



Public Engagement Co-Creation With Students Fund

2025-2026 Review



Introduction.

The Public Engagement Co-Creation with Students Fund is a new fund launched in 2025-26 to support collaboration between staff and students on public engagement projects. We ran the fund twice within the academic year.

Key aims

- To provide students with paid employment and development opportunities in the field of public engagement
- To enable students to learn about public engagement as a two-way process between people inside and outside universities
- To support staff with the development of their public engagement projects





How does it work?

With this fund, staff can apply to employ exactly two students to work up to 30 hours each. They could choose one of the following role types:

- Role Type 1 - Supporting design of a module involving public engagement
- Role Type 2 - Designing new public engagement activities or materials
- Role Type 3 - Supporting collaboration between a University of Warwick staff member and an external partner for public engagement



“The application process was very swift and informative, which I appreciated. The interview was conducted in a comfortable manner and I heard back about the job very quickly afterwards.”

A Student Co-Creator

Context.

How does this fund meet WIE's strategy?

The WIE strategy has a keen focus on both building capacity within staff and students to engage with the public. The Public Engagement Co-Creation with Students Fund contributes to following goals within the strategy.:

Goal 2

We will enable staff and students to deliver excellent public engagement activities, specially designed for specific groups/publics.

Goal 5

Warwick staff and students will be supported in bringing public and community engagement into the Warwick teaching and learning experience

Goal 6

Warwick staff and students will receive specially tailored training to increase our capacity to deliver excellent public and community engagement



Goal 7

We will make it easier for staff, students and community collaborators to work together on public engagement projects.

Goal 10

Innovative public engagement will be recognised as a pathway to personal development and/or career progression for staff and students.



**Read our
Strategy**



The number and quality of candidates was outstanding. I could have filled the roles several times over.”

**A Staff Project
Lead**

Key stats.



11 applications resulted in



14 student co-creators



Learn more about the funded projects

Did you Know?

All funded projects were for Role Type 2 (Designing new public engagement activities or materials).

Two of the projects also involved collaboration with external partners.



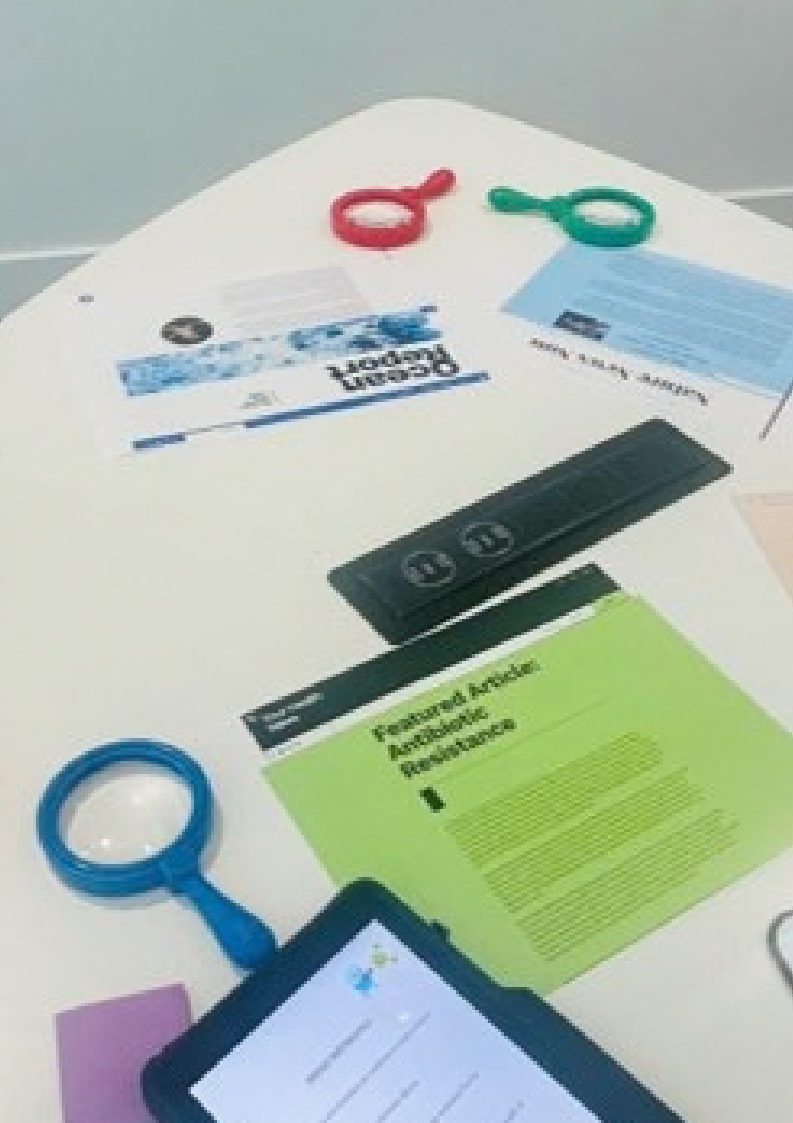
I'm now applying to a lot of engagement roles in higher education institutions. I want to go into EDI work, inclusive education, public engagement, widening participation - any position that handles anything like this.

A Student Co-Creator

Projects Per Faculty



- 3 Science, Engineering and Medicine
- 2 Arts
- 1 Social Sciences
- 1 Other



[The student co-creators] have made a huge positive impact to the wider project. They have provided me with incredible versatile engagement activities that I can use in multiple settings. Their unique approach and ideas have also opened my mind to the future possibilities of the engagement project and how we can approach audiences. [...] The students have shown me how my wider project could really work well when supported with additional input and resources.”

A Staff Project Lead

Reflections

Across all projects, 163 student applications were received and 36 interviews were conducted. The high number of applications shows there is major demand for paid work experience from Warwick students.

Last year (2024-2025), WIE funded 7 student interns to work on public engagement projects at local organisations. We also funded 6 Public Engagement URSS Projects. 14 Student Co-Creators thus exceeds the total number of students funded to work on public engagement by WIE in the previous academic year.



**Read the
student
co-creators
reflections**



Reflections.

What did the staff project leads think?

We asked participating staff to share feedback on the programme administration, the Co-Creator recruitment process and the impact of having co-creators on the wider project. Six out of seven project leads submitted feedback .



100%

rated their overall experience of leading a Public Engagement Co-Creator Project as good or excellent.

and all respondents said that they were very likely or somewhat likely to get involved with Warwick Institute of Engagement again.

83%

agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I would recommend the Public Engagement Co-Creation with Students Fund to colleagues".

83% also said that the co-creators exceeded or met their expectations.



Having the co-creators has been tremendously helpful. Without them, we would have relied on student volunteers but this would have meant the project would have taken considerably longer and the resources wouldn't have been ready for first teaching in October
A Staff Project Lead

Did you Know?

The Student Experience team have created a Student Engagement Toolkit to support staff with hiring students and supporting them through what is a very formative learning experience. Half of our Project leads accessed the resources in the toolkit.



**View the
Toolkit**

What did the student co-creators think?

Students were asked to share feedback on the co-creator application process, the project administration and if the experience had influenced their career plans. All 14 students completed the feedback survey which provided us with the insights below.

86%

agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I would recommend public engagement co-creator roles to other students".

79%

said that their co-creator role met or exceeded their expectations.



As a Psychology student interested in research, the role gave me valuable insight into how research can be communicated and applied beyond academic settings. The experience has shown me the importance of making research accessible and is something I hope to incorporate into my future career.

A Student Co-Creator

Skills Development

Alongside the projects, students were offered the opportunity to engage with WIE's training programme. Of those who accessed training, we gained the following feedback:

100%

agreed or strongly agree with the statement: "The Skills Festival resources were useful for my co-creator role." and all of them strongly agreed with the statement "WIE live training was useful for my co-creator role"



We also asked participants to select which of Warwick's 12 Core Skills they developed during their co-creation role. All skills were selected by at least 2 co-creators, suggesting the range of roles provided different development opportunities for different students. The skills identified the most by the students were professionalism (13/14), problem solving (12/14) and communications (11/14).

Conclusions.



01.

The number of applications across the 7 projects shows there is major demand from students to participate in paid Public Engagement work.

03.

Student Co-Creator roles appear to be successful at giving a reasonable number of students in-depth public engagement experience. It has still enabled more funded student public engagement than internships and URSS Public Engagement Projects did last year.

04.

This fund provides an opportunity for in-depth experience so the focus of other offerings, such as supporting URSS, running masterclasses, leading guest lectures and supporting student facilitators at Resonate events, can focus on reaching greater numbers of students.



If demand from departments to hire students continues, this scheme could be scaled up if additional funding and capacity is possible within WIE.



This is only the first year of the Co-Creation with Students Fund. We will run it again in 2026-2027 with the same budget and minor process tweaks.

We will continue to assess the opportunities available through this fund and complimentary student offerings as we gather further years of data.

