

Handout 3. Definitions and descriptions of good practice – Community Engagement & Business and Industry Interface

This framework has been designed to assess the extent to which your university can demonstrate it is committed to:

- playing a key role in promoting and sustaining relationships with local and broader communities for mutual benefit; and
- engaging with business and industry to promote the sharing of ideas and expertise for mutual benefit in ways that are socially responsible.

	Policy and Strategy	Action Planning	Stakeholder Engagement	Measurement
Activity Area Description	<p>The university’s strategies and/or policies for community engagement and business engagement in the realm of social responsibility and sustainability are well developed and aligned with broader university strategic directions. Activity is reviewed on a regular basis. There are clear reporting lines into formal university management structures.</p>	<p>The Strategy(s) is in the public domain. A co-ordinated approach to communicating the strategies and associated actions to appropriate audiences are evident. Local community, including government, schools and non-profit organisations have a good understanding of the outreach and engagement activities of the university.</p> <p>Action Plans, which incorporate objectives and associated targets, drive the cycles of activity across the university. This includes the development of mutually beneficial links between engaging business for sustainability and the university.</p>	<p>Key stakeholders (including staff, students, and community representatives) review activity associated with Policy and strategy and Action Planning and shape its development. There is evidence of a commitment to strengthen community ties and enhance the role the university plays at a broader level as well as business ties for community benefit.</p>	<p>The impacts and benefits of community and public engagement and linking the university's engagement with business to sustainability goals and objectives are routinely monitored and evaluated as part of existing university practice. There is evidence of continual improvement and feedback loops.</p>
What does good practice look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community and Business Engagement Strategy is a document that clearly articulates university objectives to build viable relationships and business partnerships external to the campus. • The Strategy demonstrates evidence of the importance of community members - from the general public to government and non-government organisations. • The relationships reflect the community within which the university operates (geographical and sectoral). • The university's Sustainability Strategy and associated policies reference community and business engagement and similarly the Community and Business Engagement Strategy reference social responsibility and sustainable development. • A well-articulated strategy includes analysis of issues specific to the university and a focus that is relevant and appropriate. • A comprehensive Sustainability Strategy includes specific detail of community engagement objectives and therefore a standalone community and business engagement strategy may not be necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear links between the development of community and business engagement activities and the university's broader planning processes. • Clear actions and objectives are evident and the university can trace these objectives through its planning system. It is clear to staff and stakeholders how community engagement is integrated into sustainability specific and university activities generally. • It is clear to staff and stakeholders where sustainability is included and how it relates to business engagement activity. • There is explicit support for staff and students to engage with communities and these activities are recognised and rewarded effectively. The approach to community and business engagement is well coordinated, rather than ad hoc and isolated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external stakeholder views are sought, captured and responded to throughout strategy development and review processes. Clear communication links are established with a variety of stakeholders, in a meaningful two-way dialogue. • Links between social responsibility and sustainability and business engagement are clearly defined and published. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to measuring the impact and benefit of community and business engagement is embedded into policy, strategy and action plans, the results of which are publicly communicated. • There is careful consideration of the reach of the activities undertaken and the university is not afraid to review activities that are not working to ensure that resources are not wasted but redirected to worthwhile activity. • The university actively encourages feedback from stakeholders as part of the process and includes this feedback in measurement and reporting processes. • Annual reports include information about community links and/or community related activities.

	Communications	Training and Support	Implementation	Links to curriculum
Activity Area Description	<p>The strategy (s) detailing community and business engagement are in the public domain. There is a planned approach to communicating to relevant stakeholders the strategies, associated activities and their implications. The agenda has clear, high-level support within the university.</p>	<p>There are clear links between the development of community engagement activities and the university's broader planning processes. Clear actions and objectives are evident and the university can trace these objectives through its planning system. It is clear to staff and stakeholders how community engagement is integrated into sustainability specific and university activities generally. There is explicit support for staff and students to engage with communities and these activities are recognised and rewarded effectively. The approach to community engagement is well coordinated, rather than ad hoc and isolated.</p> <p>Commitments and/or targets are linked to named individuals or teams within the university. Staff and students have either appropriate sustainability skills and knowledge, or opportunities to develop them through access to specialist support.</p>	<p>There is evidence of staff and student-led community and business engagement activity across the university and beyond via the Student Union, student societies, volunteering programmes, staff groups, trade unions or individual sustainability champions.</p>	<p>Community engagement activities link to, and where appropriate, are embedded into the formal and informal curriculum and research agenda.</p> <p>The university is actively linking business engagement with sustainability, employability, student learning and the student experience.</p>
What does good practice look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy(s) is in the public domain. A co-ordinated approach to communicating the strategies and associated actions to appropriate audiences are evident. Local community and businesses, including government, schools and non-profit organisations, have a good understanding of the outreach and engagement activities of the university. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clear mechanism for identifying training needs and delivering that training, guidance and support for those responsible for community and business engagement. Support is also provided in the form of recognising efforts of individuals or groups who are involved in community engagement activities, whether through public recognition or specific formal schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of activity and engagement between the university and the community and businesses are apparent. Strong and meaningful partnership activity is continually developing. Flourishing networks of those involved in community and business engagement organically develop across a range of interest areas. Stakeholders within the university identify how their activity can be enhanced to capitalise community and business engagement and they see clear linkages to social responsibility and sustainability through engagement. The university encourages learning, reflection and evaluation to improve practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal and informal curriculum activity relating to community and business engagement is identified. Support is available for curriculum leads on how community engagement feeds into the student experience and explicit links are made between business engagement, employability and the student experience. These links are supported by processes which ensure these links are optimised for the benefit of the university, its students and its community and business stakeholders.