



Manchester Metropolitan University
Public Engagement Strategy

“Bridging the gap between
MMU and the Public”



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Executive Summary

Public Engagement Strategy

The Public Engagement Strategy (PES) proposes a new direction within the university which will complement and contribute to both Research and Academic Enterprise/Knowledge Exchange activity, by offering both staff and students reward and recognition for engagement in activities which define what it means to be a university in the 21st century, making public interactions and social considerations a core part of the role of any member of staff or student in any discipline.

Specifically, the University's strategy for Public Engagement will be to

- Stimulate a wider understanding of Higher Education by enthusing the public about current issues, the creative process, and the aspirations and outcomes of research.
- Enable researchers to build the capacity and capability to participate in high quality, effective engagement with the public, and to consider societal implications and public attitudes, alongside others, in the conduct and use of research.
- Create effective communication channels between MMU and the Public about new innovative developments, achievements, projects, research and their impacts on the economy and society.
- Promote the presence of our students in the city as a positive force for good, fully unlocking and making transparent the benefits that students bring to our towns and cities, and preparing them for global citizenship.
- Further the teaching, learning and research practice of our students by their engagement and dialogue with the public and other stakeholder groups.
- Encourage the development of global citizens and professionals with a sense of civic and societal responsibility.
- Develop a close understanding and relationship with the City and Region.
- Open out the knowledge resource of the university to the public in new and innovative ways.
- Engage in the co- creation of knowledge and the generation of new ideas in collaboration with external partners.
- Encourage opportunities for academics and students to be exposed to and share diverse perspectives.
- Increase the university's participation in local democracy.
- Undertake a role in supporting and empowering local communities.

Underpinning these strategic imperatives are the University's Research and Academic Enterprise Strategies.

MMU Public Engagement Strategy

The Vision

Public Engagement has always been integral to the vision and mission of MMU as demonstrated by the University's Institutional Strategy.

The 2020 Vision describes MMU as:
“A University of and for the region.... a University whose expertise, research and other resources support the social and economic development of the region.”

MMU now wants to formalise its approach to Public Engagement to demonstrate its values and the importance it places on aligning itself with the requirements of its city and region.

The Strategy

The Public Engagement Strategy will work toward a change of culture within the university, and will set out an Action Plan for development which will offer the opportunity for all employees of the university, and the postgraduate and undergraduate community, to become involved in Public Engagement activities.

The key strategic priorities will be:

1. To work towards the provision of a support infrastructure for PE development supported by Higher Education Innovation Funding and the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement.
2. To set out an annual programme of PE activities
3. To reward and recognise staff who engage in PE activity
4. Provide an Action Plan to take forward 1-3

The Benefits to MMU of Public Engagement

The benefits to formalising an approach to Public Engagement include:

- A closer alignment with its City and Region.
- The opportunity to open out the knowledge resource of the university to the public in new and innovative ways.
- The co-creation of knowledge and the generation of new ideas in collaboration with external partners.
- The opportunity for academics and students to be exposed to and share diverse perspectives.
- Maximisation of the opportunity to inform both teaching, learning and the research context.
- Increasing of the university's participation in local democracy.
- A role in supporting and empowering local communities.
- A greater understanding of the diversity and strength of public opinion.

The Role of the Manchester Beacon

To demonstrate the university's commitment to furthering public engagement, MMU has recently successfully partnered the University of Manchester, the University of Salford and the Museum of Science and Industry to become the **Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement**. The Beacon is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council and the Wellcome Trust. HEFCE describes Public Engagement as: *“involv(ing) specialists in higher education listening to, developing their understanding of, and interacting with non-specialists.”*

Becoming one of only 6 regional Beacons connected through a national hub, will complement the development of MMU's Strategy and Action Plan in relation to Public Engagement, and will ensure that all activities will be informed by practitioners at the cutting edge.

Objectives of our Public Engagement Programme are:

- To stimulate a wider understanding of Higher Education by enthusing the public about current issues, the creative process, and the aspirations and outcomes of research.
- To enable researchers to build the capacity and capability to participate in high quality, effective engagement with the public, and to consider societal implications and public attitudes, alongside others, in the conduct and use of research.
- To create effective communication channels between MMU and the Public about new innovative developments, achievements, projects, research and their impacts on the economy and society.
- To promote the presence of our students in the city as a positive force for good, fully unlocking and making transparent the benefits students bring to our towns and cities, and preparing them for global citizenship.
- To measure the successful delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Target Audiences for Public Engagement

- All of Greater Manchester and North West residents, including those 'hard-to-reach groups'.¹
- Local businesses and business forums.
- Community, voluntary and special interest groups.
- Faith Groups.
- Local Politicians.
- The Media.
- Local Schools and FE colleges.
- Third Sector organisations.
- Regional and city-wide economic development agencies.
- Manchester City.

Governance

The Strategy will form part of MMU's Third Mission and as such, activity will report through University's Research and Enterprise Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Strategic Planning.

Support and development for public engagement activity will come from Research, Enterprise and Development (RED), led by the Head of Corporate Development. The RED office will work closely with Marketing and Communications, Research Institutes and Faculties to ensure that promotion of events and opportunities align with the aims and objectives of the Public Engagement Strategy.

Monitoring and Review

The Research and Enterprise Committee will commission half yearly reports on progress against targets set out in the Action Plan. The Strategy will be reviewed at the end of 2008 and then three yearly afterwards.

¹ 'hard to reach groups' are defined as including: people with disabilities; service non-users; young people; older people; unemployed people, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and rural communities.

Reward and Recognition of Public Engagement Activity

It is the intention to create a context for PE activity which integrates and mirrors that agreed for Research and Academic Enterprise activity, namely:

MMU Research Strategy extract from 2007 – 2020

“...to recognise and reward staff accomplishments in research through the professor, reader, professorial research fellow and senior research fellow promotion schemes...”

MMU Academic Enterprise Strategy extract from 2007 – 2020

“...to recognise and reward outstanding staff accomplishment in Academic Enterprise through, for example, opportunities for promotion to personal chairs, enterprise fellowships or secondments...”

A proposed statement for PE could read:

“...to recognise and reward outstanding staff accomplishment in Public Engagement through, for example, opportunities for promotion to personal chairs, public engagement fellowships or secondments...”

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Strategic Planning and the Director of Human Resources will lead a working group to determine how PE activities can be integrated into performance and review procedures

MMU Students and Public Engagement

MMU's PE Strategy has a threefold purpose in its engagement of students

1. To further the teaching, learning and research practice of our students by their engagement and dialogue with the public and other stakeholder groups.
2. To increase the understanding and awareness of the public of the benefit and potential asset MMU students can be to the communities in which they live.
3. To encourage the development of global citizens and professionals with a sense of civic and societal responsibility.

Action Plan for Public Engagement

The action plan for PE will be undertaken in accordance with the following Values from MMU's Institutional Strategic Plan:

'The 2020 Vision'

- to respect the rights of individuals.
- to behave ethically and professionally.
- to promote diversity.
- to invest in staff development.
- to promote and reward outstanding performance.
- to encourage creativity and enterprise.
- to develop and disseminate new knowledge.
- to promote global citizenship in our staff and students.

The Action plan will respond to the Strategic Priorities of the PE Strategy which are:

1. **To work towards the provision of a support infrastructure for PE development**
2. **To set out an annual programme of PE activities**
3. **To reward and recognise staff who engage in PE activity**

1. To work towards the provision of a support infrastructure for PE development

- i. To appoint a Public Engagement Manager.
- ii. To establish a reporting, review and monitoring procedure for all PE activities.
- iii. To establish a close working partnership between the Marketing and Communications Office and the RED Office to plan and deliver information, campaigns and promotions in relation to MMU's PE activities.
- iv. To establish an MMU working Group for PE activities.
- v. To work with Faculty Business Development Managers and champions for PE in all faculties to support, develop and delivery a programme for PE.
- vi. To integrate MMU PE activities with the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement.

Targets: (2008/2009)

- PE manager in place
- PE working Group established
- PE programme developed
- 4 promotional campaigns for PE delivered
- 5 MMU PE case studies monthly promoted through MMU's communications/media channels
- 5 Manchester Beacon case studies monthly promoted through The Beacon's communications channels
- "Community" button on the front of MMU's website

2. To set out an annual programme of PE activities

- i. To work with the PE Working Group to establish an annual programme of events and activities.
- ii. To forge effective partnerships and collaborations with external organizations, groups, individuals, who will inform and work in partnership to ensure the programme responds to the expectations and needs of the target audiences, (ie 'critical friends').
- iii. To work with the Marketing and Communications Team to ensure all activities are promoted effectively and make full use of all MMU's media networks, connections and technologies.
- iv. To establish a group of PE academic 'champions' and Postgraduate 'champions' to support the promotion, development and sustainability of PE activities across the university.
- v. To identify 2 pilot activities which will receive funding as exemplars for both MMU staff and students and the wider Manchester Beacon community.
- vi. To report regularly on activities via the RED Office to the Research and Enterprise Committee.
- vii. To monitor and review activity against targets as set out in the Action Plan.

Targets: (2008/2009)

- Year 1 PE programme developed
- 10 new partnerships/collaborations developed
- 2 new MMU working groups established (Academic and Postgraduate)
- New Groups working across the Manchester Beacon partnership
- 8 new events delivered
- 8 new target audiences reached
- 300 residents experiencing MMU's PE activities.

3. To reward and recognise staff who engage in PE activity

- i. To establish a reward and recognition mechanism, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, to ensure that PE activity becomes embedded as a core activity of the university.
- ii. To work with the Director of Human Resources to see through the administration of any reward and recognition mechanism.
- iii. To ensure MMU's Strategic Plan 2007- 2020 includes mention of the PE Strategy and Action Plan.
- iv. To review progress against this plan annually.

Targets: (2008/2009)

- Reward and Recognition Scheme in place
- 4 funded PE Fellows appointed annually £10K each (HEIF)
- MMU Strategy includes PE Statements
- 30 MMU staff benefiting from engagement with PE Activity



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