

Public Engagement Case Study

Images of Research (University of Bath)

An exhibition of photographs depicting research taking place at the University of Bath. Each photograph represented the subject of the research or the experience of conducting research. The images were accompanied by a short explanation. Members of the public and the University were invited to attend the exhibition while researchers stood alongside their image and explained their research. The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute (BRLSI) provided a venue and advertising to a large distribution list of members.

What was your experience of putting on the programme?

'This was a unique opportunity in development and learning for the researchers as well as a fascinating exhibition for the public. Feedback from participants and the public included comments such as '[People] were often astounded by how our understanding of science has developed and were mostly very excited to learn about it', 'It was a great experience, especially as I am a 1st year PhD student', 'Top stuff, I want to go back to school!', and 'A great way of getting the public (and researchers themselves) to think about research in a different way.'

How did you access/interest your intended audience?

'The two main audiences were the public, and staff/academics/researchers from the University. The general public were informed through a press release, local advertising in Bath, and invitations to various groups. On the day of the event, flyers were handed out in Bath's main shopping area and a banner was mounted outside the event venue.'

What did the students get out of the programme?

'Students and researchers had the rare opportunity to explain their research, and engage with their audience by being on hand to answer questions and give more details. Many of the participants were eager to take part in the next exhibition.'

What did the audience get out of the programme?

'The response from visitors was overwhelmingly positive, and the residents of Bath had an opportunity to engage in a creative way with the research taking place at the city's university.'

What advice would you give to a similar programme?

'The venue and materials must be as accessible as possible – send the message that the university is coming to the public and not the other way around. Make sure language in written documents makes sense to non-specialists. Get the local media involved.'

For further information please visit:

Report of event: www.bath.ac.uk/research/pgskills/courses/photocomp09report

Gallery of images: www.bath.ac.uk/research/pgskills/courses/photocomp09gallery

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