Engaging Research Awards Marking Scheme

We have developed two protocols with the aim of comparing numeric marks with a qualitative assessment. We would like to explore whether this comparative approach could work for future competitions. Please use the marking sheets provided to record your decisions, assessing the entries based only on the evidence provided in the application form.

We are also asking you to note any comments you have on the various criteria for specific entries. We will use these comments to provide feedback to the entrants with the dual aims of supporting future engaged research work more generally, and to advise possible entrants to the NCCPE's 2014 Engage Competition.

Please submit your completed forms to Fiona McKerlie by EOP on 24th February. We will discuss these at the breakfast meeting on 26th February (08.00; OU Hub).

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

What do we mean by Engaged Research Excellence?

We have already received some feedback on the 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 definition of engaged research:

> "Excellent public engagement with research is reflected in the different ways that researchers meaningfully connect and share research with various stakeholders, user communities and members of the public. Done well, public engagement with research will generate benefits, changes and effects for all participants as they share knowledge, expertise and skills. Excellence will be demonstrated partly through recognition of the contributions that all participants make to the shaping of research agendas, the processes of conducting research, and in the products of that research."

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. The intention(s) should be clear, engaging publics, user communities and other stakeholders in meaningful ways.
2. Providing innovative public engagement with research opportunities to effect change or mutual benefit.
3. Contributing to positive change with respect to public engagement with research practice, policy or procedure.
4. Developing publics, user communities and other stakeholders' engagement skills and competencies.
5. Illustrating an engagement in professional development activities.
6. Demonstrating quality and critical reflection through effective evaluation of the activities.
7. 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.

Protocol 1

Criteria (For information, by 'publics' we mean any 'non-academic participant'.)	Comments	Assessment
1. Underpinning research excellence (please highlight) Is the underpinning research excellence clearly identified, with suitable supporting evidence? a) For the Research Leader category 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 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.		Research Excellence demonstrated Not clearly evidenced. No evidence provided.
2. Research with people at the centre Are the various participants in the engaged research clearly identified? Are they the most appropriate publics to be involved with the research? (Excellent entries are likely to demonstrate evidence that ethical issues have been considered and that issues of equity and opportunity have been considered.)		Score (out of 10)
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 publics)? Is there evidence that publics been involved in shaping the aims and objectives?		Score (out of 10)
4. Engaged Research Processes How has the engaged research been conducted? When, and how often, have the publics been involved, through what mechanisms, and to what ends? Is there evidence that the various publics 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?		Score (out of 20)
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?		Score (out of 10)
Total		

Protocol 2

Criteria	Comments (aide memoire)	Band (highlight)
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 a relevant public or publics. 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. 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. It is not an essential requirement, but it is likely that the researcher will demonstrate a track record in engaged researcher, allied with significant evidence of partnership working.		Award Category Winner
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 public or publics. 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. 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. 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.		Highly Commended
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 public or publics. 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. The aims and objectives are likely to have been produced by researchers, without discussion with relevant publics. 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. The track record of the researcher in conducting engaged research will be limited, with little or no evidence of partnership working.		Not eligible for an OU Engaging Research Award; we will look to provide feedback and support to researchers in this category.