Institute for Policy and Engagement

Sharing knowledge to shape the future
The Institute for Policy and Engagement will ensure our research and academics are at the forefront of shaping public policy and debate, ultimately improving outcomes for all.”

Stephen Meek
Director, Institute for Policy and Engagement
Universities play a vital role in the modern world. Through research, teaching and knowledge exchange they have underpinned the technologies that improve the world we live in. University research helps us live longer lives and move around more efficiently, to tackle challenges from poverty to biodiversity, and to develop the social and cultural understanding needed to apply these solutions to the real world.

This role extends to helping people understand the world better. Giving people an insight into scientific, technical, political and cultural developments that are changing the world at a dizzying pace. Universities can help people understand the sometimes overwhelming challenges they face, from indebtedness to climate change, and how they can do something about them.

This applies equally to policy and decision makers. They have to make critical judgements on hugely complex issues, at an ever faster pace. In an increasingly polarised environment, the volume of information can be overwhelming. Universities can provide considered, evidence-driven insight to sort the signal from the noise.

To play these roles effectively, universities need to reflect how the world has changed. In a less deferential world they cannot assume they have a right to a hearing. They need to be partners, not lecturers. They need to listen to and understand what people need. That is what the Institute for Policy and Engagement has been created to do.

We will help to create partnerships and networks between the world-class research undertaken at the University of Nottingham and the people and organisations it can help. By doing this, we aim to help fulfil the mission of our Research Vision to deliver research of truly global significance.

We are already good at this, and sometimes exceptional. From the work of the Rights Lab, collaborating with governments, NGOs and businesses to end modern slavery, to the periodic table video series, enthusing the next generation of scientists, the University has some peerless examples of outstanding impact and engagement.

I am excited and privileged to have the opportunity to lead this Institute, at this great University, and know our potential to make a difference is huge.

Stephen Meek
Director, Institute for Policy and Engagement
Our mission

To support the exchange of knowledge and ideas to enrich policy making, inspire people, support communities, transform lives and shape the future.

Our vision

To be a beacon, renowned for creating partnerships between our world-class researchers, policymakers and the public. Through these partnerships we will tackle together the most compelling challenges locally, nationally and globally.
How we work

A number of key principles underpin the Institute’s approach to working with academic colleagues and external bodies.

**Partnership**
The Institute works closely with world-class researchers across the University, and with external partners to maximise impact and strengthen our reputation and civic role.

The challenges of the modern world are complex and multi-faceted, so our partnerships will cross disciplines and draw on a diverse range of perspectives.

**Listening**
We work by understanding what our external partners need and how we can contribute to that by drawing on our expert knowledge across disciplines. We aim to learn continually from experts inside and outside the University.

**Making a difference**
We focus on areas where we believe the University's knowledge can most contribute to real change either locally, nationally or globally.

**A focus on solutions**
We aim to contribute to visionary new approaches to global challenges, as well as sharing technical expertise. We aim to lead debates as well as respond to questions set by others.

**A global perspective**
The Institute has a physical base in Highfield House on University Park, but we will draw on the University’s researchers globally, and the expertise at its campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia.

**A civic role**
We also have a local responsibility as part of a vibrant city and region. We are committed to working with local leaders to strengthen our communities; and to be a resource to help people in those communities understand and solve local problems.

**Social responsibility**
We put social value, social responsibility, equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do.
What we offer

The Institute has been established to support you and to ensure your research outputs reach policy or public audiences effectively and measurably.

We will build our capacity by:
- offering training courses in policy impact and public engagement, masterclasses with senior policymakers and influencers, and expert public engagers
- developing an online library of guidance
- providing bespoke support for your key policy or public engagements
- awards and other forms of recognition

We will build networks and partnerships acting as a convener globally, nationally and locally by:
- identifying and creating opportunities for you to bring us closer to the heart of policy-making, and maintaining relationships
- creating innovative platforms for public engagement to reach new audiences, to inspire and to promote understanding
- providing financial and other support to host and attend events and produce materials

We will offer thought leadership by:
- building on the mission-driven approach that underpins our Beacons of Excellence to provide solutions to complex challenges that use our insight to lead debate
- using public engagement to help people understand and shape the world in which they live

The Institute is the place for our external partners to access the wealth of expertise that we have to offer. With five faculties covering arts, social sciences, science, medicine and health sciences, and engineering, and world-leading researchers, we have a vast resource of expertise to draw upon.
By enhancing the support we offer for public and policy engagement, we will help our academics to forge new partnerships and ensure that their research has genuine global impact.”

Professor Dame Jessica Corner
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange

The Institute for Policy and Engagement is a core part of the University’s Research Vision.

The Research Vision is one of the most comprehensive and ambitious programmes in the University’s history, supporting our mission of delivering exceptional research that transforms lives in our community, the UK and across the world.

Based on extensive analysis of our capabilities and potential, the Research Vision is mapped against the changing landscape of UK and international research funding and policy. Our six Beacons of Excellence are world-leading areas of transdisciplinary research that align with these strategic priorities, and each addresses UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Beacons are one of seven areas of focus that comprise the Research Vision, the others being:

- The Institute for Policy and Engagement
- People – world-class researchers and Nottingham fellows
- World-class physical and digital environment
- Industrial collaboration and commercialisation
- Transdisciplinary research capabilities in our Research Priority Areas (RPAs)
- International collaboration

We have already seen major steps forward including the recruitment of outstanding fellows and world-class researchers, significant awards and accolades, and an increase in our research funding.

This renewed focus and support for research will ensure our vision remains agile, responsive and fully supportive of our world-class researchers, by delivering a research environment without barriers where excellent research can flourish; attracting and retaining world-class research talent; allowing staff the time, support and space to deliver research with excellence; and focusing on quality research outputs.

We will continue to support all areas of research excellence across the University and promote opportunities for interdisciplinary working in a rich research ecosystem. We will also seek to better align our research with UK and global strategic priorities.

More information is available at: nottingham.ac.uk/research
In its first few months the Institute for Policy and Engagement has already made a difference.

We supported the University’s presence at SPARK 2019 in Hong Kong, sharing three remarkable pieces of research with new audiences.

We have worked with the School of Economics on two successful public lectures, convening discussion afterwards to bring together the University, local leaders and business.

We are providing support to extend the policy impact of our world-class research in fields as diverse as road user behaviour, 3D printing in pharmaceuticals, financial resilience, and International Treaty Law.

We have convened discussions between experts and decision makers on key challenges, including a ‘Global Dialogues’ event in Hong Kong on the fourth industrial revolution, and a public lecture and debate on business and society in partnership with the British Academy.

We are running two flagship training programmes covering core skills in policy impact and public engagement work, and are working with individual schools and faculties to provide more bespoke training sessions.

Postgraduate student Yue Li working on the final touches to virtual time travel. Stepping back 800 years into Chinese heritage sites, shown at the SPARK Festival in Hong Kong.
We will work with those of you who are already leaders in policy impact and public engagement to help you showcase your achievements, and inspire others to take action.

We will build a network of internal associates and external fellows to ensure you have access to top-level expertise and ideas for public engagement and policy impact.

We will develop ways of working with our campuses in Malaysia and China to ensure that academics across all three campuses are able to draw support from the Institute.

We will lead, with Lakeside Arts, Wonder 2019, our flagship public engagement event, looking to extend its reach into communities that don’t typically participate.

We will run a small grants scheme for public engagement which will support the development of new and innovative pieces of engagement.

We will collaborate, in the first instance with our research Beacons of Excellence, to develop a series of policy papers which will not just set out our research findings in policy-friendly terms, but lead the debate around the biggest policy challenges of the day.

We will develop a series of user-friendly policy and public engagement web tools to provide you with a ready source of guidance.

Under Pressure – the physics live show, a 45-minute demonstration complete with pops, bangs and levitation at Wonder 2017
Our team

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