**Introduction**

Regardless of our unique expertise, disciplines and skillsets, we are all able and obliged to promote and protect a just, safe and healthy existence. This sentiment is increasingly pertinent to academics. Within its mission-based accreditations, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administrations ([NASPAA](https://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/accreditation-step-step)) has adopted the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)) for pursuing “a better and more sustainable future for all”. In its 2029 Research Excellence Framework ([REF](https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/section-3-volume-measure-guidance/)), the United Kingdom requires top quality institutions to perform studies and work which have real-world uptake, use and impact.

Currently, Aberystwyth University supports various [centres and projects](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/innovation/irc/), seeking “solutions to global issues through fostering trans and interdisciplinary approaches”. This not only advances the institution’s [plan and mission](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/about-us/strategic-plan/#:~:text=Net%20Zero%20and%20Environment,own%20clean%20energy%20by%202030.), but echoes the UK’s REF definition of impact ([UKRI, 2022](https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/research-england/research-excellence/ref-impact/)). To advance these efforts further, however, a coalition dedicated to promoting such work is crucial.

**Goal**

The **Research Group for the Prevention** **of** **Exploitation, Atrocities, Corruption and Extremism** (**PEACE Research Group)** will promote efforts aiming to examine and oppose the misuse, abuse and manipulation of people, power, positions and platforms.

**Strategy and tactics**

**Collaboration**

Serving in a primarily supportive role, the PEACE Research Group will act as a link and liaison for staff, students and external partners to promote cooperation at local, national and international levels. Along with its regular communications, the group will host action-oriented networking events, attend conferences, arrange lectures, and schedule member meetups, etc.

Regarding said collaboration efforts, interest has already been expressed by several Aberystwyth University research centres and external parties (e.g., [The Institute of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention](https://www.binghamton.edu/i-gmap/about/index.html), [Palestine Solidarity Aberystwyth,](https://www.facebook.com/p/Palestine-Solidarity-Aberystwyth-Solidariaeth-Palestina-61572629754214/) [I-Intelligence](https://i-intelligence.eu/), [Do-Well](https://www.do-well.co.uk/), [Project LUNA](https://projectluna.co.uk/), [West Wales Against Arms](https://www.facebook.com/people/West-Wales-Against-Arms/61577990157371/)).

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| **Meeting Formats** | **Participants** | **Purposes** |
| A yellow rectangular object with a white border  AI-generated content may be incorrect.Board Meetings | Committee members | Administrative and logistical management |
| Think Tanks | Staff, students, experts | Sharing interests and brainstorming research |
| Socials | Open invitation | Introductions, recruitment, socialisation |

**Services and Engagement**

There is considerable discussion on how to define *research culture* within Higher Education. Based on aspects identified by the Royal Society ([2017](https://royalsociety.org/news-resources/publications/2018/research-culture-embedding-inclusive-excellence/)) and successful think tanks, the PEACE Research Group will foster positive, productive, creative, sound and open research. In part, this means identifying new issues and areas for joint efforts as well as promoting independent studies and events (e.g., the [Red Line Protest](https://herald.wales/north-wales/aberystwyth/aberystwyth-to-host-iconic-red-line-protest-for-palestine-on-saturday/), the [Anti-Slavery Wales Conference](https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-secretary-committed-fighting-modern-slavery), the [Unsettled Lives Exhibition](https://wp-research.aber.ac.uk/nsrefugeeswales/about-the-project/unsettled-lives/), the [Pathway to Peace Project](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2025/06/title-281561-en.html)).

Beyond this, by appointing managerial roles (e.g. Chair, Treasurer, Communications Director, Student Representative, etc.), the PEACE Research Group will further bolster engagement by developing its own opportunities and content. Eventually, the group could use the renovated Old College’s facilities (e.g., conference sites, the Centre for Dialogue, the Law Room and Moot Court, etc.) to advance the [university’s](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/oldcollege/future-plans/imagesandplans/) goals of providing a venue to “overcome shared challenges”.

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| **Group Services** | **Purposes** | **Examples** |
| Educational material | Raise public awareness and offer guidance around relevant issues. | Social media content, university website, handouts, lectures |
| Partner  resources | Update group members on the centre’s status and provide exclusive support. | Workshops, databases, newsletters, memos |
| Engagement opportunities | Encourage member and non-member participation and boost recruitment | Movies, galleries, volunteering, public demonstrations |

**Practice**

To optimise and expedite its societal and institutional goals, the PEACE Research Group will adopt and adapt its practices to compliment those of its members as well as consult administration management and peacemaking literature. Through top-down leadership (e.g., overseeing impact assessments, outreach efforts, event planning, funding ventures), staff and student volunteers (appointed to the group’s management team) will maintain the group’s services and relevance. Through bottom-up leadership (e.g., performing studies, running research hubs, developing projects), group members will work to share, study and solve real-world issues to embody and advance the group’s ethos.

Regarding its academic practices, the group will work with educators to identify opportunities and develop materials which reinforce the programmes and modules’ curriculum and pedagogical values (e.g., authentic learning, constructivism, inquiry-based learning, reflective teaching, etc.).

**Research**

Initially, the PEACE Research Group will perform [action research projects](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/hub/download/AR%20Guide_1568037589.pdf) , to develop curriculum around understanding and preventing exploitation, atrocities, corruption and extremism. For this, data will be collected to assess responses among students and staff. With proper funding and membership, the group will also pursue original studies into real-world issues.

**Agenda and Aims**

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| **2025** | **2026** | **2027** |
| * **A yellow rectangular object with a white border    AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Acquire funding * Recruit members * Develop branding * Appoint board members | * Identify areas for collaboration * Host events * Launch digital newsletter * Foster alumni connections * Maintain a funding pipeline calendar and shared resource hub | * Plan degree scheme * Create sponsorship opportunities * Develop an annual flagship conference |

**Additional measurements of success**

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| * Higher Education assessment scores * External memberships/accreditations * Student interest and involvement * Research and/or project assistance | * Coordination of events * PEACE Research Group website traffic * Citations/references in outside sources * Number of events and attendants |

**Contact Details**

If you are interested in shaping the PEACE Research Group from the ground up, or simply want to learn more, please contact **Dr Dakota Ward** at [**daw129@aber.ac.uk**](mailto:daw129@aber.ac.uk)**.**