

Policy and Position Papers

An Initial Workshop

FilmEU - Online

Daithí Mac Síthigh / 10 April 2025

What we are going to talk about

1000 WET, Thursday 10 April

- Green and white papers
- Policies and briefs
- What does an effective policy / position paper look like?
- Thinking about users - activity
- Evaluating papers - questions to ask
- Evaluating papers - activity
- Report back

Summary

Why are we here?

- Many institutions and research projects are now expected to engage in a wider range of activities to disseminate and communicate research.
- In this workshop we will examine a number of models for communicating research outcomes and findings to particular audiences and users.

European Universities

Expected Impact

- Increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of participating higher education institutions on the global scene, by becoming stronger together through deeper transnational cooperation and seamless mobility of students, academics and researchers, and **creating and sharing knowledge**, developing new concepts, technologies and innovation at unprecedented speed.
- Act as **actors of change** for the digital and green transitions, for Europe's recovery and future resilience.

We will configure a European University that fosters the concretisation of the knowledge square in relevant fields – contributing to the ongoing structural, economic and material reconfigurations of the cultural and creative industries, but also to the transformation of our HEIs, via innovation, interdisciplinarity and cooperation



Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

Call for proposals

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities – ERASMUS-EDU-
2023-EUR-UNIV



Papers, Green and White

‘Classic’ legislative process definition

- **Green Paper**
 - Classic ‘consultation paper’ - first stage towards reform of law and/or policy
 - Survey of work, outlining of options.
- **White Paper**
 - Final major pre-legislative stage (though may still be open for comment).
 - Expresses a government’s view on what the next steps should be

White Papers and Beyond

How many shades of white would you like?

- European Commission - pre-legislative, towards political consensus on a topic
- Commercial - for information of (potential?) clients / customers, but not necessarily selling a specific product
- 'Yellow' papers - technical?

Policy Brief, Briefing Paper, etc

I'll keep this brief...

- Policy Brief
 - Typically 'translates' research outputs (which may be published elsewhere and/or to a different audience) into actionable insights
 - Often for a non-academic (though can still be specialised) audience
- Briefing Paper
 - Can be a 'background note' setting out perspectives or literature on a given topic
 - Can be a 'decision memo' setting out a recommendation followed by underpinning analysis / arguments
- Note: these are not systematic or rapid reviews (formality)

A good policy / position paper

Some initial thoughts - but not really...

- Clarity of expression:
 - I understand the issue better than I did before I picked it up **AND/OR**
 - I understand the the perspective of the authors better than I did before I picked it up
- Grounded in research **AND/OR** expertise
- ‘More than the sum of its parts’ or ‘lowest common denominator’ - **both are valid**
- **CAN** magnify / multiply other work (including published work)
- **MAYBE**: States and defends a position

Policy knowledge transfer

Adapted from Arnautu & Dagenais (2021)

- Barriers to use of evidence in policy
 - ◆ accessibility (eg information overload, how to find),
 - ◆ disregarded
 - ◆ applicability (eg context of state or administration)
- Uses:
 - ◆ instrumental
 - ◆ **conceptual**
 - ◆ persuasive

Policy knowledge transfer

Adapted from Arnautu & Dagenais (2021)

- What do users (decision-makers) want?
 - Read in 30-60 minutes
 - Concise and open to quick examination and interpretation
 - Understandable, user-friendly, visually appealing, easy to access
 - Tailored to target audience
 - Appropriately timed
 - Clear focus on information of interest
 - Recommendations

How to mobilise users / readers

Adapted from IUA (2022)

- Who is this knowledge **valuable to**?
- Who might use this knowledge to inform **policies, programmes, products or services**?
- Who needs this information in order to **perform better**, or to advocate for better performance?
- What **relationships** are required in order to ensure the right people, organisations, and institutions **know about and can access** findings?
- What practice-based **problems** exist that this work or project might inform?
- Which **policies, programmes or services** could be improved by **integrating** this work or project?
- What **practices or behaviours** might be changed based on **integrating** this work or project?
- Could **knowledge, attitudes and skills**, whether technical or professional, be **shared** beyond this work or project?

Exercise 1

Who are your users?

- Participants are asked to think of an aspect of their work (or that of colleagues at their institution) and who the ‘users’ of it might be (aside from students and fellow teachers/researchers).
- Q1 - What work are we talking about?
- Q2 - Who are the ‘users’?

Assessing a paper

F.A.I.L.E.D.

- **Focus** – what areas are the subject of emphasis? Are there particular theories or methods or approaches that are specifically included?
- **Audience** – who is going to read the paper? How does it ‘speak’ to them? What is done to ensure that it will be ‘useful’ for the audience?
- **Intention** – what problem does the paper seek to solve? Is the priority to demonstrate a ‘common position’ on the part of the authors? Or make an appeal for a particular decision or outcome? Or provide information that others will utilise?

Assessing a paper

F.A.I.L.E.D.

- **Language** – how technical or specialist is the language? Is there a summary or a graphic that communicates key aspects? What background knowledge does it assume (or communicate / seek to agree upon)?
- **Evidence** – does the paper present relevant evidence (whether from the authors or from other sources)? Is the evidence found in the paper itself or through references? What sort of approaches are taken or relied upon e.g. economic statistics, fieldwork, experiments, philosophy, comparative?
- **Depth** – how long is the paper, both in terms of words and pages? Does it stand alone or does it relate to another piece of work? Is it part of a series? Does it seek to offer broad coverage of a topic and sub-topics, or is it focused on a smaller number of key points?

Exercise 2 - Overview

Group work

(1) Apply the six FAILED questions to a paper

(2) Identify one thing you really liked about it

(3) Identify one thing you would improve about it

Exercise 2 - Papers

Each group to look at one paper

1. Centre for European Policy Studies, *Tackling the EU's digital ambitions over the next five years* https://cdn.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-09_DPI.pdf
2. Chartered Accountants Ireland, *Reducing Red Tape* <https://www.charteredaccountants.ie/thought-leadership/resources/position-papers/the-next-financial-year-reducing-red-tape>
3. REBOOT project, *Developing young people's Engagement with European Cinema via the Youth Audience Award* <https://thereboot-project.eu/pdfs/policy-003.pdf>
4. VU Brussel (SMIT Research Group), *Policy Brief #77 (Flemish news consumption)* [https://smit.research.vub.be/sites/default/files/2024-06/SMIT_Policy_Brief_77_June_2024\[36\]_0.pdf](https://smit.research.vub.be/sites/default/files/2024-06/SMIT_Policy_Brief_77_June_2024[36]_0.pdf)
5. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, *Audiences and workforces in arts, culture and heritage* <https://pec.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Audiences-and-workforces-Policy-Brief-Creative-PEC-Policy-Brief-July-2024.pdf>