**Research Project Communication**

**Guidance & Templates for Researchers**

A person pointing at a wall with sticky notes

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## Introduction

Communicating research may seem daunting, labour intensive and somewhat challenging at times, particularly if the research is complex, variable and likely to span a number of years. It can be difficult to identify the key concepts and anticipated impact of the research, which are key to effectively communicating to various interested parties.

However, planning for and engaging with communication for the research lifecycle has many benefits:

* **Reputation**

Colleagues, peers, students and the wider education community being well informed of research activities and outcomes enhances academic standing and future research opportunities. It helps attract students, partners and research collaborators.

Public engagement with non-academic communities can assist with the ‘real world impact’ of research. It can garner support for the research aims and anticipated outcomes and it can also widen the pool of potential participants.

* **Relationships**

Interested parties having knowledge and understanding of research undertakings helps expand networks and collaboration potentials. It may also open doors to an array of opportunities such as guest speaking, panel roles and advisory appointments.

* **Influence**

Effectively communicating research can enable policy makers and key influential figures to be reached and engaged, providing opportunity to shape and influence policies.

* **Visibility**

Sharing research aims, objectives, methods, intended outcomes and the potential for impact beyond academia can help ‘get the message out there’. It can support the research culture within the department, faculty or wider institution and it helps provide evidence for external scrutiny.

* **Funding**

Being able to successfully convey a research project can help secure funding as it enables those awarding the funding to clearly understand the research and potential impact. Communication for the entirety of the research alongside effective dissemination can also support future funding opportunities.

Now that some of the key reasons why it is important to effectively communicate research have been identified, it is essential to consider how best to do this.

Remember, colleagues within the Faculty, the Research Office and central marketing teams can all support with communications throughout the lifecycle of your research projects – you are not in this alone!

## Communication Planning

### What needs to be communicated?

Identify the key matters to be communicated and how this will support the research project.

As a starting point consider:

* What do people need to know about the research?
* Intended aims and objectives
* Intended impact
* Any ‘calls to action’ – what will help shape and strengthen the research?
* How will people use the research?
* Use within academic circles
* Use beyond academia: Society, influencing policy, economic or environmental impact etc…
* Who will benefit from the research and what opportunities for involvement will they have?
* What is the purpose of the communication?
* Increasing awareness
* Dissemination
* Collaboration
* Encouraging Engagement
* What are the key messages and headlines that are to be conveyed?
* How would the core elements of the research be explained to a non-academic audience? Keep the message concise and user friendly
* These may shift and change as the research progresses, so it is advisable to review them on a regular basis
* Support with evidence and resources where possible

### When does research need to be communicated?

Communication opportunities can, and will, arise at various points both during and after the research project. It is therefore key to try to plan and prepare for these opportunities as early on as possible.

Key communication opportunities during the research lifecycle include:

* Funding stage (if applicable)
* Create a clear and well considered funding bid and then get it peer reviewed
* Ensure [**impact**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/) has been considered from the outset and the support of the Impact Managers sought
* Enlist support of the [**Development Managers**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/funding/) as early as possible
* Identify the key aims, approaches and desired outcomes in a way that is easy to understand for those outside of the research field
* Announce any funding wins as a good news story within the institution and beyond (as applicable) e.g. share the detail with the Research Office who can then share it via Social Media, Campus Talk, Research Monthly etc…
* The [**Finance Business Partners**](mailto:finance%20business%20partners) can support with budgeting. Consider budgeting for ‘on project’ and ‘post project’ communications, where the funding bid allows
* Commencement of the research
* Do colleagues and peers know about the new research?
* Does the wider institution know about the project, how it is funded and who is collaborating on the research?
* Is there somewhere to host news stories, link to publications and key information regarding the project as things progress? The Research Impact Managers can create project specific pages on the University website, raise a request via the [**Research Office**](mailto:researchoffice@wrexham.ac.uk).
* How will the general public be made aware of the research, planned impact and opportunities for engagement?
* Are key policy makers and interested parties aware of the commencement of the project and what it means for them?
* Ongoing research
* Be sure to update internal and external parties about any events and key milestones in the project
* Consider sharing preliminary findings (as appropriate and approved)
* Engage in events to keep interested parties informed of progress e.g. Open House for Research, Faculty Seminars, guest speaking at key external events etc…
* Writing blogs and sharing posts helps keep the research visible and engaging
* Attend conferences, network and embrace presenting opportunities that link to the research, as appropriate or seek support from colleagues in order to engage as you feel comfortable
* Explore [**knowledge exchange**](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/impact-toolkit-for-economic-and-social-sciences/how-to-do-effective-knowledge-exchange/#contents-list) opportunities, seeking support from the [**Enterprise**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/business/) team to identify appropriate channels
* Dissemination of findings
* Conferences
* Presentations
* Public forums
* Government platforms
* Research field related journals / publication platforms
* Make outputs as visible and accessible as possible so people can find and cite them
* Make research outputs [open access](https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-article-open-access/) so that the results of publicly funded research are available for all, for free
* Post Dissemination
* Be open to and engage with media opportunities relating to your research – demonstrate that you’re an expert in the field
* Continue utilising the networks built during the research
* Consider further research and funding opportunities

Create a plan setting out what is to be communicated and when. Visit the Research Office [Impact Planning webpages](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/impact-planning/) for suggested **templates** to help map out the required communication of a research project.

### Who to communicate the research with

Consider whether your internal vs external auidences:

**Internal Audiences:**

* Faculty & colleagues
* Current students (undergraduate and postgraduate)
* University professional servies
* Senior Management / Board of Governors

**External Audiences:**

* Academic community (researchers, other universities)
* Industry cartners
* Alumni
* Prospective students
* Media (local, national, international)
* General public
* Funding bodies

It is likely that a number of interested parties and key players are easily identifiable, however it is advisable to take time to fully consider all target audiences of the research, to ensure that the communication needs of each audiance can be planned and tailored.

Your Impact Plan will help you identify and record intersted parties, here are a few examples as a starting point:

* Any [**policymakers**](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/impact-toolkit-for-economic-and-social-sciences/how-to-influence-policymakers/different-types-of-policymakers/#contents-list) appropriate to the research project who have potential to influence change
* Field experts and those in positions of power and influence
* The wider research community that may be interested in the project outcomes and impact
* Participant groups
* Media
* Communities / sections of society that may be impacted (adversely or positively) by the research
* Non-government organisations

Professor Mark Reed’s [**3i Analysis Template**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/impact-planning/) helps identify the Interest, Influence and Impact of relevant parties and provides space for noting engagement plans.

The [**Publics and Stakeholder Analysis Template**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/impact-planning/) is also a good resource for identifying possible audiences.

### How to communicate research

The ‘how’ is dependant on the matter being communicated, the target audience and the resource available. All methods have pros and cons which need to be considered in relation to accessibility, delivery and the end user(s).

It is best to tailor communication channels and methods to the intended audience, using visual aids and interactive resources where possible and appropriate.

Keep the messages clear, concise and free from complex terminology. The user needs to easily identify the key points and not have to work too hard to understand them.

It is important to ensure research communication is accessible and inclusive, further information can be found on the [**Accessibility Moodle Page**](https://moodle.glyndwr.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=32572&section=2).

#### Communication Methods

Below are examples of communication methods that can be utilised:

* [Social media](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/impact-toolkit-for-economic-and-social-sciences/how-to-use-social-media/)
* Research office accounts:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Platform** | **Address** |
| Bluesky | [Wrexham Uni Research / Prif Wrecsam Ymchwil](https://bsky.app/profile/wrexhamuniresearch.bsky.social‬) |
| LinkedIn | [Ymchwil Prif Wrecsam / Wrexham Uni Research](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ymchwil-prif-wrecsam-wrexham-uni-research-6b9911261/) |
| Research at Wrexham Teams Channel | [General | Research at Wrexham | Microsoft Teams](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3ABwZ2TLzNwpxeuv3Od9JuwBZBV-FLFe4IBzZrkFhiB1Y1%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=f2de6032-6ea6-48e3-bb90-4ad0698fa092&tenantId=0bba78d8-4f4d-4dd9-9b5a-ee121b116efe) |

* University social media accounts are managed via the [**Marketing and Communications team**](mailto:Bethan.Rumsey-Jones@wrexham.ac.uk)
* Personal social media accounts can be created for academic profile purposes, if desired
* Multimedia
* [**Campus Talks**](https://wgyou.glyndwr.ac.uk/news/campus-talk-20-3/)
* Newsletters: [**Research Office Newsletters**](https://wgyou.glyndwr.ac.uk/departments/research-office/research-newsletter/), sector specific newsletters, faculty newsletters or individual research project newsletters
* Podcasts – contact the [**Creative Media**](mailto:creativemedia@wrexham.ac.uk) team for guidance and facility availability
* Embedding videos into documents and communications helps with engagement
* Blogs
* The Research Office hosts a series of [**blogs**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/blog/categories/research/) covering a wide spectrum of research topics from Publication of the Month to Open House for Research Session to Research Seminar Series
* Researchers are encouraged to produce blog content about research projects, conferences, academic experiences etc…
* [**University blogs**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/blog/5/), faculty blogs or individual research project blogs can also be used
* Webpages
* [The Research Office webpages](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/impact-planning/) cover both Faculties, research centres and research project updates, plus many other research matters
* Individual research project pages can be created upon request
* Public engagement events
* The Research Team hold public engagement events such as [**Wrexham Talks Research**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/wrexham-talks/)
* Research project specific events can also be set up, support can be sought from the Faculty Office / Research Office
* The university uses [**Eventbrite**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/help/en-gb/articles/551351/how-to-create-an-event/) – contact the Faculty Office for further detail
* Key university contacts when planning in person events:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Department** | **Use** | **Contact** |
| Aramark | Catering for events. Can be booked via an online portal. Link in with the faculty or email the detailed contact | [dodds-claire@aramark.co.uk](mailto:dodds-claire@aramark.co.uk) |
| Room Booking | Rooms can be booked via the self-serve ‘Room Booker’ system on the staff portal | [roombookings@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:roombookings@wrexham.ac.uk) |
| Reception | Good for reception to be aware of events that externals are attending, they can help direct attendees etc… | [reception@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:reception@wrexham.ac.uk) |
| Security | Good for security to be aware of events that externals are attending, particularly if being held after hours or a sensitive research topic | [security@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:security@wrexham.ac.uk) |
| Building Services | Log a job if room set up or equipment is required. This can be done via the staff portal ‘Estates Helpdesk’ | [buildingservices@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:buildingservices@wrexham.ac.uk) |
| Promotional Materials | The Marketing team can advise on promotional materials | [marketing@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@wrexham.ac.uk) |

* Attend community meetings, business events and networking opportunities that relate to the research project
* Pitching to media
* The University Communications and Public Relations team have a media database
* Specific arms of the media can be targeted to offer expert comment on particular topics / news agenda items
* Comments may be offered in written form or via a chat with a journalist, depending on what the journalist needs
* The Communications and Public Relations team work with the researchers to support this process
* University Research Events
* Open House for Research
* Faculty Research Seminars
* Coffee Mornings  
  Springboard
* Staff profiles
* Wrexham University has a [Research Information system](https://wris.wrexham.ac.uk/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2F) which is a central location to store work-related data including **research grants**, journal articles, PhD students, **current research projects** and **research impact**. This can be pulled through to the public profile section of the [external university website](https://wrexham.ac.uk/staff-profiles/), which helps promote researchers’ profiles and identity
* [Wrexham Research Information System (WRIS) User Guide](https://mailglyndwrac.sharepoint.com/sites/ResearchOffice/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FResearchOffice%2FShared%20Documents%2FWRIS%2FProfiles%2FUser%20Guide%20%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FResearchOffice%2FShared%20Documents%2FWRIS%2FProfiles&p=true&ct=1706701439357&or=Outlook%2DBody&cid=39F5D7F9%2DB28E%2D4E96%2D83FB%2DE5FE0FD89937&ga=1&isSPOFile=1&OR=Teams%2DHL&CT=1708633395619&clickparams=eyJBcHBOYW1lIjoiVGVhbXMtRGVza3RvcCIsIkFwcFZlcnNpb24iOiI0OS8yNDAxMDQxOTEzMCIsIkhhc0ZlZGVyYXRlZFVzZXIiOmZhbHNlfQ%3D%3D)
* [Walkthrough Video](https://mailglyndwrac.sharepoint.com/sites/ResearchOffice/_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FResearchOffice%2FShared%20Documents%2FWRIS%2F102101%5FVidatum%2FWalkthrough%20v2%2003%2E11%2E22%2Emp4&ct=1706701507459&or=Outlook%2DBody&cid=0F303280%2D28D2%2D42A1%2D91A6%2D1910F9D292E7&ga=1&referrer=StreamWebApp%2EWeb&referrerScenario=AddressBarCopied%2Eview%2Efee3f2c3%2Da45e%2D41d7%2Db186%2Dc8a35308b3c7&OR=Teams%2DHL&CT=1708633436200&clickparams=eyJBcHBOYW1lIjoiVGVhbXMtRGVza3RvcCIsIkFwcFZlcnNpb24iOiI0OS8yNDAxMDQxOTEzMCIsIkhhc0ZlZGVyYXRlZFVzZXIiOmZhbHNlfQ%3D%3D)
* Press releases
* Wrexham University’s press office brings together information about the University from a number of different sources
* [Wrexham University's Latest News](https://wrexham.ac.uk/news/) hosts articles about what is happening across the University. News categories include Business and Enterprise, Faculty news, Research and University news etc…

* **[Naomi Penrose](mailto:Naomi.Penrose@wrexham.ac.uk) -** Communications and Public Relations Officer

#### Remember

A few helpful things to remember when communicating research:

* In accordance with the [**Welsh Language Compliance Guidance**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/media/marketing/policies-and-documents/management/Welsh-Standards-Compliance----Concerns-and-Complaints-Guidance.pdf) there is a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat the Welsh language and the English language equally, so ensure communications are bilingual
* Make it engaging, use [**visual aids**](https://www.canva.com/infographics/?utm_source=google_sem&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=uk_en_all_payback-generic_infographic_lower_rev_roas_bm&utm_adgroup=uk_en_all_payback-generic_infographic-custom_lower_rev_roas_bm&utm_keyword=customize+infographic&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIg7_QktHRhwMV9BkGAB3PeyypEAAYAiAAEgJ60PD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds), interactive tools, infographics, videos, and images
* [**ResearchGate**](https://www.researchgate.net/) is a great platform to share work and connect with peers around the world
* Outputs need to be deposited in the University online [**Repository**](https://wrexham.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/) within three months of publication. This makes the outputs Open Access which is good practice and supports [**REF**](https://www.ref.ac.uk/) submissions
* Utilise an [**Open Researcher and Contributor ID**](https://info.orcid.org/what-is-orcid/) (ORCiD) which is a unique, persistent identifier free for researchers
* Share research student success stories too, including successful alumni and their contributions to the field

## Evaluate Communication Success

Monitor how well communication strategies are working throughout the project. Plan quantitative / qualitative measures for monitoring from the beginning e.g. number of visits a webpage has, engagement activity (likes, re-posts) of social media posts, feedback statements from newsletter readers or event attendees etc… and change communication if required.

## Key Contacts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [**Research Office**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/our-staff/)  Contact the Research Office team with any news, updates or queries relating to research. The team are happy to support in sharing communications via social media platforms, blogs, Campus Talk etc… | [researchoffice@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:researchoffice@wrexham.ac.uk) |
| **Naomi Penrose**  Communications and Public Relations Officer | [Naomi.Penrose@wrexham.ac.uk](mailto:Naomi.Penrose@wrexham.ac.uk) |

## Further Resources

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Eventbrite** | |
| The Faculty Offices, the Civic Mission team and the Research Office team have an Eventbrite account and they can be contacted regarding support available in setting up an event. | [**Quick Start Guide to Eventbrite**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/quick-start-guide/)  [**Eventbrite Tips and Guides**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/category/tips-and-guides/) |
| **LinkedIn** | |
| Breakdown of steps to creating a research communication plan | [**Creating a Research Communication Plan**](https://www.linkedin.com/advice/3/what-steps-creating-research-communication-plan) |
| **Planning Template** | |
| Use the Research Office templates to map out communication activities required for a research project | [**Impact Planning webpages**](https://wrexham.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-services/impact/impact-planning/) |
| **UK Research and Innovation Toolkit (UKRI)** | |
| There is a wealth of resources in the UKRI toolkit to support research communication. Ranging from ‘How to hold effective public engagement’ to ‘How to plan and develop publications. | [**Impact Toolkit**](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/impact-toolkit-for-economic-and-social-sciences/) |