OPENING
PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Friday 9 October 2009,

The opening ceremony for the Scottish Doctoral Training Centre in Condensed Matter Physics (CM-DTC) is being held at 1pm on Friday 9th October 2009 in Lecture Theatre C at the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of St Andrews and Dr Louise Richardson, Principal for the University will make the opening speech.

The CM-DTC is a tri-institutional collaboration between the University of St Andrews, the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University. This is a genuine tri-institutional collaboration between all three, both operationally and in its conception, and is part of a broader and longer established collaborative venture, the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance, (SUPA). The majority of the team who run CM-DTC have been working together since 2005 within SUPA.

The CM-DTC is not a physical centre; but is operated across three sites up to 60 miles apart. However what brings us all together, as well as being the main output that we produce, will be the 50-60 élite graduate students who we will train over the next decade and the first ten of them joined in September 2009. The communication and co-ordination across the three universities is undertaken by The Directors and Administrator / Manager who are based in The School of Physics & Astronomy in St Andrews.

The first difference between a CM-DTC PhD and the majority of other Research Council funded PhDs is that they are longer. Each student is fully funded for four years, which is a welcome development, and something that was recommended by two successive international panels that reviewed the health of UK physics. Secondly the scope of the CM-DTC is non-vocational training and all of our students will have to pass a broad and testing set of graduate level course as well as performing a PhD level piece of original research.

We are convinced that this breadth is one of our key strengths. UK physics departments have long wished for the opportunity to emulate the thoroughness of the PhD training that is given by, for example, the élite universities in the USA. This is our chance to do so, and we are determined to work to internationally benchmarked standards of excellence in both the scope and content of our training.
Due to the considerable funding from the government for UK science, both they and the EPSRC are now seeking, with some justification, evidence that that investment is having an impact. The CM-DTC plans that as part of the training and development of our students and to share the benefits of our funding, it is our intention that we will contribute to the society and the economy that fuels it.

As part of that benchmarking, we will be holding Symposia and Residential schools at which International leaders in our field will speak. The first of these events which will set the standard in a number of ways will be held on Saturday 28 November 2009 and will be hosted at the University of St Andrews. It will be a one-day Symposium at which the international speaker list will include the most recent British Nobel Laureate, Professor Tony Leggett from the University of Illinois. It will be attended by many of us directly connected to CM-DTC but will also be made available to physicists from the rest of the UK.

By implementing a Student-driven Outreach programme we aim to take Condensed Matter Physics further afield into the Community and especially to schools, and this will be a project that will see our student cohort formulating proposals for how best to take these plans forward.

Finally we have developed a strong affiliation with over 20 Industry Associates across a broad spectrum of size and industry, who strongly appreciate the quality of training that we will provide, and the value of high academic standards and it is our intention to develop this programme / communication links between the Industries and the CM-DTC over the forthcoming years.

To enable all of the above to take place the CM-DTC has been generously funded to the tune of £6.7 M by Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), plus pre-existing SUPA and institutional investment of £2.7M