COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS
FOR ACADEMIC STAFF
2014

1  Our Commitment

Engagement sits at the centre of the University of Tasmania’s mission and values.

At UTAS, we see engagement as the cultivation of relationships that lead to productive partnerships and yield mutually beneficial outcomes to universities and their partners through the application and utilisation of university resources including staff, students, infrastructure and knowledge and across the breadth of university activities including research, learning and teaching and service.

We believe that universities have a major responsibility to contribute to society through their community engagement, and that they have much to gain in return. We are committed to sharing our knowledge, resources and skills with the public, and to listening to and learning from the expertise and insight of the different communities with which we engage.

We are also committed to developing our approach to managing, supporting and delivering community engagement for the benefit of staff, students and the public, and to sharing what we learn about effective practice.

2  Our Communities

UTAS engages with many communities. These include different segments of the population – for example, the elderly, young people, refugees. We interact with many different functional groups, such as:

- Business
- Governments
- Disciplinary groups
- Professional organisations
- UTAS alumni
- Non-governmental organisations
- Charities and so on.

Engagement might involve local, regional, Tasmanian, national, international or global communities.

3  Community Engagement for the Institution

Our position as the sole university in Tasmania brings exceptional potential for engagement with the economic, social, cultural and intellectual life of the island and for connecting with national and international networks. Recognising that from relationships flow opportunity, we must configure ourselves to facilitate meaningful partnerships with government, industry and communities in Tasmania and across the world. (Open To Talent, Strategic Plan: 2012 Onwards).

Community is the third arm of the UTAS Strategic Plan and stands equally alongside research and students and the University’s unique position carries with it both opportunities and obligations. These obligations turn out to be not only to the community, but also to the institution and even to ourselves.

The triptych of the individual, the institutional and the communal is all-pervasive in our thinking about this third arm, and is never far from our thinking when making decisions about what we can reasonably expect of academic staff.
3.1  Five Institutional Strategies

In order to understand the academic contribution to engagement, we must first look to the goals of the institution as a whole. To achieve our community goal, UTAS has framed five institutional-level strategies:

1. To engage with the economic, social, cultural and intellectual life of Tasmania and extend this engagement into national and international networks by: configuring ourselves to facilitate meaningful partnerships with government, industry and communities in Tasmania and across the world, becoming an exemplar of how universities can best interact with the communities they serve; participating in and, where appropriate, leading authentic conversations of local significance with a focus on collaborative action around shared interests, purposes and values; positioning UTAS as a forum for ideas, debate and discussion, open to all members of the community and courageous in tackling challenging topics; and engaging with our Aboriginal community and culture.

2. To use our relationship with Tasmania to inform research questions, test research solutions at systemic scale, and translate research models into solutions for modern society.

3. To enhance our education programs by engaging with Tasmania’s society and environment, thereby increasing local participation rates, expanding the horizons of students beyond UTAS, fostering skills that extend the curriculum and providing real world experiences.

4. To attract scholars and thought leaders from around the world to UTAS, and support UTAS staff and students to spend time at other institutions.

5. To encourage current students and alumni to engage in the life of the University through volunteering, employment and engagement in outreach activities, fostering lifelong allegiance to UTAS and benefiting from the skills and experience of our alumni.

3.2  Institutional Engagement and the Individual Academic

Responsibility for enacting these strategies clearly crosses several organisational units and internal boundaries. The first strategy is very much about high-level partnerships and thought leadership, whilst the second relates to community-based research, the third to experiential learning, participation and employability and the fourth to global engagement and mobility. The fifth focusses on a particular university community (alumni) and our ability to build lifelong connections. These are strategies that are appropriate to the institution rather than to the individual academic staff member.

But it turns out that community is for both the institution and the individual UTAS academic staff member. However, as we will see, the two do not coincide in this case. An individual academic’s goals and strategies will be different in kind from those of the institutional and this is entirely appropriate and is to be expected. This is not to say however, that individual academic’s engagement activities do not assist in the achievement of institutional goals – they do – but the two are not the same.

It is worth noting that historically much community engagement at UTAS (and other universities) has been opportunistic and driven by individuals rather than being informed by a clear strategic framework. While this has produced many benefits, it is no longer clear that the cumulative efforts of numerous individuals acting largely autonomously will achieve the goals laid down in the University’s Strategic Plan. Articulating these performance expectations can be seen as part of a process of adopting a more strategic approach to engagement.
4 Community Engagement for the Individual Academic

There are many definitions, of ‘community’, of ‘engagement’ and even of ‘partnerships’. Those debates, while interesting, are not the focus here. For the purposes of this document, we are concerned with the kinds of activities and outcomes than can reasonably be expected to figure in academic performance evaluation, career planning and progression. We need then, to provide some guidelines on what is in, and what is not in scope for the individual. But note that these are indeed guidelines: they should not be seen as rigid rules. The basic principle is that activities are not double-counted: this is much more important than any debate about what is in or out of scope.

4.1 Exclusions – Which Activities are Not in Scope?

It is our closeness with community that sometimes makes it difficult to define just what is in scope here. Community often starts to look more like the way we do our business rather than the business itself. This is not the focus of these expectations. Importantly, these performance expectations are not concerned with what might be called ‘community-based research’ and ‘community-based teaching’.

Community-engaged research includes discovering, applying or synthesising knowledge, skills or ideas in ways that shed light on social, civic or ethical problems or contribute to the well-being of communities and individuals. Generally, scholarly activities categorised as ‘community engaged’ must not only meet the scholarly standards of particular disciplines but also involve groups or organisations outside the University as partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Community partners collaborate with engaged scholars by helping define the goals, scope and methods of a particular research or creative project.

Community-engaged teaching includes service learning and other forms of problem-based, active and experiential learning. Community-engaged teaching aims to help students acquire, use, or apply knowledge, ideas and skills in ways that shed light on social, civic or ethical problems or contribute to the well-being of communities and individuals. Community-engaged teaching also involves groups and organisations outside the University as partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

A high proportion of research conducted at UTAS in community-based and community-based experiential learning is increasingly becoming embedded in UTAS practice and whilst there is no doubt that community engagement is commonly a necessary precursor to successful community-engaged research and teaching, the outcomes of engaged research and engaged teaching sit more naturally under the research and teaching performance expectations.

Therefore, academic staff are encouraged to count the outcomes of their community-engaged research and community-engaged teaching (publications and so on) under the research performance expectations (RPEs) and teaching performance expectations (TPEs).

4.2 Which Activities are in Scope?

So, what is left? For a staff member with a ‘standard’ workload mix (40% research; 40% learning and teaching; 20% community engagement and internal service to UTAS), community engagement is taken to refer to those contributions, made as an academic, to the wider community which:

i. Enhance the reputation of the University.
ii. Are documented in formal workload discussions, in agreement with the staff member’s academic line manager.
iii. Draw on the academic staff member’s professional skills and relate in some way to their role as a UTAS academic, noting that community activities undertaken in a private capacity are not relevant.

Community engagement performance is measured in terms of its impact on the individual, on the institution and on the community rather than on sheer numbers of inputs (activities) or outputs.
For many academic staff with a standard workload, the main communities with which they will interact will be their profession/discipline, related industry groups or government (local, state, and/or federal).

Service to the discipline refers to service to the relevant profession or academic discipline, including clinical work, and service on local and national professional/discipline bodies. Professional service to industry refers to professional industry contributions made to business and bodies that relate to the staff member’s role as a UTAS academic and enhance the reputation of the University. Some academic staff may choose to include under their community engagement portfolio the publication of textbooks or items published in professional, industry or popular – as opposed to academic – journals.

Community engagement includes personal or professional outreach or involvement, especially when it takes place in partnership with groups and organisations outside the University and harnesses a staff member’s academic skills or expertise to contribute to the well-being of communities and individuals.

Some staff will have workload mix that has an unusually strong focus on community engagement activities. These staff will be few and will have and agreed position description that specifically includes performance indicators in engagement. They will often be ‘public intellectuals’, and will generally provide a great deal of advice, service and thought leadership to the community as an agreed part of their role. Such positions are very important to the success of the institution; however, in most cases the workload allocated to community engagement is not likely to exceed 20% for the majority of staff. This is simply because most staff have a workload mix that is predominately centred on research and teaching.

Note again that much of what should be counted as individual community engagement is not explicitly mentioned in Open to Talent. This is because, as has been already explained, while individual actions contribute to institutional goals and strategies, the two are not directly translatable.

Note also that we can make judgements about what we choose to count under community engagement and what we choose to count under research or teaching, but we must not count the same activity in more than one category.

5 Why do we Need Performance Expectations for Academic Community Engagement?

The intention of these performance expectations is to provide a career development framework for those who have engagement activity as part of their workload, and to provide a context around which useful career conversations can occur. A good proportion of community engagement activity does not happen in a planned manner, but rather is often opportunistic or ad hoc, as staff take advantage of engagement opportunities as they arise. This does not mean that successful engagement can never be planned and strategic in manner; indeed, as noted earlier, there is an expectation that community engagement will increasingly become planned and strategic – aligned with institutional priorities and carefully planned and targeted.

Being able to plan for high-impact academic engagement outcomes requires that managers remain accountable, take on a mentoring role and are able to discuss these outcomes strategically with the staff member in terms of what they mean for their individual career and what they mean for the institution as a whole.

Career decisions relating to engagement, such as choosing to accept membership of an editorial board, or undertaking to organise a major conference, should be judged in terms of their future potential positive impact and benefit to:

- The individual staff member, in terms of their own career progression
- The University, in terms of meeting its goals and strategic priorities and
- The community, in this case, the professional community.

The impact of engagement should therefore be evaluated through three lenses: 1) positive impact on the individual’s career progression; 2) positive impact on the institution itself; and 3) positive impact on the community in question.
6 Drawing a Distinction Between Activities, Outputs and Impacts

Performance in the community domain is measured in terms of its impact on the individual, on the institution and on the community rather than on sheer numbers of inputs (activities) or even of outputs. A busy community engagement schedule does not necessarily provide greater benefit to the staff member, institution, or community.

Activities which have (or have the potential to have) high impact in all three areas (career impact, institutional impact and community impact) are, of course, the aim and there will often be multiple benefits resulting from one activity. In reality, robust community activity has not only this ‘triple bottom line’, but also many other advantages flow on effects and benefits that are often very difficult to enumerate, or in fact to anticipate (e.g. sustainability, environmental, reputational and so on).

The following table is indicative only and is intended to guide career conversations and enable staff to make clear distinctions between activities, outputs and impact. It is the anticipated impact of an activity that should be used as the basis of judgements about workloads and career planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input/activity (examples only)</th>
<th>Output (examples only)</th>
<th>Impact on individual career (examples only)</th>
<th>Impact on institution as a whole (examples only)</th>
<th>Impact on community (examples only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a member of a peak body</td>
<td>Attendance at meetings of a Government Statutory Authority</td>
<td>Staff member able to use letters of special invitation or commendation to build case for promotion</td>
<td>Increased joint grant income due to connections made by staff member</td>
<td>National debate is enriched by staff member’s participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication of scholarship to the wider public through media outlets, community forums, schools etc.</td>
<td>Regular commissioned radio talkback spot</td>
<td>Staff member able to public testimonials to build case for promotion</td>
<td>UTAS named publicly as employer of respected staff member</td>
<td>Public knowledge and interest in the discipline area on the part of the listening audience is increased</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution to hospital committees such as infrastructure and audit etc</td>
<td>Regular attendance at clinical committee meetings</td>
<td>Clinical academic able to claim to remain abreast of hospital and healthcare sector issues</td>
<td>Strengthening of ties between UTAS and state government department</td>
<td>Wider community health outcomes improve as decisions are made using expert knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and provision of continuing education programs</td>
<td>Course delivered to University of the Third Age (U3A)</td>
<td>Staff member able to use student evaluations to build case for promotion</td>
<td>Increased participation as members of public enrol in courses</td>
<td>Senior public keep their minds active in later years, leading to better health outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in policy debates through submissions to government</td>
<td>Submission made</td>
<td>Staff member able to claim to remain abreast of developments in the discipline</td>
<td>Strengthening of ties between UTAS and state government department</td>
<td>Wider community outcomes improve as decisions are made using expert knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor, associate editor, advisory board member or referee of a scholarly journal</td>
<td>Referring of journal article submissions</td>
<td>Staff member able to claim to remain abreast of developments in the discipline</td>
<td>Increased joint publications due to connections made by staff member</td>
<td>Professional community benefits from staff member’s expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility as organiser of national and/or international conferences</td>
<td>Conference occurs</td>
<td>Positive evaluations from delegates used to build case for promotion</td>
<td>Staff member’s teaching improves as a result of listening to case studies presented</td>
<td>Professional community enriched by networking opportunities presented by well-run event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with industry (e.g. technical standards committees)</td>
<td>Attendance at meetings with industry on behalf of institution</td>
<td>Repeated invitations to contribute to industry used to build case for promotion</td>
<td>Student employability improves as the staff member’s industry experience informs their curriculum design</td>
<td>Documented improvements in industry practice</td>
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</table>

7 Community Engagement Performance Expectations

Indicative performance expectations for each of the academic levels are specified in the table below. These are the kinds of things that might be discussed in career and career development conversations around the community portion of an academic workload. The table is by no means prescriptive and is certainly not exhaustive.

The table is intended to not only provide guidance, but also to express the following three quite general, but very important, points about these expectations. Note that there is no expectation that as a member of staff becomes more senior they will engage in more community activities.

7.1 Increasing Leadership Contributions

First, the table illustrates the expectation that there may be an increase in the level of leadership associated with community as the academic career progresses. It is expected that the staff member’s role in leadership will become greater over time. This means not only leading and mentoring fellow staff as they undertake community activities, but also showing leadership within the community (be it professional or otherwise).

7.2 Deepening Impact

Second, the table also illustrates the expectation that there may be an increase in the depth of impact associated with community as the academic career progresses. It is expected that the impact of the staff member’s community activities and outcomes will increase over time. This includes a positive increase in the impact on the individual’s career, the University’s goals and the community in question. The increase in impact may, for example, be associated with a widening of geographical scope. For example, the sphere of impact associated with community activities may initially be confined to a certain local community or region. As a career progresses, those outcomes are expected to progressively begin to have an impact on the state, national, and global communities.
7.3 Increase in Diversity of Activities

Finally, the table is intended to illustrate the expectation that there may be an increase in the range of the types of activities undertaken as the academic career progresses. A professor will, all things being equal, engage in more ways than a more junior staff member.

7.4 Community Engagement Performance Expectations across the Academic Levels

The following generic statements of community engagement performance expectations draw on promotion criteria at the Australian National University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A Level A academic staff member is expected to work at the school level with support and mentoring from more senior academic staff. He/she is expected to develop his/her expertise in and contributions to research and learning and teaching and potentially in community engagement, and will progressively gain an increasing degree of professional autonomy, within the framework of institutional and organisational unit priorities and performance expectations. Engagement activity will often be done in partnership with more senior staff members.</td>
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</table>
| B     | In general, Level B staff are not expected to have developed a substantial record of community engagement. Engagement activity will often take place in partnership with more senior staff members. Staff at Level B might engage in activities to develop their community engagement skills by, for example:  
  - Undertaking training or participating in a mentoring program with a more experienced academic.  
  - Identifying and building substantive knowledge around one or more areas key areas of engagement (such as government, business or professional organisations). |
| C     | Level C staff are expected to make effective contributions beyond the normal expectation for Level B. For example, at Level C a staff member might engage in activities such as:  
  - Involvement in educational activities within the wider community, e.g. contribution to secondary school curriculum and assessment committees.  
  - Contributing to innovation in continuing education programs.  
  - Establishing collaborative relationships with industry and other professional organisations.  
  - Substantial and continuing activity on professional committees or community bodies.  
  - Membership of a conference organising committee, or a significant conference contribution such as chairing sessions.  
  - Sustained involvement in professional consultancy work for government, community or private sector organisations.  
  - Activities designed to further develop community engagement skills. |
| **D** | Level D staff are expected to make sustained and effective contributions to the development of relationships between the University and the wider community above the normal expectation for Level C. At Level D a staff member might engage in some of, for example:  
- Major contribution to secondary school curriculum and assessment committees or to cultural bodies.  
- Establishment of collaborative relationships with industry, and other professional organisations.  
- Contributing in a leadership capacity, to the development, innovation and provision of continuing education programs.  
- Leadership role in conference organisation at the national or international level, e.g. as a convenor of state or national conferences, chair of programme committees, editor of proceedings etc.  
- Significant advisory and consultancy activities.  
- Appointment to significant government or state bodies, industry boards, nongovernment organisations etc.  
- Leadership in the profession or discipline, for example as a senior office-bearer such as President or Chair.  
- Responsible involvement in government working parties and enquiries where professional expertise is exercised. |
| **E** | Level E staff are expected to make a sustained and effective contributions to the development of relationships between the University and the wider community above the normal expectation for level D.  
A Level E staff member could be expected to be involved in, for example:  
- Providing leadership and fostering excellence in community affairs, particularly those related to the discipline, in professional, commercial and industrial sectors where appropriate.  
- Service as a senior office bearer of a professional or disciplinary organisation.  
- Appointment to government bodies, industry organisations or non-government organisations.  
- Editing a disciplinary or professional journal.  
- Leadership role in conference organisation at the national/international level.  
- Contributing in a leadership capacity to the development, innovation and provision of continuing education programs.  
- Leadership role with industry and community agencies to establish work-based, professional and clinical placements as part of academic programs. |