



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

# **ENGAGED RESEARCH ACTION PLAN**

2019–2021

**SHAPING  
A BETTER  
WORLD**  
SINCE 1845



# WHAT IS ENGAGED RESEARCH?

The creation of a research environment which values and promotes knowledge exchange, collaboration and partnership is an integral part of the success of any university. This has always been the case but, now more than ever, there are pressing reasons to reaffirm this commitment. As a research-intensive university we are concerned about the perception of experts and expertise, public understanding of the value of knowledge, and the timely use of evidence to provide an informed basis for public debate and public policy.

There are multiple processes, methodologies and activities which fall under the broad title of *Public Engagement with Research*. The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) describes public engagement as:

***‘the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition, a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.’***

Putting mutual benefit at the heart of such engagement means:

- Not just advocating for our research, but working with others to improve the quality and the type of research we do.
- Not just communicating our research, but helping to increase broader understanding of knowledge to support informed decisions on political, economic, health, social, and cultural issues.
- Not just telling people about our research, but challenging ourselves to communicate technical knowledge to a broader range of non-technical audiences more effectively, and demonstrating the influence of external expertise on academic research priorities.

This Action Plan is designed to support staff, not to add bureaucratic burden. It is based on values, not metrics, and its objectives and actions place an onus on the University leadership to demonstrate its commitment to engaged research. This Plan has been built on the ideas, initiative and experiences of our staff and partners who have embedded engaged research at the heart of what they do. It will provide strategic direction for our initiatives in this area over the coming years and help researchers to engage our many diverse external stakeholders meaningfully and effectively.

We focus on the notion of ‘Engaged Research’ and the ‘Engaged Researcher’ to emphasise the active and wide-ranging role of our research; reaching out to and engaging not just the public or civil society but also government, business and industry. We will therefore embrace a wide-ranging and inclusive set of engagement objectives and activities, valuing the full spectrum of activities under the umbrella of Engaged Research.

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FOR QUEEN'S, RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT INCLUDES:



CONSULTATION

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Creating fora to discuss potential research themes and priority objectives with partners

OBJECTIVES

Mutual research agendas between researchers and partners are developed



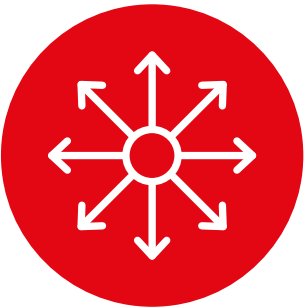
DIALOGUE

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Research advisory groups, joint workshops with external stakeholders

OBJECTIVES

Researchers are better informed about emerging priorities in relevant sectors of industry and wider society



DISSEMINATION

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Press and media, festivals, seminars, performances

OBJECTIVES

Understanding of and engagement with knowledge generated through research is increased amongst external stakeholders



PARTNERSHIP

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Successful collaborations leading to the growth of organic long-term relationships

OBJECTIVES

Long-term, sustainable, mutually-beneficial research relationships are established



COLLABORATION

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY

Co-production of specific pieces of research on topics of mutual interest

OBJECTIVES

Shared short-term goals and actions are created and agreed

# ENGAGED RESEARCH AT QUEEN'S

Researchers across our University are developing and expanding engaged research projects and partnerships – at the institutional and the grassroots level – affecting communities locally and society globally. Some examples include:

THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NORTHERN IRELAND

The Centre of Excellence for Public Health Northern Ireland brought together 6 key partners from policy, practice, the third sector and academia to develop an evidence based approach to tackle public health issues such as obesity and health inequalities.

LIVING LEGACIES

The 'Living Legacies 1914-18' World War One Engagement project has worked with over 6000 community participants and supported over 150 events to explore the impacts of the war and the continuing legacy today.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS

Researchers in Queen's have worked with over 350 businesses on around 400 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) in the last 25 years, creating high quality jobs for over 500 graduates in some of Northern Ireland's best known companies

ARK

ARK's Life and Times surveys have recorded public attitudes to key policy issues in Northern Ireland for 20 years. Over 87,000 adults, young people and children have taken part in three surveys, which have played an important role in shaping and evaluating key public policies, such as those relating to community relations and racial equality, and have consistently informed public and political debate, including in highly contested policy areas.

DELIVERING CITY DEAL PROJECTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Working together with local councils in the Belfast area we are supporting and driving innovation through the £850 million Belfast Region City Deal, creating up to 20,000 jobs alongside a 10 year programme of inclusive economic growth.

THE CENTRE FOR EVIDENCE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

We are working with local communities through the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation to establish innovation zones in West Belfast to improve health and social wellbeing and promoting the better use of evidence in policy and practice in education, social welfare and public health.

ASTROPHYSICS RESEARCH CENTRE

Astronomers at our Astrophysics Research Centre are leading major discoveries into the sources of gravitational waves and the nature of alien objects in our Solar System, explaining to millions through the media and exploring through public viewing nights, helping thousands of people to see the Moon or Jupiter through a telescope for the first time.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

Guidelines for Good Practice for University Research and Civil Society Organisations developed by Queen's researchers act as a step by step guide for researchers developing research projects with external partners, helping researchers to think about their engagement with stakeholders, and how to consider their context and needs.

# OUR VISION FOR ENGAGED RESEARCH

Our vision for engaged research at Queen's is:

*'To become a world leader in promoting the values of partnership and collaboration in research by building and sustaining mutually-beneficial research relationships, with real-world impact, and championing a culture where staff and partners feel valued and supported in their research engagement activities.'*

Through this Action Plan we will make a tangible difference in the following five priority areas:

- 1. Leadership
- 2. Capacity Building
- 3. Recognition, Reward and Progression
- 4. Increasing Access
- 5. Resourcing



## INFORM

**OUR GOAL**

We will educate, inspire and learn together

**OUR PROMISE**

We will make Queen's research relevant, accessible, understandable and inspiring

In order to make this vision a reality, Queen's will amplify and share examples of best practice in research engagement already ongoing within the University and support a range of new initiatives to encourage and embed research engagement in every part of the institution.

Our vision rests on three key principles – **Inform**, **Consult**, and **Collaborate**:



## CONSULT

**OUR GOAL**

We will promote dialogue with our partners on Queen's research activities

**OUR PROMISE**

We will listen to our partners views, developing research priorities and activities together, for mutual benefit



## COLLABORATE

**OUR GOAL**

We will partner with a diverse range of external stakeholders on Queen's research activities

**OUR PROMISE**

We will develop relationships based on equality and respect, providing opportunities for capacity building and recognition of partner contributions

# PRIORITY AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

Priority Area	Objective
1. Leadership	<p>a. We will provide leadership for engaged research within Queen's.</p> <p>b. We will provide leadership for engaged research in the wider higher education sector.</p> <p>c. We will increase the visibility of research engagement in strategic University activities and initiatives.</p>
2. Capacity Building	<p>a. We will create an environment where training and opportunities are provided for Queen's staff to reach their full potential with regard to engaged research activities.</p> <p>b. We will provide opportunities for mutually-beneficial research engagement, through the creation of forums to encourage the sharing of best practice and information exchange.</p>
3. Recognition, Reward and Progression	<p>a. We will ensure that research engagement is recognised as a core research activity, valuing the varied contributions that research staff make to the life of the University.</p> <p>b. We will ensure that researchers feel reassured and encouraged to spend time on research engagement activities.</p> <p>c. We will reward and celebrate research engagement excellence across the University.</p>
4. Increasing Access	<p>a. We will include external partners, where possible, at all stages of the research cycle, developing and undertaking research together, as equals.</p> <p>b. We will counter any remaining 'chill effect' felt by external audiences around collaborating and engaging with academia.</p>
5. Resourcing	<p>a. We will secure long-term, sustainable funding for research engagement resources and activities.</p> <p>b. We will create a central framework and support structure for research engagement.</p>

Please visit [www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Our-research/Engaged-Research/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Our-research/Engaged-Research/) to view the full Engaged Research Action Plan 2019–2021.

## **OUR VISION FOR ENGAGED RESEARCH AT QUEEN'S IS:**

**'TO BECOME A WORLD  
LEADER IN PROMOTING THE  
VALUES OF PARTNERSHIP AND  
COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH  
BY BUILDING AND SUSTAINING  
MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RESEARCH  
RELATIONSHIPS, WITH REAL-WORLD  
IMPACT, AND CHAMPIONING  
A CULTURE WHERE STAFF AND  
PARTNERS FEEL VALUED AND  
SUPPORTED IN THEIR RESEARCH  
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.'**



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