



Academic Engagement

Com-pàirteachadh
Acadaimigeach

How to get your research into the Scottish Parliament

Mar as urrainn Pàrlamaid na h-Alba
an rannsachadh agad a chleachdadh



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Scottish Parliament is responsible for making laws, and scrutinising the Scottish Government. Parliament staff need access to relevant and timely evidence as well as an awareness of key policy issues and will draw upon many sources, including academic expertise.

Top tips for engaging

Make it relevant

Try and link your research to parliamentary business. If your research topic isn't on the parliamentary agenda, it's more difficult to find a way to demonstrate how your research can be of benefit.

Communicate

When it comes to writing for parliamentarians – be clear, explicit and accurate.

Keep up to date

Sign-up for alerts, feeds and weekly e-bulletins to keep up to date with what's happening in Parliament.

Get connected

Contact the Knowledge Exchange expert in your own organisation. They should be able to support your engagement with Parliament and may have their own contacts.

Ways to engage

MSP

Why

If you have a specific research interest on a devolved matter, you can get in touch directly with a Member of the Scottish Parliament ('MSP' or 'Member').

To help you, an MSP might:

- speak in a debate
- propose a change in the law
- raise the issue with a committee
- raise awareness
- ask the First Minister or another Scottish Government Minister a question



How?

Meet with an MSP

You can meet with an MSP face-to-face at Holyrood or at their local constituency office surgeries.

Find out which MSP is interested in your subject or policy area

It's worth discovering if there are any MSPs with a particular interest in your subject area. Each MSP has their own page on the Parliament's website which lists the Committees and Cross-Party Groups they sit on. It also lists their most recent speeches, motions, questions and voting record.

Individual MSP and Party websites

It's also worth looking on individual party websites and/or individual MSP's personal websites to find out which policy areas they are engaging with.

Attend an event hosted by an MSP

The Parliament hosts a wide range of events and exhibitions, including those that have a direct link to the work of parliamentary committees and those sponsored by MSPs. Event and exhibition information can be found on the Homepage of the Parliament's website.

→ [More information on individual MSPs](#)

Ways to engage

SPICe

Why

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre, or SPICe as it's commonly referred to, is the Parliament's internal research hub and provides an impartial information and research service to MSPs, MSP staff, and other Parliament staff including Committee Clerks.

SPICe is staffed by information and subject specialists who need to be aware of key policy issues in their subject areas.

SPICe provides a range of engagement opportunities for academics to engage with SPICe colleagues and the wider Parliament.



How?

Speak at a SPICe Seminar

SPICe hosts a regular series of SPICe Seminars to develop understanding and awareness of issues and encourage engagement and debate. Seminars are attended by MSPs, MSP staff and Parliament staff and SPICe invite academics speakers to present at these seminars.

Apply for a SPICe Fellowship

SPICe hosts an annual Academic Fellowship Scheme which enables academics to work on projects and communicate analysis which would otherwise not be possible. The Scheme aims to increase the use of academic knowledge, skills and research within the Parliament and promote knowledge and understanding of the Parliament within the academic sector.

Apply to be a PhD Intern

SPICe hosts a number of PhD students every year. Students are recruited via the UK Research and Innovation Policy Internships (UKRI) Scheme. During a 3-month placement in SPICe, interns are expected to work with one of our researchers to complete a SPICe Briefing.

→ [More information about SPICe Academic Engagement](#)

Committees

Why

Committees play a central part in the work of the Parliament. This is where MSPs scrutinise the work of the Scottish Government by:

- holding inquiries into subjects relating to the work of the Committee
- examining legislation, including bills and subordinate legislation
- taking evidence from witnesses to assist in their inquiries
- considering petitions that have been submitted by members of the public and groups who wish to raise an issue



How?

Take part in a Committee meeting

Committees can invite and have the power to require witnesses to submit written evidence and attend to give oral evidence.

Contribute to a Committee Inquiry

A Committee Inquiry is an important tool used by Committees to hold the Scottish Government to account and to scrutinise in detail its policy and administration. Suggestions for possible topics for Committee inquiries can come from a variety of sources including academics and external interest groups.

Join an Expert Panel

Several Committees have developed their own 'Panel of Experts' or Advisors. They can provide advice to MSPs on a range of subjects relevant to the Committee's remit.

Take Part in a Consultation Exercise

Consultations may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, including questionnaires, written papers, public meetings, focus groups, or on-line discussion forums.

→ [More information on the work of Committees](#)

Scotland's Futures Forum

Why

Scotland's Futures Forum is the Scottish Parliament's futures think-tank. It works on a non-party basis to promote research and to stimulate debate on the long-term challenges and opportunities that Scotland faces.

How?

Get involved in a Scotland's Futures Forum event

Scotland's Futures Forum hosts regular discussions and seminars to present ideas to engage parliamentarians and challenge their thinking.

These events often include academics and external experts who are willing to share their experience and expertise

→ [More information about Scotland's Futures Forum](#)



Cross-Party Groups

Why

Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) provide an opportunity for Members of all parties and outside organisations, including academics, to meet and discuss a shared interest in a cause or subject.

How?

Join a Cross-Party Group

Joining a CPG will enable you to meet with MSPs. The Parliament's website contains an A-Z list of CPGs with details of their individual remits as well as information on how to get involved.

There are currently over 100 CPGs operating in the Parliament covering a vast range of topics.

→ [More information on Cross-Party Groups](#)





Petitions

Why

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If you would like to raise awareness of an issue, the petitions process allows you to get your issue on the Scottish Parliament's agenda.

How?

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Submit a petition

The Parliament's website contains information on how to start a petition, what you can petition about, what you need to include in your petition as well as offering some handy hints about using the petitions system.

'How to get your research into the Scottish Parliament' is produced by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe).

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