

26<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## LRCFS, University of Dundee: NCCPE Engage Watermark Award

Dear Heather,

I wanted to get in touch with the good news that, as a result of the recent Watermark process, we are delighted to award the Leverhulme Centre for Forensic Science a Gold Engage Watermark Award. Please note, this news is under a **press embargo** until the award is formally made at the Engage Conference on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

As you are well aware, this is an exacting and robust process, and we would like to thank you and your colleagues for managing the process so carefully and for providing so much evidence to support the application. To achieve a Gold award is a significant achievement, and indicates you have evidenced the following:

*The centre is a beacon of excellence in the support it offers to public engagement. It has invested significant resources over a period of several years to build substantial momentum, and the bulk of its support is in the 'gripping' and 'embedding' EDGE tool categories. It is ambitious to build on its success, and to address residual areas where development has been identified as necessary. It has an action plan in place which sets ambitious targets with clear measures of success, and it has a strong commitment to sharing its expertise with others.*

The report we provided summarised our assessment of the current 'state of play' at the Centre and highlighted the following areas of strength:

- A vibrant, energetic and focused approach to public engagement
- Excellent, committed leadership
- Innovative practices, like the Strategic Conversations
- Excellent support, in terms of the people and processes in place
- Motivated staff, students and partners

Centre staff and your partners all assessed the Centre as performing towards or at the 'embedding' level of the EDGE tool. The survey responses, interviews and application form together provided us with convincing evidence to support this assessment. These are extremely impressive and robust foundations. LRCFS has got the 'basics' right, in terms of its support. Across all areas of the EDGE tool the Centre has energetically grasped the challenge and put in place a series of investments, appointments and systems and processes to ensure that all staff, students and partners understand and are supported to embed public engagement in their work.

We invited you to reflect on some areas where we identified the potential for further development. Your response to these prompts, and your ability to spell out a convincing and robust forward plan, is a critical part of the assessment process. We were pleased to see your clear commitment to

addressing the key learning points from the Watermark process, focused in the following areas of activity, with clear action steps and indicators of success:

- Your public engagement purpose and networks: now and for the future
- How you will embrace inclusivity and diversity within your practice
- Enhancing your approaches to evaluation of public engagement
- Capturing, defining and communicating to others your approaches to public engagement with research
- Managing demand, support and resource as you grow.

We look forward to working with you over the next three years as you continue to develop your practice and leadership in public engagement, and realise your strategic goals.

We also look forward to welcoming you to the Engage conference in December to receive the award. We will be in touch with you separately about this to coordinate arrangements.

Congratulations on a really well-deserved award.

With best wishes

Handwritten signature of Sophie Duncan in black ink on a light blue background.Handwritten signature of Paul Manners in black ink.

**Sophie Duncan and Paul Manners, NCCPE Directors**