Time	Activity
12.30	Exploring 'culture' and how it features in the REF
12.50	University of Aberdeen 'Cultures' Case Study
13.05	The structure of the PCE Profile
13.20	Bath Spa University REF Pilot Case Study
13.35	***Screen break***
13.45	Using the PCE framework to assess your institution
13.50	Breakout room discussion and feedback
14.25	Wrap up
14.30	End

National Co-ordinating Centre for **Public Engagement**

Exploring Engagement   Our services   What's happening?   Learn from others   Resources   About us   Search

Championing
inclusive knowledge

We are working to build an inclusive higher education sector where communities can contribute to, and benefit from, knowledge, teaching and research.

Come In WE'RE OPEN

Page

Manifesto for public engagement

The NCCPE Manifesto invites institutions to publicly affirm, celebrate, and support their public engagement activities and commitments.

Page

Engage Watermark

Our charter mark for universities in recognition of their outstanding strategic support for, and commitment to improving, public engagement.

Page

Consultancy

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) offers consultancy services supporting universities and research institutions to develop their approach to public engagement. Get in touch to find out how [...]

Page

Engage Academy

Our sector-leading, 7-month development programme for public engagement professionals.

Page

Training for Public Engagement

The NCCPE offers a range of training opportunities to support the development of high quality engagement work.

Page

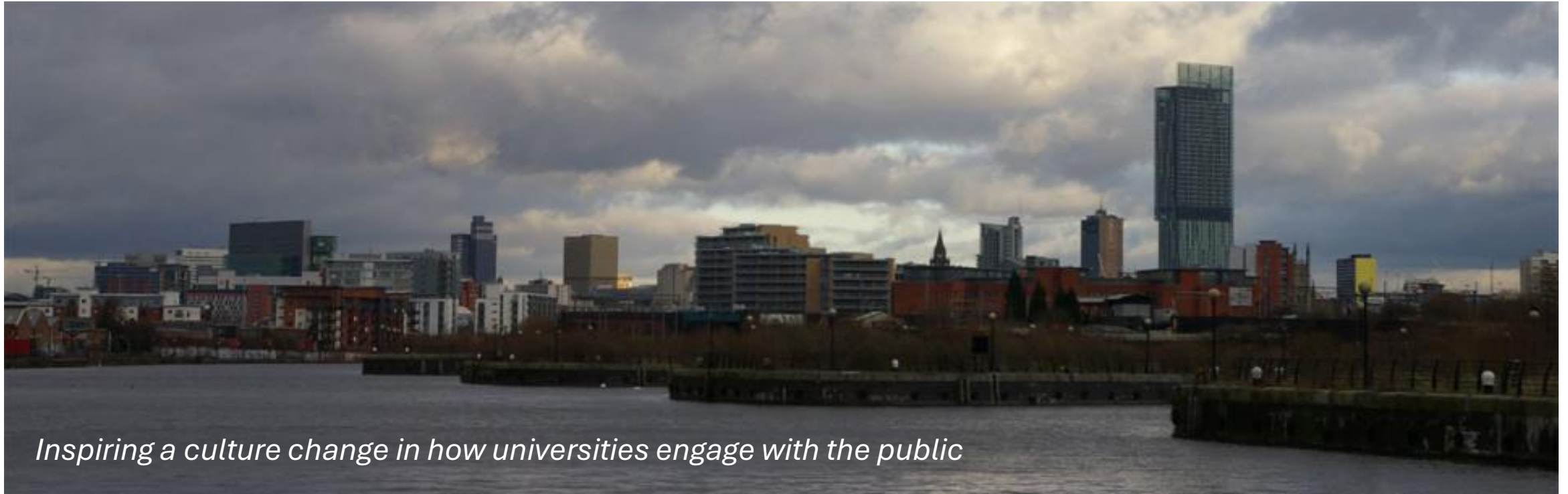## Public Engagement Professionals network

Supporting engagement professionals across the UK working in higher education and research to access CPD, peer support and the latest thinking on engagement.

Manchester Beacon
connecting people, place & knowledge

Inspiring a culture change in how universities engage with the public

Image: Michael Colvin

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

Championing inclusive knowledge

We are working to build an inclusive higher education sector where communities can contribute to, and benefit from, knowledge, teaching and research.

Come In WE'RE OPEN

UKRI Strategy 2022–2027
Transforming tomorrow together

The world is changing fast, and the UK needs a research and innovation system that is fit for the future: able to respond with agility to social, environmental, technological and economic change on a global scale

Principles for change

Diversity
We will champion a creative and dynamic research and innovation system by:

Engagement
We will help to embed research and innovation in our society and economy by:

Connectivity
We will build connectivity and break down silos across the system, nationally and internationally, by:
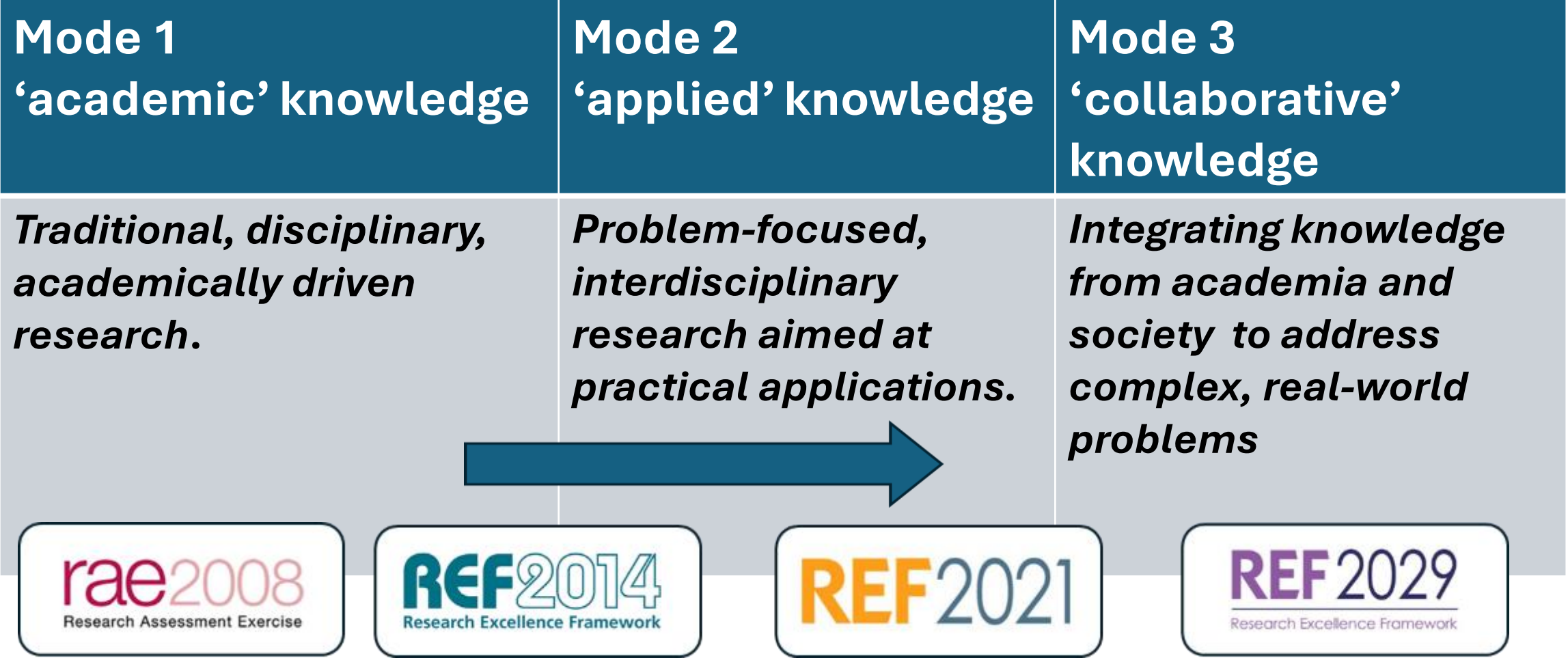
Resilience
We will increase the agility and responsiveness of the system by:

Research policy's shifting centre of gravity

Mode 1 'academic' knowledge	Mode 2 'applied' knowledge	Mode 3 'collaborative' knowledge
Traditional, disciplinary, academically driven research.	*Problem-focused, interdisciplinary research aimed at practical applications.*	*Integrating knowledge from academia and society to address complex, real-world problems*

Research policy's shifting centre of gravity

Mode 1 'academic' knowledge	Mode 2 'applied' knowledge	Mode 3 'collaborative' knowledge
Traditional, disciplinary, academically driven research.	*Problem-focused, interdisciplinary research aimed at practical applications.*	*Integrating knowledge from academia and society to address complex, real-world problems*

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Championing inclusive knowledge

We are working to build an inclusive higher education sector where communities can contribute to, and benefit from, knowledge, teaching and research.

People, culture and environment — 25%

- an **inclusive and collaborative** research system that supports a **diversity** of people, ideas, institutions, methodologies, outputs, and activities

Engagement and impact — 25%

- an **engaged and impactful** research system that connects research with wider society to bring about positive socio-economic change

Contribution to knowledge and understanding — 50%

- a research system that produces **high-quality**, **rigorous** research that is **open** to all

How are you feeling about REF 2029?

How are your colleagues feeling?

Thinking about Culture

Strategy and Leadership

(f) (in) (✉) (🔗)

Strategic leadership of public engagement requires vision and determination, and an understanding of how to change institutional culture.

on this page

1. Making Public Engagement a priority

2. Define your ambition and scope

3. Culture Matters

4. Build solid foundations

5. Build a shared vision

6. Final takeaway

7. Where next?

LINK

HANDBOOK
FOR MEMBERS AND VISITORS 2008

National Trust   2017   Handbook
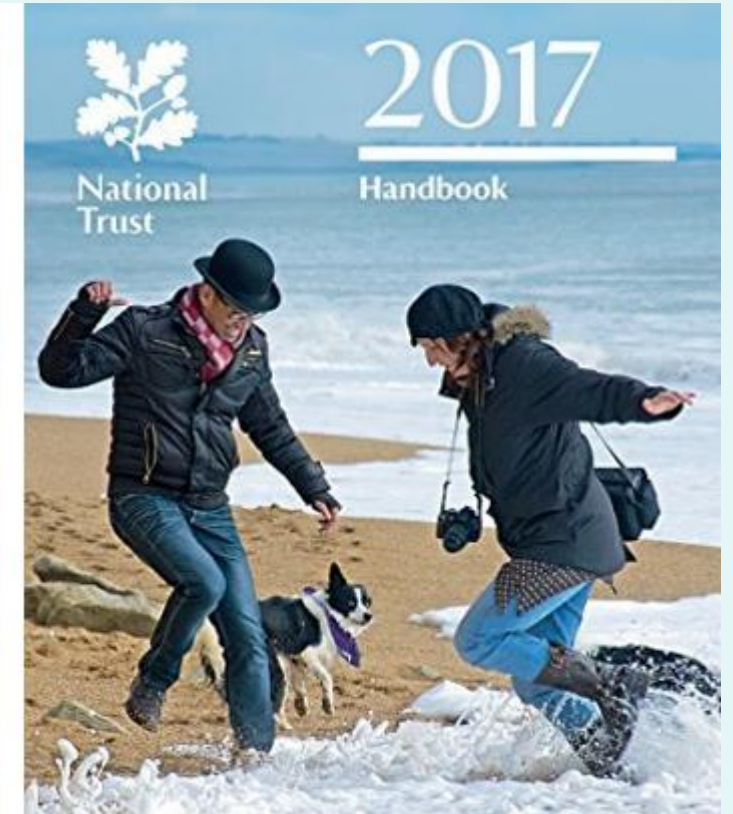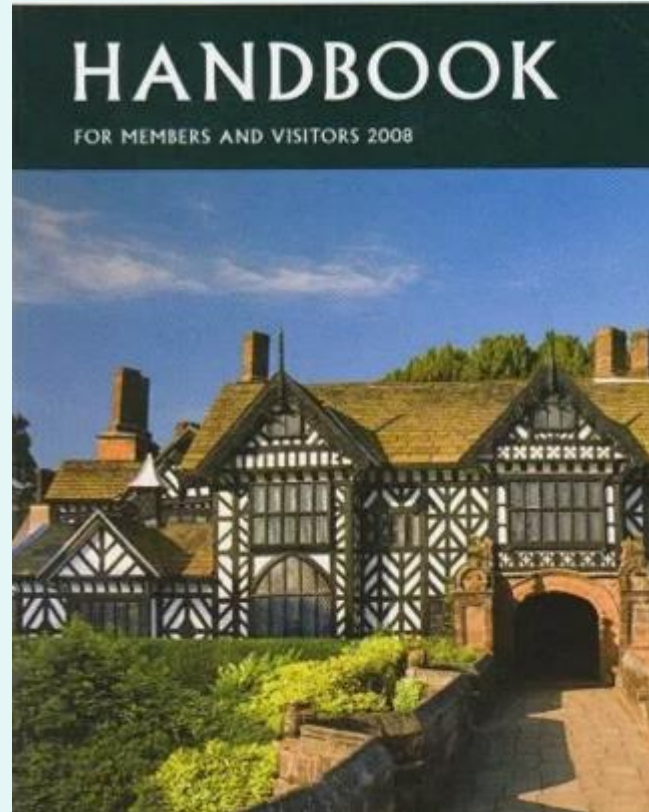
"We've taken the National Trust down the road from being what I call an 'arms closed' organisation to an 'arms open' organisation. We have needed to learn to love people as much as we love places".

Fiona Reynolds, Director General National Trust

EMBRYONIC

DEVELOPING

GRIPPING

EMBEDDING

EDGE

Purpose
Mission
Leadership
Communication

Embedding a commitment to public engagement in institutional mission and strategy, and championing that commitment at all levels

Process
Support
Learning
Recognition

Investing in systems and processes that facilitate involvement, maximise impact and help to ensure quality and value for money
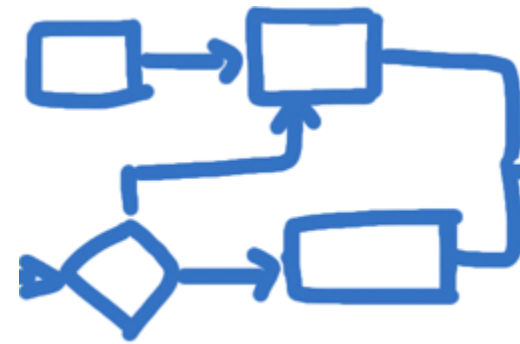
People
Staff
Students
Publics

Involving staff, students and representatives of the public and using their energy, expertise and feedback to shape the strategy and its delivery

THE EDGE TOOL

	FOCUS	EMBRYONIC	DEVELOPING	GRIPPING	EMBEDDING
PURPOSE	**Mission**	There is little or no reference to public engagement in the organisational mission or in other institution-wide strategies.	PE is referenced sporadically within the institutional mission documents and strategies, but is not considered a priority area.	PE is clearly referenced within the institutional mission and strategies and the institution is developing an institution-wide strategic approach.	PE is prioritised in the institution's official mission and in other key strategies, with success indicators identified. It is a key consideration in strategic developments in the institution.
	Leadership	Few (if any) of the most influential leaders in the institution serve as champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as informal champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as formal champions for public engagement.	The VC acts as a champion for PE and a senior leader takes formal responsibility. All senior leaders have an understanding of the importance and value of public engagement to the institution's agenda.
	Commun-ication	The institution's commitment to public engagement is rarely if ever featured in internal or external communications.	Public engagement occasionally features in internal and external communications.	Public engagement frequently features in internal communications, but rarely as a high-profile item or with an emphasis on its strategic importance.	PE appears prominently in the institution's internal communications; its strategic importance is highlighted, and resources and strategic support have been allocated to sustain this.
PROCESS	**Support**	There is no attempt to co-ordinate public engagement activity or to network learning and expertise across the institution.	There are some informal attempts being made to co-ordinate PE activities, but there is no strategic plan for this work. Some self-forming networks exist, not supported by the institution.	Oversight and co-ordination of PE has been formally allocated (e.g. to a working group or committee) but there is minimal support and resource to invest in activity.	The institution has a strategic plan to focus its co-ordination, a body/ies with formal responsibility for oversight of this plan, and resources available to assist the embedding of PE. There are a number of recognised and supported networks.
	Learning	There is little or no opportunity for staff or students to access professional development to develop their skills & knowledge of PE.	There are some opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE, but no formal or systematic support.	There are some formal opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE.	Staff and students are encouraged and supported in accessing professional development, training and informal learning to develop their skills and knowledge of engagement.
	Recognition	Staff are not formally rewarded or recognised for their PE activities.	Some departments recognise and reward PE activity on an ad hoc basis.	The university is working towards an institution-wide policy for recognising and rewarding PE activity.	The university has reviewed its processes, and developed a policy to ensure PE is rewarded & recognised in formal and informal ways.
PEOPLE	**Staff**	Few if any opportunities exist for staff to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties.	There are opportunities for staff in a handful of faculties or departments to get involved in PE, either informally or as part of their formal duties.	There are structured opportunities for many staff members to get involved in PE; but not in all faculties or departments. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties, and are encouraged and supported to do so.
	Students	Few opportunities exist for students to get involved in PE, either informally, through volunteering programmes, or as part of the formal curriculum.	There are opportunities for students to get involved, but there is no coordinated approach to promoting and supporting these opportunities across the institution.	Many (but not all) students have the opportunity to get involved in PE and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All students have the opportunity to get involved in PE, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement.
	Public	Little or no attempt has been made to assess community need, or to support 'non-traditional' groups in engaging with the institution.	Some attempt has been made to analyse community need and interest; and to begin to tackle access issues to open up the institution and its activities to the public.	The institution has committed resources to assessing community need and interests, and to using this insight and feedback to inform its strategy and plans.	The institution has assessed need & committed resources to supporting a wide range of groups to access its facilities and activities, and to systematically seek their feedback and involvement.

Explore the edge tool

Culture change – embedding a culture of public engagement:

Learning from the Catalysts for Engaging the Public with Research

Sophie Duncan and Paul Manners

May 2016

national
co-ordinating centre
for public engagement

'EDGE tool improvement is our biggest legacy – with less money and time than the Beacons we have made more progress'

1. Conceptual legacy
Transformed understandings of research: expressed personally (in how people thought about their work; their freedom to think in new ways) and institutionally (in the definitions and framings built into key strategies and other documents).

2. Changed processes and infrastructure
How engagement had been built into internal systems and processes in concrete ways.

3. Motivation, enthusiasm and connections
The project had enthused people individually – but also built a 'movement', building momentum amongst groups and networks with a shared commitment to engagement

4. A recognition of the 'slipperiness' of measuring culture change
Culture change is hard to pin down – but, looked at as a whole, the projects have created a real difference in how engagement is approached and imagined in the host universities

GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES
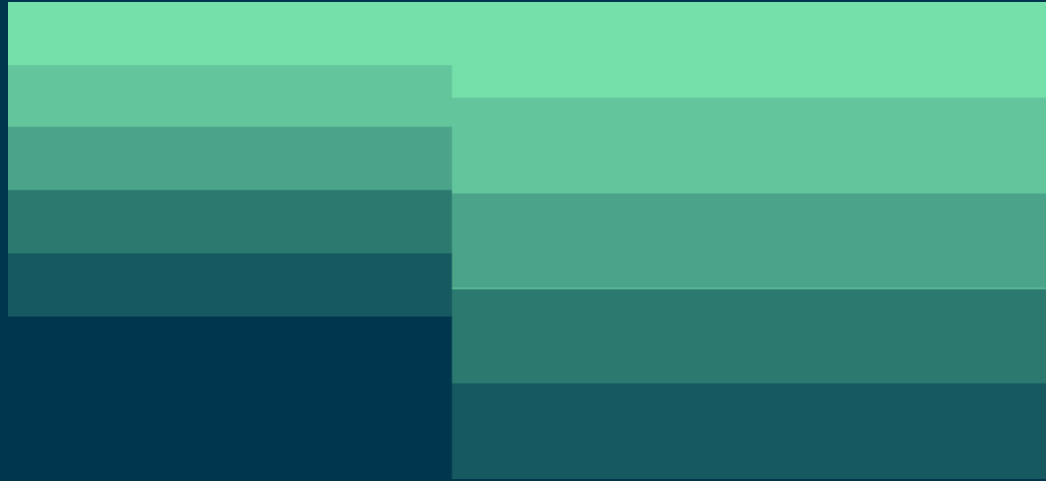
Research Cultures

Ben Tatler: Dean for Research Culture
Lucy Leiper: Head of Research Culture and Development

1495
UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

EST. → 1495

Key principles

Respecting and supporting existing research cultures

Inclusive of everyone who is involved in research: academic staff, technicians, research professionals, postgraduate researchers, and research enabling staff

Looking for opportunities to work together on shared priorities

Research culture is about *how* we work together

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Implementation and Evaluation

Maturity Matrix: GROW

Groundwork: Setting the foundation for positive research cultures with minimal structure and informal efforts. Focus on awareness and initial recognition of the importance of a positive culture.

Rooting: Early formalisation of research culture practices, with leadership starting to take notice. Initial structures, resources, and collaborations are taking root.

Optimising: Strengthening and institutionalising our ways of working, with consistent support, strategic alignment, and increasing quality and impact of research culture activities.

Widening: Fully embedding research cultures work into the institution's mission, with a focus on external impact, global collaboration, and leadership in research excellence.

WoW	**Shared Standards of Excellence** Guided by integrity, transparency, and openness, our shared standards ensure ethical, accessible research, fostering mutual trust, respect, and accountability across all levels.
Common Themes	Demonstrating integrity and responsibility in all aspects of research. Embedding responsible leadership Creating a culture of trust and accountability
PCE	**Responsibility** Staff and research students pursue research, assessment and engagement activities responsibly, with integrity and to the highest standards Institution/unit demonstrates socially responsible leadership of research, research infrastructure and facilities.

EST. → 1495

Ways of Working		Groundwork	Rooting	Optimising	Widening
Shared Standards of Excellence — Guided by integrity, transparency, and openness, our shared standards ensure ethical, accessible research, fostering mutual trust, respect, and accountability across all levels.	Demonstrating integrity and responsibility in all aspects of research: to ensure ethical, transparent, and accessible practices across all levels	Ethical research practices and integrity are recognised as important, but practices and oversight are inconsistent. Researchers operate within an emerging framework for oversight and governance, with early efforts to clarify and support autonomy in managing research ideas. Training on ethical practices is available but not universally applied.	Ethical standards and responsible research practices are being formalised across the institution, with leadership actively promoting integrity and responsible research. Governance frameworks are being formalised and communicated, providing clearer guidance to researchers and ensuring accountability while fostering creativity in managing research projects. Training programs and policies are established as a foundational requirement to ensure consistent application of ethical standards, with additional resources provided to support ongoing learning and development.	Governance frameworks are fully established and consistently implemented across all research areas. Researchers are supported by dedicated teams or tools to navigate these frameworks effectively. Processes for auditing, monitoring, and refining systems and processes are embedded, ensuring they adapt to evolving internal and external drivers. This institutional consistency empowers researchers to manage projects confidently, balancing autonomy with accountability.	Governance frameworks and ethical standards are integrated into all research operations, supported by efficient systems and processes that require minimal oversight. Researchers are empowered to operate with autonomy within a culture that prioritises trust and ethical responsibility. Regular review mechanisms ensure that frameworks remain adaptable to emerging challenges and opportunities, fostering an institution-wide commitment to continuous improvement.
	Embedding responsible leadership: in how we manage people, resources, and infrastructure ethically and sustainably.				
	Creating a culture of trust and accountability: that encourages, respect, and responsibility throughout the institution.				

Working in partnership

- Collaborating across teams

- Enabling efficiencies by bringing together resources, teams, ideas and good practice

- Shared ownership of research cultures agenda and activity

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Any Questions?

researchculture@abdn.ac.uk

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The PCE pilot

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Championing inclusive knowledge

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Contribution to knowledge and understanding — 50%

- a research system that produces **high-quality**, **rigorous** research that is **open** to all

Universities failing to promote diversity will face funding cuts

Critics warn that the plan will put 'ideological conformity' above academic excellence

Universities that fail to champion diversity face cuts to their research budgets under a funding plan that critics warn will put "ideological conformity" above academic excellence. Under proposals to reform how £2 billion a year of taxpayer funding is allocated for academic research, universities will have to show how they are "robustly" tackling inequities and promoting diversity and inclusion across all areas of their activities.

Changes to research assessment have unintended consequences

REF 2028 needs very careful design, argues Anton Muscatelli – based around what can be genuinely and rigorously measured across institutions

The controversial issue is how one develops metrics and carefully codifies qualitative information, all of which will only be approximate indicators of research culture and environment, and how this information will be used to grade different institutions. [ ] This is a major innovation and must be handled with similar care – or else there will be a serious loss of confidence in the REF.

PCE Pilot Guidance

Criteria

Vitality: extent to which the institution fosters a thriving and inclusive research culture for all staff and research students [].

Sustainability: the extent to which the research environment ensures the health, diversity, wellbeing and wider contribution of the unit []

Rigour: the extent to which the institution has robust, effective, and meaningful mechanisms and processes for supporting the highest quality research outcomes, and empowering all staff and research students []
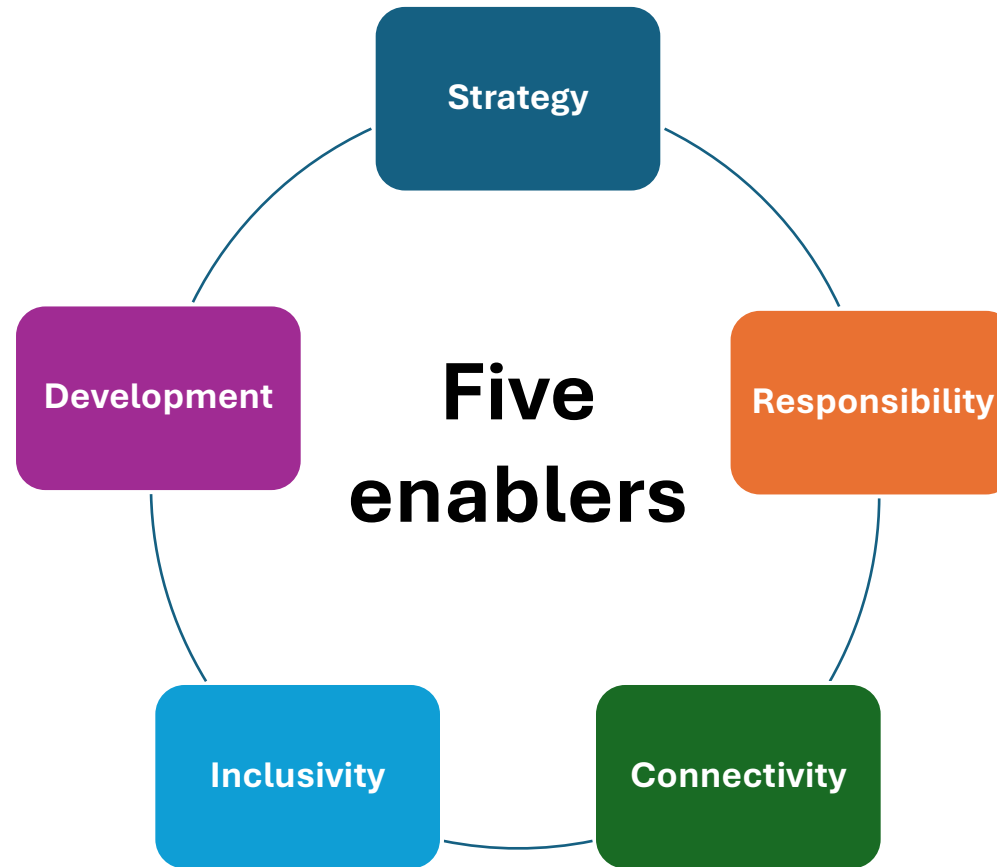
Strategy: Having robust, effective and meaningful plans…[]

Responsibility: Upholding the highest standards of research integrity and ethics []

Connectivity: Enabling inter-disciplinary approaches both within and between institutions, fostering co-creation and engagement with research users and society []

Inclusivity: Ensuring the research environment is accessible, inclusive, and collegial. Enabling equity for under-represented and minoritised groups.

Development: Recognising and valuing the breadth of activities, practices and roles involved in research, building and sustaining relevant and accessible career pathways []

Strategy

Development

Five enablers

Responsibility

Inclusivity

Connectivity

PCE Narrative template and framework

5. Development	Assessment framework
What strategies and initiatives do you have in place to ensure that staff and research students can access relevant and meaningful support at all career stages? (1000 words)	• Staff and research students can access relevant and meaningful support at all career stages

| Quantitative evidence	Qualitative evidence and contextual information
• Learning and training data, such as feedback on the effectiveness of mentoring and coaching or professional development. • Staff and research student survey data or other wellbeing measures. • Longitudinal data on share of staff and research students who completed an annual appraisal or equivalent review. • Data on the impact of undertaking CPD activities.	• The development of initiatives to support staff through career transitions, career porosity and mobility between sectors. • Support for the development of staff support networks and groups. • Documented evidence that leadership of staff support networks is appropriately recognised (e.g. in workloads or promotion criteria). • Documented evidence that the infrastructure, processes and mechanisms in place to support the training and supervision of research students are working effectively. • The development of career pathways frameworks, including for fixed-term, technical and research-enabling staff, that outline progression routes, expectations, and signposting of development opportunities. • Documented evidence of the participation of staff and research students in decision-making structures and committees leading to changes in policy and practice. • Documented steps to raise awareness of careers both within and beyond the institution and support for career transitions, career porosity and mobility between sectors. • Documented steps to enable staff and research students to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) (e.g. time). • ETC

Sources to corroborate
5.1
5.2 etc. (indicative maximum of ten sources)

The REF2029 PCE Pilot – perspectives from a small institution

Sarah Priston, Head of Research Office

Bath Spa University
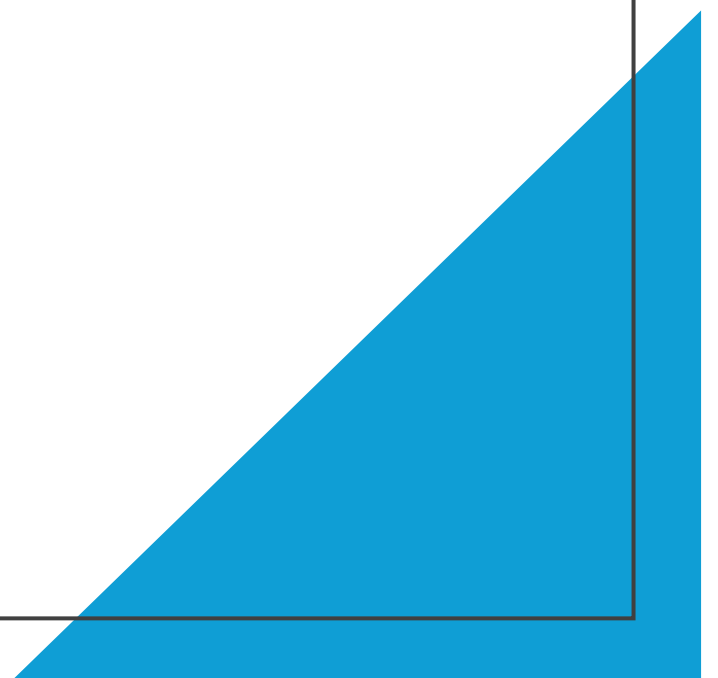
The REF PCE Pilot

- Submission requirements:
  - **An institutional statement –** that shows what measures have been put in place to support the research culture in the University and what impact these have had

  - **Statements for each UoA** demonstrating the impact of the institutional measures within the Unit.

- The guidance:
  - Return as much evidence as possible across all indicators by 19th March

The Bath Spa Experience

- Piloting PCE within 3 UoAs:

  - Business and Management
    - new for REF2021

  - Music and Performing Arts

  - Social Work and Social Policy
    - new UoA for Bath Spa, combining Sociology and Psychology

Challenges

- Time and resources:
  - **An institutional statement:** limited resources (me!) to write this in time for it to be useful for the UoA template developments
  - **Statements for each UoA:** busy UoA Leaders carving out time for this across teaching duties

- The guidance:
  - Limited in value, lack of clarity on the link between the UoA and institutional statements

- Data Evidencing and Collation:
  - Institutional capacity to gather the data required for the various areas of assessment

PCE Areas of Assessment

Strategy	• Post REF2021 Strategy focussed around our developing narrative of being a research engaged institution – research embedded within REF/KEF/TEF • Borrowed from REF2021, KEF and the various Concordat statements
Responsibility	• Focussed heavily on our reputation as a socially engaged university • Built on work related to equity and inclusion developed through our work on our AHR Impact Accelerator Award, and co-created and participatory research practices (e.g. manifesto for collaboration, public engagement toolkit)
Connectivity	• Collaboration on REF with the Library team really paid off and they were able to gather a lot of data on our approaches to open research • Used HE-BCI data • Drew on civic and regional agendas and the work of our Enterprise Studio engaging with the Creative Industries
Inclusivity	• Data team was able to gather data at institutional and UoA level • Linked to social inclusion strategies and approaches – links to grants
Development	• Limited data but drew on our work embedding the Concordat on Researcher Development, HR Excellence in Research etc • Data from locally run CEDARS in 2024 has informed an action plan and new aproaches

Lessons Learnt – Institutional template

Helps with strategic framing

- It has been a useful strategic exercise in framing ourselves as a 'research engaged' university (as opposed to a teaching intensive).

Don't reinvent wheels

- We tried not to reinvent the wheel and used data from HE-BCI and the KEF narrative across the various sections, but in particular in Connectivity section 3. We also linked it in to all our various Concordat action plans and evidence/data.

Metrics: start with what you have already, and build

- We did not get too hung-up on the metrics, but drew from what we had available, or could tailor to the indicative requirements. We are however now using the exercise to inform how we collect data on an ongoing basis to meet the potential requirements for the final submission.

BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

Research

Lessons Learnt – UoA templates

Every UoA is different

- Each UoA approached the pilot differently and drew on the institutional template where required. All the of the UoAs are in a different stage of development, so this worked quite well

Overlaps between the templates

- There is significant overlap between the UoA and institutional templates, and panels will need to be clear about how they will cross-refer in the final assessment process.

Sequencing the development work

- Where we really struggled as a small HEI was getting the institutional level data and narrative in place in a timely fashion so the UoAs could draw on this - we just didn't have the resource centrally to move quickly.

Break

Back at 1.45

![National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement]

Your turn…

![Self Assessment — clipboard with checkmarks and red pencil]

Draft Maturity Matrix

Enablers	1 - Basic (Ad Hoc)	2 - Developing (Emerging)	3 - Established (Consistent)	4 - Leading (Optimised & Innovative)
Strategy: *robust & meaningful plans?*	No clear strategy; decision-making is reactive	Some strategic planning exists but is not fully integrated	Strategy is well-defined, regularly reviewed, & aligned with goals	Strategy is data-driven, adaptive, & widely understood
Connectivity: *internal/external relationships?*	Limited internal collaboration; external partnerships are rare	Some collaboration efforts exist but are inconsistent	Strong internal & external networks are in place	Highly integrated, collaborative organisation with strong partnerships
Responsibility: *ethics, sustainability, governance?*	Minimal compliance with ethical, social, & sustainability standards	Some policies exist, but responsibility is not embedded	Clear frameworks ensure ethical & sustainable operations	Responsibility is embedded in culture; proactive leadership in social/economic impact
Inclusivity: *Diversity & fairness?*	No formal diversity or inclusion policies	Diversity efforts exist but are not fully embedded	Inclusivity is embedded in hiring, policies, & culture	Organisation is a leader in inclusivity, shaping external best practices
Development: *learning, growth, performance?*	Training & development are minimal	Some training opportunities exist but lack structure	Ongoing learning, career development & mentoring in place	Organisation fosters continuous learning & leadership development

Have a go at assessing your organisation

Instructions

NCCPE
8 hours ago

TASK 1: SELF-ASSESS YOUR INSTITUTION / UNIT (8 MINS)
Consider each enabler and use the 'heart' emoji to rate your progress as:

- Basic
- Developing
- Established
- Leading

Add a comment if you want to explain your judgement, e.g.:

- What evidence you have for this?
- What could move your organisation to the next level?
- What's holding your organisation back?

TASK 2: REFLECT ON YOUR JUDGEMENTS (7 MINS)
As a group, reflect on your judgements and the challenges of achieving excellence in the five enablers. consider starting with the one where there is the widest divergence in your judgements.

♡ 0   💬 0

Add comment

Basic (ad hoc)

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Strategy
No clear strategy; decision making is reactive.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Connectivity
Limited internal collaboration; external partnerships are rare
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Responsibility
Minimal compliance eith ethical, social and sustainability standards.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Inclusivity
No formal diversity or inclusion policies.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Staff Development
Training and development are minimal.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

Developing (emerging)

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Strategy
Some strategic planning exists but it is not fully integrated.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Connectivity
Some collaboration efforts exist but are inconsistent.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Responsibility
Some policies exist, but responsibility is not embedded.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Inclusivity
Diversity efforts exist but are not fully embedded.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Staff Development
Some training opportunities exist but lack structure.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

Established (consistent)

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Strategy
Strategy is well defined regularly reviewed and aligned with goals.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Connectivity
Strong internal and external networks are in place.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Responsibility
Clear frameworks ensure ethical and sustainable operations.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Inclusivity
Inclusivity is embedded in hiring policies and culture
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Staff Development
Ongoing learning, career development and mentoring are in place.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

Leading (optimised and innovative)

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Strategy
Strategy is data-driven, adaptive, and widely understood.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Connectivity
Highly integrated, collaborative organisation with strong stakeholder ties.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Responsibility
Responsibility is embedded in culture; proactive leadership in social impact.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Inclusivity
Organisation is a leader in inclusivity, shaping external best practices.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 8 hours ago
Staff Development
The organisation fosters continuous learning and leadership development.
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

FINAL REFLECTIONS

NCCPE 7 hours ago
STRATEGY
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 7 hours ago
CONNECTIVITY
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 7 hours ago
RESPONSIBILITY
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 7 hours ago
INCLUSIVITY
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

NCCPE 7 hours ago
STAFF DEVELOPMENT
♡ 0   💬 0
Add comment

Break out group task

TASK 1: SELF-ASSESS YOUR INSTITUTION / UNIT (5 MINS)

Consider each enabler and use the 'heart' emoji to rate your progress as:
- Basic
- Developing
- Established
- Leading

If you have time, add a comment if you want to explain your judgement, e.g.:
- What evidence you have for this?
- What could move your organisation to the next level?
- What's holding your organisation back?

TASK 2: REFLECT ON YOUR JUDGEMENTS (10 MINS)

As a group, reflect on your judgements and the challenges of achieving excellence in the five enablers. Consider starting with the one where there is the widest divergence in your judgements:

- Why is this enabler important?
- What improvements would you like to see within your institution?
- What support would you like to help you do this (e.g. from the NCCPE)?

National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

Final reflections and next steps

PEP superpowers

Inclusive, collaborative research

Engagement and Impact
- Relationship between engagement and impact (rigour)
- Expertise in evaluation

People, Culture and Environment
- Expertise in Culture Change (EDGE)
- Strategy and evaluation

Knowledge and Understanding
- Expertise in engaged research & 'Mode 3' working

What's in the NCCPE REF tool kit

People, Culture & Environment

EDGE self-assessment matrix

This tool allows you to assess your institution's support for public engagement. You can access a guide to how to use the tool here: www.publicengagement.ac.uk/edge-tool

You are welcome to use the EDGE tool for non-commercial educational purposes, where credit is given to the NCCPE.

EMBRYONIC

DEVELOPING

GRIPPING

EMBEDDING

EDGE

National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

Engaging publics with research

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

Reviewing the REF 2014 impact case studies and templates

www.publicengagement.ac.uk

NCCPE web resources

The Research Excellence Framework (REF)

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is a crucial part of the HE landscape and continues to provide significant opportunities for public engagement. Each year, around £2 billion pounds is allocated on the basis of REF results, and the guidance has encouraged HEIs to submit case studies which feature public engagement as a pathway to impact, and to develop more open and inclusive research cultures.

updated on 15 Nov 2024

7 minutes read

REF2029
Research Excellence Framework

Public engagement and the REF

The REF has provided an opportunity for institutions to feature public engagement with research, and for this activity to be recognised as valued and significant. NCCPE research has shown that around half of the submitted case studies in previous exercises have featured public engagement. This is despite concerns from some that public engagement impacts are less likely to be rated highly, and are harder to demonstrate than (for instance) economic impacts

The proposals for the next REF, in 2029, look likely to increase the spotlight on engaging with the public. The Impact Profile has been renamed 'Engagement and Impact', to better recognise the contribution of engagement activity (not just the impacts it can help to realise). REF 2029 also places a much more explicit focus on the need to improve the underpinning culture of research. This has been an important focus for the public engagement professional community since the NCCPE was founded in 2007, with an explicit culture change mission. The NCCPE's EDGE tool is a widely used framework to support universities to work in ways that REF 2029 is encouraging – openly, collaboratively and in a people-centred fashion.

This briefing explains the evolution of the REF, and the opportunities it provides to embed professional support for public engagement within research. We have produced a linked collection which traces the history of the REF in more detail and shares key NCCPE resources which have fed into its development. These provide useful intelligence about how to develop a robust and rigorous approach to assessing the impacts arising from public engagement.

We have also produced a briefing document to explain the current state of play with the development of REF2029.

REF 2029: what's the story for public engagement?

REF 2029: what's the story for public engagement?

A briefing to outline the REF 2029 developments as of November 2024, and the opportunities for public engagement.

updated on 15 Nov 2024

6 minutes read

Introduction

REF 2029 represents a significant step forward from REF 2021, in the way it encourages HEIs to embed more strategic support for public engagement. The proposals are still being consulted upon and piloted, so there is still some uncertainty about exactly how the exercise will work when the final guidance is launched later in 2025. This briefing outlines the current state of play towards the end of 2024, and the opportunities for public engagement.

The weighting of the the REF Assessment

People, Culture and Environment

Institution-level evidence statement
Discipline-level evidence statement
25%

Contribution to Knowledge & Understanding

Research outputs
Discipline-level evidence statement
50%

Engagement and Impact

Impact case studies
Discipline-level evidence statement
25%

REF Collection

This collection gathers together the NCCPE's work to support the Research Excellence Framework (REF) since it was first proposed in 2008 as the successor the Research Assessment Exercise.

REF 2014: Key NCCPE resources

The Development of REF 2014

2007 - 2009	2010	2012	2013	2016
The intention to replace RAE with REF is announced by UK government, with the outline proposals first published by HEFCE in 2009.	A REF Impact pilot was conducted	NCCPE commissioned to support the development of public engagement guidance for the initial iteration of the REF, and submit various consultation responses to inform its development.	NCCPE run workshops and training to help universities develop impact case studies featuring public engagement	NCCPE publish a review of how public engagement featured in REF 2014 and key lessons learned.

Reports and reviews

REF 2014 Results

The results of REF 2014 were published in December 2014. This key facts leaflet was published by HEFCE, to summarise the results and describe how the process worked and the [...]

Consultation responses

NCCPE response to the REF 2014 consultation

The NCCPE's first response to the proposed shape and focus of REF 2014, where we welcomed the inclusion of impact case studies and the opportunity to describe the contribution of [...]

Reports and reviews

Discussion Paper: Assessing impacts arising from public engagement with research

A discussion paper that was commissioned by the REF team to support the REF 2014 panels to prepare guidance for assessing impacts arising from public engagement. Written in 2012

Reports and reviews

Sector briefing about REF 2012 guidance

A detailed summary of the REF 2014 guidance and its treatment of public engagement

PEP network events programme

Join us for our next PEP event:

* Wednesday 25 June, 12:30pm-2:30pm

NCCPE Fellow Showcase

Don't forget to join the PEP Network LinkedIn group!

We welcome your feedback!