

Public engagement with research

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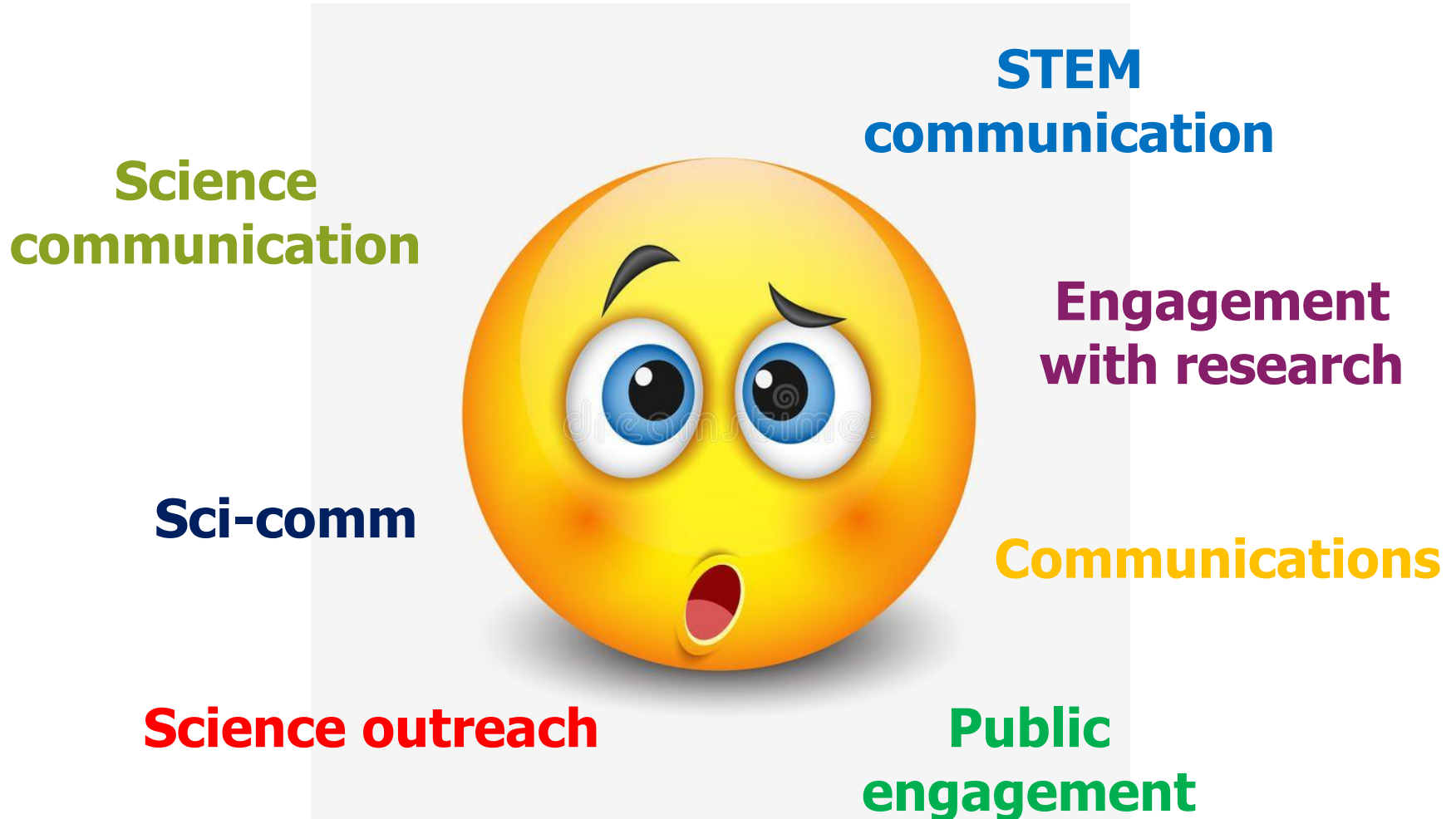
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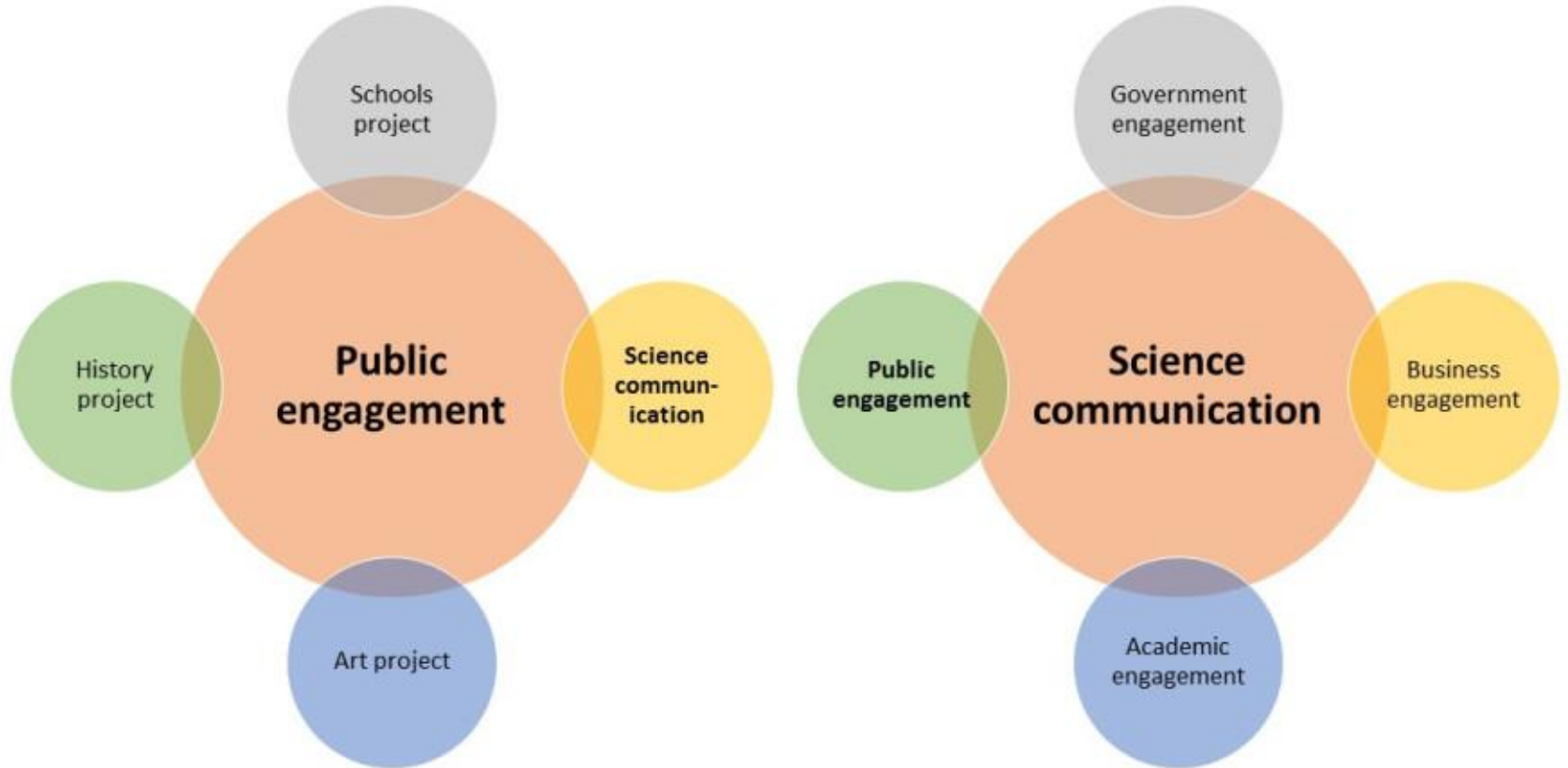
Public engagement and communications officer

MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine

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What's this public engagement stuff all about?





Depending on the project public engagement and science communication can be the technique or the overarching aim.

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Science communication is telling a broad audience about science-related topics. It's usually one-way.

Public Engagement with Research describes the many ways that members of the public can be involved in the design, conduct and dissemination of research.

High-quality engagement is a two-way process.

Why should you bother?

- Now a requirement of many funding bodies
- Important to universities [Research Excellence Framework \(REF\)](#) .
- It could help inform your project
- You get the opportunity to share what you're passionate about with people who might never hear about it otherwise
- You can gain fresh perspectives by engaging with a range of people
- Help the public understand and care about your research
- Inspire a new generation of scientists
- It can help you gain a multitude of transferable skills
- It adds some variety to your day-to-day
- It can push you out of your comfort zone
- Because it's fun 😊

Where does public engagement happen?

- **In museums**
- **In the supermarket**
- **On the high-street**
- **In the pub**
- **At the library**
- **At the theatre**
- **At the hospitals**
- **At festivals**
- **Online**



MRC Festival of Medical Research

Cancer immunotherapy stall



What do people think?

- *I think it is important that you are here*
- *I am a science teacher, and would like to get some ideas from you*
- *I heard about cancer immunotherapy in the news yesterday, but now I understand how it works*
- *I used to work in cancer research 20 years ago, so it is really nice to hear about the latest developments*
- *Cancer immunotherapy was offered to my father as a treatment, so it is nice to understand how it works*
- *Even one conversation can spark an interest in science in a child. It happened to my daughter! This is why it is so important that you are here today*
- *Thank you for being here today. I take my hat off to you*
- *It is really nice to know that this therapy is already helping patients, and is not something that will only be available in 20 years time*
- *Little girl to her mum: I want to be a scientist at Oxford!*
- *If we were younger we would have wanted to do the same as you and find a cure for cancer*
- *Keep up the good work. My mother died of cancer on Monday*
- *My friend died of cancer in the past, do you think this therapy would be available for them if they were alive today?*
- *I will check your website, as I want to get back to research*
- *It is good that you guys are here so that there are more role models for women in science*



Lots of opportunities to take part in public engagement in Oxford

- Keep an eye on the weekly bulletin for opportunities and events
- Interested in working with schools? Become a STEM Ambassador
 - Got an idea? Want to learn more? Email **charvy.narain@rdm.ox.ac.uk** or **petra.Kiviniemi@imm.ox.ac.uk**
 - Make the most of training opportunities:
<http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/public-engagement>

Resources

- **Me** for MRC WIMM, MRC MHU & MRC HIU
- **Charvy Narain** for RDM
- **Ask around for your departmental public engagement lead**

We can help if:

- **You'd like guidance when planning an activity**
- **You plan to take part in an activity but would like some training**
- **You'd like help with promotion or coverage e.g. social media, news**
- **Would like feedback on a related section in a grant application**
- **Access to resources – public engagement cupboard**
- **Anything else you might think of related to public engagement!**

Thank you!

Follow us on Twitter 😊

@MRC_WIMM
@MRC_HIU
@MRC_MHU

Social media



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Social media can help you in many ways in your role, for example to:

- Communicate with the public
- Consult and engage
- Be transparent and accountable
- Access help and support from other experts

The emphasis is very much on building communities of interest and encouraging people to participate, rather than simply broadcasting information.

MRC WIMM guidelines coming soon. MSD guidance available:

<https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/divisional-services/support-services-1/communications-web/guidelines/social-media>

Caution!



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- All information conveyed through social media should be considered public. It should be assumed that unless particular restrictions are put in place all such information could end up anywhere at any time – and this happens all the time!
 -
 - Be careful with private accounts - remember; personal views can too easily get read as the Institute's, Unit's or your funders views.