



# Guidance for contributor proposals

Public & Community Engagement with Research (PCER) Conference 2026

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## About the conference

Date: Thursday 11 June 2026

Location: Life and Mind Building, Oxford, OX1 3EL ([Life and Mind Building access guide](#))

Public and community engagement is vital in **making bigger differences** — strengthening research, building trust and delivering meaningful benefits for society.

This one-day conference will explore how responsible and purposeful engagement can make bigger differences in society locally, nationally and globally. Bringing together University academic and professional staff, researchers and members of the local community, the conference will provide a space to explore Oxford's engagement landscape, share knowledge and build meaningful connections. Attendees can hope to learn from inspiring examples of practice, gain insight into opportunities and support for engagement at Oxford, connect with others and leave with greater confidence, understanding and readiness to engage in ways that make a bigger difference locally and beyond.

The conference is organised by the Public & Community Engagement with Research Team in Research Services (hereafter referred to as the 'conference team').

## Conference objectives

The purpose of the conference is to explore how Oxford's public and community engagement strengthens research quality and delivers social and economic benefit. It will look at how the impact of this activity is understood, measured, and demonstrated for the University, local communities, and wider stakeholders.

It will connect, inform and equip University staff by sharing good practice, enabling connections, and highlighting opportunities that support meaningful engagement. For local communities it will increase understanding of engagement with the University and how to get involved and demonstrate the value of external perspectives to foster a sense of inclusion and partnership.

## How to get involved

Contributors to the PCER Conference can be involved in one of two ways, either by delivering a session or by submitting a poster or materials to be displayed in the main conference area during the event. There will be an allocated poster session where you'll be asked to attend your poster.

## Who can propose a session or poster

All content proposal submissions should include at least one University of Oxford member. However, we strongly encourage collaboration with external partners (e.g. community members or organisations, schools, businesses etc) in developing and delivering sessions. The **Session Lead** is the key contact for the session, responsible for submitting the form and liaising with the conference team.

If you are an external individual or organisation who is collaborating with the University on research or engagement activity and you'd like to be involved in delivering a session, please speak to the University of Oxford team or individual you are working with about developing a session together.

## What kind of content is right for the conference?

The theme for the conference is '**making bigger differences**', intended to promote discussion and learning about how high quality, responsible engagement can contribute to bigger differences for society, locally, nationally and globally.

### *Conference themes*

Conference content should be aligned with one of the conference's three subthemes, which are:

- Building Responsible, Trust-Centred Engagement and Knowledge Exchange
- Strengthening Connections, Collaboration and Infrastructure for Impact
- Engaging for Shared Learning, Inclusion and Local Impact

These sub-themes allow for broad interpretation and will hopefully generate a variety of ideas from our contributors. More details on these sub-themes and the kind of content they could cover are below.

These descriptions are not prescriptive and should not limit your proposals if you have an idea for a session that you think aligns with a sub-theme but is not described here.

### *Building Responsible, Trust-Centred Engagement and Knowledge Exchange*

Sessions in this theme can explore topics such as developing skills to implement responsible engagement practice and methods, case studies or outputs from responsible engagement, and discussions and/or workshops centred around building trust and developing good practice.

### *Strengthening Connections, Collaboration and Infrastructure for Impact*

This theme's sessions might explore working to build strong connections as a foundation for great engagement both in and out of the University. It could cover activity

around nurturing the engagement environment at Oxford, forming and strengthening community connections, making engagement more accessible, and improving how impact is understood, measured, and sustained.

### Engaging for Shared Learning, Inclusion and Local Impact

This theme centres on local engagement. While we hope to cover and encourage sessions exploring issues and engagement local to Oxfordshire, it could also cover sessions on engagement that has benefitted local communities across the world.

### Sessions

Each conference **session** will be 50 minutes. If you have an idea for a session that would be longer or shorter than this, please still submit your idea as we may be able to group shorter sessions or allow more time for a long session.

The spaces available for sessions will be lecture theatres and seminar rooms. All spaces have screens and microphones with AV support. Seminar rooms will contain tables and chairs that can be reconfigured to different room layouts.

When designing your session, we encourage you to consider how to make the format as interactive and engaging as possible, providing opportunities for collaboration and connection between attendees where possible (e.g. workshops, small group discussions, Q&As).

Sessions should also be designed to be inclusive and accessible. You should consider approaches such as using accessible language, enabling different methods of participation (verbal, written, etc), visual materials, including diverse perspectives and inclusive facilitation methods.

We strongly encourage sessions that will be designed and delivered in collaboration with external engagement partners. The conference team can provide financial support to pay external contributors for their time and expenses in line with the [PCER Conference Payment Policy](#).

### Posters

For those submitting **posters** to display at the conference, these could promote or feature engagement opportunities at Oxford such as funding, training, tools, resources, or programmes that may be of interest to conference attendees. Submissions may also include proposals to showcase a small, self-contained interactive exhibit that demonstrates an engagement activity, tool or approach.

Attendees will include University of Oxford staff and researchers, external partners, local community members, and staff and researchers from other universities.

## How to propose a session or poster

Please submit your proposal for a conference session or poster to display [using this form](#) by **Friday 13 March**.

## How decisions will be made

Session proposals will be reviewed by the conference team and engagement colleagues to ensure alignment with the conference objectives. The team will select sessions to create a programme with a diverse range of formats, engagement activities, topics, divisional and departmental representation, theme alignment and participants, with the aim of creating an engaging and exciting event.

Posters will be assessed against conference objectives and relevance to audiences. If there is high demand for poster space the conference team will need to select posters to be displayed to ensure a diverse range of opportunities are offered.

## Timeline for contributors

Friday 13 March	Deadline for submitting content proposal ( <a href="#">submit proposals using this form</a> )
Wednesday 8 April	Selected contributors notified
Friday 17 April	Session Leads to submit details of any payment required and estimated expenses for external contributors
Wednesday 20 May	Session content finalised and submitted to conference team
Thursday 11 June	Conference
Friday 10 July	Deadline for submitting external expense and PRF forms for external contributors

## Contributor expectations and support from the conference team

All contributors to the PCER Conference will need to agree to the following responsibilities. This will ensure that the activities delivered are meaningful, inclusive and accessible.

As a Session Lead, you will be responsible for the delivery of your content in its entirety, including:

- Designing and delivering the content as outlined in your proposal submission
- Ensuring an appropriate team of contributors (where relevant) are involved in developing and delivering sessions, with consideration given to the diversity of

the speakers/facilitators and how partner or community voices are included or acknowledged.

- Supporting external contributors to access and receive payment for their time and expenses in line with the [PCER Conference payment policy](#).
- Sending the conference team all session information and finalised content by **20 May**.
- Ensuring all contributors are registered to the conference (registration details will be shared before general release)
- Notifying the conference team with as much notice as possible if you are unable to deliver your session for any reason.

To support PCER Conference contributors, the conference team will commit to the following:

- Adhering to the conference code of conduct
- Providing contributors with a timely notification of the outcome of their submission proposal.
- Opening registration for contributors before general release.
- Providing payment to external contributors for their time and expenses, in line with the payment policy.
- Providing appropriate, accessible spaces for session delivery on the day, including AV assistance and conference team member support where needed.
- Providing clear, timely information about session timings; arrival and set-up instructions; and other requirements.

## Questions

If you have any questions, please email [publicengagement@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publicengagement@admin.ox.ac.uk).