TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ACADEMICS

GOVERNMENT

01. GET ACADEMICS TO SUPPORT YOUR POINT.

- Academics care a lot about research rigour, validity, and take the 'long-view' of creating new knowledge. They are great at helping you push back on 'unreasonable asks' by others who don't share this view.
- Best to **bring in an academic early** in the project planning stages to save you time on how best to go about addressing an issue you might have.
- Academics are also **great at brainstorming idea**s, weighing out the options based on existing knowledge in their field, and being creative once we know what parameters you are working with.

02. ASK FOR ACADEMIC PAPERS.

- Academics LOVE talking about their work! They just don't know what you might need. Most academics are really eager to help and keen to hop on a call even for 30 minutes just to share knowledge with you.
- **Reach out to them directly** to see what they can offer.
- Academics may also have 'unpublished work' that may be useful so a quick chat is always best.
- **If you can tell them how their work is helping your work then that's the main motivation for getting them on board.** Consider this a 'quick win' in getting you up to speed on a specific area really quickly!

03. USE ACADEMICS AS A SOUNDING BOARD.

- Like you, academics don't know who to talk to in government. In addition to **Googling** academics, **word-of-mouth**, you can also approach **University offices** to see which academic has the expertise for you (e.g., UCL Expert Database, UCL Policy Lab).
- **Conferences** are also great events to meet your academic expert to help peer-review your work.
- Internally, you also have Science Advisory Committees, a group of SC cleared experts who can answer more sensitive queries and questions.

04. CURATE AN ACADEMIC & REVIEWER LIST.

- All academics - regardless of their specialty - peer-reviewer for their community (99% for free!)
- **Despite not having subject expertise they will still be able to objectively peer-review your report** for scientific rigour.
- But if you want methodological expertise, it may be best to seek out academics who have published in this area (e.g., NLP or AI).
- You want at least **three** sets of peer-reviewer comments for balance.

05. BE SPECIFIC WITH YOUR ASK.

- Academics can talk for ages so you have to **be very specific in your ask**.
- You may consider citing a paper or methodology of interest in your correspondence with them so they now exactly what you'd like them to talk about.
- E.g., "You just published this paper on X on a specific topic or method, can you summarise the pros and cons of this method?"
- **Invite academics to give a seminar**. You can also 'informally' get a sense of whether they would be good people for you to work with in the future (we do that too!)

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