

Top tips

Presenting research to a policy audience

These tips have been generated through conversations with Scottish Government colleagues. The list can be used for report writing, presentations, blogs or any other format you are using to present your research.

The DOs

-  **Answer the questions. This is the most important point in all CXC outputs.**
-  **Keep it short. If your summary is more than two pages it likely won't be read.**
-  Frame your work. What is the broader picture, e.g. relevance to current strategies/plans other public interest hot topics? Remember to look outside your immediate field, e.g. fuel poverty is an important issue in relation to energy efficiency and/or energy use in buildings.
-  Explain why your suggestion/model is the best option, and how your suggestion can be implemented/method used. Be careful not to focus on the technical side of a model or methodology, focus on meaning, not method.
-  Make it visual. Can you make a graph/infographic? Seek inspiration outside of academia on how to present visually, e.g. browse bookshops for 'best data visualisation' type books.
-  Get to know the people you relate to in the Scottish Government. What is on their agenda?
-  Think of policy engagement as a short statement that you can unpack with detail/method/references etc if they ask.
-  Quantify and talk about the economics. How much public money can be saved, directly or through better value for money?
-  Point to specific benefits of your work, quantify them if you can. What would it bring to the people of Scotland?
-  Define any terms that may be read differently by different

audiences, e.g. how did you define a term like 'retrofit' in your work?

-  For current Scottish administration focus on the 'Scottishness' of your work, use Scottish example if available, and, if applicable, how your work will put Scotland at the leading edge of the topic.
-  Read through your text/presentation and consider: What's the one point you would say to the Minister?

The DON'Ts

-  Suggest that 'we need further research', unless the suggestion is very clear and related directly to achieving a policy outcome.
-  Send research papers; don't send anything you haven't summarised in a paragraph/some bullet points.

These tips are also relevant if you are 'pushing' your research, i.e. not writing for CXC, with a specific question to answer. Study relevant SG policy documents and write 2 pages (with key points up front) about how targets can be met through what you have found.