

School of Physical Sciences (SPS) Outreach and Public Engagement Strategy

The School of Physical Sciences is one of six schools in the Faculty of Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). It has grown from the Department of Physical Sciences and prior to that the merging of the Department of Physics and Astronomy with Planetary and Space Science. The School has grown to over 90 staff and 70 research students, mostly based at the Walton Hall campus in Milton Keynes.

The School of Physical Sciences supports both SEPnet and The Ogden Trust to promote physics and increase the awareness and interests in physics in both schools and the general public. To achieve this, a strategy has been developed, which is designed to focus on target audiences of under-represented groups.

Programme	Commitment	Target audience	Objectives	Strategies	Key projects / events
Schools Outreach	To increase diversity within STEM by helping to improve students' attitudes and aspirations to study and work in Physics.	Children, and their teachers, in local state school education, with a particular focus on secondary, from backgrounds that are underrepresented in STEM. We also have a focus on students in remote/rural schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To increase uptake of physics post-16. ➤ To stimulate interest, enjoyment and learning in physics. ➤ To communicate to young people, before they make choices about further education. ➤ Expand the current school networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work in line with SEPnet's Schools Outreach strategy. ➤ Promote academic research within schools, that links to, and can enrich the school curriculum. ➤ Provide a suite of interventions that allow sustained contact with students to achieve maximum impact. ➤ Provide opportunities for postgraduate students in the School to be involved. ➤ Provide support and training for teachers of physics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Connect Physics ➤ Shattering Stereotypes ➤ 'Skype a Scientist' type/lecture series remote events (to be developed). ➤ General activities that create awareness in physics.
Supporting Public Engagement with Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cultivate culture with SPS where Public Engagement is embedded alongside research and training. ➤ Supporting academics and other staff with training. 	SPS researchers and academics (staff and students).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To raise awareness of the value of Public Engagement with Research. ➤ To develop confidence and skills in developing, delivering high-quality Public Engagement with Research for a wide variety of publics. ➤ To increase the number of researchers who undergo Public Engagement with Research. ➤ To help increase the quality and impact of Public Engagement with Research in the School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To provide Public Engagement with Research support and expertise for researchers in Public Engagement with Research activities. ➤ To promote academic research within schools. ➤ Providing networks, events and platforms that allow all researchers to be involved with Public Engagement with Research. ➤ Facilitating discussion at School and research group level. ➤ Celebrating the achievements of School Public Engagement with Research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Outreach training for staff. ➤ Promote use and development of online resources such as OpenLearn. ➤ Organise events programmes and Open Days. ➤ Outreach Project Fund ➤ Outreach Committee

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Society and Community	To enhance the life of the region by engaging local communities with SPS research.	Local community groups from backgrounds that are underrepresented within STEM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To stimulate interest, enjoyment and learning in physics. ➤ To increase the diversity of publics that engage with SPS and Physics. ➤ To help strengthen young people's' interest in physics outside of school. ➤ To increase the science capital of parents and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To develop relationships with community groups. ➤ To provide opportunities for participants to take part in further STEM-related activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ OU Astronomy Observatory ➤ Open Talks ➤ Open Days ➤ OpenLearn ➤ Moon Night ➤ Royal Society ➤ Early Years Stories
Impact and Evaluation	To better evaluate the impact and reach of outreach and public engagement events.	SPS researchers and academics (staff and students).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide framework for best practice. ➤ Provide ideas for how to evaluate a range of outreach and Public Engagement events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting the inclusion of Public Engagement with Research within RCUK Pathways to Impact and other funding schemes. ➤ Supporting the delivery of high-quality case studies for REF and other assessments. 	Ongoing evaluation