

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AWARDS 2020

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Birkbeck College's vision for Public Engagement with Research (PER) is to build on our founding principles of reaching non-traditional learners and providing access to knowledge for all. Birkbeck is a place where we connect, collaborate, challenge received wisdom and build on the expertise of life and work, as well as official knowledges. Public engagement sits at the heart of our values and as a core part of our research, enabling us to interact with a wide and diverse range of ordinary people (the public) for the betterment of our research, our researchers and society.

1. HOW TO APPLY

Please complete an application form, which can be downloaded from the Birkbeck Public Engagement Awards [website](#) and submit via email to the Public Engagement Team at public-engagement@bbk.ac.uk by midnight on 23rd February 2020. Confirmation of receipt will be provided.

Please contact the Public Engagement team if you require one-to-one advice on your application.

2. ELIGIBILITY

We ask applicants to make sure that all projects submitted for consideration fit within the following determined parameters:

- **ALL RESEARCH-ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY**

We welcome applications by entrants at any stage in their career, from doctoral students to senior faculty. Applicants must be current members of staff or currently doctoral students and must be in post or enrolled until 31 July 2020.

- **ONGOING AND RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS**

Applications are welcomed for activities both current and ongoing, or that have been completed within the last two years (i.e. since January 2018).

- **LEAD CONTACT**

For ease of communication, we ask that each application identifies one individual as the main point of contact throughout the process. We still ask that you include details for all team members (and

external partners if applicable) so we can make sure all contributors receive recognition for their work.

3. CATEGORIES

Each year six projects will be recognised with a public engagement award, one in each of the below categories. It is likely that your project will fit into more than one of the below categories but at this stage we would like to know where you think it fits best. Final categorisation shall be decided by the public engagement and research awarding committee.

3.1 PHD / EARLY CAREER

This award recognises the inspiring public engagement work undertaken by researchers in the early stages of their research career, either doctoral students or early career researchers (i.e. post-docs in their first two years in post). This includes projects where the applicant has spearheaded a project or contributed significantly to a larger project. Applicants can apply across any of the following categories.

3.2 COMMUNICATING RESEARCH

This award recognises excellence in communicating research projects and ideas through stimulating or innovative activities. These activities will have been able to: inspire wonder, curiosity and learning; challenge conventional wisdom or provoke scrutiny and debate amongst their targeted publics. Classic forms of communication may have been used for this work including talks, workshops and media work (such as contributing or creating TV, film or radio content), as well as publishing articles in non-scholarly outlets. Innovative use of websites and social media for communication will also be considered in this category.

Please note the distinction between activities which are ‘publicly available’ as opposed to communicating to the public. Publicly available activities are scholarly activities such as conferences or lectures that are made available to the public rather than those specifically designed for a particular non-academic audience. Publicly available activities do not fall within the remit of this award.

Candidates can apply with a single piece of outstanding communications work or a blended communications approach with multiple outputs.

3.3 COLLABORATION

This award recognises outstanding engagement work based on an active collaboration and a two-way working relationship with an external partner or partners. Collaborators might include museums, charities, schools, individuals and artists, organisations or social enterprises who work with the researcher/s to reach their publics. Collaborations may have resulted in the

development of new pieces of work, exhibitions, performances and resources. This type of engagement usually looks to prompt new ideas and ways of working, build skills/ knowledge on both sides of the collaboration, whilst providing publics with access to research and opportunities to get involved.

With these types of projects the true engagement could be said to be with the collaborator rather than the public, although the outputs of the collaboration often add an additional level of engagement with a wider public.

3.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This award recognises projects that engage and empower communities and wider society, celebrating how local, national and international communities shape our work. These projects have a specific community at their core and are aware of the nuances that come with working with them. These projects prize inclusion and consideration, knowing that the community is both a partner and a beneficiary, and so collaboratively address issues that impact the wellbeing of that group.

3.5 ENGAGED PRACTICE

This award recognises high-quality research that uses participation and involvement of publics as a core approach to the creation of research. Projects in this category could be described as community engagement, participatory research, co-production of knowledge or socially engaged practice amongst many labels. This type of research works directly with a community of place/interest in order to: empower the subjects of the research; use dialogue and deliberation to influence the research; build networks; develop skills or improve the health and well-being of those involved.

This form of engagement often takes years to establish relationships enabling publics to share their knowledge and expertise and can often contribute to issue-based awareness, support activism or take a ground up approach to policy change.

3.6 TRANSFORMING CULTURE OR PUBLIC LIFE

This award recognises exemplary research engagement activities which aim to stimulate change. Projects in this category tackle a range of societal challenges, often working with organisations and policy makers to highlight the voices of those their research affects. These projects tend to work 'behind the scenes' to influence organisations, professional groups or policy makers. Activities are designed to: inform decision making; encourage scrutiny and debate; galvanise societal change or influence the behaviours and practices of organisations or groups who work in the public realm.

Common strategies for affecting influence might include: commissioning artworks/film/theatre; input into or creation of think-tanks and advisory groups; workshops for

professional groups and policy makers; collaborating with businesses/communities to provide a service or influence a change in practice.

Note: Collaborations within this category tend not to produce single new pieces of work but rather change the way in which a group/organisation approaches work.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

The judges are not only interested in the outputs and products of your engagement project but also in the process you used to create and conduct it. They are keen to see what has been learned from the process and what those involved have gained from the experience.

They will consider the following questions when making their decisions:

- **What research is this public engagement project based on?**

The judges want to see how integral an applicant's research is to the engagement project. For example: were the public engagement activities significantly underpinned by research or only loosely related? Projects involving your current research, rather than your broad subject area, will be commended.

- **Who did the project seek to engage with and why?**

The judges want to understand who you sought to engage with, why your research is relevant to them, and why they are relevant to your research. Detail how you identified and contacted your target group, either directly or through partner organisations. Make sure you include what you intended your target group to gain from being involved, and what you and your research sought to gain from their input.

- **How did you engage with your target group and why did you engage with them in this way?**

The judges want to find out not just how you executed your project, but how and why your means of engagement was particularly accessible and/or tailored to your group. You may want to include details of the location, date/time or other decisions made to make this suitable for the chosen audience. If you identified any barriers to working with your chosen group, how did you overcome them? If you had any collaborators or partners, include details of how you found them, identified them as suitable partners and explain what they brought to the project.

- **How does your project show excellence in engagement? What has been gained and by who over the course of the project?**

The judges are keen to understand the details of any project outputs. This is the section to list your aims if they've not already been detailed in response to earlier questions. What evaluation or evidence gathering methodologies did you employ to find out whether your aims were achieved? It's also important to consider whether your project has resulted in any changes in how the engaged group, researcher, collaborators or stakeholder lives/works/thinks. This can include personal or professional development for those involved.

- **Is there anything else that makes your project noteworthy? What did you learn? What effects did your project have?**

You can use this space to tell us anything else you think we should know. This is an opportunity to tell the judges if and how any learning has been shared with peers, and also to articulate any unforeseen results/consequences of the project. What has happened since? What might happen in future? Will the project continue? If so, how?

5. KEY DATES

Applications should be emailed to the Public Engagement Team by midnight on the 23rd February 2020: public-engagement@bbk.ac.uk

Shortlisted applicants will be informed in March 2020.

The Birkbeck Public Engagement Awards Ceremony will be held in late April 2020.

6. CONTACT US

For any queries, please contact the Public Engagement team at public-engagement@bbk.ac.uk

If you'd like to learn more about Public Engagement at Birkbeck more broadly, including information about our vision and avenues of support, please visit our [Public Engagement at Birkbeck webpage](#).