Research Assistant in Palaeoecology

SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES

Closing date: 16 February 2021
Interview date: TBC
Reference number: GEO400R
INTRODUCTION

Applications are invited for a Research Assistant to undertake palaeoecological analyses of Falkland Island peat deposits. The post is available for a fixed-term duration of 36 months, and is supported by a Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant (Falkland Island peatlands as a mirror to understand future European peatlands).

In addition to their salary, the postholder will receive financial support to attend international conferences and workshops.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Main purpose of the role:

The principal role of the RA is to explore the long-term relationship between peatland carbon sequestration rate and the former peat forming vegetation, peatland surface wetness and burning disturbance. This will provide insight into the relationship between carbon accumulation and the frequency and extent of fires. Raman spectroscopy will be used to identify the intensity of former fires using the spectral signals preserved in charcoal fragments. The aim of the research is to investigate the interactions between carbon accumulation rates, fire intensity, mire surface wetness and the types of plants growing on Falkland Island peatlands in the past. This can then serve as a long-term, ‘rear-view’ mirror to show how UK and European peatlands may sequester or release carbon under future climate change/fire weather predictions.

Key Responsibilities:

- organise logistics for fieldwork and focus upon the sampling of peat profile samples. Under the supervision of the Principal Applicant
- undertake palaeoecological analyses of peat profile samples (plant macrofossil, charcoal and testate amoebae analyses)
- submit samples for $^{210}$Pb and $^{14}$C dating
- measure the volume, mass and carbon content of peat sub-samples
- undertake Raman spectroscopy measurements of preserved charcoal fragments in the peat profiles

AT A GLANCE:

**SALARY:**
£28,332 - £30,046 per annum

**HOURS OF WORK:**
Full Time

**CONTRACT TYPE:**
Available until 31 December 2023
CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

Applicants should possess a Masters in Earth/Geography/Geosciences/Ecology or a related discipline. A background in any of the following will be of advantage: palaeoecology, age/depth modelling, plant macrofossil analysis.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be at the appropriate point on the Grade 5 salary scale (£28,332 - £30,046 per annum) and negotiable with placement according to qualifications and experience.

As this post is funded by the Leverhulme Trust it is available until 31 December 2023

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

This post does not meet the minimum requirements for visa sponsorship under the Skilled Worker Route. We are therefore unable to consider applicants for this post that require sponsorship to work in the UK.
# Person Specification

## Education/Qualifications

**Academic, technical and professional education and training**

- Masters in Palaeoecology or a related field in Geoscience
- PhD in Palaeoecology or a related field in Geoscience
- Previous postdoctoral level research

## Work and Other relevant experience (including training)

**e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research**

- Palaeoecology
- Palaeoecology – peatland ecohydrology
- Age/depth modelling
- Charcoal analysis

## Personal qualities and abilities

- Attention to detail
- Ability to work without supervision
- Good communication and personal skills
- Ability to run R software packages
- Overseas fieldwork, passport required
- Some teaching experience
Aberdeen is a broad based, research intensive University, which puts students at the centre of everything it does. 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 16,000 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 and inspires.

**2019 Highlights**

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<tr>
<th>SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR (TIMES &amp; SUNDAY TIMES)</th>
<th>70TH IN THE WORLD FOR RESEARCH CITATIONS (THE)</th>
<th>32ND IN THE WORLD FOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (THE)</th>
<th>28TH MOST INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD (THE)</th>
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<tr>
<td>15TH EQUAL IN THE UK FOR OVERALL STUDENT SATISFACTION (NSS)</td>
<td>11TH BEST STUDENT INTAKE IN THE UK (TIMES &amp; SUNDAY TIMES)</td>
<td>PERCENTAGE OF SCOTTISH INTAKE FROM MOST DEPRIVED AREAS UP FROM 4.5% IN 2018/19 TO 9% IN 2019/20</td>
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**CURRENT CONTEXT**

The University will build on the significant achievements above in 2020 and beyond. Underpinning our high performance and significant growth is a £100m investment in Aberdeen’s estate which will include the completion of a new Science Teaching Hub, the regeneration of the historic King’s Quarter, and a new Business School building. The University has also invested in 50 new academic posts, and 2020 will see the launch of 5 Interdisciplinary, cross-institution Research Centres that will catalyse world-leading research in our areas of research strength. The 5 Interdisciplinary Challenges are: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

The University of Aberdeen is a recent recipient of The Queen’s Anniversary Prize, awarded to recognise world-class excellence in innovation and practical benefit to people and society. The University was given this award for health service research leading to improvements in academic and clinical practice and delivery of health care.

**INTERNATIONAL**

Aberdeen is also increasing its international presence, positioning the University as a global organisation, and building on its established partnership in Qatar with new partnerships in Sri Lanka, with the International Institute of Health Sciences, and in China, with Shanghai University and SCNU.

The University of Aberdeen is proud to be the first UK University to operate on a dedicated campus in Qatar. Phase 1 of this partnership with AFG College has successfully recruited over 600 students. Phase 2 will see the creation of a substantially larger campus, with capacity for at least 5,000 students and research activity. For further information on our Qatar campus, visit [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar/](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar/).
On Founders’ day in 2020, our 525th anniversary as a University, we launched our new strategy ‘Aberdeen 2040’. Over the next 20 years, four strategic themes will shape our learning, discovery and strategic actions:

**INCLUSIVE:** We welcome students, staff and partners from all backgrounds, organisations and communities. We value diversity.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY:** We innovate in education and research by generating, sharing and applying new kinds of knowledge. We learn together.

**INTERNATIONAL:** We connect with others and extend our networks and partnerships around the world. We think across borders.

**SUSTAINABLE:** We understand and nurture our environment, and take care of our resources, including our people and our finances. We work responsibly.

**OUR EDUCATION**

Recognised as the Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019, we remain true to our roots as an ancient Scottish university, combining breadth and depth in our degree programmes and drawing strength from the quality of our research. Our flexible curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners and therefore to thrive as graduates in the diverse workplaces of the future and become change-makers across the globe. Our education is open to all and we are setting ambitious targets to further widen access.

**OUR RESEARCH**

Researchers at the University of Aberdeen have been at the forefront of innovation and excellence throughout the centuries, generating insights in medicine, science, engineering, law, social sciences, arts and humanities. This research has contributed to five Nobel prizes as well as other awards such as the Queen’s Anniversary prize. Our research is intellectually rigorous, working within our established areas of excellence as well as new methods of enquiry. We will continue to generate new knowledge addressing economic and societal issues with ambition and imagination, ensuring that it is globally excellent and locally relevant.
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 energy 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.visitabdn.com
The University values a diverse working environment and recognises the benefits this can bring. The University 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 at institutional level and across all its subject areas. 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 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

Applications should include a curriculum vitae and personal statement of no more than two sides of A4, outlining your reasons for making an application.

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

The closing date for receipt of applications is 16 February 2021

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Dr. Dmitri Mauquoy,
01224 272364
d.mauquoy@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Dmitri Mauquoy.

Please quote reference number GEO400R on all correspondence