

University of the West of England, Bristol Open Day

Researchers' event: an evaluation

**Margarida Sardo and Ann Grand
Science Communication Unit**

June 2013



**University of the
West of England**

Contents:

1	Summary	1
1.1	<i>Key conclusions</i>	1
1.2	<i>Key recommendations</i>	2
2	Introduction	3
2.1	<i>Researchers and public engagement with research</i>	4
2.2	<i>Development of the activities</i>	5
3	Evaluation method	7
4	Findings	9
4.1	<i>Observations</i>	9
4.2	<i>Visitors' feedback</i>	12
4.3	<i>Researchers' feedback</i>	13
5	Reflections and recommendations for future events	17
6	References	20
7	Appendices	21
7.1	<i>Appendix 1 – Visitors' questionnaire</i>	21
7.2	<i>Appendix 2 – Observation schedule</i>	23
7.3	<i>Appendix 3 – Researchers' interview questions</i>	24

1 Summary

The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) holds open days several times a year. These days enable prospective undergraduates and their families to visit the university and learn more about its study options, programmes and facilities. For the first time, the Open Day held on Saturday 23rd March 2013 included a range of displays and activities featuring current research in the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences.

This report details the key findings of an evaluation of the research-based activities at the Open Day, focussing on the visitors' engagement with research and UWE researchers and on the researchers' views of the process of developing activities for the Open Day, their motivations for participating, the challenges they faced and the value of including research in the open day.

1.1 Key conclusions:

- Very low numbers of visitors took the opportunity to engage with the researchers' activities.
- Visitors who did engage clearly felt comfortable in asking questions of the researchers.
- Researchers were quick to become engaged after being approached by visitors.
- Researchers enjoyed participating in the Open Day activities and found it easy to engage with visitors.
- Researchers saw the Open Day as an opportunity to showcase their research, inform visitors about UWE research and demonstrate impact.
- Informal displays, for example those with photographs and interactive activities, attracted visitors' attention more strongly.
- The location of the research-focussed activities was perceived as cold and unsuitable.

1.2 Key recommendations:

- The value of the support of senior Faculty members in encouraging researchers' participation is recognised and continued.
- Researchers should be supported to develop resources (including evaluation mechanisms) for research-focussed public engagement activities at future open days.
- Research-focussed activities should be located in a space where visitors feel able to pause, mingle and engage with the researchers.
- Evaluation of research-focussed activities at the open day should be integrated with the existing online survey, supplemented by observations and interviews with researchers.
- Research should be contextualised alongside undergraduate programme displays, to highlight UWE's 2020 strategy for delivering teaching supported by high-quality research.
- Researchers should be involved from the beginning of open day planning.
- Research-focussed activities should be included in the open day online information and programmes, clearly signposted and advertised.
- The SCU should be supported to develop a short workshop focussing on good practice in public engagement for researchers involved in future open days.
- Consideration should be given to develop the most appropriate and sustainable strategy for maintaining a research presence at future open days.

Acknowledgements

We offer our grateful thanks to the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation for her support, to the researchers who developed activities for the Open Day and to all those who responded to questionnaires and participated in the post-event interviews.

2 Introduction

The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) holds open days several times a year. These days enable prospective undergraduates and their families to visit the university and learn more about its study options, programmes and facilities. To this end, the open day programme includes programme-specific activities such as talks, taster sessions, laboratory tours, city tours, the opportunity to talk to programme leaders and student advisers, and advice on aspects such as admissions, accommodation, finances, etc. The planned activities run between 10am and 4pm. Prospective undergraduates and their families are encouraged to register for activities in advance¹ and are provided with a timetable and information about the activities in which they can expect to participate on the day.

UWE's research activity has not been a significant feature of open days, which largely focus on undergraduate programmes and teaching. However, for the first time, the Open Day held on Saturday 23rd March 2013 included a range of displays and activities featuring current research in the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences (HLS).

The impetus came from Erik Stengler (Senior Lecturer, Science Communication Unit) and five MSc Science Communication students, who developed 'hands-on' activities as part of a module assessment. Several HLS researchers gave a presentation about their current research to the students, who then each selected one topic on which to focus. The students worked with the researchers to develop interactive activities, which (with the support of undergraduate science communication ambassadors) the students presented on their own at the Open Day, in a mini-“Science Fair”.

Recognising the opportunity the Open Day offered to raise the visibility of HLS research among prospective students and their families, Professor Jenny Ames (Associate Dean for Research and Innovation) agreed to support the development of further activities by HLS researchers, specifically the groups whose research formed part of Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact case studies. Researchers were supported in developing activities by a member of the Science Communication Unit (AG) but at the Open Day, presented the activities themselves. The Associate

¹ See for example <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/whatson/opendays.aspx>

Dean emailed the research team leaders regarding the proposed activities and encouraged their involvement.

Another member of the Science Communication Unit (MS) carried out an evaluation of the researchers' activities during the open day, drawing on the expertise of Science Communication Unit (SCU) members to develop a thorough and meaningful evaluation strategy, with particular regard to the public impact of the featured research.

2.1 Researchers and public engagement with research

There is continuing encouragement for more researchers to engage with the public around their research (Poliakoff and Webb, 2007). One major funder, Research Councils UK, describes the need for researchers to demonstrate the impact of their research and the contribution it makes to society, suggesting that good public engagement activities help ensure that the work of universities is relevant to society (RCUK, n/d). The RCUK Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research (of which UWE is a signatory) states that "engaging people with science and engineering has never been more important" (RCUK, 2012). This is in line with the "international phenomenon" of the recent rise of public engagement with science and technology within science communication (Davies, 2013).

There is evidence that many researchers believe it is important to engage with the non-specialist public (PSP, 2006). However, 'public engagement' means different things to different people; researchers often struggle to explain what it means to them. The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) defines public engagement thus:

Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public.
Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit. (NCCPE, online)

Bauer and Jensen (2011) go further, to detail the kinds of activities that can be classed as public engagement:

Public engagement activities include a wide range of activities such as lecturing in public or in schools, giving interviews to journalists for newspapers, radio or television, writing popular science books, writing the odd article for newspapers or magazines oneself, taking part in public

debates, volunteering as an expert for a consensus conference or a “café scientifique” collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations as advisors or activists, and more. (Bauer and Jensen, 2011, p. 4)

The duty to demonstrate the public value of their work, especially when “taxpayers’ money may ultimately fund their research” (Poliakoff & Webb, 2007, p.247) is known to influence researchers. Evidence of the long-term impact of public engagement with research will form part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise taking place in 2014. It was hoped the evaluation of the public engagement impacts of the activities at the open day would provide evidence for use in the REF impact case studies.

2.2 Development of the activities

Ann Grand (Research Fellow, Science Communication Unit) supported the HLS researchers in developing activities based on their REF impact case studies. Members of the research teams were to run their own activities on the day, as befitting of the REF Impact requirements which encourage the direct involvement of researchers. Ann spoke with researchers who expressed a willingness to take part and worked with them either to devise new activities or adapt existing materials/activities. To encourage diversity and enable the researchers to develop activities suited to their research, Ann suggested activities such as informal, short science café-style talks, hands-on activities, short demonstrations and pecha-kucha presentations. Most of the activities took place on UWE’s Frenchay campus, with some additional displays at the Glenside campus. On the day, all the activities were supported by at least two members of the research group, taking turns to man the activity. This allowed researchers to take regular refreshment and lunch breaks.

The planned REF-related activities were:

- **Centre for Appearance Research (CAR)** (Frenchay): a gallery of framed photos of people with impairments and disfigurements. The photos had biographical material attached. The gallery included a rolling PowerPoint presentation about CAR's work.
- **Fatigue research** (Frenchay and Glenside): short interview video about the work of the Fatigue Research team, complemented by a poster.²
- **Speech and language therapy** (Frenchay and Glenside): ten-minute café, based on the team's consensus work with parents and children, complemented by a poster.³
- **Bioluminescent bacteria** (Frenchay): hands-on activity inviting participants to identify the activity of bioluminescent bacteria and the effects of various chemicals on the bacteria; this was an existing activity which the researchers had used several times at other events.³
- **Chemotherapy and bone marrow** (Frenchay): looking into ways that the bone marrow environment can affect the effectiveness of chemotherapy, using blown-up photomicrographs to identify damaged cells and spot the differences between treated and untreated cells.³

Short descriptions of the activities were included in the information about the Open Day on the UWE website.

² Due to circumstances beyond the team's control, the video was not ready in time for the open day.

³ Due to a lack of available rooms, the last three activities had to be converted into table-top displays.

3 Evaluation method

This section outlines the methodology used to generate the data. A variety of methods was selected, to capture the experiences of the different participants. The evaluation methodology received ethical approval from the University of the West of England, Bristol.

The *aim* of the evaluation was to gather evidence of the quality and nature of visitors' engagement with the featured research.

The *objectives* were:

- (i) to gather evidence of whether attending the event had an impact on visitors' views regarding UWE's research.
- (ii) to use structured observations to gauge visitors' interactions with the researchers and the activities.
- (iii) to conduct post-event semi-structured interviews with participating researchers to gauge their experience of the event, the skills they have gained, the challenges they have faced and what improvements they feel could be made for future events.

Visitor questionnaires

Paper questionnaires were selected as the best route to gather evidence from visitors about who engaged with the research. The evaluators aimed to collect 150–200 completed questionnaires (approximately 1% of potential visitors, based on visitor numbers for the 2009 open day, obtained from the UWE website).

On the Frenchay campus, the student science communication ambassadors were briefed to approach visitors as they moved away from an activity and ask if they were willing to complete a questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were to be collected by the ambassadors as visitors left the area. The same questionnaires were used on the Glenside campus but the researchers were asked to offer and collect the questionnaires.

The questions focused on both attitudinal and behavioural aspects: did the visitors' attitudes towards research change after their involvement in the activities and to what extent did they engage with the activities. It also looked to ask whether attendance at the event had an impact in terms of the visitors' views regarding UWE's research. A copy of the questionnaire will be found in Appendix 1.

Observations

Observation was selected as the most appropriate method to gather a structured

record of the visitors' interactions with the activities. One evaluator (MS) conducted all the observations. Only activities on the Frenchay campus were observed. Observations looked to measure age range of visitors as well as dwell time and level of participation (active or passive). Structured observations were conducted for 10-minute periods spaced regularly throughout the entire duration of the event (at the Frenchay Campus). In total, five observation sessions were made throughout the day, covering all the activities. Detailed notes were taken, supplemented by additional reflections by both evaluators immediately after the event. A copy of the observation schedule will be found in Appendix 2.

The evaluator was situated in an unobtrusive location and recorded data such as:

- Researchers delivering the activities: appearance, confidence, enthusiasm;
- Visitors: type (multi-generational, couples, etc.), size of groups, (estimated) age range;
- Engagement: how were the visitors attracted to the activities, did they get involved or just observe/listen?
- Dwell time: for how long did the visitors stay?

Interviews

The final stage of the evaluation involved interviews with the participating researchers. These took place shortly after the open day and aimed to gauge their experience, any skills they felt they had gained, challenges they faced and what improvements could be made for similar activities in future. Semi-structured interviews were used, to provide a meaningful discussion of the researchers' experience. The interviews were transcribed in full and analysed for common themes. A copy of the interview questions will be found in Appendix 3.

Six researchers were invited for interviews and four agreed to participate. The semi-structured interviews occurred primarily face-to-face, with one conducted over the phone, when face-to-face was not convenient.

4 Findings

The findings described below are drawn from the completed visitors' questionnaires, observation records and researchers' interviews. As noted above, eleven completed questionnaires were gathered; all these came from the Frenchay campus (no questionnaires were completed by Glenside visitors). All the observations were recorded at Frenchay and three of the four researchers interviewed were located there. Therefore, the findings largely reflect the experience of events and visitors on the Frenchay campus.

4.1 Observations

The advantage of observation is that it provides direct access to the incidents being studied, in a natural setting. Observation thus allows the evaluator to set the research data within the context of the whole activity, allowing subtleties and details to emerge that might otherwise be overlooked (Wilkinson, et al., 2011).

Location and timing

The observed activities were located in the foyer of A/L block in Frenchay. The day was extremely cold, with temperatures rising to just above 0°C. The foyer has two sets of automatic doors and no heating. This effectively acted as a channel for the cold air, rendering conditions were not only unpleasant for visitors but also the researchers and students seeking to engage people.

The open day was timetabled to start at 10am. The activities were largely set up by 9 to 9.30am. Because of the extreme discomfort of the researchers and students, at 12.30pm, the decision was made to move the science fair and the researchers and their displays into an internal corridor alongside rooms 1K2 and 1K15 which had better heating and fewer external doors.

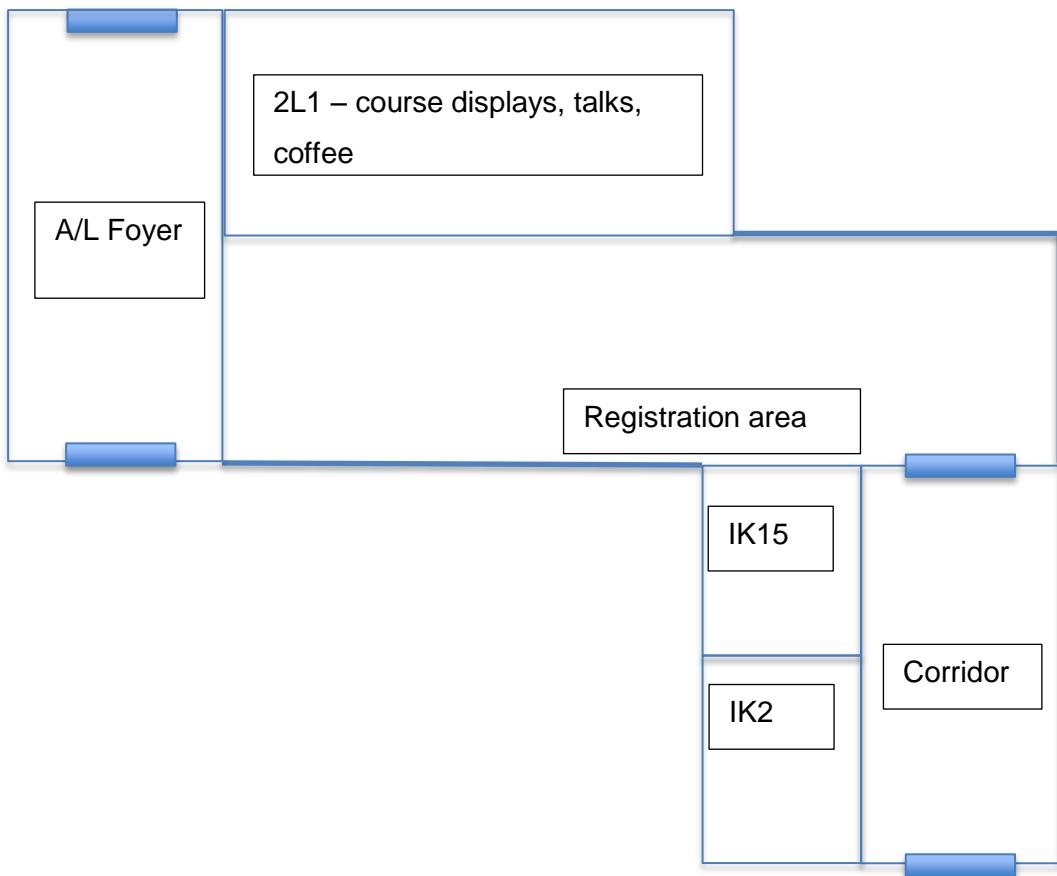


Figure 1 Display locations and rooms

Despite the problems in the foyer area there was quite a good flow of people in the A/L foyer from around 9.30am. The observer noted that these people stopped in the foyer to read signs/find directions, but most wanted to stick to their timetable, with some directly stating “we are not here for the science”. Recorded observations show that after 9.30-10am (when the Open Day officially started) there were rarely many visitors in the foyer and the visitors that were there were clearly looking for the specific places where they wanted to be. Even after the activities were moved to the K corridor, the number of passers-by was low. This posed a problem, as there were very few visitors for researchers to engage with and the ones that were there were mostly *en route* elsewhere or not interested.

Engagement

Researchers were quick to become engaged after being approached by the visitors and generally looked extremely enthusiastic about their research. Throughout the observation sessions (which covered all the research activities) it was noted that eleven visitors engaged with the displays and/or with the researchers. The observation record showed that visitors' dwell times ranged from three to 15 minutes. Visitors clearly felt comfortable in asking questions of the researchers (which could have been a factor of the context being an open day, when visitors come prepared to ask questions). The observation notes revealed that researchers and visitors engaged in discussion and questions, although researchers also explained their displays to the visitors. Visitors in groups, tended not to chat to each other but paid attention to what the researcher was saying.

Problems such as the cold conditions in the foyer and the decision to move to move to a new location meant that researchers occasionally looked tired and were challenged to keep up their enthusiasm at times.



Figure 2 CAR researcher and a visitor

Displays

The observation record showed that some activities appeared to attract more attention than others. Those displays with photographs and pictures attracted more

visitors than those showing a scientific poster. It should also be noted that the Science Fair stands, run by students, attracted more attention than the researchers' displays. This may be due to a variety of reasons; for example, the displays were less formal, with lots of pictures and no jargon. Also, students who ran these activities perhaps appeared more approachable and less intimidating to prospective students.

4.2 Visitors' feedback

Eleven completed questionnaires were returned. Five were completed by visitors that engaged with the researchers'/researchers' activities; the other six by visitors engaging with the students' activities. Of this total, seven were completed by prospective students, two by parents/caregivers, one by a current UWE student and one unknown status.

This is a much lower response rate than had been anticipated. The reasons for the low rate are largely to do with issues of the environment in which the activities were conducted. As has been noted above, the locations did not encourage visitors to linger and engage with the activities. The A/L foyer was cold and although there was a reasonable flow of people, there was a definite sense of 'passing through', as visitors were intent on getting to the events on their timetable. The K corridor was warmer, but cramped and the numbers of visitors passing by was lower. These factors combined to make the number of engaged visitors small and, given that not all visitors were willing, or felt they had time, to complete the questionnaire, led to the low response rate.

The majority of respondents ($n=8$) stated they were visiting the Open Day to get to know the campus. The displays and the presence of researchers were the major factors in attracting visitors to the researchers' activities.

All respondents were interested in science, with eight stating they were very interested. The Bioluminescent Bacteria and the Centre for Appearance Research were the activities that attracted more visitors and more comments on the questionnaires. When asked what they thought the purpose of the activities was, five visitors stated it was showcasing UWE's research, four thought it was to promote a course and a further four mentioned the purpose was to allow researchers to talk to potential students.

One visitor was observed to spend around 15 to 20 minutes engaging and chatting with one particular researcher. In conversation with the evaluator, this visitor

said she had specially come to the Open Day because of the opportunity to talk with UWE researchers. She was a current UWE student, looking for career paths, and had found online that the Science Fair and Researchers activities were taking place. The visitor mentioned that she had no idea how to reach or approach UWE researchers and was happy to find an activity where engaging with them was easy and straightforward.



Figure 3 Researchers and visitors engaging with the displays and having conversations

4.3 Researchers' feedback

This evaluation also aimed to uncover the researchers' perspective: why did they engage with the activities, what were the motivations and the challenges and what support would they welcome. Researchers spoke candidly and openly about their experiences before and during the Open Day.

In planning and creating the activities, the Associate Dean's encouragement and support was vital for researchers' response and participation. Ann Grand's initial email had received very few responses but the Dean's email, targeted at research group leaders, was much more effective. Responses came in over an (approximately) four-week period; Ann reflected that the greater time available meant she was able to support those who responded quickly far more effectively in developing their displays and activities. Because of the part-time nature of Ann's role, some researchers responded when she had only two or three working days left

before the Open Day. However, some research groups were able to make very effective use of their existing public engagement activities and displays.

Of the four researchers who were interviewed, three had participated in similar public engagement activities in the past, both at and outside UWE. One researcher commented that she was motivated to participate due to her enjoyment of public engagement activities.

However, as noted in the Introduction, ‘public engagement’ means different things to different people; researchers often struggle to explain what it means to them. The interview therefore specifically asked the researchers to define what public engagement meant to them. As might be expected (see for example, Davies, 2013), the four interviewees provided different answers. For some researchers it is about taking their research to the public:

To me it means being prepared to take your research into the public arena and to talk to the public about it. (Interviewee 1)

However, for others, it is a more complex process, involving the active participation of the public:

It's a two-way process so (...) I want to be able to transmit information about the research that we do in a way that is accessible, and to find out what people think about our research and to help them understand our research, but I want it to be two-way so that I know what they think about our research.
(Interviewee 4)

All four interviewees mentioned the opportunity to showcase UWE research, inform prospective students and their families about the research going on in the university, increase public engagement with research and demonstrate impact for the REF as reasons for including research-focused activities in the Open Day. Researchers also felt motivated to participate because they are “keen to support the university process of attracting students” (Interviewee 4), and wanted to make their group’s research better known.

Overall, interviewees enjoyed participating in the Open Day activities and found it easy to engage with visitors, when there were visitors around. All researchers pointed out that the locations (both the foyer and the corridor) were a challenge during the day, not only because they were uncomfortable (due to the cold

weather) but also because very few visitors identified the displays as an opportunity to pause and engage:

[the foyer was] sort of a walk-way through, so people were walking through it rather than [it offering] somewhere that they could go and sit and discuss and have an arena for a discussion.
(Interviewee 4).

Researchers felt the research displays could be better located alongside the teaching and programme displays and information, integrating research with teaching and demonstrating its value to the university and prospective students.

Researchers were generally pleased with their displays and felt they worked well in attracting visitors. Researchers were also pleased to have had the opportunity to showcase their research and talk to visitors about it, and saw this as one of the most positive aspects of their participation. All four interviewees said they would be happy to participate in similar activities in the future.

The interviews highlighted the support needs the researchers identified, both to help them develop public engagement with their research and also in terms of capturing the impact of these activities for the REF. One researcher commented that one thing she and her colleagues had learned from the process of planning for the Open Day activity was the need to ensure that processes for capturing impact were considered very early in research project planning.

Capturing the impact of public engagement activities for the REF seems to be a challenge for researchers, with one saying that:

We would yes like some help because I don't think we're clear on how to do that. (Interviewee 3)

Others felt they need support in creating feedback forms (questionnaires, etc.) to collect information from the public. Being able to spend time and money on capturing the impact of public engagement activities were also mentioned as aspects that would support the researchers' work.

As for developing public engagement with their research, interviewees mentioned they would welcome "support from people that understand science communication" (Interviewee 1), as some felt they lack the skills in how to do this, particularly skills in getting their "research over to people and attracting people into

the research area so they want to come and discuss it with you" (Interviewee 4). Support – both time and financial – was mentioned as a particular need for developing effective public engagement.

5 Reflections and recommendations for future events

- **Faculty support:** the Dean's promotion of the Open Day activities and encouragement for researchers to take part was vital in mobilising a good response.

Recommendation: the value of the support of senior Faculty members should be recognised and continued.

- **Resource development:** researchers varied in their speed of response to emails about the Open Day activities. Developing rich, interactive and stimulating public engagement activities requires both financial provision and practical support. Researchers mentioned that they would welcome support from specialist science communication researchers not only in developing activities but also in developing effective evaluation and impact-capturing mechanisms.

Recommendation: the SCU should be resourced to support researchers in developing materials (including evaluation mechanisms) for research-focussed public engagement activities at future open days.

- **Location:** The foyer was not an appropriate venue. Not only was it much too cold, it was also an entrance point and route through to other areas. Most visitors did not linger but were keen to pass through and get to the specific locations on their timetable for the day. The K corridor was also not an appropriate venue, as the corridor was too small for the displays; furthermore, it was a route for laboratory tours, so visitors passed through, with no opportunity to linger. Generally, visitors had their heads down and were on a timetable, so they passed by, almost determined not to stop.

Recommendation: research-focussed activities should be located in a space where visitors feel able to pause, mingle and engage with the researchers.

- **Evaluation:** evaluations of research-focussed activities at future open days would be improved by amassing more data, through reaching a higher number of visitors and gathering more responses. The entire open day is currently evaluated by the UWE marketing department, using an online survey sent out after the event. Future evaluations could be more effective if integrated with the full open day evaluation. In addition, observations and interviews with participant researchers would provide useful data. Providing evidence for REF Impact case

studies is challenging and more work is needed to develop this in an effective and embedded manner.

Recommendation: evaluation of research-focussed activities at the open day should be integrated with the existing online survey, supplemented by observations and interviews with researchers.

- **Research vs. programmes:** The displays, talks and information about undergraduate programmes at the Open Day were clearly well-planned, well-practised and well-run. However, the UWE 20/20 strategy document makes it clear that learning and teaching should be ‘informed by high-impact research and scholarship’ (UWE Bristol, 2013, p.2). There will be visitors who do not know that UWE does research; probably some who do not even know that any universities do research – there are minds to be expanded and events such as the Open Day represent a great opportunity to do so.

Recommendation: research activities should be integrated with displays and information about undergraduate programmes, so that visitors can see how research works alongside and feeds into teaching.

- **Perceived importance of the research activities:** The organisers were told the activities would have to be located in the foyer, as there were no rooms available. In fact, on the day, researchers pointed out that, for example, 1K2 and 1K15 were only being used to store furniture moved from other rooms. If research becomes part of the Open Day, researchers will want it to be seen as an important component. Research activities should be considered and incorporated from the beginning of the Open Day planning, alongside the teaching displays and university living events.

Recommendation: researchers/SCU support staff should be involved from the beginning of open day planning.

- **Advertising:** A lack of information meant that visitors were not necessarily aware of, or did not understand what these displays were about. Having visible banners, signage, and marketing materials with an attractive message strategically placed may address this issue in future events. More information could also be included in the online Open Day material.

Recommendation: research-focussed activities should be clearly signposted and advertised in future open days.

- **Engagement:** Researchers looked friendly and confident. However, generally they did not seem to be proactive regarding engaging with passers-by. They seemed to expect to be approached by the visitors, rather than reaching out to them. Researchers acknowledged that they would welcome support for developing both public engagement activities and their public engagement skills. Researchers and students involved in activities for the open day could benefit from the opportunity to reflect on the nature of public engagement.

Recommendation: **The SCU could be resourced to develop a short (three to four hour) workshop to offer researchers support around key points in good practice in science communication, techniques to approach and engage with visitors and tips on designing effective displays.**

- **Strategy:** Several open days occur over the course of the year and it may not be practical or efficient to feature research activities at every event. Featuring two or three different key areas of research at every event or focussing research activities on the open day which is most significant for conversion could be considered.

Recommendation: **The SCU could liaise with the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, as well as others involved in open day activities (for example the Marketing Dept.) to consider most sustainable strategy to maintain the research presence at future open days.**

6 References

- Bauer, M. & Jensen, P., 2011. The mobilization of scientists for public engagement. *Public Understanding of Science*, 20(1), p. 3.
- Davies, S.R., 2013. Constituting Public Engagement: Meanings and Genealogies of PEST in Two U.K. Studies. *Science Communication*. Published online before print March 7, 2013, doi: 10.1177/1075547013478203.
- NCCPE website. Available at: <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what> [Accessed: 10th May 2013].
- Poliakoff, E. & Webb, T., 2007. What factors predict scientists' intentions to participate in public engagement activities?. *Science Communication*, 29(2), p. 242.
- PSP, 2006. *Science communication: a survey of factors affecting science communication by scientists and engineers*, London: Royal Society, Wellcome Trust and RCUK.
- RCUK, 2012 . *Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research*. Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/ConcordatforEngagingthePublicwithResearch.pdf> [Accessed: 8th May 2013].
- RCUK (n/d) *Excellence with impact*. Available at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk> [Accessed: 13th May 2013]
- UWE, Bristol, 2013. *UWE Bristol Strategy 2020* Available at <https://share.uwe.ac.uk/sites/marketing/VCUpdate/Documents/UWE-Bristol-Strategy-2020.pdf> [Internal availability only]
- Wilkinson, C., Bultitude, K. & Dawson, E., (2011). "Oh Yes, Robots! People Like Robots; the Robot People Should do Something": Perspectives and Prospects in Public Engagement With Robotics. *Science Communication*, 3(33), p. 367.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Visitors’ questionnaire

NB The original questionnaire occupied only one side of A4 paper

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. It shouldn't take long to complete, and will help improve these activities in the future. Completing this questionnaire indicates that you give consent for this data to be used in a research study. All data will be treated anonymously.

1. Why did you visit the Open Day today? (tick all that apply)

- find out more about available courses get to know the campus

find out more about research other: _____

2. And what attracted you to this particular activity? (tick all that apply)

- the stand the researchers

the activity other: _____

3. How did you enjoy the activity? (please explain why)

- Enjoyed it Didn't enjoy it

4. What do you think the purpose of this activity was? (tick all that apply)

- promote a course showcase UWE's research

allow researchers to talk to potential students other: _____

5. What was the most interesting thing you saw or heard during this activity?

[View Details](#)

6. Did the activity change your views about UWE's research?

- yes maybe no If YES, in what way? _____

7. Anything you want to add about the event that hasn't already been covered?

For more information about the study, please contact Dr. John Smith at (555) 123-4567 or via email at john.smith@researchinstitute.org.

8. What is your sex?

male female prefer not
to say

9. In which capacity are you attending the Open Day?

potential student parent/care-giver other: _____

10. Which of these descriptions best suits you?

- I am not interested in science at all
- I am moderately interested in science
- I am very interested in science

Thank you!

7.2 Appendix 2 – Observation schedule

Record the following observations over a 10-15 minute time window: Activity: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

General Problems? (accessibility, logistics, weather, scheduling, etc.)	
Visitors Type (size of groups, multi-generational, age range?)	
Staff: (Age, appearance, confidence, enthusiasm)	
Engagement: (How were they attracted to the activities? Do they get involved (watching, asking q's, touching equipment, taking brochures) or observe only)	
Dwell time: (How long did visitors stay?)	
Group dynamics Are visitors talking to each other? Is conversation about the activity?	
Comments made or questions asked: (lecture / discussion?)	
Other:	

7.3 Appendix 3 – Researchers’ interview questions

Thank you for agreeing with this interview. It should take around 30 minutes and will be audio recorded. This interview is anonymous and references to your specific areas of research will be removed in reporting.

The aim is to reflect on your experiences during the recent Open Day.

1. I would like to start by asking if you have ever participated in similar activities here or outside UWE?
If yes, can you give me a few more details please?
2. In your opinion, what was the reason for including research-focussed activities in the open day?
3. What motivated you to participate in the Open Day?
4. What were your expectations prior to the Open Day?

Let’s move on now to think about the Open Day itself.

5. What in your view worked well about the Open Day?
6. And was there anything that didn’t quite work out as planned?
7. How easy or difficult was it to engage the visitors in this activity?

Reflecting on how the event went,

8. How did the Open Day meet or alter your expectations after the event?
9. Would you like to participate in a similar event again in the future?

Reflecting on public engagement with your research,

13. Research funders are working to create a culture in which public engagement by the research community is regarded as an important and essential activity. In broad terms, what does public engagement mean to you?
14. Continuing to think about public engagement, what – *if any* – support do you feel would help you develop public engagement with your research?
15. In terms of capturing the impact of public engagement activities for the REF, what – *if any* – support do you feel would help?
16. Finally, is there anything further you would like to add, any other comments, thoughts you’d like to feed in?

Thanks again for your time.