

Engaging with Government programme - Case studies

Case study 1:

After the Engaging with Government course I secured a job as a Policy Officer for the Wellcome Trust – a role that enables me to use my academic skills and experience in a more applied context. I am working mostly on developing models for good governance of access to research data, which is a radical shift from my post-doctoral research in philosophy. The course helped me understand how transferable and valuable the qualities I'd developed as an academic could be to the field of policy, and recognise the opportunities available beyond my domain of subject expertise. It also gave me an invaluable insight into the complex relationships and decision-making structures of the policy world. I am continuing to advocate for bridging the gap between academia and policy, as the course really demonstrated for me the potential for mutual benefit and fascinating exchanges of ideas at this interface.

Case study 2:

In the six months since the Engaging with Government programme, I have carefully considered the targeted impact of my research and the ways in which I disseminate it. Approaches from academic colleagues and citations mean that I know other academics are reading my work, but now that I understand more about the practicalities of reaching policy makers, I'm no longer satisfied with solely an academic audience gaining insight from publicly-funded research. With colleagues and community partners I submitted a funding bid to the AHRC based on co-designed and co-produced research. This process began with us asking non-academic partners what research was actually useful, and led to us designing a project that hopes to change how we research and who has access to humanities research assets. The perspective I gained from the programme allowed me to think through these questions coherently and with a view to specific areas of policy that might be influenced by such a pilot programme in the future. I have used digital networking much more extensively, both to learn about others' work and to make my own accessible. Again, with colleagues in other disciplines I have begun planning a conference for 2014 on 'Finding England', from which we intend to produce short briefing papers hosted by think tanks rather than traditional articles. As part of my teaching, I have discussed with students the ways in which cultural texts from the nineteenth century to the present both reflect and inform government policy, from secondary education to immigration. In researcher development work with postgraduates, I shared the knowledge I gained from the programme about mapping networks of influence and engaging with actors outside academia with the next generation of researchers.

Case Study 3:

My research focuses on societies that are transitioning from conflict and repression towards peace and democracy. I found the 2014 Engaging with Government programme really beneficial to my work. Discussions with the impressive range of speakers and my fellow participants in the course gave me the opportunity to evaluate the impact activities that I had already engaged in, to consider new ways of working with policymakers, and to consider in a deeper and more sustained way on how to develop and maintain relationships with policymakers.