

# The Open Innovation Team



Brunel  
University  
London



University  
of Essex

Lancaster  
University



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*



HM Government

# What we do

The Open Innovation Team is a cross government unit that works with academics to generate analysis and ideas for policy.

Established in 2016, we operate like an in-house consultancy, delivering policy projects for customers across government.

In the past year, we've delivered more than 20 policy projects, working with the Cabinet Office, Home Office, Ministry of Defence, Department for Education and others.

# This slide pack

**These slides are intended for universities interested in partnering with the Open Innovation Team (OIT).**

They summarise what we do, describe how our team has evolved, and explain how our university partners have benefited.

Since 2019, we've been partnering with four universities - Brunel, Essex, Lancaster and York - to increase our impact, explore new ways of collaborating, and diversify our income.

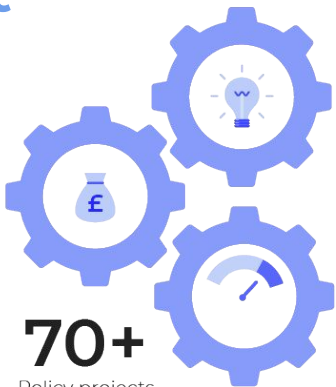
With our current university partnership deal coming to an end in 2022, we will soon be running a competition to agree partner universities for the next three to five years.

Please contact us if you would like to learn more:

[partnership@openinnovation.gov.uk](mailto:partnership@openinnovation.gov.uk)

# Policy impact

Since 2019, we've increased our policy impact, widened our range of customers, diversified our income, grown our team and upgraded our offer to university partners



**70+**

Policy projects delivered



**4.8/5**

Policy project satisfaction score (2019-21)



**368%**

Increase in income from projects, events and training



**51**

Events delivered



**14**

Government departments worked with



**1,000+**

Academics contributing to our policy work



**20,000+**

registrations for our policy events

# Partner university benefits

Each of our partner universities is given a team of experienced officials to lead on the delivery of agreed benefits and search for other opportunities to collaborate



## Policy

We tell our partners what policies we're working on so they can suggest academics for us to speak to. We also organise events and broker collaborations with partner university academics where we think our colleagues might benefit.



## Training & advice

Partners are able to access our growing training offer, including Policy Schools for students and Policy Masterclasses for academics. We also offer our partners policy impact advice, editorial support and a graphic design and data visualisation service.



## Visibility

Partner branding is added to all our policy outputs and events marketing. Invites to our online events are seen by thousands of officials each month, and a new programme of in person events will help further increase partner university visibility.



## Innovation

We continually search for new ways to benefit our partners. Since 2019, we have created new kinds of training, events and impact advice that have dramatically increased the value of tangible benefits we offer.

“Over the past six years, the Open Innovation Team has really shown its value. They have come up with an effective operating model that draws on academic expertise to deliver high-quality and impactful policy advice.”

**Tamara Finkelstein**  
Permanent Secretary, Defra

# What we do

Policy, partners,  
training & events

# Policy projects

We spend most of our time delivering consultancy-style policy projects for customers across government. We've delivered more than 60 since 2019

## Engagement



We organise workshops, seminars, visits, conferences and networking events that bring officials and outside experts together to share insights and ideas.

## Analysis



We work with experts to understand and explain the latest evidence on topics we've been asked to look at, and we provide advice on what this evidence means for policy.

## Ideas



We work with leading thinkers to generate, develop and test new ideas that our customers might like to take forward.

“  
We had a fantastic experience working with OIT...  
It enabled us to achieve so much more with our trust project than we could have independently.  
”



Ministry  
of Justice

“  
The link the team provides to academia and expert sources is unparalleled and provides policy teams with really useful insight.  
”



Department  
for Education

“  
The OIT produced an excellent piece of work, which addressed exactly the topics the team were considering at just the right moment.  
”



Cabinet Office

# Partner university benefits

Each of our university partners contributes £85,000 per year towards our costs. In return, they receive partner benefits, the range and value of which has increased over time

## Harder to value

Some of the most important benefits we offer our partners are those we find it difficult to value accurately. They include:

- > **Involvement:** we aim to deliver two significant academic collaborations and at least five smaller contributions per partner per year.
- > **Visibility:** partner university branding is added to our policy outputs and events marketing, helping to raise the profile of our partners across government.
- > **Innovation:** our partners shape how we evolve our offer by making requests for different kinds of support and working with us to design and test new services.

## Easier to value

We work with partners to continually improve our offer on training, advice and other kinds of support with a clearer value. As a result, we now offer partners a package of easily quantifiable benefits **worth 6x more** than the one we had in 2019/20.



**THEN: £30,000 PA**

In 2019/20, our partners were entitled to two policy training sessions per year, a Policy Masterclass (for professionals) and Policy School (for students).



**NOW: £190,000 PA**

In 2022/23, we expect annual benefits that are easily quantifiable to include at least seven policy training sessions of various kinds, nine impact advice clinics, three longer impact strategy engagements, and graphic design and editorial support for policy-related impact work.

# Events

We organise events that bring officials together with outside experts. We're planning to increase the frequency and ambition of these events over the next few years



## 1. So far

We've set up a popular online speaker series, allowing 50+ international leading thinkers to share their ideas with thousands of officials. We've also established an economics seminar series for government economists and delivered workshops for permanent secretaries.

## 2. Next

We expect to pilot a three week Policy Futures Festival later this year. The festival will kick off with a one day conference for senior officials and be followed with roundtables, workshops, visits, and keynotes from leading thinkers.

# Training, advice and support

Over the past 18 months, we've experimented with delivering training to non-partners, but we now we plan to make most training and advice exclusive to partner universities



## Policy training

We have training for academics, students and professionals. Our Policy Masterclasses explain to academics how policy works and how they can influence it. Our Policy Schools give students a taste of the policymaking process by inviting them to work in groups to develop and present advice on a live policy problem.



## Impact advice and support

When individual academics or research centres need more tailored advice, we can offer Impact Advice Clinics or longer Impact Strategy Engagements. We've also been experimenting with offering partners editorial and graphic design support for their policy outputs.

**“Probably the most useful training I have attended since starting my PhD.”**



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

# Case studies

our work

# Integrated Review

The Cabinet Office (CO) commissioned us to support the Integrated Review of Defence, Development, Security and Foreign Policy

## 1. Problem

CO wanted to speak to a range of outside experts to inform the Review, challenge their thinking, and help develop their plans for implementing its recommendations.

## 2. Our Work

We consulted over 100 academics for three expert roundtables, a series of five workshops in partnership with [Wilton Park](#), and three reports, including one on mitigating groupthink in foreign policy.

## 3. Outcome

Our work informed the themes and priorities of the Review, as detailed in its [annex](#).



# Early Years Healthy Development

DHSC asked us to provide case-studies of international best practice in start to life services

## 1. Problem

DHSC wanted to know more about world-leading approaches to start to life services to inform their recommendations for early years care in England.

## 2. Our Work

We consulted 29 experts from 9 countries to produce a report that assessed the strengths and weaknesses of early years services.

## 3. Outcome

Our case-studies informed - and were published as part of - the [Best Start for Life policy paper](#).

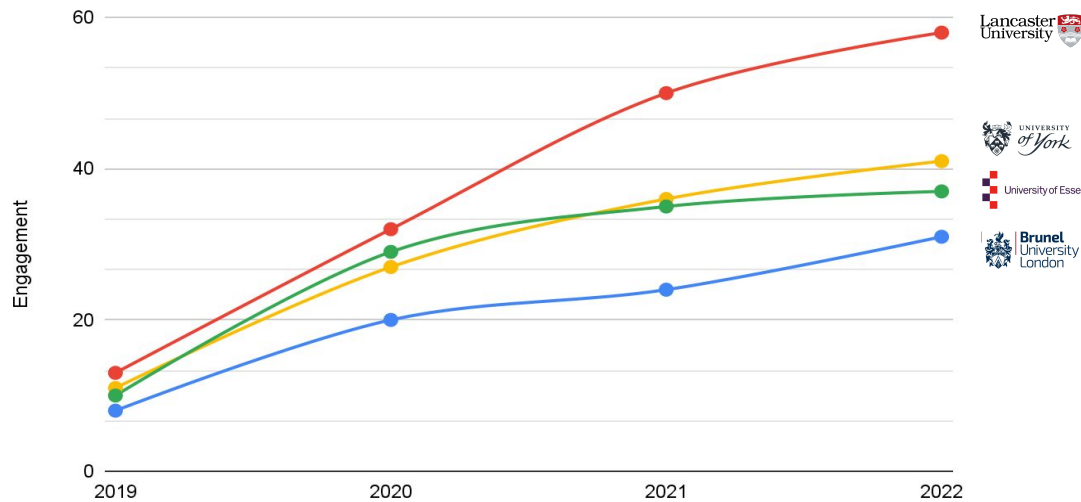


# How partners have benefited

# More involved in policy

We tell our partners about the policy projects we're working on and they suggest academics who might be well placed to contribute

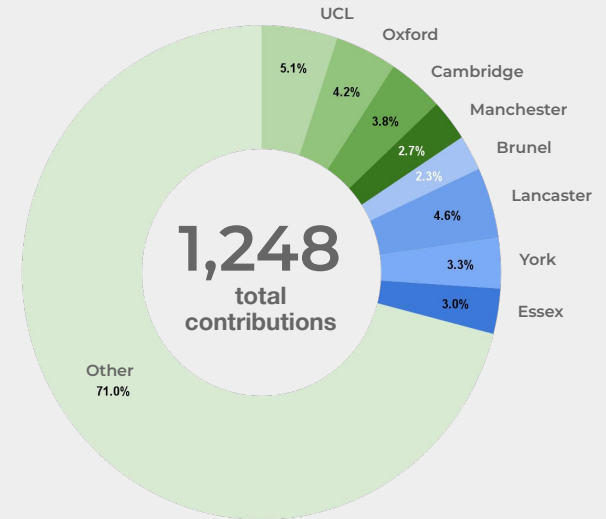
## Partner contributions, 2019-22



**Partner university engagement:** partner university academics tend to be more involved in our policy work. For example, Brunel academics had made no contributions to our policy work before Brunel partnered with us in 2019, but they have been involved more than 30 times since.

Source: Open Innovation Team

## All contributions, 2019-22, by institution



**Non-partner engagement:** experts from non-partner organisations are heavily involved in our policy work too, accounting for 87% of all contributions. UCL, Oxford and Cambridge account for the most.

# More knowledgeable about policy

The training and advice we deliver for partner university academics and students helps them understand how policy works and how they can increase their chances of influencing it

63

Training  
sessions

Partner university academics receive training on how they can **influence policy and communicate with policy audiences**. Students learn about policy-making while working in teams on live policy problems and being coached by experienced officials.

Partner university academics who want more tailored advice can sign up for an **Impact Advice Clinic** delivered over 2-3 weeks, while those who need more intensive support can benefit from an **Impact Strategy Engagement** lasting 2-3 months.

43

Impact  
advice  
sessions

“

I cannot thank the OIT staff enough, they have been absolutely amazing - not only during the workshop session which was super helpful, but also providing practical and invaluable assistance since. I have no doubt that their help will contribute to the impact of my research and my career development in general. I am extremely grateful for their generosity, kindness, expertise, and encouragement.

”



# More responsive to the needs of academics

We work with our partner universities to create new kinds of training, advice or events offers that are inspired by their needs

## Research briefings

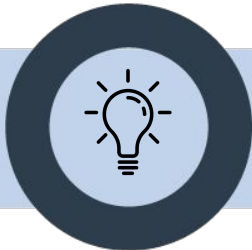
A briefing event for UK academics in partnership with MiSoc and Essex

## Impact clinics

Impact advice clinics for academics at partner universities

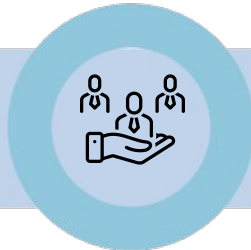
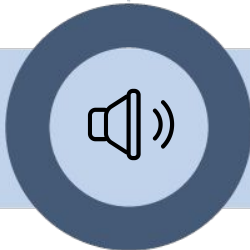
## Graphic design for universities

Commercial design services to ensure academic publications have maximum impact



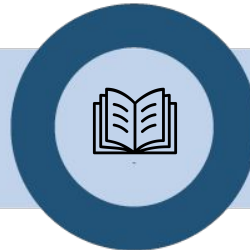
## Policy briefings

A briefing event for UK academics in partnership with Brunel



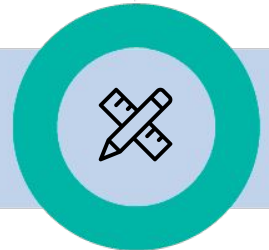
## Placements

Placements for academics in government and officials in academia, with York and Essex



## Storytelling training

Training for academics to better communicate their work to a non-academic audience

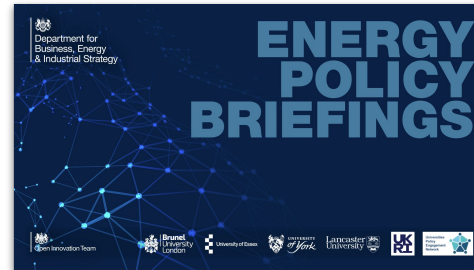


# More visible to government

Partner university branding is used on all our outputs and communications

70+

Outputs since 2019 all feature partner branding

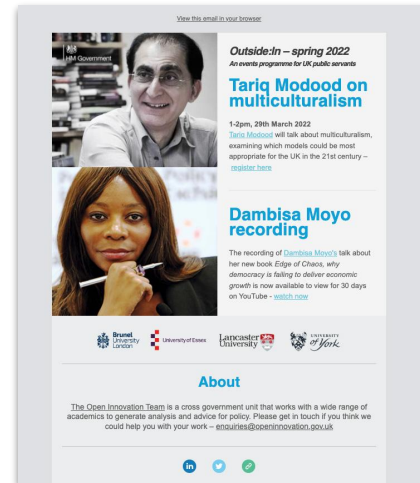


100+

UK academic institutions and 650+ academics attended our policy briefings

117

Training courses delivered since 2019, all featuring partner branding



18,000+

Officials regularly see emails or event marketing with partner branding



## Next steps

To find out more about partnering with the Open Innovation Team or for more information about our partnership offer contact [partnership@openinnovation.gov.uk](mailto:partnership@openinnovation.gov.uk)

