

PCST Venice Symposium

September 28 - 30 | 2023



Science communication education and training

Challenges and strategies for research and academic institutions

Several studies and indicators point to increasing attention and resources devoted by academic institutions to public communication and public engagement of citizens with research results and activities. Such opening up is well documented at policy level, at the level of universities, or at the level of individual researchers building a public profile.

However, in many cases this increasing effort is not always matched by a real change in the institutional culture with respect to public communication and public engagement, with the risk that activities and resource are mainly and generically aimed at increasing institutional visibility across media.

A key element in this change in the institutional culture is the need of developing an awareness for the importance of science communication among researchers and particularly among the new generations of researchers across all fields (natural, social, human sciences). As the pandemic crisis contributed to show with its unprecedented exposure of scientists as public experts, one of the key challenges is not so much providing researchers with practical communication skills, but helping them to better understand the dynamics and audiences of science communication as well as the responsibilities involved in public communication.

At the same time, the education of professionals in the field of science communication have to match the new needs and demands of academic institutions, as well as the shift of research communication activities from the traditional news media to academic institutions.

Hosted by Venice International University, a leading international network of universities, the symposium intends to address these challenges by putting together, on the one hand, the expectations and needs of academic institutions in the area of science communication, and on the other hand, the theoretical and empirical knowledge and the practical experience of the PCST community.

Key questions for the symposium will include the following:

- How can a general understanding of the role and importance of science communication become an element in the education, career development and professional growth of new generations of researchers?
- What type of training activities can be offered to meet the needs of young researchers and their institutions, while at the same time taking into account the development and acquisitions of scicomm theory and research?
- How is the demand for institutional science communicators in science communication in academic institutions changing and how are science communication courses addressing such change?
- What role can science communication scholars and practitioners play to help institutions to address these challenges?
- What role can networks of academic and research institutions play in addressing these challenges?

About VIU

Venice International University (VIU) is an international association of universities from EU, USA, Africa, East Asia, and the Mediterranean with a common campus on the island of San Servolo in the Venice lagoon (www.univiu.org).

It coordinates international projects and activities on science communication, including QUEST (www.questproject.eu).



About PCST

The International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) is one of the first and widest international networks for the science communication.

The aim of the network is to multiply opportunities for exchange and co-operation among both researchers and professionals who work in the many diverse but complementary fields of public communication of science and technology. (www.pcst.network)

