

Strategic Plan: Public Engagement with Research Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences 2018-2021

Public Engagement with Research (PER) refers to a wide range of ways of engaging members of the public with the design, conduct and dissemination of research.

Benefits for Researchers

“Public engagement can provide substantial benefits to the researchers involved in engaging the public, as well as providing a major contribution to society. Engaging the public can also improve the quality of research and its impact, by widening research horizons. We achieve this through involving, listening and interacting with the public”. - Research Councils UK

- Enhance research and its impact
- Raise research profile
- Skills development
- Rewarding and motivating
- New research perspectives
- Foster trust through transparency and accountability
- Gain access to funding
- New collaborations and partnerships
- Inspire future generations of researchers

This paper presents a set of activities and priorities for the division for the next three years, based on analysis of the Division’s and Departments’ current position (see Annexe 1 – the EDGE analysis).

Vision

To support and mobilise the wider [University strategic plan for PER](#) to “embed high-quality and innovative public engagement as an integral part of research culture and practice” within the Division’s context, ensure MPLS representation in wider initiatives, and uptake of opportunities.

Measure(s) of success: progress against divisional EDGE analysis; shift in responses to the staff-survey.

Objective 1 – Demonstrate the value of PER

Actions:

- Demonstrate and support senior leadership to champion and advocate for the value of PER.
- Build a shared understanding of what PER is and its value to researchers and support staff.
- Share case studies that illuminate the benefits of PER.
- Reward and recognise excellent PER.

Measure(s) of success: Staff survey responses; number and quality of submissions for internal PER recognition awards and Seed Funds.

Objective 2 – Build capacity for PER

Actions:

In addition to continuing to deliver the established digital engagement and PER training programmes¹, the Division will:

- Support and encourage departments to explore how to build capacity for PER in their local context, including increasing opportunities for departmental staff to enhance and reinforce awareness, and the skills and confidence to support and deliver high quality PER.
- Increase utilisation and quality of Pathways to Impact (Ptl) opportunities by research groups as a way to sustainably resource PER.
- Develop researcher and support staff skills to increase use and quality of evaluation and impact assessment.
- Increase awareness, and ability to make use, of broader approaches to PER.

Measure(s) of success: Progress against departmental EDGE analyses; quality and breadth of Ptl and PER seed fund submissions; Staff survey responses.

Objective 3 – Facilitate effective collaboration to add value and innovate

Actions:

- Support participation of researchers and support staff in external PER opportunities (e.g., local science festivals), by raising awareness and removing barriers to participation.
- Increase engagement with GLAM institutions:
 - Through targeted and transparent schemes that facilitate valuable partnerships with GLAM institutions, staff and researchers, e.g., the EPSRC IAA funded GLAMouRes project.
 - Through participation in RSL refurbishment development plans to ensure PER opportunities are capitalised on.
- Develop a shared programme for DPhil PER training across CDTs, etc., to ensure quality and consistency.
- Explore the provision for, and support coordinated programmes based on, PER by research themes, e.g., AI and Machine Learning.
- Explore opportunities for researchers, departments and Divisions to collaborate, e.g. through coordinated attendance and participation in events.

Measure of success: Numbers participating in events/partnerships; effectiveness of supported and coordinated projects.

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress against the strategic objectives laid out in this plan will be reviewed annually by the Division's Impact and Innovation Committee, and reported up to the Division's General Purposes Committee.

Monitoring of ongoing progress will be supported by a range of data, including monitoring of submissions to research grants containing PER (via X5) and PER seed funds and awards, participation in events, breadth of case studies, and triennial University-wide staff surveys.

Each project directly undertaken by the Division will have a fully integrated plan for evaluation of effectiveness and impact.

Progress monitoring will culminate in biennial EDGE review for the Division (and ongoing EDGE-facilitated conversation with individual departments).

¹ See: www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/public-engagement/find-out-what-training-is-available>

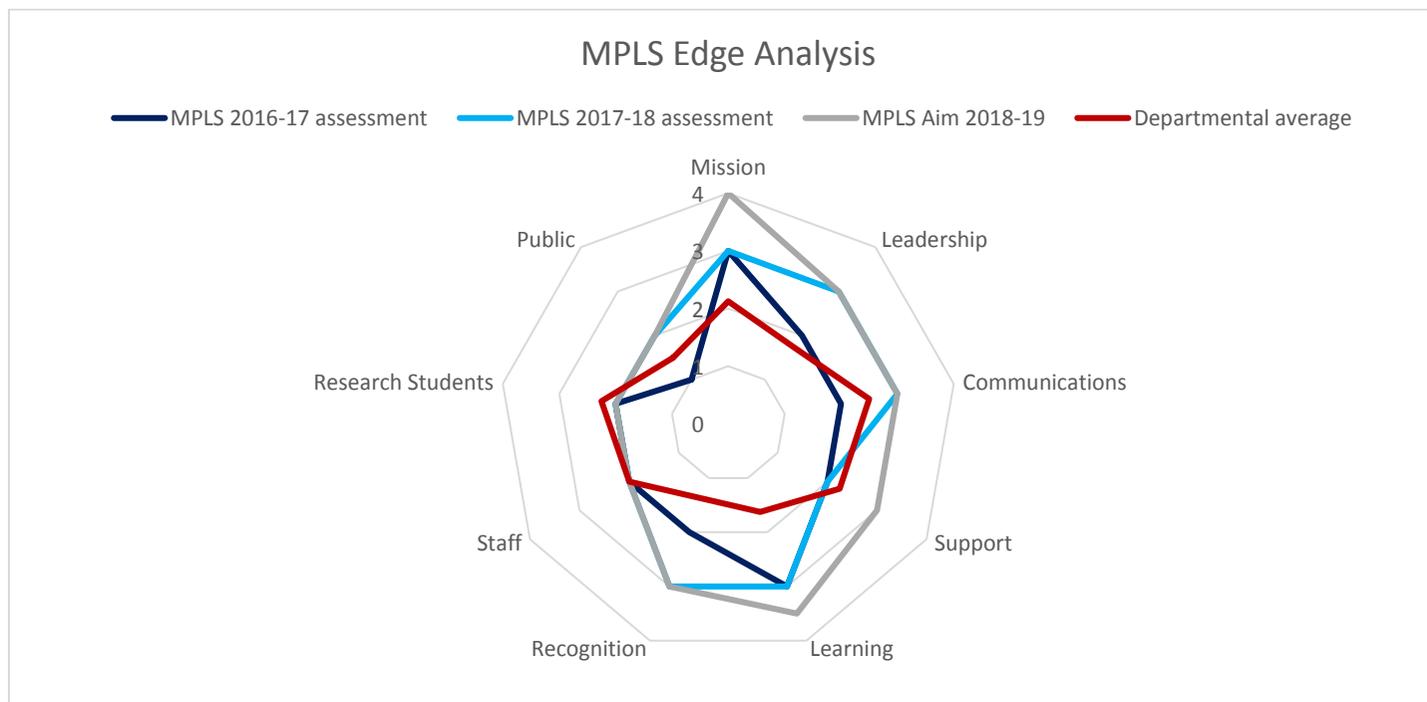
Appendix 1 – EDGE analysis

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement created the [EDGE tool](#), which provides a framework to understand the extent to which public engagement (PE) is embedded within an institution. It was informed by the work of the 'Beacons' – a group of Universities across the UK funded to undertake a programme of culture change to embed PE, and distils learning from those projects. The tool covers nine dimensions that form a self-assessment matrix, to allow an institution (or unit of) to assess progress. 'EDGE' stands for 'Embryonic', 'Developing', 'Gripping' and 'Embedded' approaches to supporting engagement.

The University has carried out an EDGE analysis of the institution as a whole, and of the individual academic divisions.

The EDGE tool has also been used to collect information and facilitate conversations with individual departments across MPLS, throughout 2017-18.

Below is an overview of the original MPLS assessment made (Sept 2015), with the most recent (April 2018), as well as the 'Divisional average' (median of 'scores' across all departments reviewed to date) as well as an anonymised heatmap showing a breakdown for each department reviewed to date. It shows a very diverse picture, representing the fact that each department has its own culture, processes, barriers and strengths. Whilst there are common barriers, this also highlights the inherent complexity in looking to develop a 'universally' relevant strategy and how to implement it.



1: Embryonic 2: Developing 3: Gripping 4: Embedding

Dept	Mission	Leadership	Comms	Support	Learning	Recognition	Staff	Research Students	Public	%age grant costings including PER
Uni 2016	Gripping	Gripping	Developing	Developing	Gripping	Gripping	Developing	Developing	Developing	13.7%
MPLS 2018			Gripping							Developing
1	Developing	Embryonic	Developing	Developing	Embryonic	Embryonic	Developing	Developing	Embryonic	19.2%
2	Gripping	Developing	Developing		Gripping					Embryonic
3				Embedded	Gripping	Gripping	Gripping	Gripping	16.5%	
4	Embryonic	Developing	Developing	Gripping	Developing	Embryonic	Developing	Developing	Developing	37.7%
5	Developing				Embryonic					Embryonic
6	Embryonic	Embryonic	Developing	Embryonic	Embryonic	Embryonic	Developing	Developing	Embryonic	9%
7	Developing	Gripping								Developing
8	Embryonic	Developing	Gripping	Developing	Developing	Gripping	Developing	Developing	Developing	13.2%
9	No review	No review	No review		No review	No review				No review
10	Embedded	Developing	Gripping	Gripping	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	51.8%

Percentage of grant costing including PER based on X5 costing confirmation question 12, duplicates removed, from June-December 2017).

Embryonic	Embryonic
Developing	Developing
Gripping	Gripping
Embedded	Embedded
No review	No review