



# Knowledge Exchange Framework Public & Community Engagement Narrative Template

For submission to [KEF@re.ukri.org](mailto:KEF@re.ukri.org) by Friday 29 May 2020

Max words: 2,000 (plus 120 word lay summary).

## Public and community engagement narrative statement

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<b>Total word count</b> (including summary of approach)	2,120

Please note a word limit of 2,000 words applies across the five 'aspects' of this statement. The summary of approach (below) has a separate word limit of 120 words. Diagrams and images may be included, providing they can be extracted for online display and the total statement (excluding cover page) does not exceed ten pages.

### Summary of approach

#### Summary

Please provide a short (max 120 words) summary of your approach to community and public engagement. This should be in the style of a 'lay summary' and provide a succinct and accessible overview of your approach.

[Birmingham City University's](#) approach to PCE is outlined in its [2025 Strategy](#), and guided and celebrated by its mission to be the 'University for Birmingham', reflecting its role as both an anchor Institution in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, but also as a civic university.

PCE activities are typically aligned to one or more thematic activity pillars: partnership to advance growth and innovation; championing and supporting diversity; knowledge making, sharing and exchange; and cultural and creative identity. Community groups are engaged in project shaping, review and evaluation to ensure identified needs are met; with activity shared with communities through a range of mechanisms including publications, events and exhibitions.

Further information on BCU's KEF strategy and activity is available [here](#).

Word count: 120

### Aspect 1: Strategy

#### Developing your strategy

Information on your existing strategy, planning process and allocation of resources, including how you identified relevant public and community groups and their needs, and facilitated their ability to engage with the institution, as a means to help understand intended achievements.

*Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 15).*

Birmingham City University’s (BCU) [2016-2020 Strategic Plan](#) (covering the last 3 HE-BCIS years) stated a dual commitment to ‘transforming Birmingham and the Region’ and ‘transforming student’s lives’. The current [2025 Strategy](#) continues this strategic focus with a mission to be the ‘University for Birmingham’, reflecting its role as both an anchor institution in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, but also as a civic university.

Public and Community Engagement (PCE) is central to this place-based approach, with aligned priorities articulated in the 2025 Strategy, including:

- Improving the breadth and depth of social, community and cultural engagement;
- Widening access to the University and its resources;
- Having a physical presence (beyond its campuses) in at least three areas of the city which suffer from high disadvantage;
- Supporting staff and students to undertake voluntary work in the community.

Strategy development was led by a significant programme of public consultation in Nov-19, enabling the University to more fully understand the needs of public and community groups; and ensuring that these groups could inform aligned strategic priorities. PCE opportunities and needs are also commonly identified through routes such as professional partnerships; cultural partners; practitioner networks; representation on Boards or Steering Groups; and through research.

A detailed [Public and Community Engagement Strategy](#) and Plan underpin BCU’s PCE priorities; provides detailed goals, leadership and governance for University staff; and makes clear the responsibilities of senior academic and professional service managers. The Strategy is framed around four thematic pillars of activity:

- Partnership to advance growth and innovation;
- Championing and supporting diversity;
- Knowledge making, sharing and exchange; and,
- Cultural and creative identity.

BCU’s commitment to PCE is also reflected in its Faculty Plans, with academic quality improved through close engagement with external stakeholders, driving world-class research, ensuring ongoing programme relevance, and enhancing the student experience through opportunities for placements, internships, volunteering and mentoring.

Word count: 312

<b>Self-assessment score</b> Developing your strategy	<b>3</b>	←	<i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).</i>
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## Aspect 2: Support

### Practical support to deliver your strategy

Provide information about the practical support you have put in place to support your public and community engagement, and recognise the work appropriately.

*Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 16).*

BCU provides a range of practical support mechanisms to deliver PCE, linked to its Strategy and Plan:

- **Embedded Impactful Research:** Including setting up independent bodies and research centres such as the Sir Lenny Henry [Centre for Media Diversity](#); and mapping the social issues in the city through the [Birmingham 2029](#) agenda.
- **Funded Programmes and Activities:** Such as the Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Investment Fund which supported a range of PCE programmes and activities since its creation in May-18. This includes a [professional mentoring scheme](#) connecting business, public sector and civil society with opportunities to mentor BCU students.
- **Widening Participation:** Through BCU hosted or supported events including public lectures, performances and galleries, or community initiatives. This includes the £1.2m community based [IntoUniversity Education Hub](#), opened in north Birmingham in March 2019 to increase access for young people to study at University.
- **Recognition and Reward:** Outstanding staff and student contributions to PCE are recognised through the University’s [Extra Mile Awards](#) for those who make a difference to the local student body, community and region. Meanwhile, the [Graduate+](#) awards support and recognise extra-curricular student activity including community-based volunteering.
- **Advisory and Governance:** Representatives from public and private sectors, and social, community and voluntary groups sit on various Boards and groups such as the [Board of Governors](#), and [Faculty Advisory Boards](#). Functions include ensuring BCU meets its objectives and charitable obligations; supporting strong community engagement; and partnership working to address specific needs or enhance practice. External staff advisory and governance roles are also commonplace, such as Presidency of the [Transatlantic Business Council](#).
- **Promotion of Opportunities:** Opportunities for participation are actively publicised through a range of outlets including student-facing services such as the [Student's Union](#); the daily staff newsletter; and [intranet](#). Opportunities available to participants or businesses from outside the University are typically publicised through the BCU website, social media channels and the dedicated business support platform, [BCU Advantage](#).
- **Oversight:** Senior academic oversight and nominated champion for each thematic pillar of PCE, supported by clear strategic actions articulated in the PCE Plan, to underpin Institutional ambition and commitments.

Word count: 347

**Self-assessment score**

Support structures and recognition

**3**



*Insert score between 1 – 5 here*

*Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).*

### Aspect 3: Activity

**Delivering your strategy: activities**

Provide information on the focus of your approach and describe examples of the activity delivered. How do you know activities have met the identified needs of public and community groups? Please focus on the last three years of activity.

*Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 17).*

Reflecting the embedded nature of PCE activity across the Institution, activity and review typically take place across three organisational levels:

- **Institutional:** A pan-university response linked to the 2025 Strategy, PCE or Faculty Plan; or aligned to an externally driven strategic priority such as widening participation;
- **Faculty or School:** Themed around areas of academic expertise and typified by larger events such as festivals or conferences;
- **Project-level:** Based around specific funded projects or research groups, these are often smaller-scale activities including workshops, screenings, and seminars.

Activities under each thematic pillar include:

### Partnership to Advance Growth and Innovation

Initiative and Link	Focus	Overview	Volume	Practical Support
<a href="#">Innovation Fest</a>	Professional Practice	Student-led digital and technological solutions to tackle business challenges, supported by partners such as Microsoft and Santander	2020 event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 650 students</li> <li>▪ 50 staff</li> <li>▪ 100 events</li> </ul>	Focussed KT sessions enabling businesses to connect with university expertise
<a href="#">COVID-19 Business Support</a>	Business	Dedicated COVID-19 business support microsite, and development of a world-first <a href="#">COVID Digital Safety Certificate</a> to manage business risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 microsite launched Mar-20</li> <li>▪ 15 (and counting) webinars produced</li> </ul>	Support to access finance; key sources of information; and bespoke webinar series

### Championing and Supporting Diversity

Initiative and Link	Focus	Overview	Volume	Practical Support
<a href="#">Housing and Hate Crime Knowledge Exchange</a>	Professional Practice	Connecting social housing providers and national networks to hate crime research to support an evidence-based response to working with victims, developing policy, and preventing hate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2,000+ practitioners</li> </ul>	Academic expertise shared with housing focused practitioners, providers and networks
<a href="#">Growing You</a>	Business	Business growth programme targeted towards regional BAME SMEs, delivered in partnership with GBSLEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 workshops with c.150 participants</li> <li>▪ 170 users of diagnostic tool</li> <li>▪ 50 businesses supported further</li> </ul>	Online diagnostic tool; workshops including strategy, leadership and engagement

### Knowledge Making, Sharing and Exchange

Initiative and Link	Focus	Overview	Volume	Practical Support
<a href="#">Law Clinic</a>	Professional Practice/ Civil Society	Student-supported clinics providing advice, case preparation and representation, and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welfare Benefits Clinic: 18-20 clients pw;</li> <li>▪ Family Law Clinic: 3-4 clients pw;</li> </ul>	Student opportunities, free advice and representation for

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Law Clinic: 12 students working 0.5 days pw providing telephone advice</li> </ul>	local communities
<a href="#">Increasing BAME Groups in Health and Social Care</a>	Professional Practice / Civil Society	Creation of a best practice toolkit for researchers to help increase the number of BAME groups in health and social care research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 researchers/ service representatives</li> <li>14 members of the public participating in workshops</li> </ul>	Workshops with researchers to test, use and reflect on practice and the toolkit

### Cultural and Creative Identity

Initiative and Link	Focus	Overview	Volume	Practical Support
<a href="#">Open School Doors</a>	Professional Practice/ Civil Society	A multilateral project that brought together researchers, teachers and parents from Austria, Germany, Greece and the UK to develop resources for schools' work with refugee and newly arrived families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary</li> <li>2 Birmingham City Schools of Sanctuary advocates</li> <li>40 EU schools</li> </ul>	Enhanced teaching and learning; supported community engagement; shared at City of Sanctuary regional/ international meetings, demonstrating reach beyond Birmingham
<a href="#">Stories of Sacrifice</a>	Civil Society/ Policy	An exhibition on Muslims in WW1 at the British Muslim Heritage Centre, researched and curated by a BCU academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29,000 visitors in first two years</li> <li>Extensive media coverage UK and internationally</li> </ul>	Dedicated website, public involvement in steering committees and actual exhibition content

Public and community groups are typically engaged in project shaping, review and evaluation to ensure identified needs are met.

Word count: 574

<b>Self-assessment score</b> Delivering your strategy	<b>3</b> ←	<i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here</i> <i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).</i>
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## Aspect 4: Results and learning

### Evidencing success

Describe the outcomes and/or impacts of your activities. How have you evaluated these individual activities to ensure you understand whether they have addressed your strategic objectives – and intended achievements for public and community? To what extent have you learnt from your approach and applied this to future activity?

*Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 18).*

Results derived from PCE activity may be exemplified through a high-level typology of outcomes and impact, which includes:

- **Influencing public sector, industry bodies and professional associations to improve policy and strategy.** BCU leads the [K-Hub](#) - a network promoting new thinking in regional development, whose principles have been incorporated into Birmingham City Council's [Big City Plan](#). The School of Law's human rights expertise is internationally recognised, with, for example, BCU experts working with the [Myanmar National Human Rights Commission](#) to recommend that the Myanmar government consider a moratorium on the death penalty.
- **Changing and improving professional practice through application of new knowledge.** BCU's toolkit for successfully [engaging BAME communities in health and social care research](#) is equipping researchers with the skills and tools to recruit and retain this group in their research. BCU is a regional provider of training for teaching staff on the [ABRACADABRA programme](#) - a reading intervention shown to deliver improved outcomes in KS1 children.
- **Social and community benefits through community assets.** The School of Jewellery worked with the Birmingham Museum and Gallery to create reproductions of key items from the [Staffordshire Hoard](#), now on permanent display as a centrepiece of public engagement and learning about regional cultural heritage.
- **Improved teaching and learning.** The [Open School Doors](#) project developed materials to support schools with refugee and newly arrived families. Learning has been integrated into taught modules on the BCU MA Education, BA Early Childhood Studies, Primary ITE, Teach First PGDE and Secondary PGCE.

All PCE activity undergoes some level of evaluation and review to assess the extent to which it has addressed strategic objectives, and delivered intended achievements. At a macro level, approaches focus on:

- **Outputs** indicating the scale of activity, such as counts of community participants, website visitors, podcast downloads, publications, etc. These are often evidenced via activity monitoring and participation data.
- **Outcomes** usually reflecting short-term results of PCE on individuals, systems or practice. Outcome data includes primary research with participants through surveys, interviews, feedback forms, focus groups, user feedback, and community fora.
- **Impacts** typically referring to longer-term societal or behavioural change resulting from the PCE activity which often require longitudinal assessment, such as BCUs work in human rights.

BCU's PCE Plan also includes targeted outcomes and impact against each thematic pillar, which guides activity, such as: increased staff participation, influence on policy, and enhanced community engagement.

Success and quality of PCE activity is also evidenced via awards, with recent successes including a [Knowledge Transfer Network](#) award for business impact, and STEAMHouse being shortlisted in the THE Awards 2019 '[Knowledge Exchange Initiative of the Year](#)'.

Word count: 436

**Self-assessment score**

Evidencing success

**3**



*Insert score between 1 – 5 here*

Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).

## Aspect 5: Acting on results

### Communicating and acting on the results

How has the institution acted on the outcomes of activities or programmes to ensure it is meeting the wider strategic aims; to inform the development of this strategic approach; and to continuously improve and improve outcomes and impacts for public and communities? To what extent have the results of the work been shared with the communities involved, internally in the institution, and externally?

Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 19).

BCU recognises the public benefit of unrestricted access to research outputs and operates an [Open Access by Default Policy](#), ensuring products are accessible and available to all. These materials are held in the [BCU Open Access Repository](#) supporting rapid dissemination, and increased use of outputs by businesses, government, charities and the wider public.

The University's PCE Plan also underlines the requirement for timely reporting of impact and sharing of results from activity. A range of mechanisms are typically employed, reflecting the breadth of stakeholder groups and beneficiaries engaged including:

- **Publications** showcasing innovative research, projects or initiatives such as [New Thinking](#) publication from the Centre for Media and Cultural Research; and learning from knowledge exchange events, such as the [Architectural Humanities Research Association Conference](#).
- **Independent Review**, such as Oxford Economics' review of BCU's [socio-economic impact](#).
- **Bespoke Websites** for research centres or interest groups including the [Cine-Excess Film Festival](#), and [Birmingham Comics Festival](#).
- **Social and Digital Media** including footage from PCE events, such as the [TigerLab](#) business challenge series; and findings from research centres, including the [Centre for Brexit Studies](#) YouTube channel.
- **Events and Exhibitions** such as the [Songwriting Studies Research Network](#) which organised two one-day events featuring high-profile guests including [Nile Rodgers](#).
- **Press Coverage**, either through BCU Channels or specialist external media to maximise coverage, as in the case of the [housing and hate crime knowledge exchange](#).

Project-based PCE is subject to stringent internal review which considers deliverables, strategic fit, and lessons learnt. Project planning also includes consideration of communication and dissemination, which are agreed with partners to maximise impact.

Formal feedback mechanisms include an annual staff survey which explores understanding of strategic mission, values and internal communication – 72% of staff in 2019 could explain what the University is trying to achieve. Regular public consultation on strategy and performance is also held through a perception survey, capturing views from community leaders, schools and colleges, local employers, leaders from relevant professional or sector bodies, and HE representatives.

Word count: 331

#### Self-assessment score

Communicating and acting on the results

3



Insert score between 1 – 5 here

KEF narrative: Public and community engagement

			<i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).</i>
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Total word count across five aspects: 2,000 (max 2,000 words across no more than ten A4 pages)