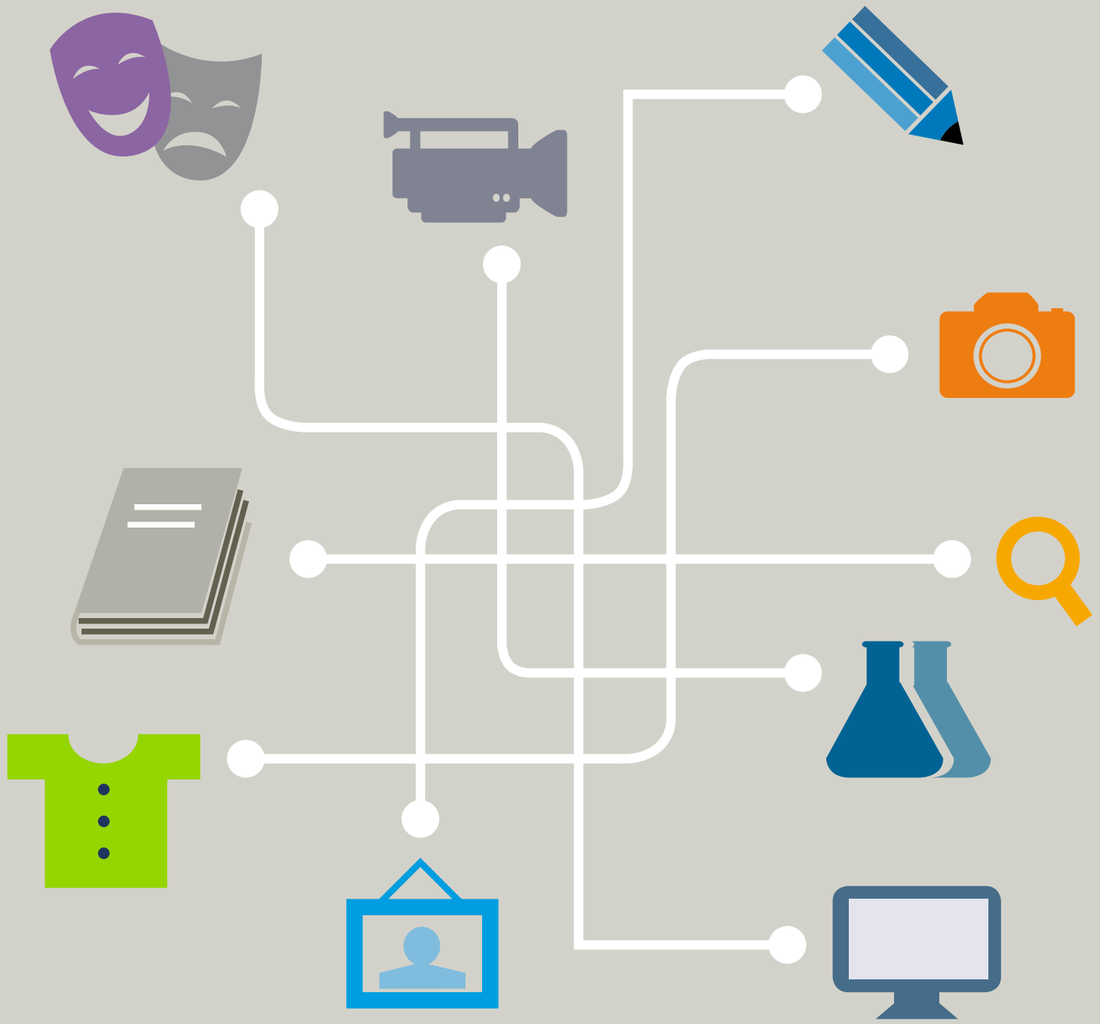
Partnership Working in the Arts and Humanities

A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE



Arts & Humanities Research Council

This good practice guide is for use by both arts and humanities researchers and potential user communities (for example businesses, social enterprises, policy organisations) who wish to embark on or are already working in a partnership project.

The advice covers both parties' perspectives and covers the partnership's full life cycle – from identifying and contacting a potential partner through to managing a joint project, promoting/using the project's results and subsequent sustainability opportunities for the partnership.

This guide is offered in the spirit of sharing advice and experience of those who have undertaken partnership projects; clearly this needs to be interpreted according to the specific circumstances of your project.

Please contact AHRC's *Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Team* if you would like to discuss any of the information in the guide, or indeed have any of your own good practice tips to share. From time to time we shall update this guide with video case studies and other material – do let us know if you feel your project should be included as a case study.

knowledgeexchange@ahrc.ac.uk

Using this guide

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» Click on the arrows at each side of the PDF to move backwards and forwards.

» Text highlighted in *blue italic* indicates a link to a relevant source of information.

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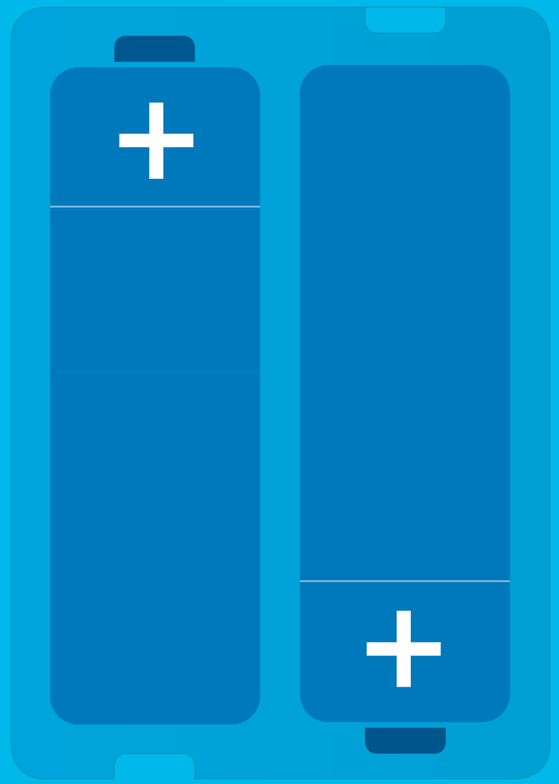
WHY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP?



1. What we mean by partnership working

In this guide we talk about partnerships between university based researchers and the private, public or third sectors.

Partnerships range from one-off collaborations formed specifically to undertake a particular project, to multi-faceted strategic relationships with shared longer term aims. Whatever its scale the goals of any partnership need to be clearly framed and understood by all parties with each partner making an active contribution to the activity.

2. Partnership working with the arts and humanities research community

The AHRC's world leading arts and humanities research community offers a rich and powerful resource for partnerships with a range of organisations in the private, public and third sectors. For academic researchers partnership working can enrich academic practice, research findings and research experience.

3. The value of partnership working

Working in partnership can stimulate, generate and reward all parties (and their respective disciplines or organisations) through new ways of thinking and working, developing and delivering research.

Across its funding schemes the AHRC has accumulated a range of case studies demonstrating the benefits of working in partnership. These are available on the AHRC website. The box below highlights some key feedback we have received from those involved in a range of partnership projects and the benefits derived and value they place on the types of interactions made possible through productive engagements between sectors.

Benefits of Partnership working based on anecdotal evidence

... for academic researchers

- ✓ New research questions identified
- ✓ Expertise gained through application of research in non-academic environment
- ✓ New case study evidence
- ✓ Enhanced teaching material
- ✓ Opportunities to present/speak at academic and non-academic events and conferences
- ✓ Opportunities for new exhibitions
- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Extended contacts and networks
- ✓ Further collaborations
- ✓ New audiences for research
- ✓ Further research/impact/KE funding
- ✓ Internship/student project opportunities
- ✓ Invitation to act as adviser for public/private body
- ✓ Press/media coverage
- ✓ Enhanced reputation/profile/goodwill

Benefits of Partnership working based on anecdotal evidence

... for businesses and cultural organisations

- ✓ Additional funding
- ✓ New knowledge and skills
- ✓ New products, processes or services
- ✓ Improved quality
- ✓ Prototype development
- ✓ New networks/contacts
- ✓ New audiences or customer bases
- ✓ Increased turnover/sales/visitor numbers
- ✓ Opportunities to access new markets
- ✓ New collaborations
- ✓ Increased reputation/profile/goodwill
- ✓ Increased customer satisfaction
- ✓ Skills development for employees
- ✓ Press/media coverage

INITIATING AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

4. Identifying and meeting a partner

By its nature, finding a project partner from a different sector can be challenging, but with determination and the right approach the future benefits are worth it. It will take time and commitment but it will also involve you engaging new audiences in the things you are passionate about. Being proactive and connecting with the right networks and individuals can itself enhance your collaborations and stimulate new ways of thinking.

Starting out

TIPS FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS:

- think creatively about potential beneficiaries of your research – don't limit it to the obvious;
- think about networks of colleagues and professional contacts you might already have – some of the most fruitful partnerships can be traced to an existing relationship or contact;
- consider your own interests and networks – including your social networks – and imagine how these might provide a springboard for knowledge exchange. Sometimes partnership opportunities can emerge from the most unlikely conversations!
- do your research: small organisations are frequently represented through regional networks or 'umbrella bodies'/ trade associations – talk to them about what is happening in their sector;
- knock on doors: get in touch directly with someone whose work excites you. Identify the potential benefits of collaborating for both of you;
- sign up to relevant newsfeeds and social networking sites to find out about events and forums where you might meet potential partners;
- the *Technology Strategy Board's Knowledge Transfer Networks* (KTN) bring together a range of stakeholders (both academic and non academic) within particular technology sector areas, including the Creative Industries. Contact the Director of the KTN that interests you.

TOP HINTS AND TIPS
for businesses and cultural organisations

- if you are a very small private or cultural organisation, consider setting up a network with other local SMEs in the sector to increase your capacity to access, establish and maintain effective relationships with HE;
- contact the Research Management/Knowledge Transfer/ Business Development offices of your local Universities. They will know about the research expertise within their institution. They may also be willing to facilitate introductions either directly or through setting up networking events around particular thematic research areas or business challenges;
- look at the websites of local universities: spotting specific individual researchers who seem to be engaged in research areas of benefit to you and your organisation and contacting them directly can often pay dividends;
- the AHRC funds a number of strategic initiatives involving partnership working. See the AHRC website for details. Examples include:
  - *Knowledge Exchange Hubs in the Creative Economy* – centres of excellence for knowledge exchange and partnership working. Approach the lead contact at the KE Hub closest to your interest and ask if you might become involved or if they have any resources to help/advise you;
  - *CREATe* – an AHRC led RCUK research centre for copyright and new business models in the creative economy;
  - *Brighton Fuse* is a 2-year research and development project which will map, measure and assist Brighton's creative, digital and IT (CDIT) cluster.
- AHRC's *Independent Research Organisations* (IROs) including the British Library and British Museum offer exciting opportunities for partnership working with a world class cultural organisation. Contact the IRO that interests you and ask for more details.
- the Technology Strategy Board's *Knowledge Transfer Networks* (KTN) bring together a range of stakeholders (both academic and non academic) within particular technology sector areas, including the Creative Industries. Contact the Director of the KTN that interests you.
- *Collaborative Doctoral Awards* and Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first hand experience of work outside an academic environment (see also Section 16). Contact some of our existing award holders and find out how they became involved.

TOP HINTS AND TIPS
for academics wishing to work in partnership

Sally Taylor Director *The Cultural Capital Exchange*

1. If you wish to become involved in partnership working with cultural and creative industry SMEs, start with who you or members of your department already know. Such connections may be more widespread than you might anticipate
2. Start small – building up trust at the same time as solving a problem for an SME can lead to further and deeper engagement.
3. One way to become engaged is to start with making a contribution to an organisation's public events programme or Festival if the organisation has one, again this provides a really good foot in the door and can lead to further exchange.
4. Do think about the language you use when working with SMEs. It has to be acknowledged that different types of organisations have their own language, and perhaps using a 'broker' in the first instance may help. Your University will be able to help you here.
5. Timescales in Higher Education and in the non academic environment can often fail to gel. Because of the pressure of the academic year it's worth thinking about starting KE activity in the Autumn term, because it may take some time to evolve. Similarly some SMEs need work turned around fast when problem solving.
6. University websites can sometimes be impenetrable for an organisation looking to partner with academics. Taking a look at how your website could become more user – friendly could prove invaluable in terms of attracting contacts. Your External Affairs departments should be able to help.
7. Training – would your department be prepared to mount a short training programme in partnership working and knowledge exchange? An organisation like The Culture Capital Exchange can help: *www.tcce.co.uk*
8. Networking – you can't beat this. Being out and about yourself and/or holding a joint session with an SME or a group of SMEs for academics around a fascinating subject matter of mutual interest (and drinks afterwards) can break the ice. People will come, mingle and share.
9. Perhaps the subject matter of your research may seem not immediately appropriate for partnership working. However, the AHRC study *'Hidden Connections'* shows that academics cite 'Gain insights in the area of my own research' as their main reason to become engaged in partnership working involving knowledge exchange.
10. Celebrate and showcase success.

5. Planning the work

Open conversations between partners are key to future success. All parties need to be clear on the commitment they are making, the potential benefits they will derive and the overall expectations on each side. Fundamental to this is the involvement of all partners in the design and planning of the project itself. You'll have different perspectives on some elements and various expertise, knowledge and experience to bring to the discussion. This diversity and the need to balance expectations is one of the important skills acquired through partnership working and can enrich the kinds of activities you'll be able to deliver together.

Spend time on developing the relationship and the collaboration in addition to doing the work. A partnership will have some form of project or output to deliver, but often the informal interactions are the things that remain with partners after the project has been completed. It's also that personal interaction that allows successful partners to collaborate again in the future, and to spot new opportunities with potential to take the partnership forward or make it sustainable.

Some fundamentals for all parties:

- clarity of purpose is crucial: it is essential that partners share a common vision for and understanding of the project, have clearly defined roles, and an understanding of their individual contribution to the project team. What does the partnership want to achieve throughout the project and what will success look like?
- develop an understanding of the operational culture of your partner's organisation perhaps through less formal activities, for example arrange a tour of the buildings, a lunch with some of the staff or attend sector events;
- involve senior members of staff from each partner in early stage discussions about your proposed project to secure their buy in. This will help to ensure the project will be adequately resourced, that risk levels are assessed realistically and contingency plans put in place. Senior level support can also benefit the dissemination, promotion and implementation of project outcomes;
- discuss and agree your approach to financial arrangements, contractual agreements and intellectual property rights – further guidance is given below;
- plan and agree how tasks will be allocated. A realistic account of time and resource available is important here to ensure that staff's other commitments are accommodated in plans;
- identify key motivations and influencing factors for each partner. Are there current hot topics or trends to take account of? Are there external factors from either perspective that may threaten the project?
- identify a process for managing problems, from small disagreements to situations which could threaten the project's progress;
- schedule project management meetings at the outset to increase chances of securing attendance. It is important that project teams meet on a regular basis to evaluate their work in relation to their original aims and objectives in order to sustain their focus, measure progress, and review whether the methodology is still appropriate;
- be aware of respective reporting requirements for the project and agree a joint approach to sharing and disseminating information;

» *Continued*

- telephone or video conferences and online groups are important resources and can save time and money whilst effectively facilitating information sharing. However technology-enabled communication should support face to face meetings rather than replace them;
- think about any potential risks associated with the main aspects of your project and how you might manage these;
- depending on the size of your project/partnership consider setting up an advisory group to support the project team. Their role might involve helping to maintain focus and advising on the contextual relevance of proposed activities. They could offer intellectual advice, help to identify key challenges, help monitor progress and assist in maintaining continuity if team members or circumstances change. Include relevant independent members to provide a broader perspective and representatives from each partner organisation;
- throughout your project spend time on developing the actual partnership and building trust as well as undertaking the work.

6. Partnership Agreements and Intellectual Property

Addressing intellectual property rights can be challenging when organisations with different approaches to new knowledge creation work together. We strongly recommend that you discuss IP issues and agree a joint position at the outset of your collaboration.

AHRC Terms and Conditions state that when we are funding a project involving multiple organisations we expect a formal collaboration agreement to be in place before the project starts. This should cover ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation.

The culture of IP around new knowledge creation in the arts and humanities may vary from that of other disciplines. For example it is unusual for HEIs to generate income from patents or license agreements from these research disciplines. Academic profile often relies heavily on the publication of critical perspectives. Partners therefore may wish to explore a less formal approach to developing contractual agreements and you might consider developing a document which agrees the principles that are specific to your project. A helpful example of agreeing shared value can be found here.

If a formal contract is needed in the context of your project you may find it useful to refer to the Lambert Toolkit available on the Intellectual Property Office website *www.ipo.gov.uk/lambert*. This consists of a set of five Model Research Collaboration (one to one) Agreements, four Consortium (multi-party) Agreements and explanatory documents. They are helpful off the shelf IP agreements that specifically address this type of partnership activity.

TOP HINTS AND TIPS
for SMEs when working in partnership

Involve yourself in the proposal writing as much as possible.

The best way to positively influence the direction and design of a project (and to consequently steer it in a direction that is of value to you) is to be involved in the bid writing. This does not have to be a prohibitively time-consuming process and should focus more on the content of the bid than the administrative aspects. If your collaboration is to be successful, the organisation in charge of the bid will welcome your involvement and input at this early stage.

Make sure you fully understand what will be required of you in terms of resources, deliverables and so on.

The best way of doing this is to spend time with the lead partner (usually a university) talking with them about roles and responsibilities. As with any other project, these need to be clearly set at the start but are sometimes less clear from the proposal forms submitted to the funder than they would be in a commercial proposal.

Familiarise yourself with the administrative requirements of the project and make sure these are built into your costs.

Some projects will require you to report back on your activities to a greater degree than other commercial work you may have been involved in. Make sure you understand these requirements from the beginning and account for them in your costs.

Make yourself fully aware of the timescales and protocols for payment.

Funded projects of this nature will have specific rules regarding when payments are made, how they are made, what proportion of the overall budget is paid at each stage and so on. For cash flow purposes, make sure you understand when you will be paid and how much.

» *Continued*

Be prepared for the scope to change over the course of the project.

Projects of this nature are often longer than commercial projects and are led by research. This means that the specifics of what you do during the project are likely to shift as the project progresses and the research develops. The best approach here is to be pragmatic but to also bear in mind that funding will not increase in line with scope changes so you will need to work within your existing budget.

If you haven't worked in partnership with higher education institutions before, you may find the project environment to be different.

If you are a small business, you will be used to working within a pressurised, fast-paced environment. Universities and colleges tend to have a different organisational culture, partly due to their size and partly due to their less 'commercial' focus. That said, many researchers and academics are highly knowledgeable, dynamic and entrepreneurial so don't give in to any preconceptions you may have.

Use the project to promote your business and extend your network.

Collaborative research projects are often well funded and often involve partners with considerable prestige. As an SME, this is a very good opportunity for you to build a new network, to gain exposure for your business and to generate new business opportunities off the back of that exposure. This will only happen, however, if you make it happen.

Make the best of your contact with project partners.

The strongest relationships you will develop during the project will be with your research partners. This will include a higher education institution or research organisation but may also include other commercial partners or end user groups. If the project is successful, it can be a launch pad to ongoing collaboration with those partners. Make the most of this opportunity: explore possibilities for further collaboration while you are still in the project and make sure you follow up *afterwards*.

Jim Playfoot Managing Director Whiteloop and Chief Executive of the Creative Network
www.whiteloop.com/people

COLLABORATIVE WORKING CASE STUDY

Watershed Pervasive Media Studio and the University of the West of England (UWE)

Watershed opened in 1982 as Britain's first dedicated media centre and, over the years, it has built a strong reputation in the creative industries as a facilitator of innovation and collaboration. In 1997, iShed was established under the Watershed umbrella to support the exchange and development of ideas and to broker partnerships between the creative, computing and communication sectors.

Collaboration is fundamental to iShed's business. Clare Reddington, Director of *iShed* and its subsidiary, the *Pervasive Media Studio*, believes that innovation relies on working with diverse partners to exchange and construct new knowledge. In her experience, "the more diverse the perspectives, the better the outcomes of the project".

The Pervasive Media Studio was established by iShed in 2008, in partnership with HP Labs and the University of the West of England (UWE)'s *Digital Cultures Research Centre* (DCRC). UWE's ongoing partnership with Watershed has not only enabled the development of this valuable resource, but has also fostered a series of successful Knowledge Transfer projects including REACT (Research and Enterprise for the Arts and Creative Technologies) one of four AHRC KE Hubs for the Creative Economy.

Professor Jonathan Dovey, Director of UWE's DCRC, has been a resident at the Pervasive Media Studio since its inception. Following a number of successful AHRC-funded collaborations with Watershed Jon is currently the Director of the KE Hub REACT and works closely with Clare Reddington and core academic partners on its delivery.

Clare feels that sustaining an ongoing relationship, such as that which exists between Watershed and UWE, supports and enriches the creative process by enabling partners to explore opportunities and identify shared ambitions. This interaction promotes the development of more current and integrated proposals and maximises the impact of projects.

» *Continued*

According to Clare, the key to successful collaboration is trust. She emphasises the importance of partners being open about their motivations and expectations from the outset and discussing practical issues, such as intellectual property rights, early on. She also recognises that achieving effective communication between partners depends on creating "lots of links at lots of levels" between the organisations. While establishing and maintaining effective partnerships can require a significant investment of time and resources, Clare remains convinced that this is the best way to develop "ideas, projects and relationships that will continue to deliver innovation for years to come."

For more information about the Pervasive Media Studio, visit the website at *www.pmstudio.co.uk*.

Pervasive Media Studio © Watershed by Sam Frost Photography 2012

MANAGING YOUR PROJECT. AVOIDING THE PITFALLS.

7. Timescales

Timing is everything when working in partnership. One of the most common pitfalls identified by project partners is failure to build in enough time to develop the relationship. Working with a partner from a different organisational and sectoral background can be hugely rewarding but in itself requires an investment of time. It takes a surprisingly long time to establish a culture of trust and understanding within which truly effective partnership projects can flourish successfully.

Partners may operate at different speeds and have different expectations. While businesses do gain significant value from working with academics they can find the pace of critical reflection frustrating. Similarly, although rapid responses to business need can appeal to researchers, rigorous research methods and approached can take time. Being aware of each other's cultures is one thing, building into the timeframe of a project and managing expectations on both sides is another.

Issues affecting all parties might include:

- *negotiation:* lengthy discussions may be required around any legal contracts. Seek appropriate advice on this as early as possible
- *travel:* effective partnership working may involve a significant amount of travel between respective locations and this needs to be factored into the project plan;
- *time management:* work between partners at multiple workplaces may be time consuming so partners need to discuss this at the outset and allow additional time to ensure that critical deadlines are not missed;
- *cultural learning:* invest time at the early stages of the project to develop core relationships, shared expectations and understandings. This will help identify, anticipate and avert potential problems as the project progresses;
- p*lanning:* take account of relevant commitments and time scales for existing projects and activities. For example, museums and galleries often set their exhibition programmes years in advance of the activity;
- *keeping in the loop:* plan joint catch-up sessions on a regular basis to evaluate the project in relation to its original aims and objectives. This will help you to maintain focus, measure progress, identify problems and solutions and review whether your methodology remains appropriate.

8. Language

Every profession has its own discourse. Working with a partner from a different sector can often expose challenges around language and terminology. It is important to acknowledge these differences and to create a culture where it is acceptable to seek clarification. Very often you will find that while using different phrases there will be a lot in common between partners.

Some communication tips for all parties:

- avoid jargon: keep alert to organisation specific or professional terminology;
- develop a shared language: make sure that you understand what your partner means by certain phrases, words and acronyms;
- work towards an agreed 'open communication system' i.e. the capacity to identify, surface and discuss problems quickly and to find ways forward based on sensitivity to each other's resources and constraints;
- identify individuals who might act as 'intermediaries' or 'translators'. These may be people whose backgrounds span your respective communities/sectors and are especially adept at liaising in this way.

9. Conflict

As with all partnerships, disagreements may arise. The opportunity to learn through alternative perspectives is a large part of what makes partnership working so stimulating and worthwhile. A degree of conflict can be healthy but it is still important to plan for and build in steps to manage any differences that could hinder delivery should they arise.

Some tips for all parties:

- disagreements can be challenging but are part of the process of working collaboratively. Use difference as a process of enlightenment and development;
- keep focused on original aims and objectives. By returning to shared goals differences can seem less fundamental than they might appear;
- manage the risk: identify early on a process for dealing with more serious conflict this will require leadership and clarity. Official channels of conflict resolution should be a final resort.

The AHRC does not usually intervene in partnership issues but we should be contacted immediately if a serious obstacle to project completion arises.

10. Project students

Partnership projects can present exciting opportunities for early career researchers and students by enhancing their experience, training and skills. It is important to recognise that there may be particular challenges in working to two sets of supervisors, with a range of colleagues and/or within new environments. Peer support can be hugely valuable in these situations.

Some tips for students and supervisors:

- when recruiting staff to a partnership project bear in mind that candidates for such roles should be willing and able to work in a collaborative and co-operative fashion;
- establish a clear and accommodating framework which aims to support the professional development of staff. This includes the provision of guidance, skills training, study supervision and access to resources as well as procedures to monitor the project;
- establish clear lines of communication for each of the project team and a mutual understanding of requirements and responsibilities;
- identify colleagues who have been or are currently involved in similar activities and explore informal ways of sharing learning or student mentorship;
- initiate or join a network of similar partnership projects. No matter how small or informal, this can help to generate new ideas about good practice and provide a valuable sounding board for dealing with arising problems, issues and ideas.

Collaborative Doctoral Award Holders' Network

> The format [was] for one or two people to coordinate an afternoon session that enabled the building up of a support group and informal CDA conversation as well as a few work-in-progress papers, and a bit of a 'backstage' tour of some aspect of one of the partner organisations. This was a really lovely format. The idea was that people would volunteer to organise and host these. Once you had hosted one you would find someone else to host the next one.
>
> What I have found really useful about face-to-face network sessions has been finding out that you aren't alone with the idiosyncrasies of this sort of research straddling institutions and academic and other professional practices. This is immensely reassuring (which is significant in itself). It also provides practical solutions or approaches to problems you've worried about on your own (because crucially they aren't problems that a supervisor has faced or considered), and can then discover that other people have actually thought about this and discussed it and come up with practical solutions. Some of the manifold ways in which these projects can, and probably should, be exploited come out in discussion, which is invaluable. The value of experiencing this early on is clear given the limited amount of time we have in these projects.
>
> There is a crucial way in which network sessions enable a peer-to-peer training to happen organically, because actually some of the issues that arise in this collaborative research are unique to this format and we learn best how to adapt and develop from other CDA students who are little bit further on. It seems pretty important to find a way to trap this knowledge and experience back into the cycle of the CDA in order for students to benefit, rather than re-making the wheel.
>
> **Penelope Woods**

> It was only when I went to the first [network] event that I actually realised what being part of a CDA actually meant. I had no idea of the implications of it either before I started my PhD or even up to that point. I think it proved to be a turning point for me in the way I view my work and to put it into some kind of context. Hearing the others speak also meant that I realised that others were feeling what I am feeling and not to feel so alone. I had written about that event here where you can see some of my first impressions... Listening about how other people dealt with different situations is also enlightening as even if not directly relevant there may be parallels between my work and theirs.

Ann Fenech

CREATING IMPACT

11. Maximising impact from your project

The Research Councils define impact as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. In order to maximise potential for impact from your project, it is helpful at the outset to think about and identify the wider beneficiaries of your proposed collaborative activities (see *Annex B* for *'RCUK Pathways to Impact'* considerations).

This might involve all parties being proactive in extending the network of connections within their respective organisations and beyond.

Some tips for all parties:

- share new knowledge and skills gained throughout the project with colleagues. This will help to embed them throughout the organisations involved;
- consider other contacts within your organisations who would benefit from connecting;
- consider organising events and informal gatherings to facilitate new interactions and enhance the partner relationship. The deeper and more wide spread the relationship becomes, the better the chances for sustainable and productive knowledge exchange at both project and strategic levels;
- identify who will benefit from the project and how their needs and interests can be incorporated at different stages throughout the project;
- consider how to disseminate your project outputs to the widest possible audience. Who could help you with that?
- identify ways of actively embedding the knowledge created from the project into your organisations. For example student placements, people exchanges or short term secondments.

12. Engaging with the public

Public engagement activities can make a major contribution to societal impact and can also improve the quality of research by widening research horizons. It's also enjoyable and rewarding to share your knowledge and experiences and can lead to future partnership possibilities.

Some tips for all parties:

» interact with the public and community groups and involve them with your project where possible;

» enhance your own communication and influencing skills by engaging with a non-specialist audience;

» connect with new partners through networking opportunities at public engagement events;

» the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement provides support through sharing best practice and highlighting opportunities for training and funding *www.publicengagement.ac.uk*.

13. Engaging with the media – how can the AHRC help?

Engaging with the media can be daunting but the AHRC's press team is able to help by:

» holding training events on working with the media designed specifically to address the needs of academics and AHRC grant holders;

» offering guidance on writing and distributing press releases, dealing with interviews and contacting journalists;

» or you may wish to have an informal discussion with one of the AHRC's Communications Team at: *communications@ahrc.ac.uk*.

APPLYING FOR FUNDING

(INFORMATION FOR ALL PARTIES)

14. Costing principles

Calculating the appropriate costings of a partnership can be complex whatever the scheme and funding agency you are applying to. It is important that financial arrangements for the partnership project are fully discussed between parties at the earliest opportunity.

Research Council awards operate according to the rules of Full Economic Costing (FEC). The underlying principle of FEC is that all costs incurred by the HEI in relation to the project, including use of general resources such as pooled administrative support or basic technical equipment, are accounted for in the application. If successful, the AHRC will normally fund 80% of this overall figure with the remaining 20% being met by the HEI. Requested costs can include salaries for academic staff and some costs associated with the non HEI partner's participation in the project but excluding costs relating to their core business.

AHRC Funding Schemes vary in the level of contribution that is required from the non HEI partner and whether this can be 'in kind' or not so it is important to look at the scheme specific guidance carefully. The AHRC always asks that the non HEI partner demonstrates their commitment to the project together with a corresponding financial value, even if this is based on estimates. Please see the *AHRC Research Funding Guide* for further details.

15. Applying to the AHRC

The following points should help you decide whether it is appropriate to apply to the AHRC to support your project:

- The project must draw upon the arts and humanities research base in order to be eligible for AHRC funding but the non-university partner can belong to any sector. We have agreements with the other UK Research Councils for cases where the project falls outside the AHRC's remit .
- A postdoctoral level academic from the university partner or *Independent Research Organisation (IRO*) must always be the Principal Investigator and named lead for the project, and the application must be submitted through their Research Organisation (RO).
- This RO will be the funding recipient and maintain responsibility for distributing the finances as outlined in the application. The non-university partner can be incorporated into the application as the 'project partner' on the form and can take a leading role in the project management and research activity.

» *Continued*

- The non-university partner will be required to produce a letter of support detailing their prospective contribution to the project but should also be kept fully involved in developing all elements of the application (see *'Top hints and tips for SMEs when working in partnership with academic researchers'*.
- All parties should be aware of the timescale involved with preparing, submitting and receiving the outcome of an application as, although this can vary between schemes, the process can be lengthy and non-university partners may find this frustrating.
- Both parties are encouraged to think carefully about who is best placed to undertake different aspects of the work. The level of skills and knowledge of the individuals involved must be appropriate to the project.

16. AHRC Funding Schemes

The AHRC operates a number of *funding opportunities* for partnership working. Your first port of call when applying to the AHRC should be our website. You may also want to talk to the research or knowledge transfer offices at the university who will have experience of preparing Research Council grant applications.

- *The Research Networking Scheme* funds a series of activities that enable interdisciplinary groups of academic researchers and professionals from other sectors who have not previously worked together to explore ideas through events and workshops.
- The *Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme* (CDAs) funds a postgraduate student to undertake a 4 year PhD on an issue of direct relevance to a non HEI organisation. The student will be jointly supervised by an academic at their HEI and a member of staff at the non HEI and will spend significant time working in both environments to ensure that their research benefits both parties.
- In addition to the existing open call for CDAs the AHRC has now made awards for *Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships* ('Changes to the scheme for 2012'). Through this route Non-HEI Organisations with a strong track record in the CDA scheme, are allocated a cohort CDA studentships for the next three academic years for which they will then be able to nominate projects with academic partners. The AHRC have made 55 studentships per year available through this route with the intention of giving partners greater autonomy and the ability to develop strong programmes of PhD study.

- The *Follow on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme* provides funds to support innovative and creative engagements with new audiences which stimulate pathways to impact. Funds will be awarded for knowledge exchange, public engagement, dissemination and commercialisation activities that arise unforeseeably during the lifespan of or following an AHRC-funded project. The scheme does not support supplementary funding for continuation of research activities.
- The *Research Grants Scheme* funds well defined collaborative research projects over a period of several years. This scheme does not require the involvement of a non HEI organisation but does encourage applicants to include potential users of the research as active project partners where appropriate.
- The AHRC also operates *strategic funding initiatives* which call for research to address issues of social, cultural or economic urgency. These programmes employ a variety of mechanisms and schemes to respond to the issues identified but all include partnership working as an important element.
- The *Knowledge Transfer Partnership* scheme is a Technology Strategy Board 'product' sponsored by the AHRC and others to facilitate collaborative projects designed to address strategic issues in business or other non-academic organisations. KTP provides financial support for three-way partnerships between a Knowledge Base, a non-academic partner (including private sector companies, charities and public sector organisations) and a recent graduate who is employed to work on a specific project relevant to the business.

17. Sustainability: other Sources of funding

When considering the longer term potential of the partnership beyond AHRC award you may find it helpful to look at funding opportunities offered through other strategic agencies:

- Other Research Councils
- *Technology Strategy Board*
- *The Wellcome Trust*
- *The Leverhulme Trust*
- *British Academy*
- *NESTA*
- *Arts Council England*
- *Arts Council of Wales*
- *Arts Council of Northern Ireland*
- *Creative Scotland*
- *Creative England*

What do AHRC peer reviewers look for in a partnership project?

Insights from Professor Seymour Roworth-Stokes former Chair of the AHRC's KT Peer Review Panel.

Shared Value: AHRC peer reviewers are aware that partnerships with non-academic partners take time to establish. Strong and equitable partnerships between academic and non-academic partners are based upon mutual benefit and shared value. This is evident in a number of ways:

1. The benefits to each partner indicate the partnership is likely to be sustained beyond the project
2. The strategic needs of the non-academic partners have been identified and the reasons why the engagement is required have been made explicit
3. Mutual goals and targets are evident and correspondence or letters of support in the application demonstrate this

For the academic partner, it is also important to recognise the benefit of the partnership and the lessons learnt, to the wider academic community beyond the individual. Reviewers are always keen to see a two way exchange of knowledge, experience and skills.

Absorptive Capacity: The ability to adequately generate, transfer and exploit knowledge requires both parties to be in a position to commit the resources and capacity necessary to embed it within an organisation's culture and behaviour. Direct and indirect forms of support provide reviewers with an indication of the capacity required to create a transformative effect for the non-academic partner, community or network involved. Issues include:

1. Consideration and development of internal infrastructures to support co-operative and collaborative working
2. Evaluation of the practice and operating contexts and environments including any lessons learnt from any previous working relationships
3. Senior management support and understanding of the partnership

Added Value and Evaluation: The application should demonstrate added value above and beyond alternative support mechanism or schemes. It is important that the proposal does not describe the partnership as a form of consultancy, with limited impact being derived through the acquisition of knowledge to resolve short term operational problems. Equally, evaluation systems should be designed to demonstrate that value and impact can be recognised and understood in equal terms between partners and beyond academe.

In short, reviewers are always looking to support genuine partnerships based upon mutual objectives rather than speculative associations constructed with the intention of securing funding.

ANNEX A & B

ANNEX A
Working with policymakers

The AHRC support its researchers to work with policymakers regularly, in ways that bring benefits to both groups. This work can be exciting, challenging and rewarding, with significant potential for impact on important topics such as security, human rights and the constitution. However, academia and government operate in very different ways.

Some tips:

- *keep to the point*. When making contact by email, keep your message short. Summarise the key points, addressing why you are making contact and how you feel it is relevant to the aims of the Department your contact is based in.
- *write for a generalist audience*. Be alive to your use of specialist words/phrases that are not part of everyday language.
- *be as specific as possible*. Make explicit the ways in which your work links to practical issues the Government has to deal with. Where possible, identify a contact in a specific policy area. If you want to find out who is responsible for a policy area, ring the Department to find out.
- *plan ahead*. Be aware that policymakers are lobbied from multiple angles and often work in high-pressure, fast-changing environments. If you establish a relationship early in the research process, policymakers are more likely to be receptive to your findings when you're ready to share them.
- *start a dialogue*. Try to connect with policymakers in a straightforward way, ask what's most important to them in their work, find out what their real priorities are.
- *avoid information overload*. Policymakers often work to very short timescales, needing information quickly and in an easily readable format. Keep briefing papers short and foreground your findings.
- *understand the tensions*. 'Thinking time' is often a luxury for policymakers, which can make them keen to access new sources of well thought through information. Nevertheless, the best evidenced policies may never see the light of day. Be not cast down! Also be aware that policymakers often have to be guarded with their thoughts, especially in sensitive or heavily scrutinised areas.
- *offer help, suggest solutions*. If you need to highlight a problem, be as diplomatic and understanding as possible.
- *timing is (sometimes) everything*. Parts of the policymaking process – like consultations – are time-critical. Check information on departmental websites. What are policymakers working on? What are they planning for the future?
- *don't worry if you don't understand the processes governing policymaking*, consultations, select committee inquiries and the like. Government insiders can find it baffling too. It's best to ask and seek clarification.

ANNEX B
RCUK Pathways to Impact considerations

The implementation of Academic Beneficiaries, Impact Summaries and *Pathways to Impact* (formerly known as Impact Plan) within the Research Council application and assessment process aims to encourage researchers to be actively involved in thinking about how they will achieve excellence with impact and to explore the pathways for realising the impact.

» The toolkit available on the RCUK website *www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/impacts/pages/home.aspx* has been developed following ongoing dialogue with the research community and is part of a wider programme of activity to improve the supporting guidance.

At the application stage the AHRC does not expect applicants to be able to predict the economic or societal impacts that their research will achieve. However, we want to encourage applicants to consider potential pathways to impact in ways that are appropriate given the nature of the research they are proposing to conduct, for example through engagement or collaboration with partners.

Arts and humanities research creates social and economic benefits directly and indirectly through improvements in social and intellectual capital, social networking, community identity, learning and skills and quality of life. Impact includes enhancing the knowledge economy, providing innovative content and support for the creative and cultural industries, enhancing public debates, participation and engagement, informing developments in performance, professional practice or public policy and contributing to regeneration, community cohesion and social inclusion, amongst many others.

When thinking about possible impacts, it may be helpful to consider the potential beneficiaries of the research. The following might help stimulate some ideas:

» are there potential beneficiaries within the private sector?

» is there anyone, including policy-makers, within international, national, local or devolved government and government agencies who would benefit from the research?

» are there potential beneficiaries within the public sector, third sector or any others (e.g. museums, galleries, charities)?

» would the research be of interest to professional or practitioner groups (such as the legal profession, architects, planners, archivists, designers, creative and performing artists)?

» are there any beneficiaries within the wider public or voluntary groups?

TOP HINTS AND TIPS
from Professor Mike Wilson

Professor Mike Wilson from University College Falmouth has led a number of AHRC-funded research projects some involving novel collaborations. He shares some tips based on his experience when completing the 'Pathways to Impact' section of the application form:

1. The most important thing for me with impact is that it should be something that is considered from the very beginning, rather than something that is dealt with as an afterthought, once the research has been designed. Impact should, in other words, be embedded throughout the research plan so that it is an integral part of it.
2. Impact should be considered from all angles and not just the obvious ones. If impact covers social, economic, cultural and policy impact, I would recommend considering each of these carefully in case there is potential for impact that you haven't thought about before. So, be prepared to think beyond the obvious beneficiaries – although be realistic about the impact and who will be interested. You don't have to claim to change the world!
3. If possible, provide evidence of potential impact. For instance, if somebody has declared an interest in the research (or somebody representing a body), then refer to it.
4. Think through the whole impact 'journey'. So, it's not just a case of identifying potential beneficiaries of the research, but also thinking through to how you are going to ensure impact (or at least maximise impact). What are you actually going to do to maximise impact and how do you ensure access to the research and take-up of the findings? It's one thing to identify potential impact, another to make it happen.
5. Is there a way that you will be able to evaluate/measure impact? How will you know about any unexpected impacts?