Writing, Edited by Tessa McWatt, Sam Dodd and Stephen Maddison

by October 2016. The director's role will be multifaceted and will include: fund raising; being a champion/advocate for civic engagement activities; and upscaling current activity levels and evaluation.

UEL is investigating the extent to which civic engagement could/should be integrated within the academic curriculum. For example, encouraging students to write a reflective piece rather than a dissertation which will add to the base of public knowledge in east London. This includes consideration of whether civic engagement should be offered as a discrete credit bearing module for all students.

A key activity will be to build greater awareness of the civic engagement activities that are already available through fresher's week and via induction. Part of this process will be creative thinking to enable students who, due to family and/or work commitments, are time poor and feel reluctant to commit to an additional activity outside their academic studies.

How is it evaluated?

Funded projects are monitored and evaluated at a local level to ensure that objectives have been met and improvements can be integrated into project design if they are funded for subsequent years.

One of the responsibilities for the Director of Civic Engagement will be to develop an evaluation framework to capture the impact of existing civic engagement activity. Thought is being given to developing a longitudinal survey of current and past students who have engaged in a range of projects. This may include a control group of students who have not participated, to assess the extent to which students have become change agents within society/active citizens.

Project Example: Speech Bubbles

Speech Bubbles⁷ is a weekly participatory drama workshop project engaging young people aged five to seven in schools in the London Borough of Newham. Speech Bubbles is an expansion of the award-winning Speech Bubbles programme run by the London Bubble Theatre Company (LBTC) and is designed to help children improve their social and communication skills. Teacher assessments have shown that 85% of children show improvement in their speaking, listening and learning and 90% of children show improvement in emotional conduct and behaviour after having engaged in the project.

The project started at UEL in 2015 and is led by Dr Sheila Preston, Head of Performing Arts, and delivered through undergraduate students studying applied theatre, health, psychosocial and/or education studies. UEL has recently been accredited as the lead organisation to operate Speech Bubbles in Newham.

"A project such as our Speech Bubbles workshops, which allows our students to share their skills with the local community, sits at the heart of the civic engagement mission of UEL" Head of Performing Arts at UEL, Dr Sheila Preston

⁷Jo Afful (2016) The impact of 'Newham Speech Bubbles' on Pupil's Communication and Staff Practice: Perceptions of Teaching Staff at an East London Primary School

Civic engagement funding enabled the recruitment, induction and training of students using the Speech Bubbles philosophy to take place. During the successful pilot year of the project, six students were trained and engaged with 60 young people across three schools in Newham. For students, this represents a continuing professional development (CPD) verified programme.

An interesting feature of Speech Bubbles is that it is a cross-school project. Students from the schools of Arts and Digital Industries, Cass School of Education and Communities and Psychology have participated and valued the experience from different perspectives. For example, drama students have seen how they can apply their skills in an education setting, education students have an off-campus placement experience that adds value to their studies and psychosocial students can see how theoretical principles work in a real-world setting.

For the LBTC Associate Director in Creative Learning, engaging with UEL to deliver Speech Bubbles was an opportunity and a risk. The Speech Bubbles programme is a social franchise that, until this point, had been delivered by other professional theatre companies. The standard model needed to be amended, for students, to incorporate additional support and provision at particular points. This was done to recognise that students were the key delivery agents and that the offer was open to students from schools other than drama. The associate director found that students studying Special Education or Psychosocial degrees provided an additional positive dimension to delivery.

Students identify their interest in participating and attend an induction session which determines their aptitude to take part in the project. Students need to be reliable, enthusiastic, have good communication skills and be willing to commit to working weekly over the course of an academic year. Two students work with a member of school staff to deliver drama sessions with two groups of ten pupils at a specific primary school. A student majoring in drama is paired-up with a student studying another discipline. This works particularly well because, as a pair, the students provide complimentary skills. It also supports the development of teamwork skills.

An introductory event was used to provide interested students with a taster of how the sessions are run. This also provides an opportunity for the project managers to informally assess which students are ready/not ready to successfully engage in the project. Student commitment is key to project success. Students need to be willing to deliver sessions at their allocated school, each week, across the academic year (24 weeks). Consistency and routine are particularly important for the students as important relationships are built-up as the project develops.

The primary school teacher identifies the children who could most benefit from the intervention and they also administer the baseline and summative evaluation forms to assess the progress that the children have made over the year.

Students identified benefits relating to their professional experience and employability skills. Partners, such as the LBTC and schools, benefited from the support to pupils through the programme.

Benefits of Student Experience related to Public Engagement	
Students	Partner
Opportunity to work with a range of professionals in performing arts and in teaching.	Using drama in a small group setting is a creative way of delivering key outcomes for specific children that sits outside the pedagogical constraints of curriculum delivery. (UEL)
For one student, the experience provided the basis for her third year dissertation, resulting in a first class degree classification and an opportunity to study for a Masters in Special Education.	Engaging in a project that helps deliver the university objectives in relation to civic engagement and community engagement (UEL).
For drama students, working in partnership with a professional theatre company, serves as a quasi-internship in art-based education, which adds value to their work experience CV.	Delivering a proven initiative that has a track record of success using a clear and straightforward methodology. (UEL)
As inexperienced practitioners, students are challenged about how important communication is and how it is perceived in practice.	It acts as a demonstration model of how a university can deliver the programme so that other universities can be approached. (LBTC)
Gaining experience to support children to develop their speech, language and communication skills.	It adds to the evidence base, demonstrating the positive impact that the programme is having. (LBTC)
Working with Key Stage 1 children as part of their placement or practice based module at UEL.	The quality of delivery has been maintained. (LBTC)
Developing facilitation and team working skills.	It extends the geographic reach of the programme. (LBTC)
Increasing confidence.	Support for the progression and development of primary age pupils (schools).
Benefitting from a CPD certified programme.	

“As a mature student, I never thought that this experience would enable me to change the course of my career.” Third year Special Education Undergraduate

“The fact that you’ve committed to being a volunteer for a whole year shows that you’re a responsible person. There’s a lot of things you can tick off for prospective employers.” Third Year Student studying education

Evaluation takes place in three forms: the three Group Evaluation Sessions per year give an opportunity for students and partners to share good practice and lessons learnt; students contribute to pupil assessment and observation records at Local Evaluation Meetings after each facilitated drama session; observations by an experienced practitioner provide feedback to students, highlighting aspects of good practice and areas for improvement. The following observations were made as a result of the evaluation:

- 'Less is more': drama students recognising that, in a primary education setting, 'less is more' in terms of performance
- Effective communication: where possible it is important to communicate key messages to teachers directly, rather than through a third party. One student arranged a meeting with Key Stage 1 teachers to explain the process and benefits of the intervention.
- Preparation and Proactivity: it is important to be assertive if a partner needs reminding of their role in the process. On some occasions, schools forgot to set-up the room and 'performance area' in advance of the sessions.

University of Brighton

The University of Brighton obtained university status in 1992; it traces its origins back to 1859. It is among the top 60 UK universities for research¹. In 2014/15² they taught 16,861 undergraduate students and 3,395 postgraduates. Faculties include Arts and Humanities; Life, Health and Physical Sciences; and Social Sciences.

Engagement and the institution

External engagement is one of three key elements highlighted in the Strategic Plan^{3,4}, which also includes: Learning and Teaching; and Research and Knowledge Exchange. One of the university's ten objectives is *"Engagement and impact: our learning and research will be developed with partners and focused on social and economic benefit"*. The university is a signatory to the public engagement (PE) manifesto published by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

The university has a strong community and social ethos: *"We want Brighton staff and students to be known for their commitment to impact, community and sustainability in their chosen field"*. University of Brighton Strategic Plan

PE is supported by the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) which was established in 2003 as an externally funded project. It moved into the mainstream of the university in 2007 with five full-time equivalent staff, supporting the university's commitment to *"engagement with the cultural, social and economic life of our localities, region and nation... and with the practical, intellectual and ethical issues of our partner organisations"*⁵. CUPP^{6,7} is part of the Department for Economic and Social Engagement and reports into the Business and Communities Committee of the university.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

The University of Brighton's commitment to engagement and the student experience is achieved through a general culture of supporting students and staff around engagement with many external 'communities'.

This was further re-enforced in the commitment in the 2013-15 Strategic Plan to introduce engagement into all undergraduate courses, with a focus on employability and social responsibility.

¹ University of Brighton (2016) Research. Our Mission. <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/index.aspx>

² <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-information/facts-and-figures/student-population.aspx>

³ https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/mac/public_docs/Strategic-Plan-2012-2015.pdf

⁴ References in the case study are to the previous plan, which was in place at the time of the case study interview; the new plan can be found here: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/practical-wisdom/index.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/pdf/resp/cupp-publications/defining-by-doing.pdf>

⁶ These references have now changed and CUPP is part of Research Enterprise and Social Partnerships. The Business and Community Committee has been disbanded.

⁷ CUPP has published many articles, papers and films that capture the learning from the work, see <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/business-and-community-partnerships/community-partnerships/materials-and-resources/material-and-resources.aspx>

“Students will be able to participate in ways that will develop their skills, help them to translate and apply what they have learned and prepare them not only for immediate employment but ongoing career development and socially purposeful citizenship. These opportunities will include professional placements, volunteering and mentoring, community participation, and entrepreneurial and economic engagement.”

The university also made a commitment to understand and measure the impact of its engagement activities.

How does it operate?

The primary driver of PE through the student experience is the culture across the institution. Students and staff are actively encouraged to identify opportunities which are supported within faculties and through the support of other teams such as student volunteering (that organises placement opportunities), CUPP and the Students’ Union.

The Active Student programme, a student volunteering service within the Careers Team, organises the placement programme to identify professional, volunteering, mentoring and community opportunities. An annual matching event is organised in which local partners are invited. Examples are wide ranging and include providing one-to-one mentoring in a prison, supporting a children’s holiday scheme, tracking hedgehogs on a conservation project, and designing a bespoke aid for a disabled person.

Engagement opportunities for students include both those related to curriculum development and research activities. Student Community Engagement (SCE) is the term used within the university to describe all the work undertaken by students in community settings as part of their accredited curriculum. These activities are experiential, community based projects carried out either for or with a community organisation. This activity started with the development of a generic accredited community based module, involving essays and reflective assignments, organised by CUPP, but now resides within individual schools.

The Student Community Research (SCR) programme involves postgraduate students who are able to attract the support of an academic supervisor to oversee their project. CUPP staff will attend an initial meeting between a student and hosting organisation to agree scope, timing, ethics, intellectual property and health and safety issues. A research agreement is completed which confirms the agreed details.

CUPP acts as a hub within the university to manage internal and external enquiries through a helpdesk, which responds to 350 community enquiries per year. The relationships with local organisations, built up over 10 years, enable its staff to facilitate and support many varied opportunities. A good example includes relations with Brighton Community Works, an umbrella body for the voluntary sector, which has provided placements and also brokered placements with other voluntary sector organisations. CUPP also operates a competitive seed fund, which aims to support six new partnerships each year and, through its Deputy Director, undertakes research and teaching relating to community based and partnership approaches to issues of sustainability, marginalisation and social justice. Close relationships between CUPP and the students’ union enable other mechanisms to stimulate students to consider and support students to undertake engagement activities.

Communities of practice are encouraged and supported as a means of sustaining and developing knowledge and experience; this also acts to connect engaged teaching with engaged research.

Schools within the university also organise their own programmes of public engagement activities such as festivals and exhibitions.

What are the key plans for development?

Some of the areas for focus to develop engagement through the student experience at the University of Brighton are:

- Addressing constraints of the university estate (for example getting the public into some buildings can be challenging due to issues of security and health and safety). New buildings are being designed to be more flexible and adaptable to support engagement activities.
- Continuing to develop activities with the CUPP and the student union to support and encourage the identification of community projects that can involve students and research.

How is it evaluated?

Many SCE projects are assessed on a reflective evaluation of the experience or a critique of the way in which the project was conceived.

CUPP has worked with a number of different approaches to try to measure the impact of engagement activities across the university. They tried the Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnerships (REAP)⁸ approach, however, while it was a good conceptual framework, they found that not all projects had the capacity to collect the required data⁹.

CUPP has also undertaken an audit of engagement activities across the university. However, this also proved challenging to develop workable definitions and to separate out activities that were primarily outreach and widening participation. Rather than continue with future audits, the university are developing a Customer Relations Management system (CRM) to help capture key information and focus on publications celebrating success. They are also using digital mapping to chart and describe all the main projects. This uses the university's Community 21 platform of engagement tools that was co-developed with local community organisations¹⁰.

Project Example 1: The Waste House Project¹¹

Situated on the University of Brighton's campus, the Waste House was designed by Duncan Baker-Brown (senior lecturer and director of a firm of architects, BBM Sustainable Design) together with undergraduate students. Student involvement was a combination of volunteers and through undergraduate learning programmes.

⁸ Pearce, J., Pearson, M., & Cameron, S. (2007) *The Ivory Tower and Beyond: The University of Bradford at the Heart of its Communities – the University of Bradford's REAP Approach to Measuring its Community Engagement*. Bradford: ICPS-University of Bradford.

⁹ https://www.brighton.ac.uk/_pdf/resp/cupp-publications/defining-by-doing.pdf

¹⁰ <https://community21.org/partners/cupp/>

¹¹ <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/ease/wastehouse/latest-news>

It was constructed by apprentices from social housing maintenance provider Mears, students from City College Brighton & Hove, students from the University of Brighton and volunteers. In all over 250 students helped on site.

It is the UK's first permanent building constructed from rubbish and is intended to demonstrate appropriate applications for recycled materials. Foundations made from ground-granulated blast-furnace slag support a framework comprising salvaged plywood beams, columns and timber joists rescued from a nearby demolished house. Waste blockwork walls surround panels filled with materials including 20,000 toothbrushes, 4,000 DVD cases, 2,000 floppy discs and two tonnes of denim offcuts. The rubbish is used as insulation and can be seen through transparent sections built into the walls. University students, college students and apprentices have all participated in identifying new techniques and opportunities as part of the construction.

The Brighton Waste House is a 'live' research project and permanent new design workshop focused on sustainable development. Its heat-retaining properties will be measured by a PhD student as part of his research over the next few years, using sensors built into the walls.

The facility will be used by students from the university's Sustainable Design MA course and will be available as a community resource for hosting sustainably themed design workshops and events. Furniture designed for the interior, by university students, includes a cabinet displaying material samples developed on campus to explore ways of mixing waste with organic materials. One of the main aims of the project was to prove *“that there is no such thing as waste, just stuff in the wrong place”*.

The project received support from Brighton and Hove City Council Planning and Building Control departments, as well as contributions of suppliers within the construction industry. Engagement activity has included: 2507 person days for the build – 97.5 % of them from students, apprentices and volunteers; 253 different students inducted and working on site; and over 700 school children visits to the construction site. So far two research papers have resulted from the project.

Project Example 2: The Boingboing network¹²

This is a community engagement project that has evolved through an interest in the subject matter of resilience research and practice for the benefit of supporting children, young people, families and adults exposed to social disadvantage.

The project is led by Angie Hart, Professor of Child, Family and Community Health at the University of Brighton, School of Health Sciences. She teaches on professional courses for health and social care practitioners and coordinates a large group of postdoctoral researchers and PhD students working on resilience and inequalities. The project is supported by CUPP and now involves many other individuals (students, researchers, young people, parents and professionals). It has now been constituted as a community interest company.

¹² <http://www.boingboing.org.uk/>

Examples of how this community project has supported PE through the student experience are outlined below and highlight the voluntary nature of student and researcher involvement.

Anne Rathbone – a Senior Training and Consultancy Manager (at Boingboing) and PhD Student at the University of Brighton (specializing in co-production). Her PhD research with the University of Brighton involves working with young people with learning disabilities as co-researchers to explore their own experiences of resilience – what is helpful and what is not – and undertaking self-directed collective action to challenge the adversities they face. The research, in partnership with Arts Connect (part of Culture Shift) in East Sussex, focuses on the use of arts-based activities to facilitate exploration of resilience issues and as a way of presenting findings.

Shahnaz Biggs – Business and Enterprise Master's Student at University of Manchester. Shahnaz was first introduced to Boingboing through a consultation they facilitated looking at research into Mental Health. She noticed many interesting and eye-opening things were discussed, as she shared stories and opinions about what should be researched. She was representing young people at the first session, but realised how some of the topics related to her across many different roles. For example, being a young female, coming from a Black Caribbean community, being Black British, being a student and coming from a single parent family. She feels that the social enterprise is making a real difference in people's lives, while being closely attached to a university, as a Master's student studying Business and Enterprise at the University of Manchester. She was a Boingboing volunteer and is now a staff member and part of her Master's research is looking at the values, mission and business model of the network. Shahnaz is currently applying to Brighton for a doctoral research programme. In her own words *"I love the fact that Boingboing is all about resilience, because I know how much being resilient helped me two years ago when I was going through a tough time with my anxiety and depression. To volunteer with and now work for an organisation that embeds and creates resilience practices as part of its core is fantastic and an amazing opportunity"*.

Emily Gagnon – Community Fellow with CUPP and PhD Student at the University of Sheffield. Emily is interested in creativity, mental health and promoting wellbeing. She encountered the Resilience Research Community through her community work with young people with mental health issues when they worked together with Boingboing to research resilience and co-create resources such as the Visual Arts Practice for Resilience Guide. Through this and further work with Boingboing and Professor Angie Hart on projects such as Imagine (around the social, historical, cultural and democratic context of civic engagement) and the Resilience Forum she developed an interest for understanding resilience as well as collaborative working and co-productive research. She is continuing to develop these interests during her PhD at the University of Sheffield.

Angie Hart and colleagues have also developed many practice resources which are used in the UK and beyond; Boingboing both benefits from this and supports further developments. Resources developed by Angie and Boingboing colleagues are used to support schools throughout the UK to support the resilience of individual students and to tackle whole school resilience building.

University of Manchester

The University of Manchester (UoM) can trace its origins back to 1824. In 2014/15¹ the university taught 26,725 undergraduate students and 8,310 postgraduate students, with a further 3,555 research postgraduates also enrolled. Faculties include Humanities; Science and Engineering; and Biology, Medicine and Health.

Engagement and the institution

The University of Manchester has three core goals set out in the 'Manchester 2020' strategic plan²: world-class research; outstanding learning and student experience; and social responsibility. Manchester has a broad view of social responsibility³ which includes community and public engagement (PE). As the university's commitment to engagement sits under its social responsibility goal, it is overseen by the Social Responsibility Governance Group chaired by the President⁴. The university does not currently have an explicit strategy for PE activity⁵ ⁶. The university is a signatory to the PE Manifesto published by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

Through its engagement activities, the university seeks to utilise its "*knowledge, resources and visitor attractions*" with the aim of making a difference within the "*university, local communities and wider society*"⁷. The university encourages engagement starting at the grassroots level and supports it through its development.

The university pursues PE through three main strategies:

- Active participation in events and festivals to involve the community and spark interest in our research, as well as encouraging potential collaborative partnerships
- School and college liaison activities, particularly towards more disadvantaged communities to help provide wider education opportunities to children
- Utilising university owned cultural attractions, such as the Manchester Museum and Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, to deliver engagement programmes to diverse communities

The university employs a distributed model to facilitate embedding PE across the institution. As well as some of the five-person social responsibility team, there is also a number of staff across the university who have public engagement within their job roles. The focus is very much on evolution and change-management in terms of facilitating the embedding of PE across the institution.

¹ <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=26494>

² <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=11953>

³ University of Manchester (2016) Social Responsibility. Strategic Priorities. Engaging our communities. <http://www.socialresponsibility.manchester.ac.uk/strategic-priorities/engaging-our-communities/>

⁴ <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/vision/>

⁵ <http://www.engagement.manchester.ac.uk/about/PE%20with%20Research%20Initial%20Findings.pdf>

⁶ A strategy is currently being written to be launched in Spring 2017. It will complement the Inspiring Communities community engagement strategy being launched in Autumn 2016

⁷ <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=25548>

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

PE is strongly linked with the other two targets of “*world-class research*” and “*outstanding learning and student experience*”. The university believes that student experience is only enhanced by PE and it can also have a beneficial impact on research.

Overall PE is widely respected across the university, explained by one senior staff member as, “*if the opportunity and the infrastructure is there to engage with the public, then public engagement should take place*”. There is a strong commitment between students and staff who are keen to see more breadth to curriculums and more opportunities to undertake PE.

How does it operate?

The faculties at Manchester operate autonomously (a strategy is currently in development which will act as an umbrella strategy giving focus and vision). Manchester delivers its commitments to PE through a variety of small-scale projects and larger, faculty wide engagements facilitated and supported by staff and students from across the institution. This is supported by encouraging all students to make a difference in their local communities by volunteering through the accredited Manchester Leadership Programme (MLP). There is also a lot of student volunteering that is not part of MLP because there is a capacity limit on this programme. Stellify⁸ is an additional leadership award for all students who engage and show leadership qualities (it is not credited but successful completion will appear on a student’s HEAR). The focus on social responsibility and the science-related curriculum at the university means that it is heavily involved in citizen-science projects and public and patient involvement.

The university recognises PE as a necessary part of research, as reflected by the necessity for faculties to display evidence of engagement in their annual performance reviews. Staff and students who demonstrate excellent PE are recognised at the annual Making a Difference Awards for social responsibility.

The university also provides subject-related PE staff with skills training and creates an environment in which different faculties can link up to share ideas. In 2014, the university created three Academic Lead roles to support and develop the social responsibility agenda, one of which was the Academic Lead for Public Engagement with Research⁹. This has supported greater PE activity within doctoral training programmes.

There are differing views on PE within the university. Many academics tend to value PE linked to involving students and researchers, but not all think it always adds value to research. For example, some academics worry that engaging the public with research might affect research credibility, while others are totally committed to involving students in PE.

The degree to which PE is involved in the student experience largely differs between departments and faculties. There are several reasons for this including:

⁸ <http://www.dse.manchester.ac.uk/our-projects/stellify/>

⁹ <http://www.engagement.manchester.ac.uk/about/PE%20with%20Research%20Initial%20Findings.pdf>

- Ease of inclusion e.g. much easier to involve public in research for arts and humanities subjects than in subjects such as biomedical science and biochemistry.
- Culture set by strategic leaders within faculties – some heads of departments are very positive about PE and so are keen to involve it in research, whereas some have traditionally been less positive.
- Student preferences – some students prefer not to become involved with PE and would rather focus solely on their degree or other experiences.
- Departmental links to engagement projects e.g. faculty of science participates in initiatives such as FameLab and science festivals.

There is support available to facilitate the development of PE projects. The social responsibility team, along with professional support staff and some academics who have specific job roles relating to PE, dedicate time to the support of these projects. They also provide extensive training and encouragement to students who wish to undertake engagement activities.

A strategic priority for the university has been to develop relationships with the institution's cultural attractions. This has led to some good examples of student experience through PE such as a project linked to the BSc Biology course. It includes an optional research initiative in the second year which requires students to select an object from the Manchester Museum and produce a short lay report about the object; a technical report to be assessed; and a short presentation to be given at the museum to the general public. The presentations are then embedded into the museum's catalogues to be kept as an informative resource. From 2014 to 2016, 155 students were involved in the initiative, working with museum staff to enable them to use their selected item for research. The programme is viewed as a way to allow undergraduates to gain experience in research and link them to further opportunities. By using the museum as a hub for PE, the university is also keen to show that the museum is part of the university rather than a separate institution. Students have found this a positive experience both in terms of learning about a specific object or subject matter and through developing research and presentation skills.

Other examples linked to teaching include the requirement to tie PE into final year dissertations. Many developed games and communication tools. One good example was the development of Top Trumps¹⁰ for Infection, by a Manchester Immunology Group (MIG) student to help communicate key facts to non-experts such as school pupils. These became part of wider activities such as a team of volunteers from the MIG who took the Worm Wagon to 'The Great British Bioscience Festival' in Bethnal Green, East London. They were part of 20 selected groups from across the UK introducing the public to parasites and some snail hosts. They also played top trumps, giant parasite lifecycle jigsaws and made worm-based art. In total 6,700 people attended the event.

A number of PhD students have developed their communication skills through initiatives such as FameLab where contestants have just three minutes to convey a scientific concept of their choice. Two have gone on to develop their communication skills through various strands of stand-up comedy. All students and researchers agree that they learn

¹⁰ <http://www.mig.ls.manchester.ac.uk/documents/toptrumps.pdf>

from these exercises how to communicate and to engage with different audiences. Those who teach also feel it has helped their lecture styles.

In the Humanities Faculty, they have a social responsibility in the curriculum award (this includes a small amount of funding and celebrates recognition of achievements through the giving of awards). The funding is primarily to support relationship development and to facilitate students going off-site. This has been happening for the last three years. It is considered work in progress, however it has served to encourage other faculties and acts to re-enforce the actions of staff committed to this approach and encourages other staff to become more involved.

The importance of PE is well-embedded in staff performance reviews and through the development of impact case studies.

What are the key plans for development?

The key area for development is in the evaluation of PE projects and the inclusion of more accredited PE activity within both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Limited opportunities exist for accredited PE within current courses/programmes.

Most engagement activities have limited evaluation so the university is trying to foster an environment where the evaluation of PE comes naturally. This is being developed through training and drop-in surgeries for researchers and staff to be able to build on their evaluation skills. There are currently two courses in evaluating PE (beginners and advanced) which are regularly attended. The potential of recording PE evidence is also being explored with the introduction of a research information system known as PURE¹¹.

How is it evaluated?

The effectiveness of PE is measured in a variety of ways:

- Student feedback
- Feedback from schools and other engagement partners
- Growth in students undertaking PE activities
- Increase in number of partners e.g. schools for outreach
- Use of funding available for postgraduate students to engage
- Formal evaluation by academics of specific projects
- Nominations for external awards e.g. NCCPE's Engage Competition.

A report in 2013 assessed the economic and social impact of the university¹², citing a number of PE-related activities.

However, it is regarded as difficult to obtain formal evaluations of many PE projects due to limitations, such as people's willingness to fill out surveys. Therefore less formal methods are widely used across the university. Some of these methods are particularly used for festivals and major events. For example, an internal report on the Science

¹¹ The university's Research Information System was introduced in August 2016 to record details of research activity at the institution.

¹² University of Manchester (2013) Measuring the difference: the economic and social impact of the University of Manchester.

Spectacular event¹³ used findings from a 'graffiti wall', postcode analysis, twitter, and questionnaires to all stakeholders including organisers.

As mentioned previously, the university is actively trying to improve evaluation methods and increase the quality and quantity of evaluation of its PE.

Project Example 1: Student Led Investigation and Management of Neglected Tropical Diseases in Madagascar

Dr Stephen Spencer founded the Madagascar Medical Expeditions in 2014 whilst still a student at the UoM. Supported by his lecturers he developed the project and involved other students. In 2015 alumni Dr Stephen Spencer and Dr Hannah Russell along with students Anthony Howe (Year 5) and James Penney (Year 4) took part in the first student-led medical research expedition from the UoM as part of their Applied Personal Excellence Pathway (APEP). The aim was to find the most important diseases affecting communities in one of Madagascar's most remote and isolated areas.

Following his voluntary work, in 2016 Dr Stephen Spencer was awarded third prize in the Alumni Category at the University of Manchester 'Volunteer of the Year' awards which celebrated the volunteering work of the university community. The expedition team also won first prize in the 'Outstanding Public Engagement' category at the University of Manchester's Social Responsibility 'Making A Difference' awards.

As part of the planning process the team fostered collaborative links between the UoM and the University of Antananarivo, whilst also working closely with The Durrell Conservation Trust who introduced the team to the local communities in the central east district of Marolambo. The team also met with the Ministry of Health of Madagascar in Antananarivo to discuss their findings. The team visited six villages in rural Madagascar and found that 94% of children had Schistosomiasis. Schistosomiasis is caused by a parasite which infects humans through contact with infected water. If present in the body for a long time, it can cause anaemia (low blood count), bloody faeces, liver failure and even death.

In May 2016, a group of students travelled back to the same villages in Madagascar to investigate the burden of Schistosomiasis on these communities. The children will be treated for Schistosomiasis with medication which has been donated by the East Lancashire NHS hospitals. One of the aspirations of the expedition was to establish partnerships to allow for regular student led expeditions to research Schistosomiasis and other diseases in Madagascar. The project was further supported by funding grants including the UoM Learning Enrichment Fund, the British Society for Immunology and The Royal Geographic Society. This together with other funds raised by the students enabled them to conduct high quality research and impact the area.

A key objective is to show international organisations and the Malagasy Department of Health that children in these villages are really sick and that treating Schistosomiasis in this area is a priority. The team hope to explore how children get Schistosomiasis and whether they are likely to stick to their treatment. Part of the project is to assess other

¹³http://www.engagement.manchester.ac.uk/highlights/manchester_science_festival/science_spectacular/index.html

ways of managing Schistosomiasis, such as education or establishing a supply of clean water.

Students commented on how the experience has developed their understanding of the testing conditions experienced by people in a remote part of the world. However, they felt uplifted by the positive energy of the villagers they worked with. Students also benefitted in terms of academic learning from developing research and insight into the effected of a little understood parasite.

The work has resulted in research papers presented at conferences and presentations at the University of Manchester International Festival of Public Health.

<http://parasitology.conferenceseries.com/abstract/2016/madagascar-medical-research-expedition-2015-high-prevalence-and-severe-parasite-loads-of-schistosoma-mansoni-found-in-school-aged-children-in-marolambo-madagascar>

www.expeditionmadagascarblog.wordpress.com

<http://www.festivalofpublichealth.co.uk/programme/parallelsession2/>

<http://www.volunteers.manchester.ac.uk/volunteer-community-engagement/news-&-events/volunteer-of-the-year-awards/meet-our-past-winners/2015-winners/alumni-3rd-place/>

http://www.omicsonline.org/2155-9597/parasitology-2016_scientifictracks-workshop.digital/files/assets/common/downloads/parasitology-2016_scientifictracks-workshop.pdf

University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield was established in 1905 from what was formerly the University College of Sheffield. It is within the top 10% of UK universities for research excellence. In 2015/16 they taught 19,125 undergraduate students and 5,320 postgraduate students, with a further 2,785 research postgraduates also enrolled. Faculties include: Arts; Engineering; Medicine, Dentistry & Health; and, Sciences and Social Science.

Engagement and the institution

Public engagement (PE) is underpinned by the University of Sheffield Strategic Plan's three interconnected themes which are: Research & its Impact; Our Place Locally and Globally; and Our Public Responsibility. *"Our social and public responsibility is integral to our university, to our education, research and partnerships."*

The University of Sheffield is in the process of developing a PE strategy for 2017/18. The PE strategy aims to build on the successful development of the PE team resulting from the successful Research Councils UK (RCUK) Public Engagement with Research Catalyst 2012-15 award, followed by the University of Sheffield supporting the team from 2016-2018. The team is led by Professor Richard Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research & Innovation and on a day-to-day strategic management level is managed by Professor Vanessa Toulmin, Director of City and Cultural Engagement, and Dr Sarah Want, Head of Research Partnerships & Engagement and Assistant Director of Research & Innovation Services. The university is a signatory to the PE Manifesto published by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

There are six staff within the Public Engagement Team. The team was established through RCUK Catalyst funding with a focus on collaborative working with the city. The public engagement team originally were part of the Corporate Communication team but then was moved under the remit of Research and Innovation Services (RIS). The purpose of the PE team is to directly contribute to research excellence and add to city vibrancy through ongoing support, training and offering PE opportunities through the festival model.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

The first of the principles within the corporate plan is 'Our Education and Student Experience'. This emphasises the importance of employability, innovation, links with employers, giving students the experience of live projects and challenges. There is also a strong ethos of volunteering; students are supported and strongly encouraged to consider this. The PE Team, whilst focusing on research excellence, offers opportunities for both university staff and students to volunteer to support some of the engagement projects. For example, in 2016, at Festival of the Mind, over 160 staff and students volunteered to support the event in event delivery roles.

The PE approach at Sheffield is based around a series of 'platforms' which are a series of public facing free festivals. They are typically subject focused with different levels of engagement across the university on different publics and audiences. The PE team makes

open calls to the faculties to stimulate ideas for existing festivals. Typically, the festivals involve interactive films, animations, exhibition spaces, original plays, commissioned art and workshops plus many other things. Often these engagement activities are created collaboratively with partners from different faculties and external creative partners from across the city.

How does it operate?

Generally PE is research focused at Sheffield, organised through the RIS team based around the festivals model, with teaching and learning elements organised within facilities around the 'Achieve More' initiative.

The university has an annual programme of festivals. Typically, the festivals are organised and implemented by postgraduates, researchers and staff members. Undergraduates tend to be volunteers within festivals. Some examples include:

- Sheffield Robotics Robosapiens film series – which included a showroom where ten selected films were shown. After each film, there was a discussion by a number of academics around issues of virtual reality and robots, discussing the feasibility of aspects within the films. This tended to last for 10 to 30 minutes and was prepared by academics and PhD's discussing the likelihood of some of the developments to actually happen. The public valued the interaction and discussions with researchers and academics.
- Mobile University – this is on a vintage bus which over three days travels between three different locations in the city centre. PhD and early career researchers are given the opportunity to give lectures and presentations to small audiences on the top deck of the bus. The scheme also links the presenters with our Public Engagement Champions providing mentoring on how to present their materials.
- KrebsFest –an example of a research inspired PE activity that supports the student experience; the festival was a celebration of the scientific research of Sir Hans Krebs and how that research is used today in the Sheffield 2022 Future projects. The festival included nine creative commissions, an exhibition and events in the Winter Gardens, an exhibition in Western Bank library, a large scale public open night, an outreach project involving seven local schools, three talks by Nobel Prize winners and a launch event. A total of 122,668 people attended the events over KrebsFest and there were over 1,366 tweets using the festival hashtag. The festival was part-funded by the Arts Council.

Festivals involve close working and joint delivery with other city organisations, including in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University. The largest festival (Festival of the Mind 2014) involved 40 funded projects, leading to 354 events. 150 academics, supported by over 200 staff/student volunteers, delivered these events for 27,000 visitors. The case study below explores projects within the Life Festival of Health.

In terms of PE and the student experience related to teaching and learning, 'Achieve More' is the title given to the approach to support students to achieve PE activities through their subjects. There are different strands for each year group: first year, second year and final year. Final year activities may well be linked to final year projects or

dissertations and can involve students working on projects with organisations from the local community, such as health care providers, schools and community groups.

Each faculty manages this differently. The aim of the Sheffield University Global Engineering Challenge Week is to introduce and develop transferable skills, by working in a cross-faculty team to tackle a real life engineering project. Twenty or more projects are drawn from the Engineers Without Borders (EWB) Challenge and also from work by Dr John Quinn (a Senior Lecturer at the University of Makerere in Uganda and an Associate Lecturer at the University of Sheffield). Each year the EWB Challenge is based in a different developing country. In previous years, projects have included innovative use of local materials for houses, alternative renewable clean cooking technologies and water purification at the household scale.

The university's approach is summarised by "*High tech solutions to low tech problems*" and is exemplified by some overseas projects: a Rhino-tracking network (to combat poaching); anti-corruption pharmaceutical drug distribution tracking; and a mobile retinal scanner (to diagnose disease). Based on students preferred projects, they are put into groups comprising students from other departments to tackle a project. Academics, industry and EWB representatives start the process by suggesting ideas and challenges. Students are supported by their own PhD student facilitator and staff member. Each group presents their 'best solution' with a supporting written document. Hub members (including students in the non-presenting groups) vote to decide the winner. All winners get awarded certificates.

The PE team has developed a range of support for staff and researchers, including:

- Training manuals for public engagement activities developed by the PE team
- Ten PE masterclasses with internal and external speakers. Feedback highlights the value generated: "*The audiences are broad and the masterclasses are relevant for academics, support staff and students*".
- A funding call from the PE team to Directors of Research & Innovation identifies academic staff to receive an award of up to £2000 to undertake new public engagement activity linked to the faculty's research priorities
- A menu of example costs for PE activities to help staff and students with research bids, covering for example exhibitions, printed materials and film production costs and time scales (including suppliers)
- A series of academic Public Engagement Champions at the university (individuals who are experienced at PE) who help to share the engagement message across the university. This is not a formal role but helps to develop awareness of public engagement across faculties.

What are the key plans for development?

By the 2018/19 academic year, all departments will offer 'Achieve More' discipline-appropriate activities that give final year students an opportunity to communicate their subject knowledge to non-specialist audiences.

The PE team's work to get PE recognised in the Reward & Recognition strategy continues. The success of two PE champions, recently promoted to professor with their PE work cited as one of the reasons for their promotion, indicates the progress being made.

The team plans to build on its success and deliver over 200 opportunities for PE through their platform series and focus on building collaborative projects which will continue beyond the individual activity. Over 10 specific events are currently targeted including: Festival of the Mind; Sheffield Festival of Science & Engineering, Doc/Fest; Life Festival; Pint of Science; Faculty of Arts & Humanities Festival; Off the Shelf; Robosapiens; and many others.

The plan is to continue to identify opportunities to positively influence the culture; this will increase the quantity and quality of PE being undertaken. The team also plans to involve undergraduate students more in PE activity.

How is it evaluated?

The university undertakes an evaluation report after each of the festivals. During the festivals there are a number of tools to generate feedback. These include questionnaires; one-on-one interviews; surveys; postcards; post-its; email evaluation forms; voting systems (using Smart systems); and a diary room with video recording facilities. Staff are supportive of the approach: *"I like the way they've involved everyone. The audiences are broad and the masterclasses are relevant for academics, support staff and students"*.

As an example, the university has collated data which indicates that between 2012 and 2015, over 60,400 people attended events (over 27,000 of those attended Festival of the Mind alone). The PE team worked with 498 academic staff and 245 non-academic staff and there have been over 1,000 attendances at 20 PE masterclasses. The Festival of the Mind 2014 evaluation identified that 95% of academics taking part rated the team's support as excellent or very good; 84% of academics agreed or strongly agreed they had gained new skills from taking part; and 65% said that involving the public in their research had positively influenced their own thinking about their research.

The PE team have supported over £3.5 million of potential research income and over £1.75 million was awarded.

Project Example 1: Life Festival of Health

The 'Life: A festival of health, from head to toe' was a PE platform which took place from Monday to Saturday in May 2014. The festival was the first large-scale PE platform for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health.

The project delivered 42 events, which were open to either the public or to school groups. The festival aimed to showcase the research undertaken in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health at the University of Sheffield.

The specific aims of the festival were to raise awareness of how the faculty's research is improving lives locally, nationally and internationally; to showcase the collaborative research that takes place between the faculty and the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals; to deepen relationships with the community, engender pride in the faculty's work and build the faculty's reputation in Sheffield and South Yorkshire; and to promote healthy living.

Most of the events took place in the Medical School; this was a deliberate attempt to raise the profile of the school. Events were also held in other university venues across the city. The Festival Planning Group was constituted of staff from the faculty, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and the Public Engagement with Research team.

The diversity of the events aimed to attract members of the public of all ages, university staff and students, and NHS staff. Some events were specifically targeted at families, with others only suitable for audiences over 16 years old due to the nature of the content. Approximately 2,300 people engaged with events over the course of the festival. Events included lectures, film-screenings, panel discussions, interactive workshops, tours of hospital facilities, hands-on activities and health checks.

All staff in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health had the opportunity to apply to take part in the festival. Some student societies from the faculty also participated in the festival.

Key events included:

- The festival launch – An Audience with Dr Dawn Harper from Embarrassing Bodies – aimed to attract public interest and provide an opportunity to promote the rest of the festival.
- International Clinical Trials Day was Tuesday 20 May. To mark this, the festival programme included tours of the Clinical Research Facilities at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and activities in the Hallamshire Hospital.
- Fun Activities for Families took place in the Medical School café. It was a drop-in event where visitors could take part in research-related activities such as extracting DNA from strawberries, viewing fluorescent zebrafish, fighting cancer cells in a video game and interacting with a robotic seal which is used in dementia care.
- After Cancer Treatment: What Now? began with a film screening of local young people sharing their experiences of life after cancer, and a panel discussion. This was followed by an art exhibition of the Phoenix Project which explores patients' attitudes to relationships during cancer.
- The Science of Bones was an interactive workshop to learn about the skeleton. The sessions were run for school groups during the daytime.
- Teddy Bear Hospital, run by the Medical Student Society, invited children to bring their teddy bear for a health-check and aimed to reduce children's fear of attending hospital.

Planning for the festival involved marketing and promotion (an external design company was employed to work on the branding and design), budget management and communications planning.

Feedback from participants included:

- Very positive feedback from the public that attended: "I think it's amazing that we can get to engage with what's going on in the university, I love the idea that academic research is accessible to us, and any opportunity for my children to learn from the real world."

- Positive views from staff involved: “[The Festival] has been a very important and positive way to engage with the public and highlight the tremendous work that goes on in the faculty.”
- Positive views from researchers involved: “[It was good] practice at explaining research in lay terms. Feedback was that they valued and were interested in what we are doing.”

Furthermore, for 18 of the 23 researchers who completed the post-festival questionnaire, it was the first time that they had participated in a PE event.

University of Winchester

The University of Winchester can trace its origins back to 1840¹; it formally became a university in 2005. Winchester's academic structure consists of four faculties: Arts; Business, Law and Sport; Education, Health and Social Care; Humanities and Social Sciences². There are 7,485 students at the university, according to the 2014/15 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record³, 5,910 of which are undergraduates and 1,575 of which are postgraduates.

Engagement and the institution

Public engagement (PE) is considered fundamental to achieving the university's five-year Strategic Plan. The value of PE is "*gradually filtering down*" to academics and researchers. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) has been a major stimulus to PE in terms of research. The university is a signatory to the PE Manifesto published by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

"The natural lead on from the values is that we want to make the world a better place and public engagement then becomes fundamental to everything we do."

Within the five-year Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) Strategy, developed in 2015, PE is covered in the aims and objectives, including the drawing up of a specific PE strategy during the period. While PE is not expressed as an explicit heading it is seen as being "*at the core*" of the RKE strategy. The other main academic service, Academic Quality and Development (AQD), is responsible for the Teaching and Learning Strategy, within which student engagement is considered to be embedded.

The Head of Student Engagement sits within AQD. While the public engagement strategy is led from RKE, AQD have input into its development. It is currently undergoing fine-tuning as it moves through the university's committees.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

Many of the university's strategies interlink with enriching the student experience and, therefore, PE and the student experience are considered to be "*at the heart of everything that the university does*". There is no specific structure in terms of how this is driven, it is just organically part of the university's culture and vision.

Many activities that the students undertake in relation to their programmes of study relate to PE. "*In all of what we do, students can be, are, and we aspire for them to be, part of the experience.*"

As an example, one of the overarching strategic aims reflects on developing teaching and learning, such as better graduate employability and links with employers: "*It is about supporting students to go on and be successful*". PE is key to delivering this aim, for

¹ <http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/members/university-of-winchester/>

² <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/aboutus/Universitystructure/Pages/Universitystructure.aspx>

³ <https://m.hesa.ac.uk/uk-he-stats/?p=institution&y=14/15&l=W&n=6>

example, through the volunteering module. The module runs across the whole of the university and last year saw 400 students enrol, gaining a placement in, for example, a charity related to their programme of study such as Winchester Young Carers or Oxfam.

“It’s very much about demonstrating the values [of the university], but it is also about giving students real-life experience in a context that aligns with our values.”

How does it operate?

Currently, there are many PE activities going on across the university, in various faculties and departments, which means there is a challenge in being entirely aware of what is going on; there is currently no over-arching body, but there is a drive to draw it together. Currently, activities are *“very pocketed, having grown organically”*.

Throughout the year, the university runs a varied PE programme, encompassing both community and employer engagement. Many of these events are coordinated, managed and delivered by students and, indeed, many would not exist without the support of the student body. A significant proportion of attendees at the events are the university’s students.

Public talks, lectures and exhibitions are programmed into the university’s PE calendar. Individual departments, academics and faculties will also often deliver symposia or conferences on topics relevant to them, which students can participate in to support *“sharing experience, sharing practice, bringing in other expertise”*.

Winchester’s Research Apprenticeships Programme (WRAP) allows undergraduates to work on real research projects which often centre on PE. As an example, in Sports and Exercise, many projects are supported through funding bids made by staff members. Some of this funding is used to enable students to contribute to the project, for example, through data collection with the public. This goes right from undergraduate to postgraduate research (PGR) student level. The WRAP often leads to a positive student experience, influencing research skills and aspirations of continuing on to an MA or PhD. Thus, students are developing, via PE, throughout their career at university.

The university runs a Student Fellows programme, where undergraduates are awarded funding to run their own research project with the support of academic staff. Similarly, through the Student Hub, the university runs a series of awards for students in the form of funding for 20 students per year to undertake social enterprise volunteering, for example, in the form of community choirs, recycling activities or arts therapy.

The university runs extracurricular student enterprise activities, including the annual Dyanmo Challenge with colleagues in the Universities of Southampton, Southampton Solent and Portsmouth. Students from mixed-university teams tackle real-world problems. In 2014 different charities presented the issues they found around being financially stable, which student teams had to reflect on and address. This was also repeated with University of Winchester students alone. This year, Southampton Solent will be hosting the challenge centred on social enterprise.

Fashion, Media and Marketing students can select a module in PE, which allows them the opportunity to work with local organisations, with experiences like this being key to success in these industries. The university’s gallery space is also open to students for exhibition of their work, while Winchester Fashion Week allows students the opportunity

to gain practical experience. Further to this, the university holds the annual three-day Winchester Writers' Festival, the focus of our case study.

The Students' Union is very *"active and dynamic"*, and they are heavily involved in PE at various levels. Committees across the university regularly discuss PE events and there are representatives from the Students' Union on over 90% of the committees. Therefore, student involvement is a part of the development, management and coordination of PE activities.

The focus on PE at the university is also reflected in the promotions criteria, the validation process which programmes undergo and in operational decisions.

What are the key plans for development?

A key area for development relates to the re-structuring of the research centres in the university to help drive PE further forward.

It is felt that the model in place for health and well-being is a good example for all research across the university. This area has to include engagement with the public, both to meet NHS approval and also because the use of public and patient interaction (PPI) is integral to research requirements. The university is currently considering how this model can be developed further.

There are plans to make students even more central to organising PE activities. For example, consideration is currently being given to students organising and managing a conference around riots and civil unrest. This would be coordinated for students and by students, open to the public, and will be in place of some of the allocated teaching and learning time.

How is it evaluated?

Many PE events have self-evaluation in place, with attendees completing surveys and anecdotal feedback received on an informal basis. These events do take time to reflect on what has worked well and areas for improvement; the university is working towards a more systematic approach to this.

The university has recently implemented a CRM system in order to better manage communications with potential and current students, alumni and wider stakeholders. There has been much consideration given to the need to quantify impact, and the university understands the need to reflect on their activities and report on this; so this is where the CRM system ties in. It is hoped that the CRM system will be key to capturing the student voice, and will be the only place in the university that is built around student experience and the quality of the PE activities – *"where the two worlds collide"*. The CRM system development will tie in to the development of the PE strategy, and the university is considering the establishment of a working group, which will include students. The CRM system will be specifically used in the development of marketing and the sharing of information.

Additionally, the university is implementing an Impact Tracker System, which individual academics will complete, and is tendering for a Current Research Information System (CRIS). It is hoped that, together, these three systems will be woven into one 'toolbox' to capture impact, so individual systems are not standalone. The overall aim is to take data

collection to a more structured process and facilitate reporting on everything the university does.

Project Example: The Winchester Writers' Festival

The University of Winchester Writers' Festival aims to “*nurture new and established creative writers from around the UK and overseas working in all forms and genres*”⁴. It is a four-way dialogue between the creative writing department of the university, a host of industry professionals, members of the public and current students – both those studying creative writing and those who engage in creative writing as a hobby.

The festival was founded 36 years ago by Barbara Large, and has since developed into a three-day annual event consisting of:

- Day long workshops, which are more ‘academic’ and about the ‘craft’.
- Short talks, which allow attendees to ‘cherry pick’ classes providing ‘the range and freedom to put together their own package’.
- One-to-one 15 minute sessions, which bring emerging authors and key industry professionals together – a unique opportunity to discuss their work with a professional.

In 2016, the festival saw 300 attendees, and this included the university’s own students (20 hosts, five on the Scholarship scheme, ten to 15 paying attendees). Additional to this, there were approximately 30 student volunteers.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students can participate in the coordination and management of the festival in a variety of ways:

- As a student host, of which there are approximately 20 per year; these individuals are given an industry professional to look after, showing them around, supporting them and ensuring that their needs are met.
- As a volunteer; some of these individuals are the university’s Events Management students, who enjoy the opportunity to be part of a large event, while others are from the university’s media or creative writing programmes.
- As a member of the Scholarship scheme; the festival offers a ten free full festival places available to 18-25 year-olds who are actively engaged in creative writing and communicating/dissemination through social media. Applicants do not need to be students at the University of Winchester.

Often the process for emerging authors is anonymous and difficult, but the festival “*absolutely breaks down a lot of the barriers in the way of students putting their work in front of the people they want it to reach*”. The festival allows students to gain professional experience and feedback in a non-threatening environment, and to network with industry professionals. The potential to become a published author through the festival does exist, but, more often, the festival provides valuable learning, and the chance to try new things. An MA student attending the festival at the end of her programme stated that she had

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<http://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/ResearchandKnowledgeExchange/writersconference/Pages/WinchesterWritersConference.aspx>

“done the theory” in her MA, and the festival allowed her to put this into practice. She described the festival as *“the cherry on the top of the cake”*.

MA students described the one-to-one experience as *“vital”*. One MA student attending the festival at the end of her programme said that the one-to-one *“took her out of her comfort zone in a safe environment”*. She described the experience as *“pushing”* her. However, she now feels confident and able to *“hold her own ground”*.

The classes available to the students have helped to improve their writing skills, and also make them more ‘industry-ready’. One of the MA students we spoke to, attending the festival at the end of her course, selected a class on children’s publishing, which helped her to see the *“harsh reality of getting her work past the accountant”*. Another MA student is now more able to write on a daily basis, having learnt how to blog. She also talked about other classes she attended as part of the festival which have made her more observant.

Two MA students stated that there is something for everyone and it is very inclusive – all ages and abilities are welcome. An MA student attending the festival at the end of her programme described *“finding her place in this community”*. This MA student, who signed up to her MA because of the festival, stated that it helped her to realise that the writing community is not a closed one, and she felt *“inspired”*.

The students talked about writing being *“very internal”*, but gathering in groups develops confidence and reaffirms your beliefs, putting aside personal worries. They discussed how *“strangers will discuss your plot points with you”*. They feel that everyone is very approachable – there is no *“intellectual snobbery”*.

The MA student attending the festival at the end of her programme believes that her attendance at the festival has led to her dissertation having more direction, and that the festival was like a *“three-day masterclass”*. The festival came a few weeks after the end of term and she believes that it supported her to *“kick start the creative process again”*.

Several graduate MA students who have gone on to be successful authors are keen to return to the festival as speakers to give back to future cohorts. Two MA students that the evaluator spoke to also said that they would want to continue coming, even if they became published authors. They stated that they feel that the festival is always *“fresh and new”* and there is the opportunity to learn and develop with it.

University of the West of England, Bristol

The University of the West of England Bristol (UWE) obtained university status in 1992, prior to which it was Bristol Polytechnic, established in 1970. In 2014/15¹ 21,466 undergraduate students, 5,346 postgraduates, with a further 468 research postgraduates enrolled at UWE. Faculties include Arts, Creative Industries and Education; Business and Law; Environment and Technology; and Health and Applied Sciences.

Engagement and the institution

Engagement is a core objective at UWE and incorporates the institution's outward facing (public engagement) activities in its widest sense. This includes specific projects (see below) as well as all its interactions outside of the university. Engagement at a strategic level rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Research and Business Engagement. At an operational level, there are two groups responsible for engagement; the Public Engagement and Community Group and the Business Engagement Group. Both groups include representatives from the four faculties at Associate Dean level. A decision has been taken to merge the groups to provide a more holistic perspective of engagement across the institution. The PVC for Research and Business Engagement is also chair of the Management Group for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement which is hosted at UWE's City Campus.

The university operates a distributed model in relation to engagement which stems from the UWE Bristol Strategy 2020². Engagement has been a key element of preceding plans and strategies and UWE did have a separate public engagement (PE) strategy document prior to the 2020 process. However, a decision was taken to integrate engagement within the new 2020 document. The fourth priority in the 2020 Strategy is 'Strategic partnerships, connections and networks' and specifically addresses engagement. This priority focuses on *"developing strategic links that differentiate our academic activity and enhance the global reputation, health, sustainability and prosperity of the university, Bristol and our wider region"*. Specifically, this priority:

- Supports and encourages progression to higher education through national and international collaborative activity with schools, colleges universities and other partners.
- Engages with communities, public organisations and individuals focusing on maximising the potential of talent within Bristol and the Bristol city-region.
- Develops professional support for regional and national business partners in common areas of expertise to promote economic growth, sustainability and social enterprise.
- Develops national and international strategic partnerships to enhance learning, teaching, research and infrastructure.

¹ <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/factsandfigures/studentandstaffnumbers.aspx>

² Advancing knowledge, inspiring people, transforming futures: UWE Bristol Strategy 2020 – Striding forward with confidence <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/strategy.aspx>

The other priorities also include elements of engagement; ‘Ready and Able Graduates’ focuses on practice-based projects with external organisations; ‘Research with Impact’ includes a wide range of partnerships to help meet the needs of the economy and society. A review of progress towards achieving Strategy 2020 priorities between 2013-2016 has been undertaken. As part of the review, three areas of progress, pertaining to engagement and the student experience, are of particular importance:

- Prioritising practice-oriented learning: Placing further emphasis on this as a core value and offering placement opportunities to all students irrespective of their chosen course of study to support the achievement of UWE’s Graduate Attributes³.
- Development of the new City Campus: Providing an opportunity for students studying creative and cultural subjects to be involved in the work of some of the city’s most prominent creative spaces (M Shed, Spike Island, Watershed and Arnolfini).
- University Enterprise Zone: Opened in 2016, and one of only four university enterprise zones developed by universities in the UK, it provides a collaboration space between UWE and businesses specialising in robotics, health technology, biosciences and biomedicine.

Engagement and the student experience

What are the principles?

The key principle is a faculty-wide focus on practice-oriented learning which is ‘woven within the fabric’ of how courses are developed and taught at UWE. This is a deliberate strategy and a key curriculum driver which is responding to students who want courses that integrate more practical experiences. The aim is to develop ‘Ready and Able Graduates’ that have:

- Key employability skills
- Character traits that employers value
- Developed core career specific skills that employers require.

The practice element is increasingly integrated within the curriculum, particularly in courses where, traditionally, the practice element seems less obvious. For example, students studying sociology have a compulsory module on Developing Self and Society in year two, which provides an opportunity to develop graduate employability skills. In other courses, the practice element is often tied to requirements demanded by external bodies leading to professional accreditation.

How does it operate?

Bristol and the Bristol City region naturally nurtures collaboration. This is a function of key players who have their head offices located in the city creating important sector clusters (e.g. creative industries, defence, engineering, financial services, and pharmaceuticals), a strong higher education presence (approximately 50,000 students) and a thriving third

³ <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/ourstory/learningandteaching/work-integratedlearning.aspx>

sector. UWE focus is to create places (physical and virtual) to enable collaboration to take place.

Project examples of how the 2020 Strategy encourages PE projects that add value to the student experience:

- CAKE (Community Action and Knowledge Exchange): Predominantly focused on students providing ICT solutions to community groups and company ICT issues in and around Bristol.
- Skills Bridge: A brokerage service that connects local organisations and community groups and students at both UWE and Bristol University; provides a showcase of existing and previous student engagement projects and is a legacy of the HEFCE funded Green Capital: Student Capital programme (see below).
- Parkhive: A collaborative project between students at UWE and the Bristol Parks Forum with the objective of improving the green spaces in the City.
- CFR (Centre for Floods, Community and Resilience): Provides links to student's third year projects and also co-ordinates opportunities for internships with civil engineering and construction companies for Masters Students studying Applied GIS Environment Consultancy and Sustainable Development and undergraduates studying Geography.

What are the key plans for development?

The mid-term review of the 2020 Strategy demonstrates that engagement and the student experience is being integrated organically within the way that the university works. Work practice will continue to seek to add value to the student experience by focusing on the core graduate attributes, values and capabilities that employers value. The final review of the extent to which the strategic objectives have been met and the proceeding strategy will set the set the direction going forward.

UWE is currently developing a pyramid of student enterprise engagement opportunities as part of the integration of the University Enterprise Zone across the university. This will range from awareness raising across the student population, to integrating specific enterprise modules within programmes, developing a specific student enterprise programme and an opportunity to establish a start-up investment.

In parallel to the 2020 Strategy review, PE and the student experience will be a priority as part of UWE's development of its Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) submission to HEFCE by the end of October 2016.

The new appointment of an Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Regional Engagement will provide added impetus to recognise and celebrate existing and planned engagement activity including a focus on new commercial activity, Bristol as a learning city and the apprenticeship agenda.

How is it evaluated?

There are two levels of evaluation. At a high level, the extent to which priority 4 in Strategy 2020 is being met provides a good indication of whether the ambition to be an institution that focuses on practice-oriented learning is increasingly becoming a reality. At

a local level, key programmes and projects are subject to external or internal formal evaluation.

Project Example: Green Capital: Student Capital – The Power of Student Sustainability Engagement

Bristol City's successful bid to be European Green Capital for 2015 led to HEFCE support to develop student engagement across the city via a unique partnership between the city's two universities and their respective Students' Unions. The five objectives of Green Capital: Student Capital are:

- To create an increase in student engagement in business, community and voluntary sector organisations
- To promote awareness in the wider community of the potential impact of students as positive change agents
- To deliver dissemination activities to examine the role of higher education in Green Capital initiatives
- To undertake a robust evaluation of the project to understand the impact and value of student engagement
- To act as a demonstration project in relation to the two universities and their respective student's unions working in partnership.

Project activity

The programme generated a wide range of projects focused around a broad definition of sustainability including aspects of environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability.

Project activities included:

- Promoting recycling on campuses
- Delivering lessons on sustainability in primary schools
- Campaigning to reduce the consumption of plastic bags and single-use plastic items
- Developing a long-term bicycle hire scheme for children
- Raising the issue of homelessness by raising donations
- Writing business plans for local NGOs
- Volunteering for local organisations
- Campaigning for divestment from fossil fuels
- Running a "BioBlitz" on the university precinct
- Supporting conservation efforts in local woodlands
- Undertaking energy audits and providing advice on energy use for community groups

- Researching ‘tricky problems’ for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) & NGOs
- Promoting public health initiatives
- Greening business through waste and energy audits and via green business plans
- Helping communities with architecture and design challenges
- Hands on Bristol beach and other clean up schemes.

Challenges

There were five areas within which challenges were identified and overcome:

- Collaboration: Although it is common for higher education institutions to work in partnership, it is rarer for students’ unions and student cohorts to work together effectively.
- Resources: Due to the ambition and scale of the project, the universities worked together to secure external funding to support the project.
- Good quality information: An early issue was acquiring accurate data about the activities that were taking place, bearing in mind, that students were not operating in a vacuum and there were a number of existing engagement projects already underway, and the two institutions had different mechanisms in place for recording activity.
- Generating student interest: As the aim was to engage a significant number of students, a range of easy entry points were established to enable students to engage including volunteering, placements, internships, and project-based activity.
- Establishing a strong legacy: It was important to capture and build on the momentum generated by the programme, ‘raising the bar’ in relation to future student engagement projects.

Benefits for students

The value and impact of the ‘Green Capital: Student Capital’ programme has been documented⁴. The benefits for students include that students can be significant change agents when relationships are properly brokered and supported; a structured approach to student engagement in sustainability promotes student understanding and community roles; it provides an opportunity to harness the power of a significant student population within a locality; it provides a platform for sustainability and ongoing student visibility.

Other critical success factors are an experimentalist governance approach allowing flexibility to be responsive to organisation and student needs; partnership working is most effective when all stakeholders are encouraging the same outcomes; and the importance of scale/critical mass.

⁴ Clayton, W., Longhurst, J., Willmore, C., et al (2015) The Bristol Method: Green Capital Student Capital – The power of student sustainability engagement

Impact

The predominant impact of the programme relates to the key output of 126,000 hours of volunteer time, engaging 8,071 students, which equates to 74 years of work with a cash value of £1.1 million. Change Maker and Gold Change Maker awards were given to students who made significant or outstanding contributions. In parallel to the project activity, there was significant academic output including: three international conferences hosted in Bristol; 26 academic papers either presented at conferences or developed for submissions to journals and six video case studies. A critical impact was the development of Skills Bridge which provides continuity and a legacy beyond the lifetime of the original programme. Skills Bridge provides a brokerage mechanism for organisations across the city region to engage with students on a range of short and medium-term projects and activities.

The programme had an impact on curriculum design, stimulating further sustainability audits across programme areas and it also had an impact on UWE research, undertaken by the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments and the Air Quality Management Resource Centre.

Evaluation

The evaluation of 'Green Capital: Student Capital'⁵ was undertaken by the NUS and was student-led. Following intensive student training in evaluation and auditing techniques, students undertook a documentary evidence review and a series of group interviews. The Lead Evaluator Summation stated:

"Each distinct component of the Green Capital: Student Capital project has had a positive outcome for students and the wider community. Not only have the objectives set out for the project all been met but the true meaningfulness of the student engagement has been proven."

⁵ Green Capital: Student Capital Student-led Evaluation, Quinn Runkle, Senior Project Officer – Communities and Curriculum, Department for Sustainability, NUS, June 2016

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