

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SKILLS

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

SECTION 1 - MY MOTIVATIONS, EXPERIENCES & PREFERENCES

There are so many opportunities for public engagement with research that the choice can be overwhelming. It is easy to find yourself doing things that are fun and interesting without thinking strategically about what will be useful to your research or your professional development. The exercises in this section will help you understand your motivations, experiences and preferences.

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME

1B. EXPERIENCE MAPPING

1C. ENGAGEMENT METHOD PREFERENCE QUIZ

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME

This exercise will help you reflect on what motivates you to get involved in public engagement.

Why you want to get involved in public engagement is personal to you. In this exercise, we ask you to take a moment to reflect on your motivations. This will help you:

- identify the benefits that public engagement with research will bring
- be strategic in your choices by prioritising activities that are of value to you and the groups you are reaching out to
- identify the key stakeholders you'd most like to work with
- choose activities that you will find interesting and rewarding, and that work for people you are engaging with
- find the time and energy to make your activity work

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

EXERCISE

1

Why do you want to get involved in public engagement?

Use the space below to note down the main reasons why you want to get involved in public engagement - in the general sense and also more specifically in relation to your current research project.

WHY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GENERALLY?

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WHY FOR MY CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT?

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NEED INSPIRATION?

Check out some of the common reasons why researchers want to get involved in engaging public groups with their work on page nine.

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

EXERCISE

2

Outcomes for you and your research

Think about your motivation for doing public engagement specifically related to your current research project answer the following questions:

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL CHANGE ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH IF YOU DO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL CHANGE ABOUT YOU (PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY) IF YOU DO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT?

3

How important to you is each of your more general motivations that you identified earlier?

Return to the table in 1 and review your list and rate each of the motivations with the following scales:

On a scale of 1 – 3 (1 – Very important to me, 2 – Quite important to me and 3 – Not important or relevant to me)

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME**WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?****NEXT STEPS**

You've now identified the broad motivations you have in relation to public engagement with research, along with some motivations you feel are particularly relevant for your current research project. Use this list to help you make decisions about the types of activities you get involved in. However, these motivations may change for you over time and will become much more specific for each intervention/project and for each research funder.

NEXT STEPS

Put a note in your calendar now to revisit these motivations in the future, when your public engagement activity has developed. Note your motivations, and ask yourself these questions when the time comes:

- Does my public engagement activity match my motivations?
- What needs to change?
- What is going well?
- Who needs more support?

1A. WHAT MOTIVATES ME

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

COMMON MOTIVATIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT I want to develop new and existing skills to enhance my professional development (to assist with probation, promotion and general career progression).

SOCIAL JUSTICE I want to help all people to have equal access to wealth, health, wellbeing, justice and opportunity.

COMMUNITY NEEDS I want to use my research to address the needs of people outside the university.

NURTURING NEW TALENT I want to encourage a broader range of future researchers so my field can benefit from diverse ideas and talent.

ENJOYMENT I want to feel refreshed and have fun by doing something different with my research.

PROMOTING TRUST I want to make research an open, accessible and transparent process and promote trust between research institutions and society.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC SUPPORT universities are dependent on public funds, and public support, and must be accountable for this.

GET MORE FUNDING I want to get more funding for my research. Funders want to see how my research effects people outside academia, and public engagement is a great way to evidence this.

RAISING MY PROFILE I want to raise my profile as a researcher or individual.

RAISING AWARENESS I want to make sure that people know about my area of research.

GAIN INSIGHT I want to get new perspectives on my research from people outside academia who have first-hand experience and knowledge of the issues I'm interested in.

TO IMPROVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE I want students I work with to have a broader experience of university life that includes communities connected to their area of study.

1B. EXPERIENCE MAPPING

Many of the skills that are necessary to do public engagement are not unique to public engagement. Developing your practice in public engagement is not about learning a whole new set of skills or knowledge but drawing on the expertise you may already have from other jobs you've done; personal achievements or roles you have in your personal life you might not immediately associate with your current job.

This exercise will help you explore a variety of experiences and dig a little deeper into them looking for transferable skills as well as what you enjoyed or disliked about those experiences. Doing this will help you discover and surface your existing skills, expertise, and preferences that will be valuable in developing your approach to engaging people with your research.

1B. EXPERIENCE MAPPING

EXERCISE

Starting with your current role, work backwards and create a map of your journey of how you got here. Use the next page of the toolkit to do this.

Chart on your map any significant experiences you had along the way, professional or personal, these could be other roles you've held, hobbies, interests and achievements or voluntary activities you've undertaken.

At each point think about the skills and knowledge you developed because of that experience.

QUESTIONS TO PROMPT REFLECTIONS:

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?

WAS THAT A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE? WHY WAS THAT?

DID THAT EXPERIENCE MAKE YOU FEEL DIFFERENTLY ABOUT ANYTHING? WHY?

DID THAT EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE WHAT YOU DID NEXT?

1B. EXPERIENCE MAPPING

EXERCISE

Map out your career journey

1C. ENGAGEMENT METHOD PREFERENCE QUIZ

Your approach to engaging public groups with your research may be the result of your own personal style, interest and preferences. This could be the result of your education, interests outside work and study, your work experience or how you prefer to be engaged and learn. Understanding your preferences will help make sense of why you might be more interested in doing science comedy versus running a focus group, for example.

This exercise aims to help you understand your preferences and reflect on how these preferences may or may not meet the needs of engagement in your research project.

1C. ENGAGEMENT METHOD PREFERENCE QUIZ**EXERCISE**

This quiz is a way to explore your preferences and interests when it comes to public engagement. For each of these six points choose a statement that you think best describes you. Don't think too hard just go for your gut instinct.

- 1
- A I like persuading other people to think differently
 - B I like building consensus
 - C I enjoy being challenged by opposing views
-
- 2
- A I like thinking of creative ways to share my knowledge
 - B I like thinking of creative ways for people to work together
 - C I like thinking of creative ways for people to share their knowledge and experience
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- 3
- A I am an ideas person
 - B I am flexible and open-minded
 - C I value others' points of view
-
- 4
- A I like feeling that I am independent
 - B I like feeling that I am part of a community
 - C I like understanding other people's view
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- 5
- A I enjoy seeing others interested in, or entertained by, the things that I have to say
 - B I enjoy open-ended creative activities
 - C I am a good listener
-
- 6
- A I like solving problems alone, using my own ideas
 - B I like solving problems in a team
 - C I like solving problems alone, after I've had some input from others
-

1C. ENGAGEMENT METHOD PREFERENCE QUIZ

LOOK BACK AT YOUR ANSWERS. IF YOU ANSWERED...

EXERCISE

MOSTLY A_s – INFORM You will probably enjoy working on public engagement activities that focus on sharing your knowledge, inspiring people, educating them, and influencing their decisions. Activities you might want to get involved in include:

- Public talks, debates and panels
- Festivals
- Blogs
- Social media including Twitter, Instagram and social news website Reddit
- Broadcast media such as TV, Radio and podcasting

MOSTLY B_s – WORK TOGETHER You will probably enjoy working on collaborative engagement activities, in which you work with people with different backgrounds to solve problems, make decisions, and create things. Activities you might want to get involved in include:

- Dialogue events
- Participatory art projects
- Workshops and working groups
- Coproduction activities

MOSTLY C_s – LISTEN You will probably enjoy working on engagement activities where you learn about others' experiences, opinions, and knowledge from outside academia. Activities you might want to get involved in include:

- Interviews, surveys and questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Citizens' juries
- Advisory panels

These are the three main purposes of most public engagement activities. However, in reality, public engagement activities will rarely just have a single purpose but be combination of one or more.

REFLECTIONS This quiz reveals the preference you have for the type of public engagement activity you might be best suited to be involved in. However, the audiences you want to work with, and the goals you want to achieve with engaging people with your research, may work better with other styles of activities.