



RAEng Responses

Potential Questions regarding Communicating with the Public:

1. How do engineering academies interact with the public?

The type of communication depends heavily on the audience and the goal of the communication. The Royal Academy of Engineering employs a variety of communication methods with the below giving an example of likely channels:

- General Public
 - Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook)
 - News Media (through press releases)
 - Academy Website
 - Printed materials at public events
 - Public Lectures
- Universities/Faculty
 - Email
 - Posters
 - Flyers (printed and digital)
 - Printed Media (reports)
- Young people
 - Social Media
 - Website
 - YouTube

The Academy's international programmes have enabled us to reach out to the public in new ways and illustrate the role that engineering plays in international development and in societal progression more broadly. Through a focus on international development and the SDGs we have been able to engage with a more diverse audience and to communicate the benefits engineering brings to society, particularly to a non-engineering audience. Perhaps this case study can act as a blueprint for communicating the benefit of engineering; it is an example of how we must illustrate the tangible, real-world impact that engineering can have and ensure we do not talk about engineering in a vacuum.

2. Are there best practices that can be distilled from CAETS member academies?

- **How do you determine which mechanisms are the most effective for a given audience?**

Three of the most important steps in determining effective means of communications are: to consider who the audience; what they are likely to take from the engagement; and the intended purpose of the interaction. For example, communication strategies may be tailored depending on who the intended audience are; for instance, social media advertising can be tailored to target specific geographic regions to ensure that the opportunities on offer are reaching those who they are intended for.

We have found social media an increasingly effective tool for amplifying conversation, particularly among the younger people we engage with (under 45). Live tweeting at events by Academy staff, Academy accounts, and event participants has enabled conversations to be followed by those who are



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not in the room and sets a platform for wider engagement. Many Academy events incorporate a social media toolkit into the event materials, providing guidance and direction on how to engage with Academy social media, and contribute to the conversation.

Another aspect worthy of consideration is how wide reaching we want the particular communication to be. Broader, high level announcements often follow more traditional means such as press releases and posting on the website. Such communications are often more content heavy and require more time for an audience to engage with. In cases such as these, social media can be used as a directional, support tool to signal potential users in the direction of the website or news article.

Key questions to ask include; Will the intended audience use the medium of communication being used? Who are we trying to reach? How do we want them to engage with us and why?

- **Do you maintain and analyse specific metrics?**

The Academy monitors digital analytics such as website activity and social media engagement and this is fed back into communications strategies to assess their impact. This is normally on a project by project basis.

3. What might CAETS do to communicate the value of engineering to society, policy-makers, and other stakeholders?

- **What are the “common” messages that should be communicated globally?**

Engineering matters. It underpins our daily lives, drives economic growth, plays a critical role in addressing major societal challenges and helps ensure our readiness for the future, from providing a sustainable supply of food, water and clean energy, to advancing healthcare, and keeping us safe and secure.

Engineering should be at the heart of policy-making, ensuring that an engineering voice is present at the very start of any policy discussions

Engineers must take a leading role in working across disciplines to tackle the Global Grand Challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Diversity within the engineering profession must be nurtured and encouraged.

Engineering itself is a diverse profession, with many routes into it, and within it.

- **What means should be used to communicate those messages?**

This should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, where the target audience and the purpose of the communication is at the heart of any strategy.

- **Should we build alliances with other engineering organizations in order to gain broader distribution networks?**

Partnerships can be very beneficial in allowing a more diverse exchange of ideas and opinions, and in helping achieve objectives. However, our main concern with forming partnerships with other organisations is that we must always be asking ourselves whether this is going to increase our impact as



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a network. Do the other organization bring with them expertise, resources, or networks that we don't have?

4. What are the next steps for CAETS?

It is the Academy's belief that communications are context dependent. As such, CAETS should begin by identifying the messages it wishes to convey and to whom, before moving on to how.

Royal Academy of Engineering Background Information

Communications Campaigns

This Is Engineering

- *This is Engineering is a new multi-year campaign led by the Royal Academy of Engineering in partnership with eleven major engineering organisations to change the perception of engineering among young people aged 13-18.*
- *This is Engineering* challenges those misconceptions, by presenting a positive image of modern engineering. Through real young engineers it illustrates how engineering is behind many of the things they are already interested in – sport, fashion and tech for example – and that they can follow what they love into engineering, and in doing so help shape the future.
- The first year of the campaign will challenge young people (13-18) to reconsider what engineering really looks like with bold advertising on social media platforms. Supporting PR will encourage parents and teachers to talk about engineering in positive ways with young people, and also communicate the skills and diversity challenge to policy makers and business leaders.
- *This is Engineering is a key partner in HM Government's Year of Engineering, which was launched on 15 January 2018. Together the two campaigns will help inspire the next generation of engineers, raising public awareness about engineering's variety, appeal and impact.*
- At the heart of *This is Engineering* are five 40-second videos, each of which profiles a young engineer who is doing something remarkable. Watch Pavlina, Chris, Vinita, Charles and Daniella and be inspired by the power and potential of engineering!
- <http://www.thisisengineering.org.uk/>

Publications & Reports

Ingenia!

- *Ingenia!* is a stimulating and informative quarterly magazine that publishes articles across the whole range of engineering disciplines. It is aimed at everyone with an interest in engineering, whether working in business and industry, government,



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academia or the financial community. Complex or technical engineering issues are made accessible, and will interest engineering enthusiasts of all ages.

- *Ingenia!* has a circulation of around 11,000, and is sent free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it, including Academy Fellows, engineers, students and teachers. More than 3,600 schools, colleges and university technical colleges receive copies.
- <http://www.ingenia.org.uk/>

Designing Inclusion into Engineering Education

(<https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/reports/designing-inclusion-into-engineering-education>)

- A fresh, practical look at how diversity impacts on engineering and strategies for change
- Educators have a fundamental role to play in addressing the skills gap in engineering, but making the profession more welcoming to everyone is challenging. This report sets out a framework to build an inclusive higher education environment in engineering and technology. Based on work at UCL from 2011 to 2016, which culminated in a symposium, it also includes contributions from experts across the world and is supported by the Royal Academy of Engineering.
- This report also builds on a recent study by the Academy (2017) that focuses on creating cultures where engineers thrive. The aim is to work towards an inclusive graduate engineer who understands that they are not working in a monoculture and not producing products or solutions for a homogenous customer
(<https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/reports/creating-cultures-where-all-engineers-thrive>)