

KEY INFORMATION

Engage adult audiences with your research at our after-hours Imperial Lates events.

What are Imperial Lates?

Imperial Lates are after-hours events for adult audiences to explore cutting-edge science and engineering at Imperial in creative ways. The Lates usually take place in the College main entrance, welcoming around 800–1000 curious members of the public to explore our research.

Each Lates programme is themed and brings together researchers from across the College to explore that theme through various activities including live demonstrations, creative workshops, interactive experiments and inspiring talks.

The Lates are organised by the Public Engagement team. If you would like to be involved, have an engagement idea to share, or would simply like to find out more, please contact lates@imperial.ac.uk.

Imperial Lates objectives:

- Support engagement of Imperial's areas of work and research under broad cross-college themes, which consider current societal trends and areas of public interest
- Inspire the public with our work through an accessible event that helps generate a feeling that science is for everyone
- Provide a platform for staff and students from different disciplines to participate in two-way engagement that provides new perspectives on their research whilst developing confidence, experience, skills and innovative practise in this area
- Develop a legacy to each Lates that leads to visitors or staff and students being motivated to participate in future events, creating new collaborations, or new ideas for work/research



Who takes part in the Lates?

Anyone from across the Imperial community – research staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students, professional staff and alumni – can take part in a Lates. We also welcome Imperial’s collaborators or partners to deliver activities alongside our staff and students as long as they have an Imperial element to them.



Why take part in the Lates?

- **It’s a great place to start your engagement journey.** It’s organised by the PE team who can provide advice on your engagement ideas and help to develop an activity. It’s also a relatively low time commitment being just a three-hour event.

“Thanks to you and the team for organising such a splendid event. I was stunned by the number, diversity and engagement of the audience. It is a great achievement.”

Lates exhibitor



- **Explore your research in creative ways:** we offer opportunities to collaborate with artists, be creative, try something new, think about your research in new ways.

“We were delighted at everyone’s zestful creativity and curiosity”

Lates exhibitor

- **Fun, informal environment:** Lates is a relaxed and friendly environment.

“It is such a fun evening out. Learning, exchanging thoughts and ideas”

Lates attendee

- **Meaningful conversations / dialogue with the public:** Lates attract an audience of engaged adults with genuine interest in our research providing a great opportunity for meaningful dialogue and to gauge or even collect public opinion on your work and think about your research in new ways.

“It was a privilege to be able to hear from the community - so many great discussions were had at the stall and at the talk. We hope to learn from the experience to expand on the concept for future events.”

Lates exhibitor

“The friendliness and ‘engageability’ (if that’s a word!) of the researchers and staff made me feel that although I’m not a scientist, I can be part of the work they’re doing by spreading the word about what I’ve learnt.”

Lates attendee



Ways to take part

The Lates programme consists of a variety of talks, workshops, demos, tours and more. To get an idea of how the whole evening works you can view example past programmes from [Beautiful Data Lates](#) and [Infectious Lates](#).

We welcome proposals and ideas from those who have ideas or have already delivered these types of content, as well as contact from people who are interested, but not sure how their research could be applied to these activities.



Here are some of the activities that academic teams or individuals have delivered at previous Lates:

Talks	From our main hour-long panel discussion which can attract 300 people, to our shorter more informal <i>A Day in the Life of...</i> series, we offer a wide range of talks and drop-in discussions across each evening and are always looking for budding inspiring speakers. Check out our resource <i>How do I give an engaging talk?</i>
Live demos and hands-on activities	Our most popular way to take part in the Lates, researchers develop simple yet effective demonstrations and experiments that act as gateways to conversations with the public. Take a look at our resource <i>How do I design a hands-on activity?</i>
Creative workshops	A creative workshop is an opportunity for visitors to get really hands-on and crafty. We usually pair researchers with an artist to develop these workshops. Collaborating with an artist can help you to look your research in a new light to produce a great engagement activity that you can be used again and again.
Collect public comment and opinion	The Lates attract a friendly and engaged audience who are interested to learn and share opinions. This presents a great opportunity for you to collect public comment and opinion on your research which can later be evaluated. See our resource <i>Collecting public opinion</i> .
And many more	Tours, performance, poetry, quizzes, card games, policy debates, exhibitions, installations, and we also welcome new ideas outside of these suggestions. Take a look at the resources in our <i>Engagement Toolkit</i> on our webpages for ideas, inspiration and guidance.



Time commitment and what to expect

Total time commitment for a researcher or student taking part in the Lates is approximately 4–7 hours meetings and planning pre-event, plus 4 hours on the night to set up and deliver your activity (this could be less if you are delivering a talk as opposed to running a workshop or exhibit or if your activity is adapted from something you have delivered before):

Two months out	Two months out	One month out	Two weeks out	One week out	On the night
Initial meeting with public engagement team (30 mins)	Developing ideas and activity (2–3 hours)	Correspondence with public engagement team (30 mins)	In person briefing meeting (1 hour)	Prep for evening (1–2 hours)	Delivery (4 hours – depending on the activity)

Case Studies

Read about researchers' experiences from the Xmas Lates in 2018:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/189469/imperial-researchers-share-their-fascination-with/>

Measurement and uncertainty, a giant pendulum experiment by artist Geraldine Cox and the Cold Matter physics team featured in Lates: Winter Wonderlab in 2019:

<https://www.findingpatterns.info/journalblog/2020/3/9/giant-pendulum-experiment>

