

ENGAGEMENT RECOGNITION IN ACADEMIC CAREERS



SCAN CARD · 10

DESCRIPTION

Universities are expected to contribute to society through community engagement, knowledge exchange, public dialogue and collaborative research. These expectations challenge traditional models of academic work focused primarily on research and teaching. Growing attention is being paid to how engagement activities are recognised within academic careers — through promotion criteria, workload allocation, rewards and definitions of academic excellence.

Despite this, community engagement often remains peripheral within career structures. Promotion systems continue to prioritise research and teaching outputs, while engagement is frequently undervalued or treated as voluntary.

RELEVANCE

Recognition systems influence how academic work is valued within universities. They shape where staff invest time and effort, and affect the visibility and sustainability of community engagement activities.

Without appropriate recognition, staff may be discouraged from investing time in community partnerships — reducing the long-term sustainability and institutional reach of community engagement.

NEED

Universities need approaches that clarify how community engagement relates to academic careers, workload models, promotion systems and professional development.

This requires decisions about how engagement-related contributions are recognised alongside research and teaching. If not addressed, engagement may continue to depend on a small number of committed individuals — limiting its visibility, legitimacy and long-term sustainability.

CATEGORY

Social · Ethical

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Strong



SCANNING METHOD

Policy review · Literature

SOURCES

Farnell (2020) NESET Community Engagement · OECD (2024) State of Academic Careers · EUA (2025) Sustainable Academic Careers