

STUDENT BRIEFING:

LAHP PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TRAINING AND COMPETITION 2024

What follows is a briefing paper for LAHP's Public Engagement training provision and the third iteration of our Public Engagement Prize competition launched in March 2024.

First though, why public engagement?

Public engagement now features as a core skill that academics are increasingly required to develop. Over the forthcoming term, LAHP is offering you training in this increasingly important area of academic activity.

If you have ever wondered what public engagement is all about; what it adds to your research; why it is so prominent now in Higher Education institutions; what the virtues of engaging with the 'public' are or indeed – who exactly are the public? Then these sessions are probably for you!

"Public engagement describes 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." – definition of the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

Led by experts drawn from across our non-HEI partners as well as academics within them, these sessions will tell you all you need to know to get started on your own public engagement activities. And as you will see below, they are designed to encourage you to have a go at initiating a PE project, which you can then use to enter LAHP's annual public engagement competition!

Rationale:

1. Public engagement (PE) now stands at the heart of UKRI thinking and is a central policy plank for all research councils, including as a pathway to impact – but can be an unfamiliar topic, marginal concern or peripheral idea for PGRs who are unfamiliar with it.

2. PGRs who do not yet understand the potential of their work to reach wider audiences miss opportunities to develop core skills in PE during their period of

doctoral research. This not only negatively affects their understanding of the impact agenda and how it informs both research policy and UKRI post PhD funding streams, but also overlooks how PE can itself be integrated as part of a research methodology and lead to further insights, outputs, and interdisciplinary collaborations and funding opportunities.

3. This suite of training in PE and impact aims to ensure that LAHP'S PGRs in their second and third years have an opportunity to acquire a fundamental understanding of PE as an activity that should be embedded in and through their approach to dissemination, collaboration and impact and/or be centrally placed within their research as a methodology.

4. This training is not only important to them as current doctoral candidates, but also going forward as ECRs moving beyond the PhD into employment contexts, whether HE or non-HE. This includes alt-ac careers (e.g., research careers beyond the academy), where research skills combined with a nuanced understanding of PE and the impact agenda can be effectively applied across a variety of industries and sectors.

Training Aims:

1. To understand PE and PE as a pathway to impact within an Arts and Humanities context and explore how individual researchers and can find different ways to connect with non-specialist audiences in and out of an institutional context.
2. To explore the practicalities of PE in a variety of formats - including face-to-face, online, and digital - and gain understanding of the skills needed for the practical side of organizing and running PE events, including basic event planning, presentation, and management.
3. To understand the needs of potential partners, what a successful collaboration looks like, and the responsibilities of researcher roles in an interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnership.
4. To gain understanding of the impact agenda and how impact can be assessed – and how the current and future funding environment for research is increasingly determined by an ability to engage a wide range of publics, partners, and collaborators.
5. To explore ways in which effective and impactful PE can best address issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Training sessions:

Training will run from February until May in four phases and cover: introductory sessions; practical projects; museum visits and student case studies; project development. The sessions will be led by specialists in research and public engagement, including three of LAHP's core non-HEI partners: the Museum of

London, The National Archives and the V&A. At least 10% of places will be reserved for those not funded by LAHP and a number of places will be reserved for students from other AHRC DTPs.

An overview of the training can be found on the following webpage under 'LAHP Public Engagement Training and Competition': <https://www.lahp.ac.uk/training-cohortdevelopment/research-training/>

Or individual sessions can be viewed via the Inkpath platform (guidance on how to register): <https://webapp.inkpath.co.uk/#/LoginPage>

LAHP's Impact, Engagement and Entrepreneurship Fund

LAHP students (2nd and 3rd year) can apply for up to £600 to support a PE project through the LAHP Impact, Engagement and Entrepreneurship Fund. See <https://www.lahp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/LAHP-IEE-guidelines-2020-21.pdf>

The LAHP Public Engagement Competition

LAHP funded students are eligible to enter LAHP's Public Engagement Competition. Submissions should be for a PE project directly related to their primary research or in collaboration with other students around a mutual interest resonant with their research.

The submission can take one of the following forms:

- (1) Documentation or a sample of an individual piece of public engagement in relation to LAHP-funded research;
- (2) Documentation or a sample of a group/ collaborative project undertaken in response to the training sessions;
- (3) A detailed proposal of 3-5 pages for a planned public engagement project related to LAHP-funded research.

All submissions must also be accompanied by a **one-page project summary** that explains how the PE activity relates to and/or extends your research; which particular audience you wanted to reach and why; and what impacts you anticipate it having.

Submissions will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Clarity of the project, including aims and outcomes
- Link to current LAHP research
- Specificity of target audience, and how the project hopes to reach these groups
- Appropriateness of engagement method for aims and public
- Quality of evaluation plans.

The deadline is **30 April 2024** and the winner and runners-up will be announced at LAHP's Annual Research Day on 14 May 2024. The first prize will be £200 in book tokens, with two runner-up prizes of £50 in book tokens.

Competition submissions should be sent to info.lahp@london.ac.uk