Research Fellow
The Rowett Institute
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

Closing date: 27 October 2020
Interview date: To be Confirmed
Reference number: ROW070R
Introduction

The Rowett Institute is one of the foremost nutrition research institutes in Europe undertaking research to address some of the most compelling contemporary problems in nutrition. Much of our research is funded by the Scottish Government’s Strategic Research Programme and closely linked to SEFARI (www.sefari.scot). We are seeking a postdoctoral research fellow to join a research team modelling social aspects of dietary behaviours around healthy, environmentally sustainable diets by linking nutrition, environmental impacts and food culture.

It is known that dietary behaviours and food choices are influenced by individual habit, social interactions and food cultures. How these factors interact to influence the food choices people make in complex social system, such as the ‘real world’, needs to be understood to change dietary habits. Using a modelling approach this research project aims to simulate dietary behaviours and test scenarios to shift the population towards healthier and more environmentally sustainable diets. This addresses two major global issues; poor diet-related health and climate change. We work in an interdisciplinary team at the nexus of food, environment and social science using a multi-methods approach. Research methods include modelling complex social systems, quantitative and qualitative methods with primary and secondary data.

The successful candidate will be based at the Rowett Institute and will deliver the research under the direction of Professor Jennie Macdiarmid. They will join a dynamic interdisciplinary research team comprising nutritionists, social scientists, environmental scientists and statisticians and led by Professor Jennie Macdiarmid and Dr Tony Craig at the James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen.
**Job description**

**Main purpose of the role:**

We are seeking to recruit a highly motivated post-doctoral researcher fellow to support research led by Professor Jennie Macdiarmid. The purpose of the project is to understand the role of social and cultural factors associated with food choices with the aim of moving the population towards eating healthy and environmentally sustainable diets. We are using agent-based modelling to simulate a complex social system, particularly studying the role of social networks. The main role of the post-doctoral fellow is to continue the development of existing agent-based models and test potential policy scenarios for achieving healthy and environmentally sustainable diets. The successful candidate will join the interdisciplinary research team working on the wider programme of research on food culture and sustainable diets. The work is funded by the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Research Fellow**

- **Take responsibility to carry out the day to day research ensuring that it is completed efficiently, on time and to the highest of research standards.**

- **Develop and take forward research within the project, led by Professor Jennie Macdiarmid and Dr Tony Craig.**

- **Responsible for the day to day research project administration and data management.**

- **Keep comprehensive and up-to-date records of tasks performed, including thoroughly documenting the project and reporting progress regularly.**

- **Generate research outputs to publish in high impact scientific journals.**

- **Work closely with colleagues both within and outside the immediate research team.**

- **Participate in University research events and attend research seminars, conferences, staff development workshops and liaise with experts in the field.**

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**At a glance**

**Salary:**
Grade 6, £33,797 - £40,323

**Hours of work:**
Full Time

**Contract type:**
Project Limited until 31st March 2022
Candidate background

We are seeking a highly motivated, ambitious and conscientious individual to join an interdisciplinary research team studying healthy and environmentally sustainable diets. This project is modelling social and cultural factors associated with food choices, focused on shifting the population towards eating healthy, sustainable diets. The successful candidate will have skills in modelling complex systems.

Knowledge
- PhD in a relevant field, such as computational science, computer science, mathematics or complex systems (e.g. nutrition, social or environment science), with a track record in modelling complex systems.
- Excellent computer programming skills.
- Good knowledge of developing and running simulation models, such as agent-based modelling.
- Understanding of the science underpinning social networks, nutrition and environmental sustainability.
- Experience of quantitative research methods and data analysis.
- Understanding of policy-related research associated with health and environment.

Skills
- Demonstrable skills, experience and enthusiasm to collaborate in an interdisciplinary team.
- Ability to work independently and within a team to plan and progress work.
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written, to specialist and audiences outside of academia.
- Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage their own time to meet agreed deadlines.
- Ability to think critically and reflect on research findings.
- Interest in expanding knowledge and research skills.

Experience
- Track record in developing and running simulation models, such as agent-based models.
- Publication of scientific papers in peer reviewed journals.
- Demonstrable skills and experience of working successfully in an interdisciplinary team.
- Experience of presenting complex ideas to diverse audiences.
Terms of appointment

Salary will be at the appropriate point on the Grade 6 salary scale and negotiable with placement according to qualifications and experience.

The appointment will be available until 31 March 2022 and made subject to satisfactory references and a 12 month probation period.

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

This post does not meet the minimum requirements as issued by UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) to qualify for an employer-sponsored visa. We are therefore unable to consider applications from candidates for this post who require sponsorship to work in the UK.
# Person specification

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<th>Education/Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic, technical and professional education and training</td>
<td>A PhD in a relevant field, such as computational science, computer science, mathematics, such as computational science, computer science, mathematics or complex systems (e.g. nutrition, social or environmental science).</td>
<td>Track record in developing and using agent-based models.</td>
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<th>Work and Other relevant experience (including training)</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<td>eg Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research</td>
<td>Excellent computer programming skills.</td>
<td>Knowledge of NetLogo or similar computing programmes.</td>
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<td>Track record of developing and running simulation models, such as agent-based modelling.</td>
<td>Evidence of publishing for a multidisciplinary audience.</td>
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<td>Knowledge of modelling social networks.</td>
<td>Experience of presentation of complex issues to stakeholders, e.g. policy, public and other non-academics.</td>
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<td>Good understanding of food choice in the context of the health and sustainable diets.</td>
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<td>Experience of quantitative research methods.</td>
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<td>Proven track record for productivity.</td>
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<td>Track record in publishing academic research paper.</td>
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<th>Personal qualities and abilities</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<td>eg initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills</td>
<td>Ability and enthusiasm to work in an interdisciplinary team and communicate with colleagues from different disciplines.</td>
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<td>Ability to independently, plan and progress work to meet deadlines.</td>
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<td>Ability to think critically and reflect on research.</td>
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<td>Excellent record keeping.</td>
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<td>Excellent written and oral communication skills to both academic and non-academic audiences.</td>
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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.
The School (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/smmsn/index.php) encompasses all of the disciplines that underpin today’s medicine, including biomedical sciences, health sciences, nutrition and medical, medical science and dental education and these are organised into five Institutes. The largest school in the University, the SMMSN has five Institutes: the Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), the Institute of Applied Health Sciences (IAHS), the Rowett Institute, the Institute of Education in Medical and Dental Sciences (IEMDS) and the Institute of Dentistry, comprising all of our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and our own graduate entry Dental School.

Staff are line managed and research opportunities are supported through our institutes which work together in an integrated and coordinated way to deliver research and teaching across the School, details of which can be found on their websites as below.

- The Institute of Applied Health Sciences https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/
- The Institute of Medical Sciences http://www.abdn.ac.uk/ims/
- The Rowett Institute http://www.abdn.ac.uk/rowett/
- The Institute of Education for Medical and Dental Sciences https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iemds/
- The Institute of Dentistry https://www.abdn.ac.uk/dental/

Within the IMS, our scientists are working towards the creation of effective therapies for patients with a range of debilitating and life-threatening conditions. Current research areas include: arthritis and musculoskeletal medicine; cell developmental and cancer biology; immunity, infection and inflammation; metabolic and cardiovascular health; microbiology and translational neuroscience.

Within the IAHS, research is focused on improving health and health care delivery. It is home to a multidisciplinary grouping of around 100 university academic staff who conduct population and clinically-orientated health research and hosts the Health Services Research Unit (HSRU) and Health Economics Research Unit (HERU), both funded by the Chief Scientist’s Office (CSO) of the Scottish Government.

As well as being the organisational home to the teaching scholarship staff and responsible for oversight of the UG and PGT programmes offered by the School, the IEMDS promotes and supports excellence in medical education through research and development, with a focus on conceptually and theoretically robust research and development which has strong potential for reaching international recognition.

The Dental Institute runs an undergraduate BDS programme and a growing suite of masters programmes for professional development.

We have a number of specialist Centres representing areas of particular research strength and capacity within the School all of which are willing to support colleagues on projects in their areas. More information is available at the following websites.

- The Centre for Healthcare Education Research and Innovation (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/cheri/index.php)
- The Centre for Health Data Science (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/achds/)
- The Aberdeen Cardiovascular & Diabetes Centre (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/acdc/)
  and
- The Aberdeen Centre for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Health (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/acamh/)
The School is home to over 800 staff and 2000fte students. It is located on the Foresterhill site, shared with our main clinical partner, NHS Grampian, with whom we work in close collaboration at primary and secondary care levels. This is one of the largest integrated healthcare delivery, training and research sites in Europe and has rich assets including state-of-the-art academic (research and teaching) and clinical buildings. Excellent infrastructure is also provided through core facilities for biomedical science including flow cytometry, proteomics, microscopy and genome sequencing, support for data health science projects and clinical trials.

The last major academic capital development was the opening of the Rowett Institute, occupied in March 2016, whose staff undertakes nutrition research to help improve people’s lives through the prevention of ill-health and disease. Their new £40M building has provided the University of Aberdeen with a facility with unique capabilities for human nutrition and metabolic research. Currently, the NHSG is carrying out an exciting £164 million building development creating The Baird Family Hospital and The Aberdeen and North Centre for Haematology, Oncology and Radiotherapy (ANCHOR) Centre Project, scheduled for completion in 2021.
The city and the region

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, Heathrow, and Luton), Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Southampton, Belfast and East Midlands within the U.K. There are also flights to international hub airports: Amsterdam (Schiphol), and Paris (Charles De-Gaulle as well as flights to other European destinations. http://www.aberdeenairport.com Road and rail links are also well developed.

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, sea-side and country pursuits. Aberdeen has first class amenities including His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, Art Gallery, the P&J Arena, 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.

Aberdeenshire is one of Scotland’s most appealing regions. Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms National Park are within easy access of the city, and there are a variety of towns and villages scattered along the coastline.

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire cater for a wide range of tastes in sporting and cultural activities.

To find out more about Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire go to www.visatabdn.com
Equality & Diversity

The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition welcomes a diverse working environment and recognises the many benefits this can bring. The School is keen to receive applications from individuals from across all of the equality protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

The University supports opportunities for flexible working for a range of reasons and has policies in place to facilitate this. The policies can be found here:

https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/flexible-working--5607.php

The University’s commitment to gender equality has been recognised through the achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze award. The University is also a Stonewall Diversity Champion to further LGBT+ equality.

The University is signed up to Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter, affirming the University’s commitment to the charter’s aim of improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

Candidates who are British Sign Language (BSL) user can contact us directly by using contact SCOTLAND-BSL

The University is delighted to be accredited as a Disability Confident employer Committed and strives to ensure that disabled staff and students have the opportunity to work and study in an inclusive, accessible and supportive environment.

https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/equality-and-diversity-277.php

How to apply

Online application forms are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/jobs

The closing date for receipt of applications is 27 October 2020

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Professor Jennie Macdiarmid
Email: j.macdiarmid@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Professor Macdiarmid

Please quote reference number ROW070R on all correspondence