

UCL Public Engagement Beacon Bursary: Project Evaluation & Learning Form

The project evaluation and learning form aims to provide a simple way to document what the project has done and achieved. Projects are asked to reflect on their experience, explain any problems they had, summarise what they have learned, and lessons they would pass on to other projects or can be applied elsewhere. Although a template is provided, the nature and scope of the form will depend on the project undertaken.

Projects should submit a complete project evaluation and learning form no later than **one month** after the project end date.

The form will be reviewed by the UCL Public Engagement Unit and summarised to the Steering Group. As we are keen to share experiences of public engagement, completed sections of the form (with approval from the author) will be used to develop UCL public engagement case studies which will be published on the UCL website.

Background:

Name	<u>Rosemary Ashton</u>																										
Job Title/Course	<u>Quain Professor of English Language and Literature</u>																										
Organisation/Department	<u>English</u>																										
Project name	<u>Bloomsbury Day</u>																										
Total project value (£)	<u>£969</u>																										
Beacon funding (£)	<u>£950</u>																										
Funding breakdown <i>Please note the the project actual spend, broken down into specific costs</i>	<p><u>Bloomsbury Day costs</u></p> <table> <tr><td><u>staff time</u></td><td><u>79</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>wine</u></td><td><u>253.26</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>15 juice</u></td><td><u>18.75</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>ice</u></td><td><u>21</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>water</u></td><td><u>17.28</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>food waitrose</u></td><td><u>241.5</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>crisps/nuts</u></td><td><u>11.76</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>water refectory</u></td><td><u>83.85</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>majestic glass washing</u></td><td><u>20</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>helpers book tokens</u></td><td><u>70</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>maps</u></td><td><u>55</u></td></tr> <tr><td><u>printing/publicity</u></td><td><u>97.6</u></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td><u>969</u></td></tr> </table> <p><u>Please note that these figures are correct as known at time of sending (31 March 2010). There may be minor adjustments to be made (e.g. NI contributions for staff time). We kept close to the amount granted by means of omitting the tea interval and by ordering and returning wine and glasses from Majestic</u></p>	<u>staff time</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>wine</u>	<u>253.26</u>	<u>15 juice</u>	<u>18.75</u>	<u>ice</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>water</u>	<u>17.28</u>	<u>food waitrose</u>	<u>241.5</u>	<u>crisps/nuts</u>	<u>11.76</u>	<u>water refectory</u>	<u>83.85</u>	<u>majestic glass washing</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>helpers book tokens</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>maps</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>printing/publicity</u>	<u>97.6</u>		<u>969</u>
<u>staff time</u>	<u>79</u>																										
<u>wine</u>	<u>253.26</u>																										
<u>15 juice</u>	<u>18.75</u>																										
<u>ice</u>	<u>21</u>																										
<u>water</u>	<u>17.28</u>																										
<u>food waitrose</u>	<u>241.5</u>																										
<u>crisps/nuts</u>	<u>11.76</u>																										
<u>water refectory</u>	<u>83.85</u>																										
<u>majestic glass washing</u>	<u>20</u>																										
<u>helpers book tokens</u>	<u>70</u>																										
<u>maps</u>	<u>55</u>																										
<u>printing/publicity</u>	<u>97.6</u>																										
	<u>969</u>																										

	<p><u>Wines. A number of UCL English staff - academic and administrative – and graduate students gave freely of their time to keep costs down. None of the speakers claimed travel costs.</u></p> <p><u>balance</u> <u>14.68</u></p>
Location	<u>Cruciform Lecture Theatre 1 and North Cloisters</u>
Start and end dates	<u>December 2009-12 March 2010</u>
Project partners (Please list the partners involved in the project, include names, organisations and contact details where appropriate).	<u>The organiser, Rosemary Ashton, is in UCL English and is Lead Investigator on the UCL Leverhulme-funded Bloomsbury Project. She was responsible for all the organising, with help from Clare Szembek and Kathy Metzenthin in the English Department Office and help on the day from a Postdoctoral Fellow and 6 graduate students in the department</u>

Summary of project / activity: What happened?

The event lasted from 4 to 9pm

Session 1 (4-5.30) ‘Bloomsbury Past: the nineteenth century’ consisted of an introduction to the Bloomsbury Project by Rosemary Ashton and 4 short papers on aspects of nineteenth-century Bloomsbury by colleagues working on the Bloomsbury Project (a PhD student from UCL English, a UCL geographer, a professor of cultural history at Central St Martins (an alumna of UCL English), and an English professor from Birkbeck. Finished by 20 minutes Q & A session.

Break

Session 2 (6-7.30) ‘Bloomsbury Present: novelists and poets on “their” Bloomsbury’ consisted of talks by two distinguished English Department alumni, David Lodge and Lynne Truss, on the ways in which they have engaged with Virginia Woolf in their own work, followed by 20 minutes Q & A session. Finally a reading of a specially commissioned poem by Professor Mark Ford of UCL English, a respected poet, and some poetry readings by two recent UCL English alumni who are beginning to publish their poetry, Oliver Hazzard and Declan Ryan

Reception in North Cloisters (7.30-9) with an opportunity to meet the speakers, demonstrations of the Bloomsbury Project website, the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine Bloomsbury blog, a Waterstone’s bookstall, a display of UCL Special Collections maps of Bloomsbury, and an opportunity for guests to view the new UCL Library exhibition connected with the Project, ‘Innovators and Educators: UCL and Bloomsbury in the nineteenth century’

Who was the audience for this project? Please give details.

The audience was the most wide-ranging the English Department has ever had for one of its events. 300+ attended, with both sessions filling the lecture theatre. The numbers consisted of English Department alumni (the largest group), UCL students and staff (English department and other), members of the advisory board of the Bloomsbury Project, librarians, museum curators, and archivists from Senate House, British Museum, Foundling Museum, Swedenborg Society, and Camden Libraries, representatives of the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Commission on Historical Documents, local residents, people who work in the area, a local architect, a local publisher, an academic from City Lit, an editor from the TLS, two London Blue Badge Guides, relatives and friends of alumni, students from other universities (Oxford and Royal Holloway)

What was the project supposed to accomplish? Please outline the aims and objectives agreed at the start of project, note if they changed during the project and the process and reasons for making those changes.

The aim was to combine an English Department alumnus event (to follow on from three successful events last year) with a celebration and showcasing of the Leverhulme-funded nineteenth-century Bloomsbury Project as it nears completion. The Project has amassed an emailing list of well over 100 interested people from academia, from local history groups, and from the many libraries and museums and educational establishments in the area, and it was thought a good idea to bring these people into UCL to cement ties for the future. The Bloomsbury Project matches well with UCL's current Global University and Sustainable Cities initiatives, so that such an event was timely for UCL itself. The aim was to bring a wider audience into UCL than usually attends events here. We were particularly keen to bring in local residents and workers, who we knew would be attracted by the subject matter.

An unforeseen extra came in late 2009, when UCL Library decided to prepare an exhibition of UCL's position in nineteenth-century Bloomsbury, and approached Rosemary Ashton and the Bloomsbury Project Researcher, Dr Deborah Colville, to collaborate on preparing the exhibition and catalogue. The exhibition was timed to open in the same week as Bloomsbury Day, thus maximising interest in both events. This represented a welcome addition, rather than a change, to the original plans for the event.

Did the project succeed in its aims? How do you know? Specifically, please outline any evaluation and assessment undertaken.

The day was a great success. We advertised it more widely than is usual, namely by email to all English alumni, to the Bloomsbury Project mailing list, and to

individuals with an interest. We produced 400 leaflets for the event, distributing them in parts of UCL, the BM, BL, Foundling Museum, Holborn Library, local bookshops. Rosemary Ashton spoke about the event and handed out leaflets at a Cultural Bloomsbury Breakfast in the BMA building in February – Cultural Bloomsbury is a group of local institutions and organisations which meets regularly in different Bloomsbury venues. We also advertised in UCLs’ ‘Brain Food’ leaflet, the Provost’s Newsletter, UCL English Department website, the Bloomsbury Project website, and the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine website.

We kept a register of those expressing an intention to attend; when the number reached 340 (the capacity of the Lecture Theatre) we held a short waiting list. In regular emails sent out in the weeks before the event to those wishing to attend we asked people to let us know if they couldn’t come so that we could give the place to someone on the waiting list.

We handed out a feedback form to all attendees and asked them to complete them before leaving. This produced 62 forms. We followed up with an email asking for forms from those who had not filled them in on the day, and got a further 11. Rosemary Ashton analysed the 73 completed forms, and was able to ascertain the variety of the attendees (see ‘Who was the audience?’ above) – though of course there may be many more categories who attended but did not complete feedback forms.

The feedback form asked: ‘What attracted you to attend?’ to which the overwhelming majority of those replying said that they had an interest in the area; an equal number said they were attracted by the quality of the speakers and the range of interests represented in the talks. Of those who specified their main interest, slightly more named the nineteenth-century session than the twentieth. To the question ‘What did you find most interesting/useful, and why?’ ca. 31 answered that they enjoyed both sessions; 30 singled out Session 1, and 10 singled out Session 2; about 15 said David Lodge and Lynne Truss were the main attraction to them; 6 gave special mention to the young poets.

What things do you think worked well and why? *When filling in this section, please try to think about all aspects of the project (e.g. initial inception, project activities and project outcomes), from a range of perspectives.*

The day was a success largely because of the work put in: the many, many hours of organisation that went into the preparations, with frequent meetings between Rosemary Ashton and the Head of Department Professor Susan Irvine, the departmental Alumni Officer Dr Berry Chevasco, and the English Department administrative staff, particularly Clare Szembek, who was detailed to create and maintain the attendance list, design the leaflet, and liaise with Room Bookings, A/V, Estates and Facilities, and arrange refreshments, as well as leading the graduate helpers on the day. Rosemary Ashton invited and kept in correspondence with all the speakers, devised the feedback form, took advice from the Public Engagement Unit and attended PEU meetings, liaised with the

Waterstone's events coordinator, and with UCL Special Collections over maps, and held meetings with the graduate helpers to distribute tasks for them on the day. She also, with help from graduates, took leaflets round to local organisations in advance of the day. We were helped by advice from the PEU about devising the feedback form, ordering tables and boards, etc.

What problems emerged during the project and how were they tackled?

Specifically, what barriers did you face and how did you overcome them? Again, please try to think about all aspects of the project, from a range of perspectives.

The organisation took a lot of time, especially on the part of the chief organiser, Rosemary Ashton. An original plan to video the event came to nothing because we were advised that the Cruciform Lecture Theatre 1 was too dark to make for a successful video. There was also the problem that it would be troublesome and expensive to take the necessary equipment into the building. So we abandoned the idea and got a PhD helper to take photographs instead.

Though we contacted A/V in good time and engineers did come to set up on the day, some audience members (and feedback forms) complained that some of the speakers could not be heard very well – because the microphone on the rostrum was placed too far from the speakers. The individual microphones on the speakers' table worked well, as did the two roving microphones.

A few participants complained that there were no refreshments other than water at the first break – this was because there are no refreshment facilities in the Cruciform Building. We had originally intended to repair to the North Cloisters for tea and biscuits, but when we became aware of the large number of attendees, we abandoned the plan, as it would have taken far longer than the 30 minutes allotted for the break. (It would also have added considerably to our tight budget.) We brought water to the Cruciform lecture theatre as a consolation.

Looking back, what things do you wish you had known when the project started?

Please list anything you feel would have been helpful to know at the start which could have made the project easier.

It would have been good to know that the Cruciform does not allow for refreshments; we might have sought a different venue. Alternatively we should have foreseen the time difficulties involved in shifting large numbers across Gower Street and back and trimmed the first session by 30 minutes to make time. But it has to be said that the feedback on that session was very positive and that no-one suggested it had been too long. We would, however, take the logistical problem into better account on a future occasion.

It would have been good also to know the LT 1 is not good for videoing (why is that?). And something ought to be done to make such large lecture theatres failsafe in terms of the sound system. Not all speakers are good at projecting their voices, so some compensation ought to be made.

Has the project led to any new activity or relationships? *For example has the project led to any changes within the department or any changes in teaching or research? Please give details.*

Not really applicable to this event.

But our feedback form asked for ideas for future occasions, and suggestions included a day about London or cities in general, a day on Dickens, one on T. S. Eliot, one on the BM, a collaboration with the History of Medicine on great medical practitioners in Bloomsbury, a day on the squares of Bloomsbury, a day on the Rossettis and Pre-Raphaelites and their connection with Bloomsbury, a day for other brilliant UCL alumni to talk – Ricky Gervais was named by one.

Which of the Beacon aim(s) did it address? *The aims for the Beacon for Public Engagement Programme are as follows:*

Create a culture within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students	<u>yes</u>
Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved	<u>yes</u>
Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level	
Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise	<u>yes</u>
Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning	

Specifically, how does the project addresses these aims?

Our event helped to embed public engagement aims by bringing a much wider audience to a UCL event than is usual and by engaging with them through question and answer sessions, informal chat over drinks afterwards, and through the feedback forms.

We hope we have encouraged other departments of UCL (represented on the day

by staff from many different departments) to try something similar. Our own graduate students were involved in organising and in one case in speaking, and several undergraduates attended.

We hope that the obvious success of the day (Rosemary Ashton received over 20 follow-up emails from speakers and participants enthusing about the event in addition to the appreciation expressed in the feedback forms) will encourage others to follow our example.

In our case, we tested whether you can entice people from outside the institution, and with a wide range of interests, to come to an event. We found that we could, though we think that the hard work we put into advertising and leafleting was essential in this, as well as the intrinsic fascination of the subject. Also the word of mouth that has built up by the increasing public visibility of the Bloomsbury Project through talks given by its leaders inside UCL and in other organisations (and see the Project video on the UCL website – done in October 2009, it is the third most viewed of UCL’s videos). The feedback forms showed that word of mouth was the second most frequent method of people hearing about the event, after email.

More information: *Please attach photographs of what happened, if you have one. Please also list any titles or links to more information on the project (for example reports, articles, websites).*

See www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project for a report on Bloomsbury Day by Dr Juliette Atkinson. The report is also published on the UCL English Department homepage.