

Table 8

Engaging with Arab Universities

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Building a collaboration and engaging with Arab universities is considered as an “add on” and fringe activities to both parties.

Typically, the Association of Arab Universities consider that universities engaging with Arab universities will have activities in place which incorporate:

- **public engagement into their research** (Actively involving the public in research activity of the institution)
- **knowledge exchange** (Increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and wider society)
- **teaching** (Developing teaching activities which positively impact on the community, and enhance students’ engagement skills), and
- **social responsibility** (Seeking to maximize the benefits that the institution can generate for the public)

An engaged university has embedded a commitment to public engagement in its institutional mission and strategy, and champions that commitment at all levels:

- It creates a shared understanding of the purpose, value, meaning and role of public engagement to staff and students and embeds this in its strategy and mission
- It supports leaders and champions across the organization who embrace public engagement
- It communicates consistent, clear messages to validate, support and celebrate it, and ensures open and two-way communication with members of the public and community organizations

Support

- It recognizes and rewards staff involvement within recruitment, promotion, workload plans and performance reviews, and celebrates success with awards or prizes

- It supports and coordinates the delivery of public engagement to maximize efficiency, target support, improve quality, foster innovation, join up thinking and monitor involvement and impact
- It provides opportunities for learning and reflection and support for continuing professional development and training

People

An engaged university is actively involving staff, students and representatives of the public and using their energy, expertise and feedback to shape the engagement strategy and its delivery:

- It ensures that all staff – in academic and support roles – have opportunities to get involved in informal and formal ways
- It proactively includes and involves students in shaping the mission and in the delivery of the strategy, and maximizes opportunities for their involvement
- It invests in people, processes and infrastructure to support and nurture the involvement of the public and of organizations external to the HEI

The sessions addressed the following questions

- So how 'engaged' is your institution?
- How you assess your current support for public and international engagement?

Magna Charta

Also, the table addressed the issue of the Association of Arab Universities possibly adopting a Magna Charta and whether this should be the MCU of the MCO or whether a separate Magna Charta was needed for the Middle East?

The question was raised as to whether the engagement from the Observatory in the Middle East was adequate.

Arrangements such as the formation of an 'Arab Chapter' were discussed.