

Public Engagement Medium-term Priorities

AIM

An open and accessible College that embraces and includes wider society through high-quality engagement.

THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CONTEXT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Our overall aim unites our specific Public Engagement focus within the College of Science and Engineering with other University interests. Firstly, as part of the overall Strategy 2030¹, the University of Edinburgh endeavours to be more inclusive and accessible to all, with social and civic responsibility one of four key areas. Secondly, the University-wide strategy for Public Engagement² aspires to improve relationships with communities locally and internationally to deliver true impact for society. Thirdly, the Community Engagement Strategy³ prioritises: a) the strengthening of relationships between the University, the city and our communities; b) the enhancement of community relations; and c) improved interaction and understanding between the University and our communities. Finally, our Public Engagement efforts coincide with aspects of the Aspiration and Early Engagement strand in the Widening Participation Strategy⁴, through engaging with communities that have not traditionally connected with the University.



Collaboration: Designers, engineers, consultants, and students working together at the launch of the Nairobi Energy Data Challenge in Kenya, to develop new ideas for data and off-grid energy access.

Definition of Public Engagement

Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

OUR KEY OUTCOMES

1. Staff and students will be more empowered to undertake public engagement.
2. Public Engagement Professionals will be more enabled to support staff and students in undertaking public engagement activities and projects.
3. Staff and students will develop more sustainable engagement with diverse communities through enhanced partnerships.

Our focus on these three fundamental outcomes will result in citizens having improved access to cutting-edge scientific knowledge, greater potential to be involved in research processes, as well as better opportunities to know who our scientists are and what they do.

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030>

² http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Researchers/Public_engagement/Strategy_for_Supporting_Public_Engagement_with_Research.pdf

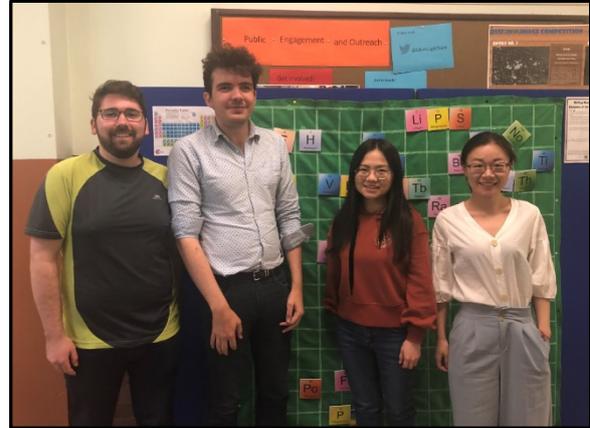
³ https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/community-engagement-strategy_web_final.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidingprinciples2018-2021.pdf>

OUR MAIN ACTIVITIES

A. Improving support for staff and students involved in Public Engagement

- a) Develop and enhance best-practice Public Engagement resources and make these available through the SharePoint platform.⁵
- b) Deliver the 'Creating Impactful Public Engagement' workshop through IAD and offer the workshop in response to School-level enquiries.
- c) Maintain an overview of Public Engagement training available through the Institute of Academic Development (IAD), and negotiate new additions and/or amendments to the programme in response to developing needs.
- d) Maintain a College-wide Public Engagement community through a regular newsletter, websites, and resource-sharing.
- e) Raise awareness of Public Engagement opportunities and support through College- and School-level communication avenues that direct staff and students to our mailing list and online resources.
- f) Support and provide the infrastructure (i.e. through training and mentoring) for staff and students to evaluate and reflect on their Public Engagement in order to develop more meaningful and appropriate processes as well as support potential Impact plans.
- g) Support the implementation of the Academic Leads for Public Engagement Scheme (ALPES): a pan-University programme of training and mentoring to foster academic leadership in Public Engagement across the institution.



Student-led: *Book a Scientist* is aimed at Primary and Secondary Schools to enrich the students' experience of their curriculum without having to leave the classroom

B. Enhancing reward and recognition of staff and students who engage our communities

- a) Working in collaboration with the University's Public Engagement Coordination Group, encourage all Schools/Groups to explicitly consider Public Engagement within the annual Performance and Development Review and promotion cases.
- b) Contribute to the development of online case studies that highlight how Public Engagement efforts have been a positive factor in the recent promotions of academic staff at different career stages.
- c) Within the KB100 project, support the implementation of prizes that recognise and reward best practice in Public Engagement.
- d) Develop an advisory notice, in collaboration with University HR, which supports staff in deciding when and how to reward students who support their Public Engagement plans. Share this more widely through the University's Public Engagement Coordination Group.

⁵ CSE Public Engagement SharePoint site: <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/CSCE/public-engagement/SitePages/Home.aspx>; further details about the projects behind the images used in this medium-term document can be found on the Exemplars of Public Engagement SharePoint page.

C. Developing the foundations to work in partnership with new communities

- a) Provide support for staff and students to address ‘low science capital’⁶ through highlighting relevant opportunities for engagement (e.g. LEAPS / SHEP schools; SIMD data-zones)
- b) Develop exemplars of Public Engagement within the College, particularly to demonstrate the interdisciplinary and innovative efforts of staff and students.
- c) Develop a new strand of the Doors Open Day programme that engages communities close to the King’s Building campus by visiting these communities directly.
- d) Explore the potential for a Schools’ Conference – building on existing Science Insights and/or Schools in Labs projects – within the KB100 project that will target LEAPS-priority secondary schools.
- e) Share details of Scottish Government calls for evidence and similar opportunities that relate to the research undertaken across the College.



Community-focus: Staff and students are working with the Craigmillar community to raise the science aspirations of local children and families through the *Craigmillar Community Science Festival* and other year-round activities.



Innovation: *AI Primer* builds on the lecture approach through an interactive game-show element to explore topics around the central theme of Artificial Intelligence.

TIMELINE

This medium-term priorities document will next be reviewed in late 2021.

⁶ The concept of “science capital” can help to understand patterns in science participation - why some people engage and others do not: i.e. “Is science for me?” Science capital is conceptualised as a bag containing all the science-related knowledge, attitudes, experiences and resources people acquire through life. It includes: a) what science people know; b) how people think about science (i.e. attitudes and dispositions); c) who people know (e.g. if family/friends are interested in science); and d) how people engage with science day-to-day. See: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/departments/education-practice-and-society/science-capital-research>