



Brunel
University
London

First Steps to Engaging with Public Policy:

Where to Begin and How Brunel Public Policy Can Support You

London 2024
By Brunel Public Policy

Brunel Public Policy uses our world-leading research to help inform policy-makers, legislators and regulators. If you would like to explore how your research could have policy relevance and make the first steps in engaging with public policy, we can support you to do this in a variety of ways.

We invite researchers at all career stages to begin learning about and engaging with public policy. Below we outline a range of forms this initial engagement could take and ways that we can support you in making those first steps into research impact through public policy engagement.



Totally new to Policy Engagement?

Public Policy is anything that a government body chooses to do or not to do, and can be defined as the deliberate decisions, actions, and laws formulated and implemented by government bodies to address public issues and achieve societal objectives. This includes:

- Allocation of resources
- Establishing regulations and laws
- Providing services to address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges

See the [Informing and Enhancing Public Life](#) and [Policy News](#) sections of our website for examples of how many other Brunel researchers and academics have engaged with policy-making. The former is organised by topic, to help you find something similar to your own research area.

Is there a particular part of your research that you think is relevant to public policy? Ahead of thinking about how you might engage with policy making on this topic, we suggest you think about:

- **Why are your findings important to policy-makers?**
Try to think from their perspective. Remember – findings can suggest the benefits of not taking any action as well as doing so.
- **Can you articulate your finding and its relevance to policy in a way that is understandable to a non-expert?**
Try this out on a family member or friend with no relevant academic background.
- **What do you know about the current policy context?**
- **Are there any upcoming changes or reviews on the topic?**
- **If a relevant inquiry arises from Parliament or another policy making body, submitting written evidence can be a great way to begin engaging. Further information below.**

We recommend registering for the OIT Policy Masterclass whenever BPP advertise this, as this will improve your understanding of the policy making process and opportunities for beginning to engage with Public Policy. **Below we provide details of some key ways you could engage with Policy Making and how we could support you.**

Training and events

You can take part in a variety of informative, policy-related training events and seminars. For regular updates follow us on X or LinkedIn and visit our website: [Training sessions and Events](#). We particularly recommend registering for an OIT Policy Masterclass if there is one coming up and you do not yet have much policy engagement experience, and the OIT Storyelling training if you want support in articulating your message to policy makers.

Join the Brunel Public Policy Network

By joining the BPP Network, you will be added to our database of experts who wish to engage with public policy. You will receive our termly newsletter, alerts for opportunities to engage with policy, and information about opportunities for advance registration for our training and policy engagement events.

[Join the Brunel Public Policy Network.](#)



Update Your Staff Profile

Whenever we in Brunel Public Policy or external policy professionals are looking for experts to respond to a need in a particular area, your online **staff profile** is the first thing that may alert us to your expertise. We will alert you to many of the opportunities listed below if we find your profile when searching the area of interest.

As such, it is important to write your profile in a way that clearly outlines your area of expertise in a way that is understandable to those with different expertise and from outside of academia, and to make sure it contains the key terms likely to be searched for your research area.



Written Evidence

While developing new ideas and policies, policymakers require a solid knowledge base to understand the most important trends and identify necessary changes. As part of this process, parliamentary select committees decide on priority topics to investigate, and then they launch topical inquiries. Researchers, experts, practitioners and a wide range of people who know about the topic submit their responses online. These responses are known as written evidence. Committees then choose the most relevant pieces of evidence, and based on them they make recommendations for policies or even legislation.

Written evidence submissions do not need to respond to all questions in the call – only those for which you have relevant evidence to impart. There is typically a 3,000 word limit for each submission, and it could be somewhat shorter if you are only responding to limited elements of the call.

How can I participate?

If we think that your research addresses a current inquiry, you will be approached by a member of the Brunel Public Policy (BPP) team. Alternatively, you can monitor the inquiries and submit the evidence yourself: [Find an inquiry - Committees - UK Parliament](#). When you do make a submission, please alert us (bpp@brunel.ac.uk) so that we can showcase your evidence on the BPP website.

- Learn more about how to prepare a written evidence document: [Have your say: select committee inquiries - UK Parliament](#).
- You can prepare a written evidence submission using our [written evidence template](#)

Where can I find some examples?

We publish all written evidence submitted by Brunel academics here: [Written Evidence | Brunel University London](#).

If you are considering submitting evidence for the first time...

We recommend that you read this [blog post for advice](#), use our written evidence template, and contact us at bpp@brunel.ac.uk to review your draft before submission

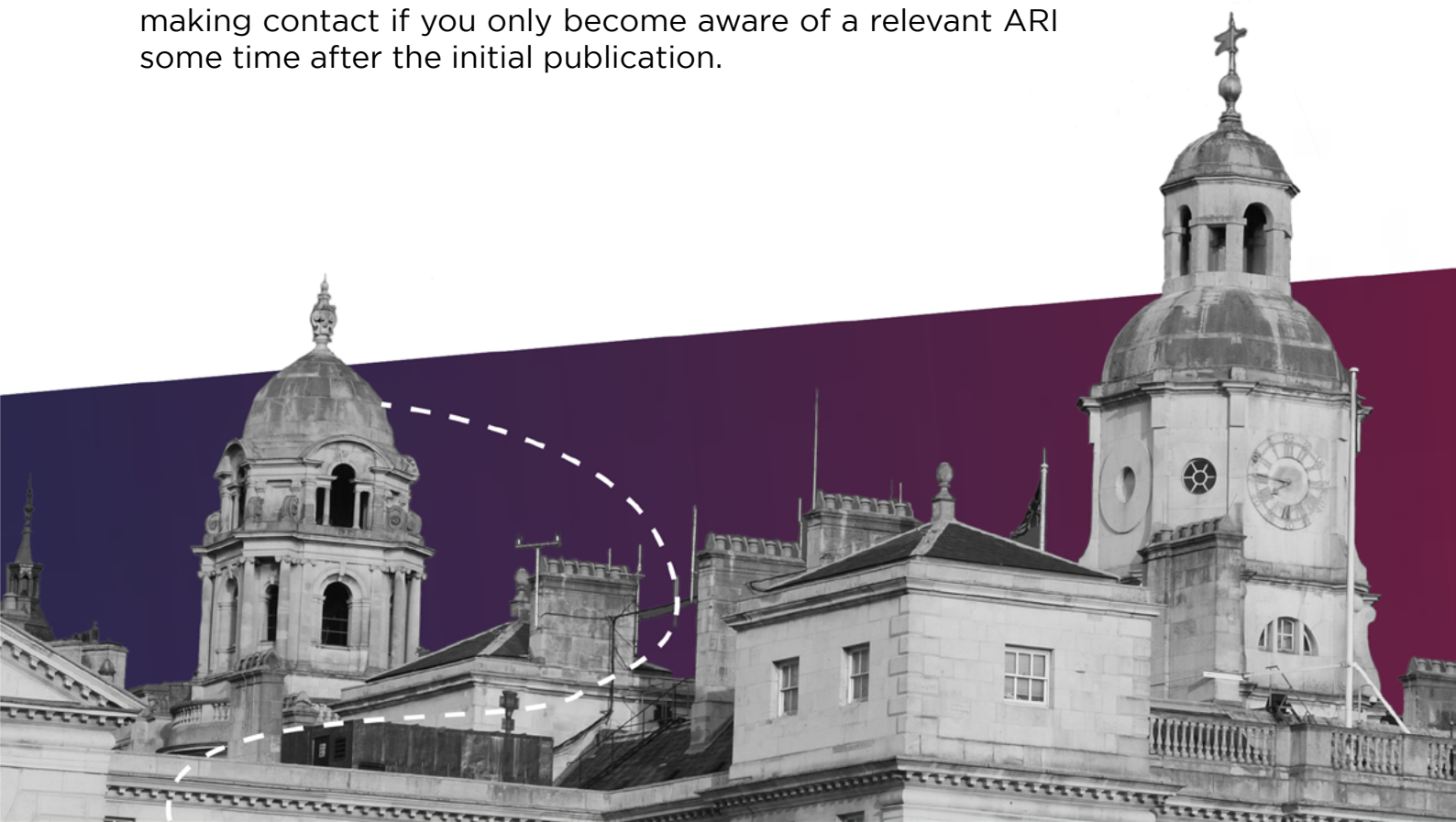
Government Areas of Research Interest

Areas of research interest (ARI) give details about the main research questions identified by government departments, and are published as a call for experts in these areas of interest to engage in dialogue with the government department and identify evidence relevant to the ARI.

You can see [the full collection of UK Government ARIs here](#), or search [this database](#) of ARIs for key terms from your research to see if any ARI questions align with your expertise.

Within each published ARI, there are listed details of how to make contact in order to flag that you have relevant expertise and wish to engage. Each ARI is live until a new one is published and you can make contact at any time with no deadline. However, it should be noted that there is variation between the different government departments in how heavily these ARIs are used and how well they are updated.

As such, you may find they are more likely to pick up your contact if the ARI was published recently. That said, making contact regarding these ARIs is typically providing a very brief summary of your relevant expertise so it is still worth making contact if you only become aware of a relevant ARI some time after the initial publication.



Policy Briefs

Policy briefs are short documents that summarise key aspects of a given research topic and offer easily accessible recommendations for policymakers. They act as a calling card, signalling to readers that you have expertise backed by your own research evidence that is relevant to current policy issues. They are far shorter than academic papers so cannot contain that level of detail, but instead act to show you can link your research to policy recommendations and are open to discussing this further.

Policy briefs have a specific, solution-oriented structure, and are usually 1-2 pages long. They are co-produced between Brunel academics and experienced policy writers. We publish them on the BPP website and support you in distributing them to interested stakeholders.

How can I create a Policy Brief?

If we find that your research addresses a particularly timely policy question, you will be approached by a member of the Brunel Public Policy (BPP) team. Alternatively, if you believe your research is interesting from a policy perspective and having a Policy Brief will support you in making contact with relevant policy makers and stakeholders, you can proactively contact bpp@brunel.ac.uk. We will then advise you on the next steps, which may be supporting you in drafting a policy brief, or may sometimes be initially using an alternative vehicle to promote your research to policy makers.

Where can I find some examples?

We publish examples of policy briefs created by Brunel academics here [Policy Briefs | Brunel University London](#).

Policy Briefs

[→ How to contribute?](#)



18 Apr 2024

Policy brief: Reducing NHS Costs
Associated with Smoking – Professor Francesco Moscone >



16 Feb 2024

Policy brief: Hydrogen in the UK. Working from the future – Dr John Szabo >



01 Sep 2023

Policy Brief: Copyright, generative AI and data mining - Dr Hayleigh Boshier >



22 Aug 2023

Policy Brief: Addressing Future Election Challenges - Prof Justin Fisher >

Apply to the Policy Development Fund for support

The Policy Development Fund is designed to support the promotion of Brunel research to policy makers, legislators and regulators via events designed to foster engagement between research and policy

Policy Development Fund | Brunel University London

Within Brunel Public Policy, our expertise lies largely in UK national public policy engagement. However, the policy development fund can equally be awarded for engagement with local, international, or local/ national public policy of different nations.



Other ways to engage

Public Engagement

Any work that you undertake to make your research accessible and interesting to the broader public will also make it more visible and understandable to policy makers. So we encourage you to give talks and write articles for this broader audience as a first step towards policy engagement, building your public profile and communication skills even if you are not yet sure of the policy implications or channels of your research.

Policy-related papers and reports

If you have published a research paper or report that covers a policy topic, share it with us via bpp@brunel.ac.uk. We will recommend ways you could capitalise on the report for public policy research impact, and publish it under [Policy Papers and Reports | Brunel University London](#).

Bodies and Channels through which to engage

You may wish to consider which policy making body would be most interested in your area of research.

UK National Policy

Above we have described how to engage with Parliamentary Inquiries and Government Department ARIs. You could also consider:

- Government consultations
- Inquiries and consultations from parliaments and governments of the UK and devolved administrations
- Civil servants and ministers with specific areas of responsibility relevant to your findings
- Regulatory bodies
- All Party Parliamentary Groups. All-Party Parliamentary Groups (AP-PGs) are informal cross-party groups that have no official status within Parliament. They are run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities.
- External influencers such as research institutes, think tanks, NGOs, HEIs and learned societies. These bodies may be more open to finding out

about and using your research, especially if your recommendations align with their angle, but it is worth noting that you may have less control over how your research is used when done so via a 3rd party influencer.

UK Local Policy

The local policy landscape, including which body has responsibility for what, varies across the UK. In England, there are 317 local authorities made up of 5 different types; county councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, and London Boroughs. If your research has local policy significance, we recommend to first investigate which local authority is responsible and then make contact, ideally offering a relevant report, policy brief, or talk to support their understanding of this area.

Contact bpp@brunel.ac.uk if you would like support in making such initial contacts.

International and overseas policy

If your work has global policy relevance, you may wish to consider engaging with an international body, such as those listed below:

- The UN and its wide-ranging sub-bodies, issues and campaigns, such as Security Council, Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change Executive, World Health Organization, and many more.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- European Union and its component institutions including European Parliament, European Council, and the European Commission.
- Alternatively, if your research is relevant to specific locations outside the UK, you may wish to consider engaging with national, regional and local bodies that have jurisdiction for that location. The make up of these bodies will vary for different locations.

Co-production of Research and Regular advice

Once you have built up a profile and relationships with policy makers, there may be opportunities for co-produced research, and you may become someone policy makers actively seek out for research. It usually requires sustained engagement over a long period to reach this point.

For more support in understanding how the policy making process works, when to make contact and with whom, we strongly recommend attending the OIT Masterclass at the next opportunity, and for training in how to articulate your message in a way that will be understandable and engaging to policy makers, we strongly recommend attending the OIT Storytelling training at the next opportunity. If an opportunity or need to engage arises before you can attend and you need some advice, please contact us on bpp@brunel.ac.uk.

You can also browse the BPP Intranet resources for additional information.



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