

DRIVING ACADEMIC DIVERSITY IN OUR MEDIA VOICES

A University Alliance campaign to increase the diversity of academic voices in the media

CAMPAIGN CONTEXT

University Alliance are setting out to establish far greater appreciation of our member's academic expertise through supporting more academics to engage with the media, while also increasing the diversity of our experts in order to provide a more representative range of media commentators.

WHY

We estimate that less than a fifth of academic experts from across our institutions have had any level of media involvement in recent years, and this is too often not representative of the diversity of the academic community.

Furthermore there is low awareness amongst the public as to the great research taking place at non-traditional universities.

Central to UA's mission is unlocking potential and effecting change, and we recognise the historic underrepresentation of diverse voices in the media and are committed to taking action to diversify the academic pipeline and increase diversity of our experts in the media.

We are committed to raising the collective value and status of applied research undertaken by our universities, whilst also being well placed to promote the different strengths and contributions of our 12 individual members.

Our academics have a perfect blend of academic analysis and industry experience from a wide range of sectors – able to provide relatable, engaging research to the public.

Through UA's Doctoral Training Alliance programme we can support and nurture a pool of talented early-career researchers to better maximise opportunities for external engagement.

WHY UA

OUR GOALS

1. Double the number of UA academics participating in media opportunities over 3 years.
2. Increase diversity of our UA media commentators - ensuring it represents the diversity of UA members regardless of their ethnicity, age, gender or disability.
3. Raise the profile of UA members within the media and drive interest in Alliance universities as a tremendous source of media expertise.
4. Generate awareness of the value of research conducted by UA members within the media and the wider public domain.

OUR TARGETS

Grow the number of mentions of UA academics gaining relevant media coverage - from an estimated 1,742 to 3,484 in 3 years' time*.

Vastly increase the diversity of our academics who have a voice in the media.

The benefits to the academic community

Media experience and coverage supports academics by: increasing public interest and engagement; stimulating external impact opportunities; providing evidence-based content; championing the subject matter; developing communications skills; opening doors and connections; and reaching out to the world.

It raises the profile of Alliance universities within the media and the wider public domain.

The benefits to the media

The media will have more diversity in their sources of expert opinion and input - and this will allow for a better representation of differing voices and backgrounds reflected in media coverage.

Media will also benefit from our distinctive family of applied experts - blending real-world experience with academic insight to provide relatable, engaging research to the public.

How?

Recognising the barriers and obstacles many face in taking up media opportunities, we have developed a campaign approach that supports and develops academics whilst drawing on UA's platform to secure opportunities. There will be a specific focus on promoting diversity and representation throughout the campaign.

Peer support - we have recruited 60 x diverse and representative media-active academics to be our media champions, providing encouragement and on-call guidance to those wanting to learn more and seize opportunities.

Expert profiling - our media champions are profiled on a dedicated and external online experts centre (Expertfile), a go-to source for journalists seeking expert opinion, which also lives on our website. UA will proactively profile its experts through targeted outreach and campaigns.

Professional coaching - we have enlisted a professional media coach to help those who want formal knowledge, insight and training in media-ready skills.

Campaigning - we are working with our member university media teams to stimulate more academic interest in the media and raise awareness of their own expertise, and take a proactive approach to improving diversity of expertise covered in the media.

Media outreach - we're planning events to bring journalists and academics together to explore better ways of meeting mutual interests and champion the importance of diverse representation.

Facilities - we are encouraging the sharing of high-level media kit and professional studio space between our member universities (when possible).

Sharing successes - during our campaign we'll be highlighting examples of our successes and resulting media coverage, and sharing progress against benchmarks and lessons learned.

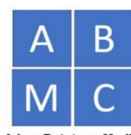
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*We have used data supplied by a media monitoring agency to provide an indication of the total number of mentions of a UA member institution "academic", "expert" or "researcher" in UK quality media over the academic year period 2019-20. We will use the same method to track changes in media performance year on year towards our three year target.