

The Engaging Researcher

Getting started in public engagement

Participant Toolkit

NAME:

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Programme outline

TIME	DETAIL
09:00 – 09:30	Participant registration
09:30 – 10:25	What...is public engagement?
10:25 – 10:40	Why... engage the public with my research?
10:40 – 11:05	Who...are the public?
11:05 – 11:20	Break
11:20 – 11:50	Who...are the public? (continued)
11:50 – 12:25	So what...about research might be interesting to the public?
12:25 – 12:30	How...do I design a public engagement activity?
12:30 – 13:15	Lunch
13:15 – 14:20	How...do I design a public engagement activity? (continued)
14:20 – 14:35	Break
14:35 – 15:40	Your case study
15:40 – 16:30	Now what...where do I go from here?

Introduction to the programme

Keen to engage the public with your research but not sure where to begin?

An engaging researcher is just like any other researcher - with one important difference. Engaging researchers go out of their way to involve the public with their research. They open up opportunities for others to get involved, provide new perspectives on the value of their work, and stimulate people to be curious about the world of research - and why it matters.

This one day highly interactive workshop has been designed for researchers who are new to, or have some experience with public engagement. During the workshop, participants will:

- Explore how public engagement can benefit you, your research, research funders and the public with whom you engage
- Discover the range of activities you can use to engage the public with your research
- Investigate the needs of different publics, explore potential engagement challenges, and identify solutions for overcoming them
- Explore methods for evaluating the impact and success of public engagement activities.
- Put your knowledge and skills into action to design and plan a public engagement activity.
- Examine which public engagement activities complement your current skills and what will help you develop your skills further
- Learn how to take the next steps in finding public engagement contacts and opportunities
- Collaborate with peers from a range of disciplines and institutions

Process

This will be achieved through:

- a safe, yet challenging environment that will encourage you to explore and identify the key elements of public engagement
- a balanced and structured programme of exercises and review that will provide a variety of learning situations, allowing you to identify and take away relevant lessons
- a range of group situations where you will be encouraged to have discussions on particular topics and share feedback with peers
- this toolkit – offered to aid your learning process in your own working environment
- encouragement to create an ongoing level of support from your learning groups that will enable continued networking, coaching and further group interactions.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

What do you hope to gain or learn by attending this event?

Networking

What is networking?

Networking is increasing the number of people you know and who know you. By expanding the network of people you know you will be able to turn to more people for help and advice and find out about more opportunities. Networking is based on the principle of reciprocity, which means that just as you draw opportunities and support from your networks you are expected to put something back in. This means that the larger your networks the more people will look to you for advice and support.

Why network?

Networking helps you to:

- Exchange information and keep up-to-date with new developments
- Secure personal, political or managerial support for your work
- Identify potential areas for collaboration
- Establish disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-sector special interest groups
- Get published and receive referrals
- Explore career options
- Raise your profile and the profile/engagement of your research

There is a great deal of research that suggests that individuals who have large numbers of friends and contacts and who maintain relationships with colleagues and former colleagues tend to succeed in their careers. People tend to prefer to collaborate with people who they know and like. Therefore, effective networkers are likely to be offered more opportunities. Because academic communities are small you are likely to find yourself being examined, peer reviewed or interviewed by people who you have met at conferences etc.

Networking and public engagement

Networking is a key skill in developing yourself as an engaging researcher. The more networks you are involved in, the more likely you will know about relevant public engagement opportunities. There are also public engagement networks where you can share ideas with other researchers interested in this area.

First impressions are vital. If you can introduce yourself and communicate an interesting or intriguing fact about your research in under 30 seconds, you are well on the way to being an engaging researcher.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

Did you make any interesting connections during this activity?

What did you discover about communicating your own research clearly and concisely?

Jargon

Jargon is any complex language that unnecessarily prevents clear understanding or explanation

As we get increasingly familiar with our subject matter we further develop our own research language. To anyone that cannot communicate in this language we are speaking in jargon. To engage the public in your research, it's important to *junk the jargon* without oversimplifying your research or worse patronising your public. Sometimes it is inevitable that you will need to use technical terms, in fact sometimes such terms can help raise curiosity about your research, however it is essential that you explain clearly what the term means from the outset, that you give it context and relevance.

Be aware that jargon is not just the scientific or research terms and acronyms that you may use, it also means longer or formal terms where simpler, everyday terms would do, for example endeavour (try), erroneous (wrong), utilisation (using) and methodology (process).

An engaging researcher thinks about how they will most effectively communicate with different publics. They will modify their language to make the subject matter interesting, relevant and appropriate. Try to describe your work in ways that can be easily visualised. Use analogies and metaphors to help explain complex processes and liken things to everyday situations.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

When do you find yourself using jargon and why?

What will you do to junk the jargon?

Create a jargon dictionary: what terms do I use that may be considered jargon by others?

What...is public engagement?

Public engagement means many things to many people. There isn't a single definition and depending on your research discipline and your Institution's culture your experiences of 'what it is' and 'doing it' will differ greatly. But it is useful come to a shared understanding of what we mean by public engagement.

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

– Vitae "The engaging researcher" booklet.

There are a large number of opportunities to engage with the general public, for example:

- Giving talks at local and national organisations about your research area
- Running or contributing to adult education courses
- Contributing to open days and other school outreach activities
- Taking part in writing or poster competitions
- Joining a national scheme like STEM Ambassadors to go into schools
- Writing a press release or blog about your research

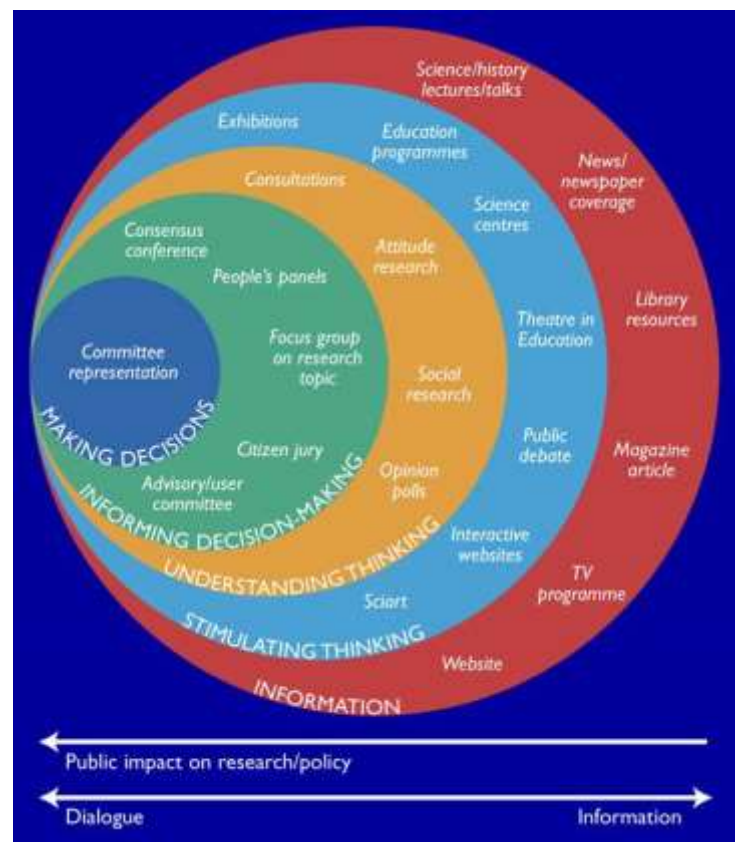
Models: The Public Engagement Onion

This model shows public engagement methods and activities as a series of layers, like an onion. With each layer the focus moves from two-way dialogue and co-design or co-decision making to telling or information giving. Hence the impact on your research or on influencing policy decreases as you move towards the outer layers of the onion.

Depending on your discipline you will see some activities may have a more natural or obvious fit with your own research. For example:

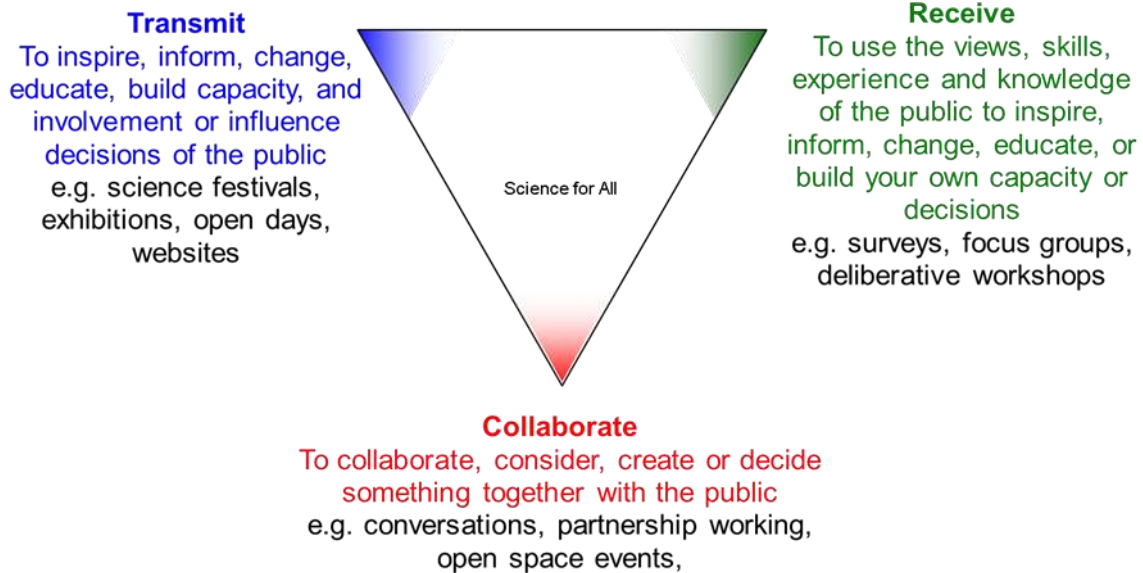
- STEM based research has a history of inspiring future generations of scientists. 'Information' and 'Stimulating Thinking'
- Social science has a tradition of investigating public attitudes and shaping public policy. 'Understanding Thinking' and 'Informing Decision Making'
- The grant peer review panels of UK research funders such as AHRC and BBSRC include reviewers from outside the academic community to provide perspectives on the social, cultural or economic impact of proposals. 'Making Decisions'.

However as research becomes more collaborative and innovative you are likely to see a blurring of these traditional divisions. When thinking about the types of public engagement activities you wish to get involved in, use the Onion model to consider how you could create a meaningful experience for both yourself and the people involved in that activity.



Source Acknowledgement: Wellcome Trust

Models: The Public Engagement Triangle



This model is designed to help you explore your **reasons** for carrying out any public engagement activity. It can help you to plan, design, and draw out **objectives** for your communication and public engagement activities. It will also help you to think about your public engagement **strategy**, possible **approaches**, and consider how you will **evaluate** your activity against your objectives.

The model shows three broad, but often overlapping purposes:

- **Transmitting** information to others
- **Receiving** information from others
- **Collaborating** or coproducing information or outcomes with others.

The tool can help you to create a meaningful experience for both yourself and the people involved in the public engagement activity. Use the tool to get the conversation started:

- What is the emphasis of your public engagement activity?
- What terms come to mind when you think about the activity, for example:
 - Transmit: inspiration, raise awareness, shift perceptions, change behaviour
 - Receive: partnership, shared decision making, conflict resolution
 - Collaborate: influence decision making, consultation, understand strength of feeling
- What it is you want to achieve and why?
- Have you considered the range of available public engagement methods or activities available?
- What are the most appropriate activities or methods to meet your identified needs?
- What expertise or skills will you need to deliver the activity?
- How will you evaluate those activities against your objectives?

Source Acknowledgement: The Public Engagement Triangle: a conversational tool. Developed by Lindsey Colbourne, August 2010 for the BIS Science for All group.
<http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/all/files/2010/10/PE-conversational-tool-Final-251010.pdf>

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

How familiar are you with the range of public engagement activities discussed so far today?

What public engagement activities would you like to find more about?

Which model helps you to most understand the scope and range of public engagement activities?

Why...engage the public with my research?

The benefits of engaging the public with your research include creating opportunities for others to get involved, providing new perspectives and engaging people in your research area and why it matters.

Funding bodies and universities are increasingly encouraging researchers to do public engagement activities. Documents such as the *Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research* (and associated briefings) provide a strong encouragement for all researchers, regardless of their discipline, to engage the public in their research.

There many good reasons for participating in public engagement activities. Here are just some of the reasons shared by other researchers:

- Developing your skills
- Stimulating research creativity and innovation
- Enriching your career
- Motivating – inspiring you & your research
- Enhancing your research quality & its impact
- Gaining new research perspectives
- Raising your personal & institutional profile
- Influencing & networking opportunities
- Helping to build trust
- Forming collaborations & partnerships
- Enjoyment & personal reward
- Accessing more funding
- Increasing awareness of the value of research
- Increasing student recruitment
- Inspiring the next generation of researchers

It's important to think about why you want to engage the public with your research as this will impact on what you do and who you engage with.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

What are your personal motivations for doing public engagement?

What would you find most rewarding about doing public engagement activities?

How might public engagement help you to develop as a professional researcher?

Who...are the public?

We are all the public. When we engage with others, we inevitably have to make an assessment of how to communicate with them. These assessments are often based on assumptions and stereotypes. The public you engage with may have already developed a particular view of what researchers are like – a picture often built up from the media. To engage with any particular public audience you need to build up picture but have to aim for accuracy rather than assumptions and stereotypes.

The following are some examples of publics you might encounter when taking part in a public engagement activity.

- An over 60s club from a city suburb
- A Women's Institute group from a rural county
- A group of 16 - 18 year olds from an inner city Young People's Centre
- A government committee considering policy on which your research could have direct impact
- A class of year 6 (10 - 11 year old) pupils from a primary school
- The committee of a Festival e.g. science, history, literature, international
- A special interest, community or action group
- Commuters at a busy train station
- Visitors at a local museum
- A parent and toddler group
- An informal group meeting in a cafe or bar

Each group of people will have particular characteristics and one of the keys to engaging fully with the group is to recognise those characteristics and to start thinking yourself into their shoes. You might start doing so by considering the following:

- How do members of your public see themselves?
- Where do they come from? What age group are they? How diverse is the group in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability? What would be your expectations of the household incomes, occupations and educational backgrounds of public members?
- How much does the public already know about your topic? What does the public know about you? How do they view you?
- What attitudes or misconceptions is the public likely to have about the topic? Has there been media coverage of the topic and should they believe everything they've read in the papers? What papers will they have read?
- What is your relationship to the public? What attitude do you expect the public to have towards you? What can you do to build a bridge between you and the public?
- What kind of information is important to this public? How are they likely to use the information they're given?
- What kind of approach will this public expect? (formal; informal; academic lecture; conversational; theatrical performance)
- What motivates the public? What makes your public tick? What are they enthusiastic about?
- What might you expect to gain from this public?

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

What public groups do you want to engage with and why?

Are there any public groups that would be likely to engage with you and why?

What might the public get out of engaging with you and your research?

So what...about research might be interesting to the public?

“The question should not be is our research any good, but what is it good for?”
Professor Chris Brink, VC, Newcastle University

You might know why your research is important and how it contributes to knowledge within your discipline, but to be an engaging researcher it is crucial that you can also explain the broader context of your research area. Keep in mind your audience and discuss what is important, relevant and interesting about the research area from their perspective.

Reasons for engaging with the public extend beyond the benefits to the research and researchers themselves. Some argue that if research is publicly funded, society has a right to shape research agendas and be involved in decisions about how discoveries are used.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

What is important, relevant and interesting about your research?

Why should the public care about your research?

What would the public gain from knowing more about your research area?

How...do I design a public engagement activity?

In designing a public engagement activity, you need to be realistic about the amount of time it will take you to prepare and run the activity as well as what resources you have available.

Examples of public engagement activities could include:

- Running hands-on demonstrations at museums or science centres
- Taking part in festivals
- Doing a public talk or lecture
- Working with schools or young people
- Running a public dialogue or debate event
- Performing a stand-up comedy routine at a cafe or bar
- Appearing on television or radio
- Writing a blog or contributing to a website
- Writing for a public magazine
- Involving the public as co-researchers
- Developing a social media application

How do you know your activity has been successful?

Reasons for doing evaluation include:

- helps with your planning – focus on what you want to achieve and how you will know if you have been successful
- provides you with evidence – proves value and benefits of your activity
- produces a record of your achievement
- demonstrates value for money
- can inform future activities – provide lessons learned
- makes you reflect on your approach and how to improve it.

Having an evaluation strategy

An evaluation strategy does not have to be extensive – just one side of A4. It will help you to plan your public engagement activity fully. An evaluation strategy should cover the following sections:

1. **Aim** (why are you doing the activity?)
2. **SMART objectives** (what do you want to achieve?)
 - **Specific** - straight forward, focused and well defined with emphasis on action and the required outcome
 - **Measurable** - visible progress to help you to know when you have achieved your objective(s)
 - **Achievable** - objectives that stretch you, but not so far that you become frustrated and lose motivation
 - **Realistic** - realistic means that you have the resources to get it done
 - **Time defined** - must have deadlines but they need to be both achievable and realistic
3. **Evaluation questions** (what do you want to know?)
 - Resources e.g. Were they adequate? What could be improved?
 - Activity e.g. Did they work? What could be improved?
 - Outputs (results of you activity) e.g. How many took part? What type of people took part? What was achieved? How could it be improved?
 - Outcomes (overall benefits) e.g. Did people change their behaviour, knowledge, skills, attitudes? How did your activity achieve these outcomes? How could it be improved?
 - Impact (overall effect or influence – the sum of the outputs and outcomes) e.g. Has the activity had an impact? What type of impact? Could the impact have been greater?

4. **Methodology** (what strategy will you use?)
When deciding on the method to use you need to use a mixture of techniques and get more than one perspective from e.g. the public (the participants), your own (the deliverer) and a neutral observer who can be a helper or colleague (the evaluator).
5. **Data collection** (what techniques will you use to collect your data?)
It is important to try to use a mixture of quantitative (use facts and figures and multiple choice questions) and qualitative (ask people what they thought with open-ended questions) techniques. Select methods that are suitable for the type of public being engaged.
6. **Data analysis** (how will you analyse your data?)
Think about how much data you plan to gather and how you will analyse the results.
7. **Reporting** (who will be reading your report?)
Think about the evidence you have collected, what it tells you and who is going to read your report. Reflect on what you have learned from the experience. What changes will you make next time?

Practicalities

A template plan and checklist have been included in this toolkit to help you plan your next public engagement activity.

Learning styles

The VAK (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic) learning styles model suggests that most people can be divided into one of three preferred styles of learning. These three styles are as follows:

- Someone with a **Visual** learning style has a preference to see or observe things, including images, demonstrations, exhibitions and displays and films. They will construct flat-pack furniture after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first.
- Someone with an **Auditory** learning style has a preference to absorb information through listening to sounds and themselves and others speak. They will construct flat-pack furniture by either asking someone to read them the directions or by speaking them out loud.
- Someone with a **Kinaesthetic** learning style has a preference to touch, feel and experience. They will construct flat-pack furniture by working it out as they go along and often ignoring the instructions!

Most people have a main preferred learning style but some have a more even blend of two, or possibly three styles. There is no right or wrong learning style. In the context of public engagement, it is worth considering a mix of approaches when devising your activity to take into account all the possible learning styles of your participants.

Deciding on a creative idea

The Disney Creativity Strategy is a tool for facilitating creative thinking. It was created by Robert Dilts from his observations of Walt Disney who used different thought processes to do different things. There are three distinct stages:

- **Dreamer** (WHAT?) – be open to any ideas. Freely associate and think outside the box. During this stage there are no restrictions. Wouldn't it be great ...
- **Realist** (HOW?) – how can you balance your ideas with the resources you have available? Make your creative idea happen.
- **Critic** (WHY?) – Look critically at your idea. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Pick holes in it. Refine it

Wow factors

When doing activities in an open public space it is essential to have a 'Wow' element to encourage people to stop and engage. This can be achieved by having an exciting title for your activity title and/or by having objects that people can relate to or are intrigued by.

Examples of intriguing titles include:

- An experiment in kissing
- Field of Genes: DNA Testing to Find Future Olympic Champions.
- Putting the M back in STEM
- Graphene: Unexpected science in a pencil line
- The Barometer Podcast: The wonderful world of weather
- Turings Sunflowers
- Make, Hack and Do
- Get your Geek on
- Histonauts: A digital treasure hunt.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

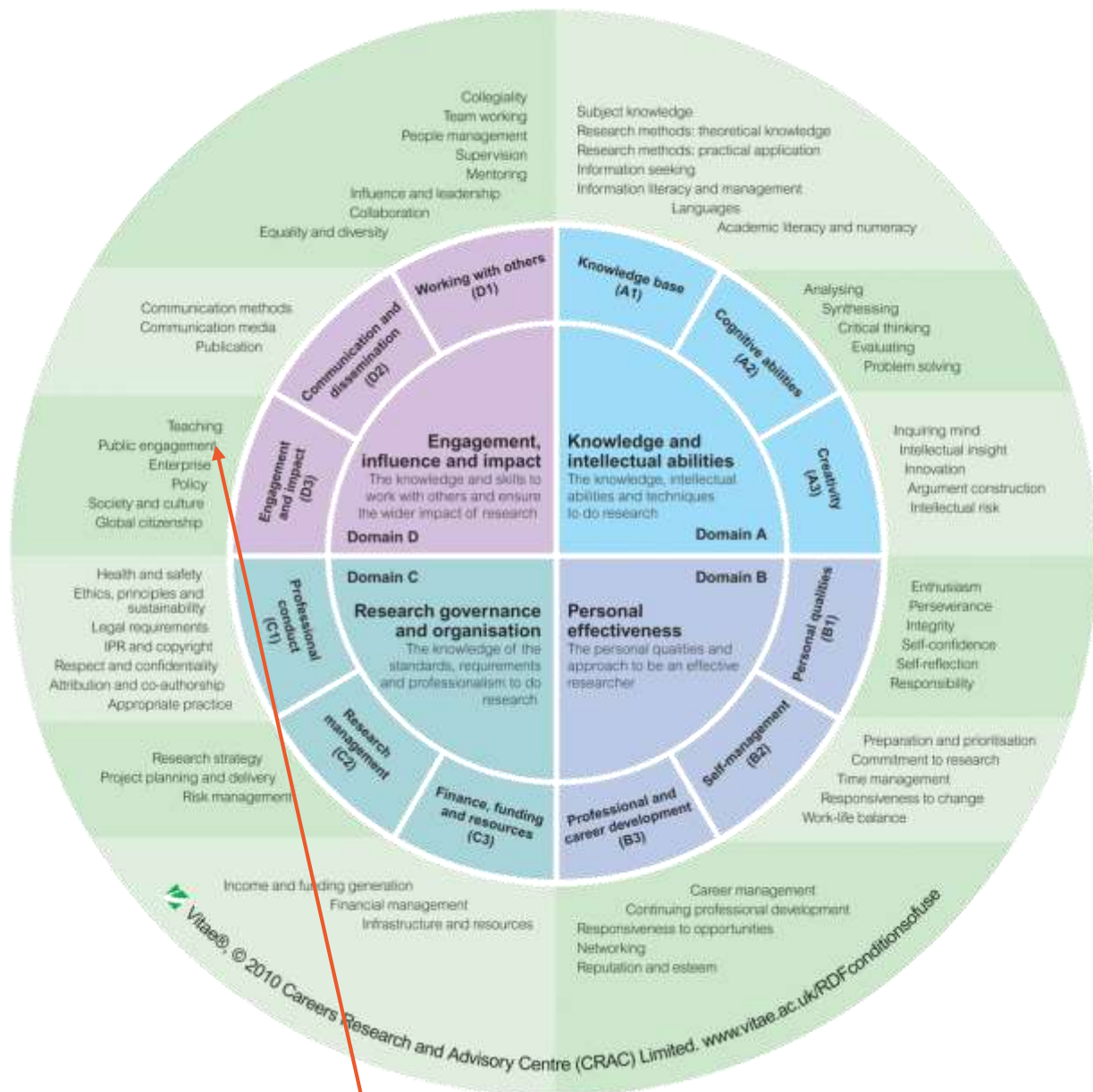
What types of public engagement activities would be suitable for you, your research and the public?

What public engagement activities would you like to know more about or get involved in?

Where will you go or who will you talk to find out more?

Now what...where do I go from here?

You may be surprised to find that you already have many of the skills needed to be an engaging researcher. Over time, you can begin to stretch yourself by developing your skills further and learning new techniques. All of the skills and attributes of public engagement are referenced in the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). This is a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education. To use the RDF to plan your professional development encompassing all aspects of developing as a researcher (not just public engagement), visit www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf.



The public engagement section of the RDF comprises the phases of development that a researcher might follow as they become more experienced in public engagement:

Phase 1:

- Understands and appreciates the value of engaging with the public, willingly participates.
- Open to influence of public interactions on own work.

- Responds to local opportunities and existing activities; presents aspects of research at public events.

Phase 2:

- Contributes to promoting the public understanding of own research area.
- Actively seeks ways to realise opportunities for public engagement.
- Facilitates engagement with others, leads on local opportunities, is involved with national programmes; makes appropriate use of external support for these activities.
- Recognises the mutual benefit of engagement to research, researchers and the public.

Phase 3:

- Facilitates opportunities for public dialogue, connects with users of research and beneficiaries; leads major public engagement projects and funding applications.
- Helps to shape the public's conception of research. Facilitates a dialogue between the public and researchers; educates, advises and guides less experienced researchers about the importance of public engagement.
- Initiates activities; building track record of public engagement.
- Creates a climate where engagement activity is valued.

Phases 4 & 5:

- Establishes public engagement reputation, gives strategic support, promotes projects and supports funding applications.
- Is known advocate for public engagement in discipline/research area; Occupies specific public engagement post(s) or personal chair.

However, many of the other skills, knowledge and behaviours of successful researchers shown in the RDF are important in your development as an engaging researcher.

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

(Where am I now) Where do your current strengths lie in terms of public engagement skills, knowledge, or behaviours? (Add evidence/examples to showcase each of your strengths)

(Where do I want to be?) What skills, knowledge or behaviours do you need to develop?

(What's stopping me?) Are there any barriers that might stop you from achieving your goals? Is there anything you can do about them?

(How do I get there?) What is your highest priority to develop? What are your first steps in developing this priority? How will you know when you have successfully developed this?

(Taking action) Record your actions/evidence and review your developmental progress

(Where am I now)...For you to complete after

In summary and top tips for effective public engagement

What is public engagement?

- Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the public. It is a two-way process and done well can have a huge impact on all participants.
- The public engagement models demonstrate a range of approaches and activities but more importantly ask you to consider the purpose behind the activity.

Why engage the public with my research?

- Be clear about why you are engaging with the public, both in your own mind and in your communication with potential participants.
- Revisit your personal motivations as they will change as you gain public engagement experience and as you progress in your career.

Who are the public?

- We are all the public.
- When planning your public engagement strategy, consider who you wish to engage and why, their interests and why they might be interested in your research area. This will help you choose a suitable approach.
- Consider the needs, expectations, and knowledge of those you wish to engage with. Be aware of your own assumptions and start thinking yourself into their shoes.
- Don't forget to think about how you might overcome any challenges you may face when engaging your public.

What about research might interest the public?

- What is the broader context of your research area?
- Also known as the What's In It For Me (WIIFM) factor - what is important, relevant and interesting about the research area from your public's perspective?

How do I design a public engagement activity?

- Allow enough time to plan public engagement thoroughly, whether it is a small, one-off event or a sustained programme.
- Build evaluation in at the start of the public engagement programme. Evaluating the experience or activity is the only way to learn what works.
- Consider how different learning style preferences can be incorporated into your activities.
- Be creative and fully explore a range of possibilities but remember you don't have to reinvent the wheel, sometimes you can re-purpose tried and tested activities from other disciplines.
- Consider the logistics and practicalities including, time, budget, venue, materials and equipment, health and safety, partners, support, and publicity. Be prepared and have a plan B to hand.

What does an engaging researcher look like?

- Engaging researchers go out of their way to involve the public with their research.
- Think about the key skills needed and plan your own professional development accordingly.
- Consider your own preferred communication styles and skills in the area of public engagement. Your activities will be far more successful if you are comfortable delivering them.

- Think about your public engagement role as one that is ongoing - this will allow you to connect your activities, build your expertise and develop a rapport with the groups you are engaging with.

Now what...where do I go from here?

- What will you do following this workshop? Do you need to do some research in your Institution, make some useful contacts or are you ready to just get on with it? Finding out about public engagement is one thing, but nothing beats putting those skills into practice.
- Share your experiences of public engagement with your colleagues. Just as you might benefit from the wealth of case studies available to you, so might others benefit for your experiences and lessons learned.

Source acknowledgement: Adapted from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Three things you could do next ...

1 Get inspired and get talking

Once you start asking the right questions you'll be surprised to discover just how much public engagement activity is taking in your own institution and across your local region.

Speak to other researchers across the department; find out what sorts of activities they are involved in and how they got started. Are there faculty or central outreach/science communication/public engagement/widening participation units?

And remember not every public engagement activity needs to be designed from scratch, take a look at the impact and public engagement case studies on funding body and learned body websites. You will find a wealth of opportunities, funding and contacts.

2 Take your research out on the town

Get involved in a science, history, social science or arts festival. Festivals provide a great opportunity for collaborating with other researchers and partners such as museums, art galleries and science centres and for working with all kinds of public groups. The types of activities can range from talks and workshops to exhibitions, public debates and performances to interactive drop-in style activities.

If you're not sure what happens at a festival, then make a commitment to attend one in the coming year – for the most part events are largely free and offer you a great chance to build your networks,

3 Raise your public engagement profile

Share your experiences with other researchers, get connected and keep up to date with events and activities.

Consider writing your own blog whether is it about your research or your activities related to that research, a reflective journey about your public engagement activities can provide a source of inspiration to others. Find out how microblogging tools such as Twitter can ensure that you are up to date with the very latest opportunities available to you. Or join an online network such as the:

- Vitae Public Engagement Blog – <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/publicengagement>
- NCCPE Public Engagement Network – <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>

As well as raising your own profile, you'll find links to other online resources and support.

Planning your next public engagement activity

This template might help you to plan your next activity.

WHY? (Aims & Objectives)	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN				
		WHO? (Audience)			
		WHAT? (Title of activity)			
HOW? (The activity)	REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE (Marketing your activity)				
	HAVE YOU BEEN SUCCESSFUL ? (Evaluating the impact)				

Public Engagement Checklist

	✓	x
ACTIVITY PLAN		
State your objectives clearly/what you want to achieve		
Identify your public		
Create an public profile		
Secure funding (if required)		
Are you working alone or in partnership? Who would be your partner(s)?		
Compile a budget		
Time Plan with dates and milestones (when you hope to achieve various actions)		
Evaluation strategy		
How you will record your activity e.g. photographs, video		
VENUE		
Conduct a site visit to see size and location of space within venue		
Check accessibility of space for buggies/people in wheelchairs/etc.		
Find out what the venue's procedures are for first aid, fire evacuation, child protection		
Find out where electric power points (if any) are located		
Ask if venue staff will be available to help set up/take down your activity		
Discover the location of the toilets, catering facilities, your named venue staff member for the day		
Car parking – where can you drop off your equipment, park your vehicles		
See if venue staff can give you any advice or tips!		
RESOURCES		
Recruit people/volunteers to help		
Brief helpers prior to activity date		
Book transport to get resources to venue		
Identify and source equipment required		
Construct or acquire equipment, signs, activity sheets, etc.		
Source any free giveaways		
HEALTH & SAFETY		
Sort out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks if required <i>(May be required when working with children. Your university's HR Department or Widening Participation Team should be able to help you)</i>		
Complete a risk assessment <i>(Required for any public event. Your university should have a form)</i>		
Source a copy of public liability insurance <i>(Required for any event held in a public space. You will be covered by the university's policy)</i>		
Ensure any electrical equipment is PAT tested <i>(Any portable electrical equipment older than one year must have been tested. It is likely to have a sticker indicating the test/retest dates)</i>		
Have a procedure for gaining consent from the public if taking photographs/video <i>(This should be covered in your university's child protection policy if not ask the advice of the venue)</i>		
PUBLICITY		
Include in your public profile how they like to hear about activities. Use this to target your marketing.		
Free advertising – find out how your venue can help you advertise your activity <i>(e.g. include in What's On guide, send out a press release, display posters, etc.)</i>		

Resources and opportunities in public engagement

Below are a few examples of various resources and opportunities available to you to help and support your public engagement activity. For a more detailed list with associated web links please visit the public engagement section of the Vitae website:

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/publicengagement>

The advice and ideas in these resources can be transferred from one discipline area to another so try not to limit yourself to those within your own research area.

Guides & Online Resources:

Communicating with the public: guidance notes (BBSRC)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Community Engagement (NHS)

Impact Toolkit (online from ESRC)

A guide to successful communications and communicating science: A scientist's survival kit (European Commission)

Dialogue with the public: practical guidelines (RCUK)

Raising the profile of your research through the media (ARHC)

Social Media: A Guide For Researchers (Research Information Network)

Association of British Writers

Vidiowiki (a community of researchers from around the world talking about their work and why it's interesting, in 3 minutes or less)

Good Practice Examples: Online (podcasts & blogs)

Geek Pop (a free online music festival featuring artists inspired by science and celebrating geek culture)

Cancer Research UK Blog

Social Science for Schools (ESRC)

Jodcast (an astronomy podcast)

Public Engagement Evaluation Resources:

Public engagement evaluation guide (Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement)

Practical guidelines: a guide for evaluating public engagement (RCUK)

Making a difference: a guide to evaluating public participation in central government (INVOLVE)

Evaluating participatory, deliberative and co-operative ways of working (Interact Working Paper)

Organisations & Networks:

Arts Council

Association for Science Centres and Discovery Centres

British Interactive Group

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE – has toolkits, engagement guides and case studies)

People and Participation

Royal Society of Arts

Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue In Science and Innovation

Note: A number of professional bodies offer outreach programmes and funding for researchers to participate in public engagement activities. We encourage you to check out other opportunities with professional bodies in your research discipline.

Events / Opportunities:

Bright Club (London, Manchester, Wales, York, Edinburgh)

The Big Draw, Campaign for Drawing

Cafe Scientifique

Festivals (e.g. Cambridge Festival of Ideas, Cheltenham Science Festival, Hay-on-Wye Literature Festival, Manchester Histories Festival, St Andrew's On The Rocks Arts Festival)

I'm a Scientist / Engineer Get Me Out of Here!

Maths Busking (street performance)

National events (e.g. Heritage Open Days, Festival of British Archaeology, ESRC's Festival of Social Science)

Nuffield Bursaries

STEM Ambassadors

Widening Participation*

Volunteering & community engagement*

Note: *Many UK universities offer these schemes and opportunities. They may have an outreach or public engagement unit.

Competitions & Awards

Famelab

Wellcome Trust Science Writing Competition

Joshua Phillips Award

Society of Biology Science Communication Award

Note: Many regions and HEIs run public engagement competitions. Be sure to check out what is going on in your local area.