RESEARCH ASSISTANT / FELLOW
HERU, Institute of Applied Health Sciences

Closing date: 19 September 2022
Interview date: To be confirmed
Reference number: IHS123R
INTRODUCTION

The Health Economics Research Unit (HERU) is one of Europe’s leading centres for health economics and is located within the Institute of Applied Health Sciences in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, at the University of Aberdeen.

We are a leading health economics research centre, with a reputation for delivering applied and methodological work of the highest quality across a broad range of policy-relevant fields including technology assessment, workforce, person-centred care, and population health.

In 2017, the University of Aberdeen were awarded the Queen’s Anniversary Prize in recognition of world-leading research into health economics and health services undertaken at HERU and the Health Services Research Unit (HSRU) over the last 40 years. The Queen’s Anniversary Prize is awarded every two years to recognise world-class excellence and achievement. It is the most prestigious form of national recognition open to a UK academic institution. The focus of the award is on innovation and practical benefit to people and society. HERU and HSRU were recognised for ‘Health service research leading to improvements in academic and clinical practice and delivery of health care.’

JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

This post offers the opportunity to contribute to applied economic evaluations of health technologies and health behaviour interventions for the purpose of informing policy and practice, and to pursue methodological developments in this area of research.

Candidates whose key skills and interests include statistical/econometric methods for analysing individual level data collected alongside randomised controlled trials, and/or decision analytic modelling techniques for economic evaluation are encouraged to apply.

The successful candidates will contribute to our Assessment of Technologies and Health Behaviour research themes and will work closely with researchers from HERU, the Institute of Applied Health Sciences and other relevant groups on a number of multidisciplinary research projects; including prospective evaluations carried out alongside randomised controlled trials or other study designs, and decision modelling exercises to inform long-term estimates of cost-effectiveness.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Research Assistant / Research Fellow

- Conducting economic evaluations based on individual data collected alongside randomised controlled trials or other study designs
- Contributing to the development of health economic decision models for informing NHS decisions
- Analysis of individual patient data to inform decision analytic model inputs
- Critiquing existing economic evaluations and decision models
- Collection and analysis of health economic data in lower income countries (one post)
- Searching and reviewing relevant literature to inform the design and analysis of studies
- Contributing to report writing and the production of journal articles and dissemination

CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

We seek individuals who relish the opportunity to be involved with research within a vibrant research-led academic unit.

The Health Economics Research Unit (HERU) is seeking to appoint two Research Assistant(s)/Fellow(s) in health economics to contribute to the Assessment of Technologies and Health Behaviour themes for a period of 2-years. Individuals with an MSc in economics, health economics, statistics, operations research, or closely related quantitative discipline are encouraged to apply. Appointees at Research Fellow level will have a PhD in economics/health economics/statistics/operations research or an MSc in economics/health economics plus several years’ experience that demonstrate the skills and capabilities to operate at this level.
TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be at the appropriate point on Grade 5 for Research Assistants, £29,619 - £34,308, or Grade 6 for Research Fellows, £35,333 - £38,592 per annum, and negotiable with placement according to qualifications and experience.

Any appointment will be 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 role is based in the UK and as such the successful candidate will be required to live and work in the UK.

The candidate appointed to this post may be eligible for homeworking on an occasional or regular basis. For more information, please refer to our Homeworking Policy.

Appointments at Grade 5 do 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.

Appointments at Grade 6 may be eligible for sponsorship.

Should you require a visa to undertake employment in the UK you will be required to fulfil the minimum points criteria to be granted a Certificate of Sponsorship under the requirements of the Skilled Worker visa. At the time an offer of appointment is made, you will be asked to demonstrate that you fulfil the criteria in respect of qualification and competency in English. For research and academic posts, we will consider eligibility under the Global Talent visa. Please do not hesitate to contact Grant Rae, HR Adviser (grant.rae@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.

AT A GLANCE

SALARY:

Grade 5 (Research Assistant)
£29,619 - £34,308 per annum

Grade 6 (Research Fellow)
£35,333 - £38,592 per annum

HOURS OF WORK: 37.5 per week

CONTRACT TYPE: Funding Limited for 2 years

LOCATION: Polwarth Building, Foresterhill, Aberdeen
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Research Assistant, Grade 5

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<tr>
<th><strong>Education/Qualifications</strong></th>
<th><strong>ESSENTIAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESIRABLE</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic, technical, and professional education and training</td>
<td>• MSc in economics, health economics, statistics, operations research, or other relevant quantitative discipline</td>
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<th><strong>Work and Other relevant experience (including training)</strong></th>
<th><strong>ESSENTIAL</strong></th>
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<td>e.g., Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research</td>
<td>• Strong data preparation and analysis skills using STATA or other appropriate statistical package (e.g., SPSS, R, SAS) • Searching and reviewing academic literature</td>
<td>• Knowledge/training in the analysis of individual level data • Knowledge/training in the development and analysis of decision analytic models for economic evaluation • Report writing and other dissemination activities</td>
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<th><strong>Personal qualities and abilities</strong></th>
<th><strong>ESSENTIAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESIRABLE</strong></th>
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<td>e.g., initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills</td>
<td>• Excellent written and verbal communication skills • Ability to work as a member of a multi-disciplinary scientific team • Evidence of ability to prioritise workload with minimal supervision • Ability to complete work to agreed deadlines • Ability to work independently • Ability to communicate with non-specialists</td>
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<th><strong>Other</strong></th>
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<td>e.g., special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.</td>
<td>• Willingness to share an office • Willingness to travel</td>
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## Research Fellow, Grade 6

| **Education/Qualifications**<br>Academic, technical, and professional education and training | **Essential**<br>• A PhD in economics, health economics, statistics, operations research, or other relevant quantitative discipline; or an MSc in a relevant quantitative discipline plus equivalent research experience in an academic or industry setting. |
| **Work and Other relevant experience (including training)**<br>e.g., Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research | **Essential**<br>• Strong data preparation and analysis skills using STATA or other appropriate statistical package (e.g., SPSS, R, SAS)<br>• Experience analysing individual level data on costs and outcomes<br>• Searching and reviewing academic literature<br>• Contributing to report writing and other dissemination activities (e.g., journal articles, oral and poster presentations) |
| **Personal qualities and abilities**<br>e.g., initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills | **Essential**<br>• Excellent written and verbal communication skills<br>• Ability to work as a member of a multi-disciplinary scientific team<br>• Evidence of ability to prioritise workload with minimal supervision<br>• Ability to complete work to agreed deadlines<br>• Ability to work independently<br>• Ability to communicate with non-specialists |
| **Other**<br>e.g., special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc. | **Essential**<br>• Willingness to share an office<br>• Willingness to travel |
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others

The University of Aberdeen is a broad-based, research-intensive University, and we put students at the centre of everything we do. Outstanding in a wide range of discipline areas, Aberdeen is credited for its international reach and 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.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The University continues to build on its achievements. 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 in 2020 launched five interdisciplinary, cross-institution Research Centres that will catalyse world-leading research in our areas of strength. Our five Interdisciplinary Challenges are: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

ABERDEEN 2040

On our 525th anniversary as a University we launched Aberdeen 2040, our strategic vision for the next 20 years. Four strategic themes will shape our learning and discovery, underlined by 20 commitments we have made against each theme:

- **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 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. 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.

INTERNATIONAL
Aberdeen is increasing its international presence, positioning the University as a global organisation, and building on established global partnerships in e.g., Qatar, China, North America, Europe. We feature in the top 50 institutions worldwide for international students and have been named 31st in the world for International Outlook. The University of Aberdeen is proud to be the first UK University to deliver programmes on a dedicated campus in Qatar in partnership with AFG College. Phase 1 has successfully recruited over 600 students and 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 www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar.

IMPACT
Our dedication to building a sustainable future is reflected in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021 where we were ranked in the top 60 Universities worldwide for positive impact on society.

In 2020 the University signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals accord, solidifying our commitment to developing the world in a sustainable way. In 2021 we were listed in the global Top 50 for 6 of these goals and in the UK Top 20 for all 17.

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1 QS World University Rankings 2022
2 Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022
3 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021
The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

The School (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/smmsn/index.php) encompasses all 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 Healthcare and Medical Sciences (IEHMS) and the Institute of Dentistry, comprising all 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 in Healthcare and Medical Sciences https://www.abdn.ac.uk/IEHMS/
- The Institute of Dentistry https://www.abdn.ac.uk/dental/ 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 IEHMS 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 highly regarded University of Aberdeen MBChB programme and several postgraduate programmes including a Masters in Clinical Education are delivered by IEHMS.
The Dental Institute runs an undergraduate BDS programme and a growing suite of masters programmes for professional development.

We have several 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/)
- 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.

**THE HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH UNIT (HERU)**

The Health Economics Research Unit (HERU) was established 1st April 1977 and is part of the Institute of Applied Health Sciences, within The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition at the University of Aberdeen.

Core funding is received from the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates and the University of Aberdeen. Substantial additional funding is also secured from competitive research grants.

The Unit Director is Professor Mandy Ryan, who is a Professor of Health Economics. HERU currently employs 23 research staff, and we have 7 PhD students registered. Staff and students are supported by a business manager, part-time administrator and information officer.

The Unit is located in offices within the University Medical School at Foresterhill, the main hospital site in Aberdeen. It is supported by excellent computing and IT facilities and has access to all the major UK datasets used by health economists.

HERU has four individual Themes of research:

- **Workforce and Organisation of Care**;
- **Health Behaviour**;
- **Assessment of Technologies**; and
- **Methods of Benefit Valuation**.

The Unit has an outstanding record of publications in the leading health economist journals and an extensive programme of dissemination through the organisation of and participation in conferences. We offer an Online Postgraduate Programme in Health
Economics for Health Professionals (HE4HP). The programme is for health professionals who would like to improve their understanding of health economics and research methods.

We also contribute to a number of post-graduate courses, and present expert workshops and training courses.

Further details of the Unit’s activities can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/heru and interested candidates are encouraged to access the Unit’s Annual Report available at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/publications/annual/

HERU’s Research Themes are detailed below:

**Workforce and Organisation of Care**

*Theme leader: Dr Diane Skåtun*

The healthcare workforce is a crucial resource within any healthcare system. The Workforce and Organisation of Care theme examines the role of financial and non-financial incentives on the behaviour of individuals and the organisational structure in which they operate.

The theme’s research spans all aspects of the health workforce life cycle; from training decisions at the start of a career through to career-end retirement decisions. Our research covers all occupational groups that make up the broad healthcare workforce including nurses, doctors, and allied health professionals.

Our aim is to provide a better understanding of the healthcare workforce and in doing so, contribute to the evidence-base that informs policies designed to improve the delivery of care.

**Health Behaviour**

*Theme leader: Professor Paul McNamee*

The health behaviour of individuals – smoking, alcohol, poor diet, physical activity – are major contributors to development of health problems. Also, amongst individuals with existing health problems, behaviour in terms of self-management is an important determinant of long-term health and well-being. In both areas, behaviour is likely to be influenced by economic variables and individual preferences, as well as other factors, such as educational attainment.

The specific objectives are:

- To enhance understanding of health behaviour from an economics perspective.
- To strengthen the evidence base relating to the outcomes and value for money of health behaviour interventions.

In terms of behaviours, the focus is on dietary choice, physical activity, alcohol consumption, smoking and self-management of chronic conditions. In terms of economic concepts, current expertise lies within the areas of time and risk preference, identification of the causal determinants of health, and assessment of the cost-effectiveness of health behaviour interventions.

**Assessment of Technologies**

*Theme leader: Dr Graham Scotland*

This theme aims to conduct research to address questions of immediate policy or practical relevance for NHS decision-makers, and to pursue methodological research in order to strengthen the application of economic evaluation methods.

The objectives are to:
Inform and support healthcare decision making at a national level, by producing high quality economic evaluations that address national priorities.

- Develop and refine methods of economic evaluation.
- Make available to the NHS a body of expertise through nurturing and developing research skills in economic evaluation methods.

The Assessment of Technologies theme engages in a number of externally funded projects to carry out applied economic evaluations of new and existing interventions, and also co-hosts a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) contract to conduct Technology Assessment Reviews for the NHS.

Preference And ValuE (PAVE)

Theme leader: Dr Verity Watson

The aims of the research group are to develop and apply economic methods of valuing health and healthcare. Our work explores the value that individuals, patients, and society places on the benefits of health and care. Research in this theme combines methodological research on stated preference methods with applications to challenging settings. Much of our work uses discrete choice experiments (DCEs).

ABERDEEN AND ABERDEENSHIRE

Scotland’s third largest city, Aberdeen sits on the coast between the mountains of Aberdeenshire and the stunning North Sea coastline. The Aberdeen City region is a can-do place that is actively investing, at scale, in its future.

Renowned as a Global Energy Hub, Aberdeen is a vibrant, entrepreneurial region, home to a unique mix of business opportunities and specialist skills across various sectors including energy, technology, life sciences and food & drink. More than 20% of Scotland’s top businesses are located in this region which is taking great strides to ensure that it continues to compete on a world stage. Investments of more than £10 billion of public and private infrastructure is due to be delivered before 2030, marking an exciting time to be part of a genuine world-class location.

Built from sparkling local granite Aberdeen has earned the name of the Silver City. As the energy capital of Europe, Aberdeen nevertheless retains its old-fashioned charm and character making it an attractive place in which to live, work and study. Due to its global business and international energy industry credentials, Aberdeen is well served by local and national transport infrastructure with excellent rail networks that run both North and South of Scotland and the rest of the UK. It also acts as an international travel hub. Flying time to London is just over one hour with regular daily flights and serves international travel to European centres such as Amsterdam (Schiphol) and Paris (Charles de Gaulle) as well as flights to other European destinations.

The city and the surrounding countryside provide a variety of urban, seaside and country attractions. Aberdeen has first class amenities including His Majesty’s Theatre, Music Hall, Art Gallery, the P&J Arena, Museums, and Beach Leisure Centre. The city is framed by its accessible beach front which is within a short walk of the city centre and there is an array of activities available across the region such as hill walking; mountaineering; sailing; surfing; salmon; trout; and sea fishing; golf; sailing; surfing and windsurfing. The surrounding countryside, known as Aberdeenshire, is also 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 has ranked consistently highly in nationally recognised quality of life surveys and was recently named the happiest city in the UK to live and work in4.

To find our more visit www.visitabdn.com

4 Shawbrook Bank Happiest Cities Index 2021
EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

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 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 at 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 an 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) users 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.

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

HOW TO APPLY

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

The closing date for receipt of applications is **19 September 2022**

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Professor Paul McNamee, Health Behaviour theme leader, p.mcnamee@abdn.ac.uk, or Dr Graham Scotland, Assessment of Technologies theme leader g.scotland@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Paul McNamee or Graham Scotland.

Please quote reference number IHS123R on all correspondence