
Evaluation Consultancy Brief

Brief and invitation for proposals: deadline 14th May 2021

Introduction

We are inviting proposals for the evaluation of a new pilot Public Engagement with Research (PER) programme¹. The pilot project is a collaboration between the Medical Sciences Division (MSD) and Mathematics Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS) at the University of Oxford.

Our science engagement programme adopts a new approach to PER, embedding community needs, interests and opportunities at the outset, and seeks a more sustained mode of engagement. The programme will provide a platform and support for researchers to work alongside local communities with high quality, effective public engagement with science research. Through this we will deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for both University of Oxford researchers and our local communities; developing skills, sharing knowledge, building capacity and exchanging perspectives. We make use of expertise within GLAM (the University's Gardens, Libraries and Museums) to build community engagement best practice into the heart of our programme. Importantly, we will give community partners genuine agency and enable them to participate meaningfully in the research agenda; recognising our responsibility as a civic institution to channel our influence and resources towards not only what we are good at, but also towards what we can be good for. In so doing we will build sustainable partnerships across Oxfordshire, increasing the scale and scope of opportunities for people who live and work in the region.

The role of the evaluation consultant will be to evaluate the new Science Engagement Pilot Programme, for which the objectives are:

1. To trial a new more sustained process for engaging diverse public audiences with research (measured in terms of the depth and quality of our connections, and importantly who takes part)
2. To initiate mutually beneficial partnerships between researchers and community groups (measured in terms of research outputs and community goals)
3. To positively impact researchers and community groups participating in the programme in terms of their skills, knowledge and attitudes towards research and PER.

Requirements and deliverables

The evaluation consultant will

- Attend regular meetings with the project team and Advisory Group
- Develop an evaluation plan for the programme by end of June 2021.
- Evaluate the programme as per the evaluation plan
- Provide a final evaluation report of the programme by the end of March 2022

¹ Funded by the Wellcome Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF), Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council Impact Acceleration Account (EPSRC IAA) and Van Houten Fund



The evaluation report will be made available to the project team and the funders for the purpose of:

- Monitoring the success, or otherwise, of the programme in relation to its aims and intended outcomes.
- Understanding the successes, challenges and lessons learned in establishing co-development projects between researchers and community groups
- Sharing key learning programme partners, funders and the wider sector as may be appropriate.

Evaluation questions and methodologies

The evaluation questions include the following and may be refined, or added to by the appointed evaluator:

1. Did the programme achieve its objectives (stated above)?
2. What were the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the pilot? [aligned to funder's metrics]
3. What were the benefits and challenges of running the programme in this way?
4. Does the (presumed) added-value of the programme justify the costs and resources invested?
5. What is the legacy of the programme?

The evaluator will be required to propose methodologies appropriate to the programme, activities and audience; and to integrate the evaluation as part of the delivery of the programme (see appendix for the programme timeline). The methodologies will need to generate a mix of quantitative and qualitative data about the programme as appropriate to the evaluation questions and the objectives. We welcome a creative approach to this evaluation.

Scope

The evaluator will be appointed to evaluate the overall pilot programme. Within the programme there will be up to five project teams, each comprising a partnership between a community group and one or more researchers. Project teams will be supported to evaluate their own activities, through an introductory workshop which will be delivered internally. Towards the end of the programme the project teams will complete a mini final report summarising the key project activities (i.e. what activities took place; how many people engaged in their project; any key outcomes and impacts on the participants). The evaluator will collate insights from these mini reports alongside answers to the evaluation questions (listed above) into the final programme report.

Support

The initial point of contact for the appointed evaluator will be the Science Engagement Facilitator, Oliver Moore. Throughout the programme guidance will be provided by the Advisory Group which includes representation from researchers, university and museum PER staff, community groups and Oxford City Council staff.

Proposal

If you would like to submit a proposal to carry out this work, please provide an overview of no more than 6 sides of A4 (minimum 12pt font) that includes the following information:

- Approach and proposed methodologies (including details of any data that needs to be collected).
- Timeline.
- Budget setting out clearly the day rate and number of days for the different people working on the project and proposed payment schedule linked to reporting.
- An explanation of how the study will be carried out with regard to ethical practice, safeguarding and GDPR compliance.

- A brief track record of similar work (with links to any relevant publicly available evaluation reports).
- Roles and responsibilities of key individuals.
- Ways of working with regard to time/project management and approach to working with and engaging with clients.
- Please also include an appendix (does not count towards 6 side limit) containing:
 - Biographies or CVs outlining relevant experience of key individuals working on the project
 - Two testimonials from previous evaluation consultancy work

Proposals to be sent to Oliver Moore (oliver.moore@admin.ox.ac.uk) by close of play on Friday 14th May 2021. Please direct any enquiries to Oliver Moore. We aim to review responses and appoint a consultant by Friday 21st May 2021.

Budget

Up to a maximum of £6,000, including VAT.

Covers all meetings, workshops, interviews, research, expenses, travel and final report.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed in relation to the following criteria:

- Understanding of Public Engagement with Research in Higher Education institutions.
- Experience in the evaluation of strategic projects and programmes in Higher Education institutions.
- Extent to which the evaluation approach is creative and embedded as part of the funding programme.
- Capacity to take on the work as proposed and meet the required deadlines.
- Value for money.

This work can be undertaken remotely and is open to all applicants who have the right to work in the UK.

Appendix

Programme overview

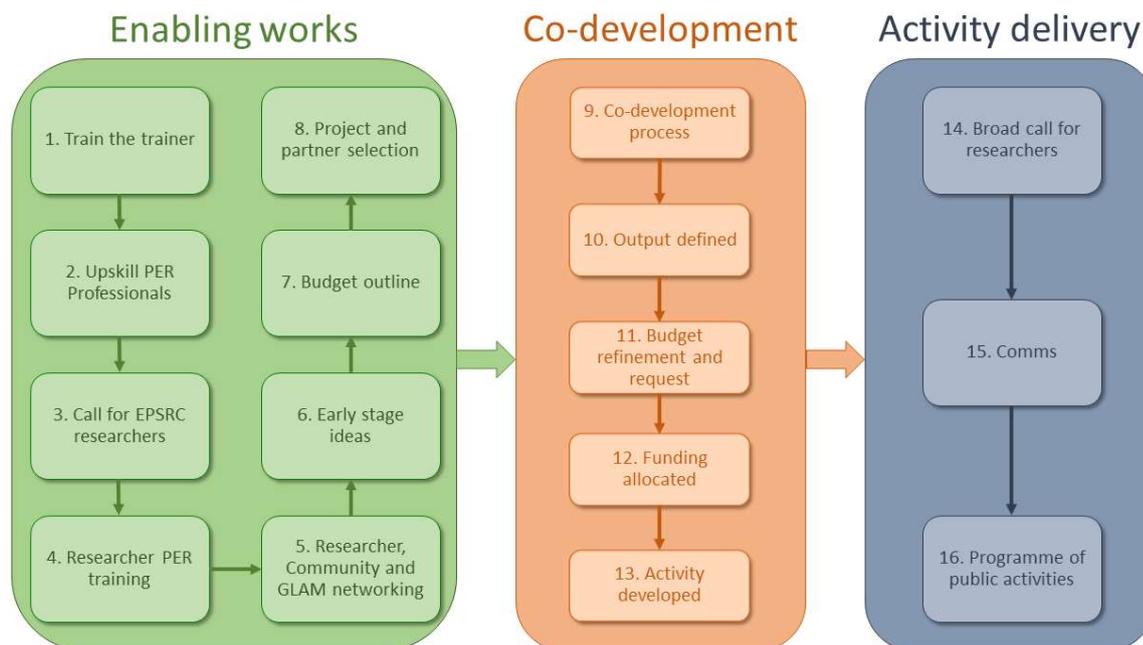
There are three stages to the programme:

The first stage is enabling works where we will upskill researchers and PER support staff to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to undertake effective Public Engagement with Research. We will also provide an onboarding session for community partners so that they are aware of the University resources that they can leverage as part of this programme. Following training and onboarding, we will run facilitated networking and ideation sessions to help researchers and community groups conceive PER projects that will bring mutual benefits for both groups.

The second stage builds upon these seed ideas by supporting researchers and community groups as they co-develop the activity together. This involves regular sessions over a sustained period facilitated by PER support staff to help the researchers and community groups work up their project ideas, ensuring that the final product uses research expertise and insights to address community needs and realise community opportunities. Through this we aim to have a positive impact on research practice, the researchers themselves, and community participants leading to stronger partnerships between the University and community organisations across Oxfordshire.

The third stage is a celebration event where these projects are showcased online and at face-to-face Public Engagement with Research events. This will enable further benefits to diverse

audiences across Oxfordshire as they engage with relevant, accessible and innovative research projects run by the University of Oxford researchers.



Enabling works

1. 'Train the trainer' sessions for departmental PER staff delivered, designed to bolster their training expertise.
2. Upskilled departmental PER staff with skills and knowledge to support their EPSRC researchers.
3. Call for EPSRC researchers led by trained departmental and division staff, making potential participants at all career stages aware of the opportunity .
4. Training for researchers: covering the programme content, PER best practice, and effective community partnership working .
5. A networking and ideas generation workshop for the trained researchers across all EPSRC-related departments connecting community group ambassadors and GLAM PER staff to begin the partnership process.
6. The output of this workshop will be early stage ideas about potential collaborative projects
7. Support for researchers to consider outline costs of their activity as both a training opportunity and to help determine the viability of the proposal.
8. Reviewing proposals and associated costs to determine greatest potential in terms of PER impact, and also form a complementary pairing between researcher and community interests. Those at the top of the list will be invited to progress to the co-development phase detailed below.

Co-development

9. In-depth engagement. The partners will connect at least once per week over three months (see below for schedule). This will be flexible (e.g., quick phone calls or longer meetings). Sustained engagement to develop a shared understanding of each other's work, priorities, interests, challenges and opportunities. This will elucidate commonalities and areas of alignment.
10. We and the departmental PER leads will support the partners at this stage to use their insights to refine their initial activity proposal through developing a narrative for their activity. With this defined, we will help them consider first an appropriate audience for their activity, desired outcomes, and best format. Our Research Services staff will run an

evaluation workshop to help the project team develop an evaluation plan for their projects. Throughout this process the researchers will form an informal peer review group, facilitated by divisional and departmental PER staff, to give the researchers the opportunity to share insights, skills and engagement techniques with each other, one of the key benefits of PER cited by researchers during our consultations.

11. Finalise budget requirements for the proposal activities, making adjustments as needed to keep the total costs across all activities within the programme budget.
12. Funds allocated.
13. Developing and evaluating activities, with close support from us and the departmental PER leads.

Activity delivery

14. At this stage the programme opens right up again. We will facilitate a broad call for other researchers to participate in the celebration event. Researchers of all disciplines can participate in this science festival complementing the research areas community themes covered in the co-developed activities. A variety of activities are welcome, these could be in the form of fairs, plays, talks, workshops, lab tours or something else entirely. The activities can be pre-existing or newly developed, the departmental PER staff supporting the researchers to ensure all activities incorporate PER best practice.
15. With the content of the festival confirmed we will then promote the festival broadly through established internal and external channels.
16. This celebration event will showcase the finalised projects and connect to a diverse audience through the multiple community partners. Project teams to complete a final report summarising the key project activities, and their outcomes and impacts, using in-house reporting templates.

Reach

We will support up to five project teams, each comprising a community group and one or more researchers. These project teams will co-develop a project to overcome a community challenge or seize a community opportunity, which will then be showcased at the celebration event (science festival format) at the end of the programme.

Enabling works: 30 researchers through training programme, 10 community partners

Co-development: 5 lead researchers and 100 community members

Activity delivery: 25 researchers and 1000 festival attendees

Total: 60 researchers and 1110 members of the public²

Through the enabling work, co-development and science festival we aim to achieve the following programme goals:

- **Enable engagement of broad audiences with Oxford science**, making efforts to engage under-served groups, and build meaningful relationships with the local community;
- **Build the capacity of researchers** to plan, deliver and evaluate effective, impactful public engagement with research (PER), through providing integrated support, opportunities and training, building on what lessons learnt from PER Lab and similar projects;
- **Provide a platform for researchers** across the University's Divisions that is free for them to access;
- **Make use of expertise within GLAM (Gardens, Libraries and Museums)**, building on the recent collaborative project, The PER Lab;

² This is a pilot programme testing new approaches to PER so the reach estimates are on the conservative side, we will endeavour to exceed these numbers

- **Use a variety of engagement methods**, venues and activities, which are appropriate, relevant and matched to the needs and requirements of a) communities and b) researchers, their research, and their current PER experience and skill level;
- **Follow best community engagement practice**; in terms of working equitably and towards a shared agenda, valuing local knowledge and diverse perspectives, recognising the institutional profile and resource of the university and using this to give power and agency to local communities
- **Undertake high quality evaluation** to assess the successes and capture lessons learnt.

Project outputs

- Celebration programme and associated activities and resources
- Reach and scope (in person and digital)
- Marketing assets and branding
- Training and ideation workshops (researchers, GLAM and community ambassadors)
- Funded projects
- Other supporting training courses for researchers (e.g., for those with existing activities to enhance practice, evaluation, etc.).
- Quality PER case studies
- Networking, learning and sharing workshops and events
- Evaluation report

Timeline

We are working to the following schedule:

Pre-launch

April 2021 recruitment of researchers and community groups
 May securing partnerships

Stage 1 – Enabling works

June benchmark evaluation of researchers' attitudes, skills and confidence regarding PER, dovetailing with wider divisional and university evaluation and monitoring where possible.
 July PER training for researchers and PER professionals. Project teams supported to develop an evaluation plan for their projects.
 August finalise logistics for partnership working through pilot engagement activities

Stage 2 – Co-development

September Research/community project co-development work begins
 October Research/community project co-development work continues
 November Research/community project co-development work continues
 December Research/community project co-development work culminates in announcing celebration event programme

Stage 3 – Celebration event

Jan 2022 celebration event delivery period begins
 February celebration event delivery continues
 March celebration event delivery period concludes. Project teams to submit final project summaries
 April reporting and next steps

Further information about the programme can be found here: [Establishing a new science engagement programme — Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation)

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. Income from external research contracts in 2016/17 exceeded £564m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division (MPLS) is one of the four academic divisions within the University: the Humanities Division; the Social Sciences Division; the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division; and the Medical Sciences Division. It comprises ten academic departments: Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Science, Engineering Science, Materials, the Mathematical Institute, Physics, Plant Sciences, Statistics, and Zoology. It also encompasses the Begbroke Science Park and the Life Sciences Interface Doctoral Training Centre. The constituent units of the Division enjoy an international reputation for excellence in the mathematical, physical, and life sciences, as well as in interdisciplinary areas, particularly at the interface with the medical and physical sciences.

Each division has its own academic Head of Division and a divisional secretariat, led by the Divisional Registrar. Each division is responsible for academic oversight of the teaching and research of its various departments and faculties, for strategic and operational planning, and for personnel and resource management. Much of this is undertaken by the divisional board and its principal committees.

The Interim Head of the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division is Professor Sam Howison, and the Interim Divisional Registrar is Tracy Gale. In addition to the advertised post there are, currently, a further 23 academic-related and support staff in the divisional office, together with the Divisional Finance team and the Sector Personnel team. The administrative staff of the divisional office (including the post advertised) are formally part of the Academic Administration Division (AAD) of the University Administration and Services (UAS), and report to the Divisional Registrar.

The Divisional Office for Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences is based at 9 Parks Road, in the heart of the science area.

For more information please visit www.mpls.ox.ac.uk.

Important information for applicants

Data Privacy

The data you provide (your name, contact details) will only be used for the purposes of assessing your proposal, and if successful, for future administration in relation to this project only. Your data will be held electronically on our GDPR compliant secure systems and will not be shared with anyone beyond required as part of administering this tender and the project in general. By submitting your proposal you consent to providing this data to the University of Oxford as data controller and processor. If at any time you no longer wish your data to be held, please notify oliver.moore@mpls.ox.ac.uk.

Equality of Opportunity

Appointment as Evaluation Consultant will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of the role. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.