



Mile End Institute Strategy 2023-2028

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FOREWORD

Professor Frances Bowen, Vice-Principal for Humanities and Social Sciences

Queen Mary is a leading global research-intensive University committed to improving lives locally, nationally and internationally.



Organised across three Faculties, the University strives to catalyse our position as an anchor institution within East London to celebrate the diversity within our communities, our global reach, and our engagement with local institutions.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is committed to research and teaching excellence, offering programmes of research and study across a wide range of disciplines, including commercial law, politics, geography, drama and film studies. Our central focus on public engagement, partnerships, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and the generation of research with broad and compelling societal impacts is supported through research centres such as the Mile End Institute (MEI). With an ever-growing and well-established presence within the landscape of UK politics and policymaking, the MEI has built a reputation for stimulating debate on key issues, and working closely with policymakers in central and local government. In particular, the Institute seeks to instill the

importance of institutional memory and historical understanding in contemporary political and political debate.

The MEI Strategy 2023-2028 harnesses these strengths. MEI's objectives align with the University's wider ambitions to 'generate new knowledge, challenge existing knowledge, and engage locally, nationally and internationally to create a better world' (Strategy 2030). The strategy is centred around three broad aims: 1) to drive policy and political debate of importance to our society and economy; 2) to enhance Queen Mary's contribution to the policymaking environment of the UK; and 3) to engage students and postgraduate researchers in policy work. The MEI works with research support teams across the University, notably the Centre for Public Engagement, the Impact team, and the Global Policy Institute. I am excited to see how this 'joined up' approach to working unfolds to the benefit of our academics, Faculty and wider University.

We are proud of our place within East London. The MEI's programme will support Queen Mary in its goal of working with and for local residents, businesses, the NHS, local government, the arts and cultural sector, alongside voluntary and community organisations as part of its Civic University Agreement.



Image credit: ©Queen Mary University London

INTRODUCTION

The Mile End Institute (MEI) was founded in 2015 under the guidance of our patron, Lord Hennessy, and brings together politicians, policymakers, the Queen Mary community, and the public to debate the major challenges facing East London and the UK. The MEI draws on a wide range of expertise from the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR) and the School of History, alongside the research community in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and throughout Queen Mary, University of London.

Our team of academics and policy professionals aim to stimulate and inform policy debate to achieve more effective decision-making, policy delivery and accountability across government and civil society. MEI staff and Fellows have direct experience of working in both academia and public policy, bringing a comprehensive understanding of practical policy processes, alongside the historical and political context in which policy debates and decisions are made. A core strength of MEI is the Institute's capacity to apply a historical perspective to key policy issues in an era where institutional memory within government and politics is very often in short supply.

Since 2015, the MEI has led on a host of activities aimed at raising the profile of Queen Mary research in policy circles, surfacing key questions in policy debates, and curating relationships with key external stakeholders. Such activities have included:

- Major conferences, seminars and events: showcasing Queen Mary's expertise and engaging public audiences
- Policy projects: partnering with think tanks and civil society organisations to address cross-cutting challenges including health inequalities, devolution to sub-regional government in England, modernising the British constitution, examining the impact of fiscal austerity, the battle for gender equality in Parliament, and developing the concept of well-being as a framework for public policy in London.
- Polling: gauging the views and opinions of citizens throughout London and the wider UK in partnership with YouGov and Number Cruncher Politics.
- Podcasts: featuring prominent commentators and practitioners across academia, Parliament and Government
- Blogs and policy briefings: sharing insights on key issues in the public, private and civil society sectors with policy stakeholders.

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IMPACT IS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY AT QUEEN MARY


We aim to support colleagues' capacity to create sustained policy impact from their research. The MEI is aligned with Strategy 2030, the Research Impact Strategy, the Global Policy Institute, the Civic University Agreement, as well as the corporate strategy for Tower Hamlets, the Borough in which we are located. This strategy draws together overarching, institutional level priorities which are shared across Faculties and teams articulated in Queen Mary's Research Highways and the Global Policy Institute's Strategic Pathways.

The MEI Strategy is based around three strategic objectives that strive to:

1. Drive debate and informed discussion between policymakers, academia, local communities, and commentators around the political, economic and policy challenges facing the UK, East London and the Thames Estuary.
2. Enhance the Mile End Institute's and Queen Mary's reputation for policy engagement and impact, underpinned by high-quality interdisciplinary research drawing on diverse perspectives.
3. Empower students and postgraduate researchers within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and throughout Queen Mary, as citizens and engaged participants in political and policy debate.

At the MEI, we want to extend the frontiers of evidence-informed policy debate, utilising the very best research in the humanities and social sciences to help solve the most intractable contemporary policy problems, while addressing the inequities and injustices that still afflict our society.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Strategic Objective 1: Drive debate and informed discussion between policymakers, academia, local communities, and commentators around the political, economic and policy challenges facing the UK, East London and the Thames Estuary.

Image credit: Maria Teneva on Unsplash

Identify, engage with, and showcase the work of a diversity of scholars whose research has the potential to positively impact the policy programme of future governments and public authorities.

Promote dialogue and debate on key public policy questions between academia, policymakers, civil society and elected politicians.

Support Queen Mary's existing partnerships with Tower Hamlets and Newham councils, Citizen's UK, the London Research and Policy Partnership (LRaPP) and Tower Hamlet's Health Determinants Research Collaboration to strengthen institutional links and knowledge exchange forums between government, business and civil society.

Promote a truly long-term perspective in public debate ('looking around the corner') that rebuilds institutional memory throughout the policymaking process and the institutions of government.

Contribute to the formulation and adoption of policies that help create a more inclusive society and reduce all forms of inequality.

Enhance Queen Mary's research culture through increasing opportunities for Queen Mary researchers and staff to gain first-hand experience working within or with policy organisations through the East London Research Network (ELRN), the Civic Champions Network, and the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences.

Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the Mile End Institute's and Queen Mary's reputation for policy engagement and impact, underpinned by high-quality inter-disciplinary research.

Image credit: Stephen Swainz

Promote the MEI's reputation as a source of high-quality research for informing policymaking.

Build capacity across Queen Mary's researchers, especially those at early to mid-career stage or from under-represented backgrounds, to engage with public policy throughout the UK.

Foster an environment and culture of policy engagement that will lead to sustained policy impact and feed into preparations for the next Research Excellence Framework.

Increase our contribution to, and benefit from, the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) as a means of raising the visibility of MEI with other universities and policy teams.

Enhance our networks by drawing on alumni relationships particularly through the School of Politics and International Relations, the School of History and throughout HSS.

Deliver a high-profile and large-scale event to celebrate the MEI's 10-year anniversary in 2025.

Continue to collaborate effectively with the MEI's Visiting Fellows and the Centre for Arts and Culture's Cultural Advocacy Fellows.



Farah Hussain 'In Conversation' with Shadow Health Secretary, Wes Streeting MP, November 2023. Photo credit: Gary Schwartz

Strategic Objective 3: Empower students and postgraduate researchers within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and throughout QMUL, as citizens and engaged participants in political and policy debate.

Image credit: Stephen Swainz

Engage on a systematic and sustained basis with students at all levels of the University to help develop the next generation of policymakers and politicians.

Collaborate with colleagues delivering Masters programmes in SPIR and History, and comparable programmes across the university, to strengthen employability and work experience for students.

Design and deliver teaching resources and engagement programmes to help students build the skills necessary for engaging with policy audiences and to develop successful careers.

Work with colleagues to build employability objectives and career pathways into Parliament, politics and public policy for all of our students.



Queen Mary alumni and MEI Manager, Thomas Chidwick, with broadcaster Michael Cockerell.
Image credit: Gary Schwartz

GOVERNANCE

The Mile End Institute is re-establishing an Advisory Board to help promote the Institute to external audiences, enhance networks and connections, and ensure our work is attuned to wider policy contexts. The Board will feature senior officials, lawmakers, and local government and third sector representatives and will meet annually to horizon scan and identify strategic opportunities for the MEI to leverage and align to.

The internal MEI Team, including the Director, Deputy Directors, Manager, Policy Partnerships Manager, and Research Fellows will meet monthly to discuss progress against the Strategy and upcoming work. They will use other networks and forums across the university, such as the Impact Forum, to collaborate with colleagues working in other impact and

engagement teams, such as the Impact Team, the Global Policy Institute, the Centre for Public Engagement, QMi, the Centre for Arts and Culture, Deputy Vice Principals for Impact and Faculty Deputy Deans for Research Impact. These colleagues and stakeholders in strategic positions across the university will also be invited to join the MEI's final academic year team meeting each summer to ensure implementation of this Strategy, review plans for the following academic year, champion initiatives, and build consensus across the University to address institutional challenges.



MEI Co-Director, Professor Patrick Diamond, pictured with Marie Le Conte and Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy MP at an 'In Conversation' event in March 2023. Image credit: Gary Schwartz



Chloe Schendel-Wilson, Sir Robert Buckland, Bethany Bale, Dr Nicole Brown, Bal Deol, and Michelle Daley at an event co-organised by the MEI and the Disability Policy Centre. Image credit: Gary Schwartz

RESOURCE & COMMUNICATION

To increase the MEI's capacity for engagement and delivery, we will leverage internal funding alongside external funding opportunities through the humanities and social sciences' research councils, philanthropy and charitable foundations and offering fee-based training programmes. Internal opportunities such as the Queen Mary Impact Fund have the potential to enable us to lead impactful projects while we will also support colleagues in applying for inward and outward policy secondments under the Queen Mary Policy Secondment scheme. Where appropriate, we will aim to lead on major external research funding bids and support MEI colleagues to be named on interdisciplinary grant applications across the university.

We will be developing a communications strategy that will enable us to maximise our impact, focusing on key enablers such as our website, social media channels, and our monthly newsletter.



The MEI's long-running 'In Conversation' series welcomed Rushanara Ali, MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, in October 2023. Image credit: Gary Schwartz



Atlee Square at Queen Mary University of London's Mile End Campus. The acquisition of the Clement Atlee statue was supported by the MEI's founder and patron, Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield. Image credit: Stephen Swainz

Acknowledgments

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Contact

Mile End Institute
Queen Mary University London, Mile End Campus

qmul.ac.uk/mei
mei@qmul.ac.uk
[@MileEndInst](https://twitter.com/MileEndInst)