

2014-2015 Engaging Research Awards Assessment Protocol

Two protocols have been developed with the aim of comparing numeric marks with a qualitative assessment. Judges will use the marking sheets provided to record their decisions, assessing the entries based only on the evidence provided in the application form.

Judges will also be asked to note any comments they have on the various criteria for specific entries. We will use these comments to provide feedback to the entrants with the aim of supporting future engaged research work.

Re. protocol 1—as guidance to the judges we are suggesting that: an Award Winning entry is likely to achieve an overall score of $\geq 80\%$; a highly commended entry is likely to achieve an overall score of $\geq 60\%$. Please also note that Criterion 4 ‘Engaged Research Processes’ is double-weighted.

What do we mean by Engaged Research Excellence?

We received feedback on the inaugural Award Scheme, with discussions focussing on the criterion for assessing what it means to be an ‘active researcher’. It is important to reiterate, therefore, that this scheme isn’t designed to reward ‘engaged scholarship’. Engaged research excellence has to be a central aspect of the application for it to receive an award. With this in mind, we are using the following Open University-approved definition of engaged research:

“Engaged research encompasses the different ways that researchers meaningfully interact with various stakeholders over any or all stages of a research process, from issue formulation, the production or co-creation of new knowledge, to knowledge evaluation and dissemination.

Stakeholders may include user communities, and members of the public or groups who come into existence or develop an identity in relationship to the research process.”

Criteria for assessing excellence

Work on the OU’s Public Engagement with Research Catalyst has identified significant diversity in the ways that researchers engage with various publics. Rather than impose a specific set of requirements on researchers this scheme has been devised so that:

“...contributions can then be substantiated against one or more of the following:

1. Providing innovative public engagement with research opportunities to effect change or mutual benefit.
2. Contributing to positive change with respect to public engagement with research practice, policy or procedure.
3. Developing publics, user communities and other stakeholders’ engagement skills and competencies.
4. Illustrating an engagement in professional development activities.
5. Engaging with and responding to the diverse needs of publics, user communities and other stakeholders.”

You can therefore expect to see evidence against at least one of the criteria, but it is unlikely that an entry will address all of them.



Assessment Criteria	Comments (aide memoire)	Assessment
<p>1. Underpinning research excellence Is the underpinning research excellence clearly identified, with suitable supporting evidence? a) For senior researchers you should look for evidence of funding as a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator for engaged research (e.g. from external bodies, including Research Councils, Charities, etc.). b) For Mid- and Early Career Researchers look for evidence of engaged research outputs. (Outputs may be evidenced in a number of forms, including: peer reviewed publications, practitioner guidelines, etc. Look for evidence of quality that is recognised “...internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour”.) c) Postgraduate Research Students should outline their area of research and include a letter of support from their supervisors indicating satisfactory progress.</p>		<p>Research Excellence demonstrated</p> <p>Not clearly evidenced.</p> <p>No evidence provided.</p>
<p>2. Research with people at the centre Are the various participants in the engaged research clearly identified? Are they the most appropriate stakeholders to be involved with the research? Are the contributions from non-academic stakeholders documented and appropriate? (Excellent entries should demonstrate evidence that ethical issues and issues of equity and opportunity have been addressed.)</p>		Score (out of 10)
<p>3. Purposes of the Engaged Research To what extent are the aims and objectives clear? Is there evidence that the aims and objectives are meaningful and relevant to all the participants (researchers AND non-academic stakeholders)? Is there evidence that stakeholders been involved in shaping the aims and objectives?</p>		Score (out of 10)
<p>4. Engaged Research Processes and Methodologies How has the engaged research been conducted? When, and how often, have the stakeholders been involved, through what mechanisms, and to what ends? Is there evidence that the various stakeholders have been involved in meaningful ways at different stages of the research cycle, e.g. in shaping the research, the processes of conducting the research, and co-producing outputs?</p>		Score (out of 20)
<p>5. Quality and reflective practices Does the entry include quality assurance measures and/or evidence of reflective practice? Was performance against the aims and objectives measured in an appropriate and effective way? Is there evidence that the engaged research made a difference to the participants (researchers and/or publics), in terms of effects, changes or benefits?</p>		Score (out of 10)
Total		



Criteria	Comments (aide memoire)	Band (highlight)
<p>An entry from an Award Category Winner will be underpinned by excellent research. The entry will clearly describe a process of engaged research that connects in meaningful ways with relevant stakeholders. This is likely to be clearly demonstrated in all aspects of the research cycle, from the shaping of the research, through the processes, and into the collaborative production of shared research outputs.</p> <p>The aims and objectives will be appropriate to the participants and suitable methodologies and interventions will have been collaboratively developed, with ethical approval, and involving appropriate participants. Clear and appropriate evidence of suitable quality assurance measures will be demonstrated, alongside evidence of reflective practice.</p> <p>It is not an essential requirement, but it is likely that the researcher will demonstrate a track record in engaged research, allied with significant evidence of partnership working.</p>		Award Category Winner
<p>A highly commended entry will be underpinned by high-quality research. The entry will clearly describe a process of engaged research that connects in meaningful ways with a relevant stakeholders. This is likely to be demonstrated in most (but not necessarily all) aspects of the research cycle, from the shaping of the research, through the processes, with ethical approval, and into the collaborative production of shared research outputs.</p> <p>The aims and objectives will be appropriate to most of the participants and methodologies and interventions will have been developed. There will be some evidence of suitable quality assurance measures, alongside some evidence of reflective practice.</p> <p>It is not an essential requirement, but it is likely that the researcher will have some evidence of developing a track record as an engaged researcher, allied with evidence of partnership working.</p>		Highly Commended
<p>Entries that are not deemed suitable for an award are likely to be underpinned by research, but with limited or no evidence of quality. The entry is likely to describe a process of engaged research that connects researchers with a poorly-defined stakeholders. Interventions are likely to be demonstrated in the latter stages of the research cycle, most likely in the dissemination of research outputs to a mass audience.</p> <p>The aims and objectives are likely to have been produced by researchers, without discussion with relevant stakeholders. Methodologies and interventions will have been developed largely or exclusively by researchers. There will be limited or no evidence of quality assurance measures, and little or no evidence of reflective practice.</p> <p>The track record of the researcher in conducting engaged research will be limited, with little or no evidence of partnership working.</p>		Not eligible for an OU Engaging Research Award; we will look to provide feedback and support to researchers in this category.

