

UNIVERSITY OF BATH INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

MISSION STATEMENT

This Mission Statement is expressed in terms of the overall vision, the strategic aims and objectives, and distinctive niche

Vision

An internationally-recognised Institute in a research-intensive University, undertaking inter-disciplinary research of high quality, scrutinising the evidence base for policy and practice, and enlarging the policy options under debate, so as to contribute to public understanding and the common good.

Strategic Aims

1. To undertake inter-disciplinary research of high quality and having international significance for policy
2. To project this research into the policy world, for maximum impact with public policy-makers and practitioners, users of public services, and business, civil society and the media
3. To work with policy makers on the complex policy challenges that they face, bringing independent evidence-based analysis to bear

Initial Objectives and Priorities

- To build inter-disciplinary research capacity across the University in relation to specific policy fields and challenges
- To build and sustain world-wide research partnerships of high repute
- To attract leading international scholars as visiting fellows
- To play a significant role in shaping research funding priorities, in the UK and internationally
- To provide more effective 'pathways to impact' for this research
- To disseminate skills in policy engagement and impact to researchers across the University
- To build capacity in media- and Parliament-watching
- To engage in 'co-production' with policy-makers, in the role of critical outsiders;
- To extend and strengthen our connections with the policy world, so as to have early notice of emerging policy challenges
- To make these connections at local, national and international levels, and to develop policy approaches that are adequate to this multi-level connectedness
- To engage with alumni, especially those who are rising stars in national governments, international agencies and other public policy bodies around the world
- To attract international policy makers as visiting fellows
- To establish Bath as a centre for debates involving academic and policy elites, looking ahead to emerging policy challenges

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| <p>4. To identify the assumptions that underlie policies, the powerful interests that shape them and the hidden costs and gains they entail</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map through our research the hidden costs and consequences of public policy choices and the assumptions those choices embody • To use the global span of our research networks to compare such policy choices internationally • To engage critically with the governance of research and evidence • To engage with NGOs and civil society, including through our web site and social media, with a view to assessing a wider range of policy options |
| <p>5. To promote public understanding of the policy dilemmas that our societies face, better-grounded in evidence</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a programme of regional public engagement events that connect technological, environmental, social and economic challenges and their policy implications • To develop our web presence as an interactive public forum |
| <p>6. To further the core goal of the University of Bath, to develop 'excellence in research and innovation'</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a common and well-defined focus for policy research in the University, integrating Faculties, research groups and relevant central services in a shared mission • To strengthen the level of research grant and contract capture across the University, both in value terms and in terms of the proportion of academic staff bidding • To secure external impact and esteem for our research, including through consultancy and knowledge transfer activities • To attract high calibre research students and provide them with a high quality environment which bridges the worlds of research and policy |

The Distinctive Niche of the Institute

1. *The Institute will become known for the quality of its analysis:*

- Deploying a range of novel analytical frameworks and toolkits, in an inter-disciplinary setting
- Recognising and exploring the interdependence of policy domains: social, economic, environmental, security, fiscal, etc
- Being prepared to tackle complex policy issues with difficult trade-offs
- Bridging the worlds of research, policy and professional practice with rapid but high quality responses to policy problems
- Providing an evidence-based response to public hopes and fears

2. *The Institute will become known for drawing researchers and policy actors out of their narrow parochialisms:*

- Building inter-disciplinary research teams better adapted to addressing complex policy agendas
- Drawing out the connections between discrete areas of research and policy, so as to paint the larger picture for our various audiences
- Forging new connections between the research and policy worlds and 'co-producing' policy options
- Making such connections at local, national and international levels, and developing policy perspectives adequate to this multi-level connectedness
- Using these connections as antennae, reaching into the policy process and providing early signals of new debates and challenges
- Building dynamic synergies among these connections, so as to multiply their benefits for our research and research funding, our consultancy and knowledge transfer, and our reputation within the international student market

3. *The Institute will become known for 'speaking truth to power', asking:*

- What presuppositions policy makers bring with them and how do they define the societal 'problems' they address?

- Who is to be blamed for these problems and how far is there a responsibility on the public authorities to address them?
- What standards of evidence are demanded for different problems, as a precondition for the investment of public resources?
- What are the hidden costs, the collateral damage of public policy choices, detracting from the public good?
- Which problems require a novel response - and when is such novelty no more than a way to avoid hard political questions?
- What new policy problems and challenges are likely to emerge – and in what ways do current policies create, exacerbate or conceal those problems?