

ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP

ROLES ARE EMERGING



SCAN CARD · 15

DESCRIPTION

Community engagement is becoming a more visible part of university missions. Activities previously coordinated through individual projects or informal initiatives now require institutional coordination, strategic direction and long-term support. Universities are creating dedicated leadership roles focused on community engagement, civic responsibility, societal impact and external partnerships. New positions are emerging at both senior leadership and operational levels, often accompanied by engagement offices and support teams.

These developments increase the visibility of engagement within university governance. Approaches remain diverse — some institutions invest heavily in engagement leadership while others continue to rely on decentralised models.

RELEVANCE

Leadership structures influence how community engagement is prioritised, coordinated and embedded within universities. Dedicated engagement roles can strengthen strategic direction, partnership development and institutional capacity.

However, where engagement leadership remains informal or poorly defined, coordination may depend on individual commitment rather than institutional support — limiting the long-term sustainability of engagement activities.

NEED

Universities need clear governance arrangements defining the responsibilities, authority and resources associated with engagement leadership roles.

This requires decisions about how engagement leadership is positioned within university governance and how engagement leaders interact with academic leadership, community partners and institutional decision-making. If not addressed, engagement may remain fragmented across projects and units, limiting strategic coordination and long-term sustainability.

CATEGORY

Political · Social

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Strong



SCANNING METHOD

Institutional · Policy review

SOURCES

EUA (2023) NEWLEAD Leadership · Farnell (2020) NESET · Meerman & Davey (2025) UIIN Reimagining · Goddard et al. (2016) Civic University · NCCPE (2019) Strategy & Leadership