

NWCDTP

Public Policy
Engagement
Programme



North
West
Consortium
Doctoral
Training
Partnership



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

PILOT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership received funding from the AHRC to develop a pilot training programme in public policy engagement.

“ I have learned an extraordinary amount about Parliamentary processes the advantages of digital social media and getting my research agenda out there. ”

Building upon growing expertise in policy-influence and impact across the Consortium, this pilot supported postgraduate and early career researchers in the arts and humanities to:

- Enhance their awareness of policymaking processes and the potential policy relevance of their work
- Develop the skills, networks and knowledge to put this awareness into practice
- Build appropriate policy impact into research design.

To achieve these aims our pilot programme comprised a variety of events and activities.

These included: a one-day workshop offering academic and practitioner perspectives on how researchers can engage with policymakers; a one-day masterclass providing expert advice on blogging for a policymaking audience; a suite of open-access online resources; and a fund for student-led training and development.

100%

of researchers who took part in the pilot activities agreed that they had learned a great deal of new information about how researchers can engage with public policymakers.

NWCDTP VISION

The North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership (NWCDTP) brings together the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Salford, Lancaster, Keele and Manchester Metropolitan Universities and Royal Northern College of Music to train a new generation of skilled researchers.

Our Public Policy Engagement pilot aligned its goals to the NWCDTP's vision in a number of key areas to support it in achieving its core aims and objectives.

The pilot contributed a new strand to the innovative training environment offered to postgraduate researchers by the NWCDTP. It presented opportunities to enhance the specialist research of PGRs across the entire disciplinary spectrum of our Consortium by highlighting viable pathways to impact for arts and humanities researchers in the public sector.

A number of cross-institutional and interdisciplinary networking opportunities were built into the events organised as a core part of our pilot programme. These supported development of a cohort of like-minded postgraduate researchers who are actively seeking to engage with policymakers during their doctoral research. To enable sustainable peer-to-peer support, the cohort has set-up an online network using social media and blogging software.

Within the pilot programme, PGRs were also given the chance to be active partners in shaping their own training and development. To support this, a call was opened for proposals of student-led activities which were supported through the NWCDTP's inaugural Public Policy Engagement Fund.

EXPERTISE IN POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Across the NWCDTP institutions are a wealth of researchers, centres and institutes offering accessible, applied and constructive research through engaged partnerships with policymakers at local, national and international levels.

Our pilot programme brought together a critical mass of experts leading these initiatives to shape the most effective training programme for our postgraduate and early career researchers. These included:

Professor Colin Talbot
University of Manchester
Co-director Policy@manchester

Professor Charles Forsdick
University of Liverpool
AHRC Leadership Fellow
Translating Cultures

Professor Chris Fox
Manchester Metropolitan University
Director of Policy Evaluation and
Research Unit

Dr Eleanor Davey
University of Manchester
Humanitarian and Conflict
Response Institute

Professor Rhiannon Corcoran
University of Liverpool
Co-director Heseltine Institute for
Public Policy and Practice

Professor Sally Sheard
University of Liverpool
Senior Editor History and Policy

Professor Simeon Yates
University of Liverpool
Director Institute for Cultural Capital

Key contacts

The NWCDTP's Public Policy Engagement pilot was delivered by:

Professor Stuart Jones
University of Manchester
Director of the NWCDTP

Dr Jenny Rivers
University of Liverpool
Research and Knowledge
Exchange Manager

Dr Wendy Asquith
University of Liverpool
Postdoctoral Research Associate

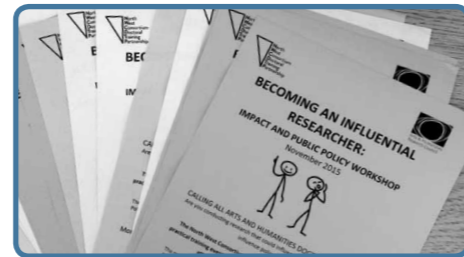
Carol Douguedroit-Arrowsmith
University of Manchester
NWCDTP Administrator

BECOMING AN INFLUENTIAL RESEARCHER

With growing awareness of the demand for research-based evidence from policymakers, arts and humanities researchers are increasingly keen to engage.

In November 2015 the NWCDTP hosted the *Becoming an Influential Researcher* workshop at the University of Liverpool, with the aim of informing and equipping PGR and ECR delegates with the knowledge and skills to meet this challenge.

Places were awarded on a competitive basis to 28 PGRs and ECRs across the 16 universities partnered in the NWCDTP and the Centre for Eastern European Language-Based Area Studies (CEELBAS). The event was oversubscribed and 94% of attendees rated it as excellent or very good.



Training delivered

The programme included hands-on workshop sessions with expert practitioners that focussed on:

- Highlighting the challenges and opportunities for engaging with policymakers
- Increasing awareness of the policymaking process
- Developing policy-relevant communication strategies.

Presentations and panel discussions were also given by academic researchers with experience of influencing policy and collaborating with policymakers.



“The workshop gave us lots of ideas about how to embed policy training in our future programme.”

Professor Stuart Jones,
NWCDTP Director

Partnerships

The *Becoming an Influential Researcher* workshop was delivered in collaboration with the Houses of Parliament Outreach Service, the Parliament Week initiative and the Institute for Government. Collaborating with these partners provided our delegates with unique access to the insights of parliamentarians and expert government advisors.

Professor Sally Sheard gave a keynote address entitled *Engaging with policymakers as a 'useful historian'*. Other speakers included Jane Tinkler of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, prize-winning journalist Nicholas Timmins and Dr Jessica Field, Humanitarian Affairs Advisor with Save the Children.

“I never realised just how little of my work is visible online. I can now act on this thanks to this workshop.”

“I didn't really feel that I had the ability to influence policy, but [now] I feel far more confident.”

For more information visit:
www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/public-policy-engagement/becoming-an-influential-researcher-workshop/

SUSTAINABLE EXPERT TRAINING

To make the fundamentals of public policy engagement training available to researchers unable to attend the NWCDTP's events during the pilot programme, a suite of open access online resources has been created.



Interviews with Influential Researchers

Early career researchers across the NWCDTP are engaging with policymakers through their research in a wide variety of arts and humanities disciplines. Among these are: Dr Eleanor Davey, British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer at the University of Manchester; Dr Angela Connelly, Senior Research Associate at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts; Dr Jessica Field who holds a joint post with Save the Children and the University of Manchester's Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute; and Dr Emmanuel Tseklevs, Senior Lecturer in Design at Lancaster University (pictured left from top to bottom).



To learn from their experiences we asked these four researchers to tell us why they are engaging with policymakers and what the particular advantages and challenges are to doing this at an early stage in your research career. Their experiences were drawn from research and policy engagement in fields ranging from Urban Planning and Architecture, to Design and Health, and Social Justice and Humanitarian Affairs.

Expert presentations

Presentations given during the Becoming an Influential Researcher workshop by academic researchers with a wealth of experience in public policy engagement, are also now available on the NWCDTP website.

These cover topics including engaging with policymakers as a historian; creating impact on parliament and government and influencing policymakers as an academic including giving evidence to Parliamentary Select Committees.



From left to right: Jane Tinkler, Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST); Tom Healey, UK Parliament; Stephen McGinness, UK Parliament; Professor Sally Sheard, University of Liverpool; Dr Alex Balch, University of Liverpool

How to write for policymakers

Working with a group of experts in policy influence, we have produced a series of online videos that will inform researchers about the most effective ways to engage with policymakers.

Included are the perspectives of Select Committee Clerks, Parliamentarians and Third Sector professionals on the different types of writing a researcher can produce to grab the attention of policymakers from blogging to policy briefs. We asked for responses to questions such as: What is your top tip when writing for policymakers?; Which written formats are most consulted when creating policy?; What constitutes evidence for a Parliamentary Select Committee?; and What can I do to engage policymakers once I've written my policy brief?

For more information visit:
<http://nwcntp.ac.uk/public-policy-engagement/online-training-materials>

“The key transformation I feel working as an academic in the policy world is that my research is more directed and useful, beyond my own personal research agenda and career. That, to me, is a rewarding achievement.”

Dr Jessica Field,
Humanitarian Affairs Advisor, Save the Children and
Research Fellow, HCRI, University of Manchester

NWCDTP STUDENT PROFILE

Joshua Hughes is a doctoral researcher in International Law funded by the NWCDTP. He began his doctorate in 2015 at Lancaster University, studying the legality of, and accountability for, military drones, targeted killing, and autonomous weapons systems.

Taking part in many of the activities offered through our pilot has provided Joshua with opportunities to explore how he might engage with public policymakers from the outset of his project.

"Attending the Becoming an Influential Researcher workshop gave me the impetus to begin blogging, and the belief that my research could be read by influential people. I also gained knowledge of potential routes for impacting parliament and policymakers. The parliamentary and academic experts in attendance gave invaluable advice on how to find, present, and submit evidence for a parliamentary inquiry. Following the workshop, I found an inquiry and All-Party Parliamentary Group looking at my research area.

I was too late to submit evidence for inquiry, but have joined the conversation on twitter, and on my blog entitled: The Law of Killer Robots.

Taking part in the Blogging for a Policymaking Audience masterclass, supported me to reshape and focus my blog for effective policy engagement, and helped me to have more confidence in my blog writing skills. In the weekend since the event I have had blog views from three new countries!"



"Following the workshop, I found an inquiry and All-Party Parliamentary Group looking at my research area ... and have joined the conversation on twitter and on my blog."

Joshua Hughes
NWCDTP Researcher
Lancaster University

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

To deliver its Public Policy Engagement training, the NWCDTP collaborated with a range of partners.

Across our programme of activities we have partnered with the Houses of Parliament Outreach Service to identify and access expert knowledge of parliamentary processes, branches and networks that influence and shape national policy. With the Institute for Government we designed and delivered a bespoke skills training workshop for our researchers. This was held in November 2015 as a partner of the House of Commons' nationwide Parliament Week initiative.

Guest speakers from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Parliamentary Select Committees and international non-governmental organisations have been welcomed as contributors to our activities.

Our postgraduate researchers particularly valued the involvement of partners with expertise in the design, development and evaluation of public policy. These collaborations provided the opportunity to learn directly from policymakers and policy-influencers. They highlighted what arts and humanities researchers can offer to policymaking audiences.

Partnering organisations also had the chance to connect with a group of early career researchers keen to apply their original, specialist research in policymaking contexts.

"The NWCDTP's workshop was a brilliantly informative, well planned day providing exceptional information, advice and guidance as to how researchers can effectively participate with and influence Parliament's core activities and functions."

Gary Hart
Senior Community and Engagement Outreach Officer
Houses of Parliament

INSTITUTE
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PARLIAMENT WEEK
#DoDemocracy

