

PDN External Communication strategy

The Communications Committee was set up in 2014 and has two overall goals:

1. Facilitate internal communication, by ensuring all members of PDN have access to relevant information and are informed about events relating to Departmental research, teaching, welfare & wellbeing and administration.
2. Ensure that the goals and achievements of all members of PDN are acknowledged and communicated effectively within and beyond PDN and the University.

Our specific goals are to:

- Provide access to information about people, resources, training, opportunities
- Share key goals of PDN: teaching, research, wellbeing, public engagement
- Share the achievements of all members of PDN
- Promote interaction, and thus wellbeing

To do this, we use a variety of traditional and digital media.

External communication strategy

For External Communication, our goals are primarily to disseminate our research and teaching goals and achievements as well as our science-based activities, such as outreach and public engagement, to people outside of PDN.

1. Scientific dissemination

All members of PDN are encouraged to actively pursue the external communication of their research. To realise the full potential of the scientific achievements of PDN technical and research staff, a system to collect, review and promote interesting research stories through various means of communication is established.

Principal Investigators are encouraged to notify the Communications Co-ordinator about upcoming research papers. All research papers published are listed on the website. The Communications Co-ordinator searches for PDN-linked research publications: we ask PIs to cite PDN in a standardised fashion whenever they submit a study for publication.

In many cases, publications form the basis for interesting local, national or international news items that showcase the output of the Department. The Communications Co-ordinator can help with this and will liaise with the University Office of External Affairs (and any other relevant office in case of research funded by specific organisations) to produce a press release or other media considered appropriate. The Co-ordinator can also oversee production and editing of support

material, which will be sent to the researcher involved for review, such as social media posts, photos, quotes, videos and public events.

We encourage PIs to notify the Co-ordinator of all media enquiries received. The Co-ordinator will support them in liaising with journalists. This also helps in building a centralised list of PDN mentions in the news. All content for communication and dissemination should be reviewed and edited by the Co-ordinator for sign-off before the final release.

We would also like to hear about new technological developments in the Department, which may be research lab-based or teaching lab-based.

The Communications Chair and Co-ordinator and members of the Committee will scout for potential candidates and support them in the production of blogs, articles and social media content about their research.

PDN has two major seminar series with invited speakers. These are promoted through the website, TV screens and email lists.

There is an annual PDN Research Symposium (usually March-April) at which the graduate students, postdocs and some PIs present their research. All research staff are expected to attend this.

2. Teaching dissemination

PDN is a major teaching hub in the School of Biological Sciences. We have a high standard of undergraduate and graduate student teaching. We aim to showcase the teaching that we do, including the core teaching activities as well as innovations in teaching methods and ideas. We encourage members of PDN to contact us about teaching initiatives and achievements: this includes the academic staff who often deliver the teaching, and also the technical and administrative staff who support the teaching and the development of courses.

The Communications Chair and Co-ordinator and members of the Committee will scout for potential candidates and support them in the production of blogs, articles and social media content about their teaching.

3. Events

PDN is actively involved in the organisation and promotion of public engagement and outreach events. Some current members of PDN contribute to scientific programmes that are open to the public, including Summer Schools, Master-classes and Schools events (e.g. Sutton Trust). Other more internally focused events include Open Day sessions. The Co-ordinator can help to ensure these events are promoted appropriately. To improve the outreach to former members of the Department, an event tailored to Alumni similar to the ones organised by colleges could also be possible.

We encourage all members of PDN to get involved in existing public science events, such as the Cambridge Science Festival and the Cambridge Festival of Ideas, Pint of Science, Famelab and TED Talks. The Co-ordinator is responsible for collecting ideas for events and proposing them to the respective festivals.

All events will be advertised with posters, TV displays, tweets on social media and mentions on the newsletter according to their importance.

4. Presentation to the external community

In an age where prospective students, employees, assessors and reviewers first encounter us via the website and social media, it is vital that we all put effort into our digital profiles.

We encourage members of PDN to

- (i) keep their webpages and social media feeds (if applicable) current
- (ii) use a clear and consistent style across all media, keeping written content simple and accessible to everyone
- (iii) adhere to University official guidelines provided by the Office of External Affairs and Communications when using images, fonts, colours, templates and logos, to ensure that all content is readily identified with the Department and the University.

In the case of Academic webpages, the Co-ordinator will ask all PIs to provide key information (Appendix A) through an emailed request form and this will be used to build the new pages, which can be then edited by both the Co-ordinator and the PIs. This ensures a consistent academic web page format.

To be visually more appealing, the website will aim to use high quality images. New images will be collected photo-shoots commissioned to either the Anatomy Visual Media Group or to external professionals if necessary, University digital assets which are accessible to staff, and free science image services, such as Wellcome Images and Wikimedia Commons will also be used, especially for historical pictures which require no permission. Researchers who possess science images from their studies are encouraged to send them to the Communications Co-ordinator to develop a centralised shared gallery.

5. Social media

PDN will support the promotion of its activities with the use of selected social media channels. The Communications Co-ordinator is responsible for the channels and will ensure that the content is shared regularly in an engaging and accurate way. The Co-ordinator will also interact with other users through the channel and address their comments. Only the Co-ordinator and selected representatives should have access to these channels.

The main social media channel is the PDN official Twitter account @PDN_Cambridge. The account has been revamped and is now sharing content at least once a week. Potential content on Twitter includes: news and announcements, upcoming events,

high profile seminars, feature articles, interesting and striking scientific images, media about studying and working at the department, live tweeting from seminars and conferences, studentship opportunities, job ads and anything else considered noteworthy.

Tweets from the official account should adhere to the style guidelines, include twitter handles and hashtags if relevant, and include a link to the PDN website and a picture if possible. We encourage members of staff who use twitter to follow the official account and retweet it when possible. The account is also part of the official University of Cambridge listing, so some retweeting is expected.

Appendix A

Academic web page information

- **Full name and title** at the top of the page.
- **Profile photo**, in 250x250 px format, to display on the left hand side.
- **Additional captioned photos**, maximum 2-3, in the right format, to be displayed on the right hand side below navigation. Captions should not exceed 2 sentences.
- **Brief sentence** to summarise the main research interest. This will be included at the top of the page and in the Contacts list page to give visitors general idea of the research interest of the specific PI.
- **Contact information** at the top of the page written in the same format.
- **Additional info** such as availability to PhDs, written in the same format.
- **Detailed description of main research interests** already exists in most pages and will only need some edits for style.
- **List of research team** and main collaborators will be a separate page linked from navigation on the right hand side. Researchers and collaborators will have the ability to create their own page or link to their own site if they so desire. This helps raise the profile of young researchers within the department who may need to display their information in case of grant applications.
- **Publication highlights** will list only an handful of selected publications: the full list will be accessible from the right hand side menu (either a link to Pubmed/Symplectic or a subpage where PIs can upload the complete list).
- **Related pages** which may be of interest, such as the Research pages, will be added and linked in the right hand side menu.

Academic staff pages that are hosted on other websites (such as the Gurdon Institute) will not be affected by this and the PDN website will simply link to the existing ones.