

**Evaluating your event**

This document covers the process and reasoning behind collecting feedback from public events, such as talks, workshops and lectures. Evaluation can include reflection from both event attendees and organisers and will help you to deliver successful events.

**Why is evaluation important?**  
Evaluation is an important part of any public engagement activity or event as it allows you to demonstrate how you have met the objectives of your event. It tells you about what has worked, what hasn’t, and what the value of the activity has been for the different audiences.

It also:

* Provides data for reporting, which can be used for awards, grants, and impact case studies.
* Often a requirement of funders / sponsors.
* Allows you to reflect.
* Highlights areas for improvement.
* Measure progress from past events.
* Can be used (with permission) in testimonials.
* Evidences the event’s impact on the participants.
* Measures the reach of your event (e.g. areas of deprivation or outside the institute’s immediate locality).

**How to evaluate your event**Evaluation starts at the stage where you are planning an event, not once it has finished. Questions to assist in evaluating your event can be included during the registration and feedback process as well as during the event.

In order to know what you want to measure, you need to know what you were trying to achieve for each audience (including you). It is also useful to consider how the data will be used, what is most relevant, useful, and feasible to ask (within GDPR).

When setting objectives for the event, consider what constitutes success and how you will measure it. Different tools, like a [log frame](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/aug/17/how-to-write-a-logframe-a-beginners-guide), [planning triangle](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/copy_of_how-to-create-a-planning-triangle) or [logic model](https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/evaluating_your_public_engagement_work.pdf) can help with this planning.

Objectives should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound.

Evaluation can often be divided into two parts – formative and summative. Formative evaluation happens during a project and is a way of reflecting on what has happened and making changes in response to your findings. Summative evaluation tends to come at the end of a project and assesses the value of your activities against your original objectives.

When multiple partners, stakeholders or funders are involved, they may require evaluation on different parts of the event or activity. They may also request certain data is collected, and for their logos to be included on any surveys. Requesting post event feedback should ideally take place on the day of, or the day after the event.

**Paper or digital?**You can gather useful information via paper questionnaires, electronic surveys or creative methods

* Pre event, as guests register
* During the event e.g. a ‘feedback wall’ via a tool like Padlet or MIRO, a voting box, a graphic artist (contact [cpe-info@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:cpe-info@bristol.ac.uk)), or polling platforms such as Mentimeter and Slido
* Post event, through a paper survey handed out at an event or an online survey sent afterwards.

Pick the format which is most suitable for your event – for example when running schools events, paper or electronic surveys on the day are recommended, or during online events, polls can be useful to keep an audience engaged.

If you want to set up an online survey, there are several options where you can create a simple form and add questions and notes, and compile responses.

* [JISC Online Surveys](https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/features-pricing/) (formerly BOS). You will need an [Online Surveys licence](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/itservices/SitePages/jisc-online-surveys.aspx) to use this. Check if your School or Department already has one.
* [Microsoft Forms](https://forms.office.com/) and [Zoom](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/itservices/SitePages/zoom.aspx) all have the capability to collect feedback and are supported by the IT team.

Think about how long to leave a post event survey open for – we recommend 2 - 4 weeks. Make sure attendees know this deadline and send reminders to encourage responses as appropriate.

**Introduction**Whatever form of evaluation you choose to use, you should include a short introduction. This explains what event the feedback concerns, as well as information on whether the data entered will be anonymous, that it is non-compulsory, and how data will be shared and stored after collection. Always thank respondents for taking part.

**Sample questions**   
There are many forms of question used in evaluation. Standardising questions across the institution will not always be possible as evaluation is always unique to the specific event. However, if as an institute we can include some common questions, it allows comparing and benchmarking.

The questions included in the feedback survey should be led by your event objectives. Below is a selection of common questions, with an explanation of what information they will collect and why, as well as an indication of when they are best asked. Questions that we recommend including and that will allow institutional benchmarking are highlighted in red.

***Note about demographic data:*** Questions about age, ethnicity, gender, and postcode collect demographic data. This can show whether your event attracted your target audience. Consider carefully whether you really need to collect this kind of personal information, and ensure such data is stored securely and used in line with GDPR requirements.

***Registration questions:***

* *Are you happy to receive further information about future University of Bristol public events via email?*

By asking this question and ensuring the details of that those that reply ‘yes’ are sent to the UK Events Team, we can promote all university public events to a larger audience. The University [public events listing](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/events/) promotes all University public events and a monthly email promoting these events is sent out by the UK Events Team.

* *How did you first find out about this event?*

Demonstrates which of your marketing channels was most effective and can help you refine promotion for future events. It’s best to include options, e.g. Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Word of Mouth, etc.

* *I am: a UoB student, a UoB staff member, a UoB alumnus, a member of the public*

Demonstrates if your event has contributed towards the University’s civic mission which forms part of the University vision and strategy.

***Post event survey questions:***

* *How would you rate the event according to the following criteria / how satisfied were you with the following aspects of the event?*

Used to collect opinions on venue, speakers, content, timings and opportunity for interaction.

* *What worked well / was most interesting / did you enjoy in particular?*

Provides the opportunity to collect positive and specific feedback.

* *Please provide any suggestions for how this event could have been improved.*

Allows attendees to highlight things which didn’t work well, so that you can improve future events.

* *Have you attended a University event before / would you attend another University event?*

University events can sometimes attract a very narrow audience; many attendees answering yes to this question could suggest you need to consider different techniques for reaching a wider audience. Alternatively, this can show the success of previous University events to encourage repeat attendance.

* *How has this event affected your perception of the University of Bristol?*

Demonstrates if your event has had a positive impact on the University’s reputation.

* *Did you have prior knowledge of the event’s topic?*

Measures any increase in knowledge; one key element of successful public engagement.

* *What (if anything) do you think you have gained from this event?*

Use as an open-ended question or give options e.g. Better understanding of this research topic, Better understanding of how researchers work, etc…

**Analysis and Understanding**

There are many ways of analysing the data you have collected, whether it is qualitative or quantitative. This [Evaluation Guide from UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-16102020-public-engagement-evaluation-guide.pdf) contains some good advice on analysis tools and techniques. Ensure you refer back to your original objectives at this stage, but also note any unexpected or unforeseen outcomes, both positive and negative.

**Reporting and Sharing**

Sharing your learning is a key part of any evaluation. Reporting requirements will vary according to the event and your stakeholders. At a minimum, always ensure you succinctly capture the results and reflect on them with the organising team. Communicate them to partners, funders and stakeholders in a timely fashion and publish them publicly if possible.

**Further information**

1. The [NCCPE website](http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how/guides/introduction-evaluation) has useful information to help you evaluate your activities.
2. Contact the [Public Engagement team](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/public-engagement/about/team/) for assistance evaluating public engagement
3. Download the Public Engagement team’s short [Evaluation Guide](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/public-engagement/Evaluation%20Guide%20for%20Public%20Engagement%20(UOB).pdf).
4. [JISC Online Surveys](https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/)
5. [Public Engagement | Public Engagement | University of Bristol](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/public-engagement/)
6. [Data protection office website](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/)