Appointment of
Head of School
School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture
March 2019
Introduction

The School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture

The School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture brings together disciplines encompassing the arts, humanities and creative practice:

- Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Studies
- English and Creative Writing
- Film and Visual Culture
- Language and Linguistics
- Music

- Modern Languages including:
  - French & Francophone Studies
  - Gaelic Studies
  - German Studies
  - Spanish & Latin American Studies
  - Sustained Studies languages (Arabic, Mandarin, Swedish).

In September 2015, it welcomed the Elphinstone Institute (which specialises in the study of Ethnology, Folklore and Ethnomusicology) and the Department of Music (previously within the School of Education), consolidating a number of existing links and collaborations.
The School has distinctive strengths in creative practice, counting writers, poets, filmmakers, composers and sonic artists among the members of its community. Its location in the North East of Scotland is reflected in strong links with the local area and the regions of the north, as well as expertise in Gaelic and Doric language and culture. At the same time, it has a global reach, attracting students from around the world to study for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and has an international staff from nearly 20 countries.

The School has fostered a productive collaborative environment for research and teaching over the years, reflected in PhD co-supervision between disciplines, co-teaching on a range of undergraduate courses, and research activities co-ordinated through the School’s research centres. It is home to one of the University’s largest undergraduate cohorts, with around 1,000 students enrolled on our courses. Many of its undergraduates are enrolled on Joint Honours programmes within the School and with other Schools, including Social Sciences, Divinity, History and Philosophy, and the Business School.

Recent initiatives to further consolidate collaborative and cross-School working include a new Joint Honours undergraduate programme in Modern Languages – Translation & Interpreting, and cross-discipline appointments in Film & German and English & Film. As part of the University’s Enhanced Study programme, the School offers students the opportunity to study from a range of seven languages during the first two years of their degree.

The School runs a diverse series of ten taught Masters programmes, reflecting the research and teaching interests of its staff. Programmes include:

- MLitt in Creative Writing; English Literary Studies; Ethnology & Folklore; Film, Visual Culture & Arts Management
- MSc in TESOL; Translation Studies; Professional Communication; and Creative & Cultural Communication
- MMus in Music; Sonic Arts; and Vocal Music.

Together, our PGT programmes currently recruit around 100 students each year from home and abroad. The School offers PhD supervision across all its disciplines, and has around 70 students registered on research degrees. It is also developing a track record of success in securing Collaborative Doctoral Awards with partners including the National Library of Scotland and Barn Arts (Banchory).
The School has a long history of excellent research across all its disciplines. It returns to three Units of Assessment in REF (English Language & Literature, Modern Languages; Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies). In REF 2014, English Language & Literature was recognised as one of the UK’s leading departments, with 93 per cent of research graded at 3*/4*. In Modern Languages, nearly 25 per cent of outputs were graded at 4*, placing it ahead of a substantial number of other institutions. In Music, 100 per cent of impact was graded at 3*/4*.

The School’s research centres support collaborative and interdisciplinary activity across the School by reflecting its shared interests and strengths. Its current centres include:

- Centre for Celtic & Anglo-Saxon Studies
- WORD Centre for Creative Writing
- Centre for the Novel
- Washington Wilson Centre for Visual Culture
- Sound Emporium Research Group (SERG)
- Grierson Centre for Textual Criticism and Comparative Literary History
- Walter Scott Research Centre.

Through Professor Cairns Craig, the School has a leadership role in the University’s Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies (RIISS), which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2019. Through Dr Nadia Kiwan and Dr Trevor Stack, it leads the Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and the Rule of Law (CISRUL), which currently hosts the EU co-funded POLITICO PhD doctoral programme.

The School holds over 70 permanent academic posts (full- and part-time), supported by 11 administrative and secretarial staff. Links to academic staff interests and research profiles can be found here.

Details of School research centres can be found here.

Details of the School’s disciplines can be found here.

The School and the University are committed to promoting and maintaining an inclusive and supportive working environment that assists all members of our University community to reach their full potential. Diversity brings strength and we welcome applications from all genders and protected characteristics across the international, national and regional communities that we work with and serve.
Main purpose of the role:

The successful candidate will undertake the duties of Head of School for the first five years of their employment, renewable for a further three years. Reporting to Professor Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal, the Head of School is responsible for the development and delivery of the School’s strategic plan and leading the School’s contribution to the University’s strategic ambitions. You should have an academic track record that demonstrates international standing and leadership.

Previous management experience, including revenue generation, financial accountability and the management of teams, is essential as are excellent interpersonal skills, in particular the ability to build productive working relationships with colleagues, students and others. You will be expected to enhance the strong research culture and undergraduate numbers and further develop the postgraduate potential of the School.

In addition, the successful candidate will undertake a role commensurate with their academic appointment (proportionate to their activity as Head of School). We welcome applicants with a background in any of the School’s discipline areas.
Key responsibilities:

**Head of School**

**Academic leadership**
- To lead and manage the School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture within the University as a dynamic academic unit committed to excellence.
- To build the reputation of the School as a distinctive and successful academic enterprise on a regional, national and international level.
- To ensure research capacity continues to grow alongside research-informed teaching and learning.
- To ensure the effective delivery and development of high-quality teaching and learning programmes as well as their regular review, evaluation and development.
- To encourage the School's internationalisation in all aspects of its activities.

**Management of people**
- To manage, motivate and mentor staff, inspiring them to think creatively and ensuring their continuous development.
- To ensure equitable and robust workload allocations which recognise the contribution of staff.

**Financial and resource management**
- To ensure that the School is financially sustainable in the short, medium and longer term.
- To ensure effective financial management of the School and budgetary stability, delivering budget targets particularly as regards income generation and surplus creation.
- To transform the strategic vision in the School/University Plan into operational outcomes.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration and management of all the School’s resources and activities, in particular developing and implementing the School’s strategic plan aligned with University strategic plans.

**Values and communication**
- To model the University’s values of integrity, communication, respect and inclusion and champion them in the School.
- To create inclusive communication and discussion fora within the School and through partnership and national/international networks.
- To promote partnership working in the broadest sense as key to building future capacity and demonstrating impact within wider communities.
- To ensure effective methods of internal communication with staff and students are in place and to achieve rising levels of student and staff satisfaction as measured by surveys.
- To represent and champion the School within the broader University, and vice versa, as well as to external stakeholders.
The University wishes to recruit a Head of School with outstanding expertise in key areas to inspire, lead and manage the School.

A dynamic, collegial and creative individual who wishes to embrace the opportunities of leading the School is sought. Applicants should be ambitious in their vision for growth, be able to build on excellence, further develop the School's research culture, and be prepared to lead change to meet requirements of students, research funders and businesses. We welcome applicants with a background in any of the School's discipline areas.
Salary will be at the appropriate point for academic appointment negotiated according to qualifications and experience. A responsibility payment for headship applies over and above the academic salary. Any appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references.

For further information on various staff benefits and policies please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here

Should you require a visa to undertake paid employment in the UK, you will be required to fulfill the minimum points criteria to be granted a Certificate of Sponsorship and Tier 2 visa. As appropriate, at the time an offer of appointment is made you will be asked to demonstrate that you fulfill the criteria in respect of financial maintenance and competency in English. Please do not hesitate to contact Tim Arnot, HR Partner (Tel: +44 (0)1224 274149 or email t.arnot@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.

1Senior Lecturer/Reader – Grade 8 (£51,630 - £58,089), Chair – Grade 9 (competitive remuneration package).
Person specification

Education/Qualifications

Essential
• PhD in a relevant discipline.

Desirable
• PG Certificate in Higher Education or equivalent qualification.
• Fellowship of the UK Higher Education Academy.

Work and Other relevant experience (including training)

Essential
• Proven senior leadership and management experience.
• Excellent understanding of the key issues facing higher education in Scotland, the UK and internationally, especially relating to the disciplines of the School.
• A track record of internationally excellent research and publication in a relevant subject area, appropriate to the career stage.

Desirable
• International recognition – invited lectures, nominated UK expert, research visits, honours etc. which demonstrate impact.
• Experience of successfully leading teams.
• Significant experience in academic administration and an understanding of academic governance.
• Strong academic leadership across a broad range of teaching and research activity.
• Experience of generating revenue growth.

Desirable
• Compatibility of areas of expertise with priority research and development areas of the School.
• Record of cross-sector or inter-disciplinary working in teaching and research contexts.
• Experience of distance and blended learning, online delivery and digital enhancement.
• Membership of editorial boards, grant awarding bodies, professional societies or associations.
• Direct experience of student recruitment and marketing.
Person specification

Personal qualities and abilities

Essential

- An aspiration to create a flagship School and foster a culture of academic and professional excellence.
- An absolute commitment to excellence in research, learning and teaching, public engagement and impact.
- Strong commitment to working in partnership with students.
- A demonstrable commitment to principles of academic freedom and promoting staff well-being.
- Effective and confident organisational and communication skills.
- Presence as a leader who can make difficult decisions.
- Ability to demonstrate a collegiate, team-working approach.
- Ability to lead and develop collaborative partnerships, both internally and externally.
- Ability to encourage innovative approaches to teaching and research.
- Successful experience of financial management.
- Excellent, effective, principled and empathetic communicator.
- Outstanding interpersonal and motivational skills with evidence of the ability to lead others effectively.
- Strong sense of career trajectories for members of staff.

Other

Essential

- Ongoing commitment to personal career development.
- Willingness to be involved in the full range of University activities detailed in the Strategic Plan and KPIs.
The University

Founded in 1495, Aberdeen is Scotland’s third oldest University and the fifth oldest in the UK. Ranked within the world top 160 in the Times Higher Education Rankings 2019 and named Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019, Aberdeen is ‘open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others’.

Aberdeen is a broad based, research intensive University, which puts students at the head of everything it does. It has significant academic strengths and potential across a wide variety of disciplines. Outstanding in a wide range of discipline areas, Aberdeen has also been credited for its international reach and its commercialisation of research ideas into spin out companies.

The University has over 14,000 matriculated students and 3,600 staff representing 130 nationalities.

We encourage bold thinking, creativity and innovation, and we nurture ambition with many opportunities for professional and personal development in an inclusive learning environment which challenges, inspires and helps every individual to reach their full potential.

The University combines a distinguished heritage with a forward looking attitude. In the past few years, the University has encouraged creativity in its academic staff, broken new ground with an innovative curriculum, and developed state-of-the-art facilities including the new Sir Duncan Rice Library and the Aberdeen Sports Village and Aquatics Centre. In looking to the future, the University seeks to enhance its reputation as one of the world’s leading Universities by moving forward with ever more ground breaking research; ensuring students have an intellectual and social experience second to none; and capitalising upon the dual role as one of the major institutions of the north and as a cornerstone of regional economic and cultural life.
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire

With a population of approximately 230,000, the city stands between the Rivers Dee and Don. This historic city has many architectural splendours and the use of its sparkling local granite has earned Aberdeen the name of the Silver City. Recognised as the oil capital of Europe, Aberdeen nevertheless retains its old-fashioned charm and character, making it an attractive place in which to live.

Aberdeen enjoys excellent communication services with other European cities – e.g. flying time to London is just over one hour with regular daily flights. There are direct air links to London (City, Gatwick, Heathrow, and Luton), Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Southampton, Belfast and East Midlands within the UK. There are also flights to international hub airports: Amsterdam (Schiphol) and Paris (Charles De-Gaulle), as well as flights to other European destinations. Road and rail links are also well developed.

Many new housing developments have taken place in surrounding villages providing a wide choice of housing within easy commuting distance by car.

Education facilities are excellent and in addition to Regional Education Authority schools, there are two fee-paying schools for girls and one co-educational college. All three cater for primary and secondary pupils. Aberdeen College is one of Scotland’s largest colleges of further/higher education and vocational training. Last year it had over 30,000 student enrolments.

The Grampian Region, which took its name from the Grampian Mountains, has a population of approximately 545,000. It is made up of five districts – Aberdeen, Banff & Buchan, Gordon, Kincardine & Deeside and Moray. The city and the surrounding countryside provide a variety of urban, seaside and country pursuits. Aberdeen has first class amenities including His Majesty’s Theatre, Music Hall, Art Gallery, the Aberdeen Exhibition Centre, Museums and Beach Leisure centre. Within a short time, beach pursuits, equine activities, salmon, trout and sea fishing, hill-walking, mountaineering, golf, sailing, surfing and windsurfing can be reached. The city and the surrounding countryside are repeatedly given high ratings for quality of life in surveys.
The following outdoor pursuits are available in and around Aberdeen:

**Skiing** – three ski centres within two hours’ drive of Aberdeen. The nearest centre is only one hour away. There is a good dry ski slope in the city.

**Watersports** – Aberdeen has one of the best surf breaks on the east coast of Scotland with further good surfing at Fraserburgh. There are numerous inshore and offshore windsurfing opportunities. Excellent sea kayaking off the local coastline with river kayaking in River Dee and North Esk. Power kiting/surf-kiting in Fraserburgh.

**Cycling** – There are three local road cycling clubs and there is a wealth of excellent road cycling routes out, particularly to the west and north, from the city which are within very easy reach. Due to the relatively compact nature of Aberdeen it is possible to very quickly escape the city and enjoy a wonderful network of quiet country roads.

**Mountain Biking** – There are local official trails at Kirkhill Forest on edge of the city with many unofficial mountain biking opportunities within an hour of the city. There is a downhill mountain bike course at the Lecht (90 min).

**Walking** – ranging from the forests around the city and the Deeside Way to long-distance footpaths to more difficult routes along Deeside, Glen Muick (leading to Lochnagar), Glen Tanar culminating in challenging high level routes into the Cairngorms, the largest National Park in the UK.

**Climbing** – There is indoor climbing at Transition Extreme and RGU sports centre in the city and outdoor and winter climbing on Lochnagar and the Cairngorms.

**Golf** – many excellent links and parkland courses both public and private including Royal Aberdeen which hosted the 2014 Scottish Open and the 2011 Walker Cup. Trump International Scotland is only 20 minutes from the city boundary.

**Country pursuits** – fishing on Dee, Don and Spey and shooting estates in the East Cairngorms.

There are four National Nature Reserves within an hour’s drive – Sands of Forvie, Muir of Dinnet, Glen Tanar, St Cyrus and three RSPB reserves (Fowlsheugh, Meikle Lodge and Loch of Strathbeg) and one SWT reserve (Montrose Basin) – all within an hour’s drive.

Aberdeen is particularly strong in the field of education with a large number of excellent state schools which consistently rank very highly in national league tables.

To find out more about Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, go to [www.VisitScotland.com](http://www.VisitScotland.com)
Appointment process and how to apply

Perrett Laver, the appointed advisers of the University, are conducting an executive search exercise alongside the public advertisement for this role. Perrett Laver will support the Selection Committee in the discharge of its duties. Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae detailing career and achievements, as well as a covering letter addressing the role description and person specification.

For further details, a job description, person specification and information on how to apply, please see https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/ quoting reference 4115.

The closing date for receipt of applications is Thursday 9th May 2019.

The University pursues a policy of equal opportunities in the appointment and promotion of staff.

As defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is ‘Legitimate Interest’. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website www.perrettlaver.com/information/privacy/