Research Fellow
School of Psychology

Closing date: 15 January 2023
Interview date: To be confirmed
Reference number: PSY055R
**INTRODUCTION**

Applications are invited for a full-time Research Fellow position at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, to work with Dr Constanze Hesse on a project funded by the ESRC (project title: “The need for unpleasant touch: behavioural and physiological investigations into negative affective touch and how it can be used to shape interactions”). This project is part of a larger international project with collaborators in Germany and France and will be conducted in close association with all project partners.

The project aims to investigate how negative affective touch perception (i.e., the “unpleasantness to touch”) influences human actions and behaviour. It combines knowledge and methodology from the fields of haptic perception, action control, cognitive and biological psychology as well as physiology.

The project will provide an excellent opportunity for a highly motivated post-doctoral researcher to work in a productive, collaborative, and research-focused environment.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:**

The successful candidate will be responsible for preparing research ethics applications, experimental stimuli, materials, and programmes, recruiting and testing participants, collecting and analysing behavioural movement tracking data, preparing manuscripts, and assisting with the communication and dissemination of the research findings to both academic and non-academic audiences.

Applicants should have an PhD degree in Psychology or cognate discipline, and have a record of experimental research experience, preferably in visual psychophysics. Proficiency in MATLAB programming and experience in using motion tracking or eye-tracking hardware (e.g., Optottrak or Eyelink) as well as kinematic data analysis are highly desirable.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Contributing to experimental design & Liaison with external collaborators
- Preparation of ethics applications & creation of experimental stimuli and materials
- Programming (MATLAB) and piloting of experiments (including motion tracking)
- Operation of motion tracking equipment
- Recruitment of participants and data collection
- Data management, coding, and analysis
- Manuscript preparation and dissemination of findings at scientific meetings and conferences
CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

We are looking to appoint a full-time post-doctoral research fellow who holds a PhD degree in psychology or a cognate discipline (e.g., neuroscience or movement science). Candidates are expected to have experience with psychophysical experimentation and programming, and ideally also with using motion capture techniques (movement or eye-tracking) and with the analysis of motion data. The candidate should be able to work independently but also as part of a larger team and have good verbal and written communication skills. Numerical proficiency and statistical skills are essential and some programming skills in Matlab are expected.
TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be at the appropriate point on the Grade 6, £35,333 - £36,386 per annum, and negotiable with placement according to qualifications and experience.

Any appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references and 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.

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 (e-mail: grant.rae@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.

AT A GLANCE

SALARY:
Grade 6
35,333 - £36,386 per annum

HOURS OF WORK:
Full-Time, 37.5 hours per week

CONTRACT TYPE:
Funding Limited for 36 months (starting 1 March 2023)

LOCATION:
Aberdeen
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic, technical and professional education and training</td>
<td>• PhD (or equivalent) in Psychology or cognate discipline (e.g., movement science or neuroscience)</td>
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<td><strong>Work and Other relevant experience (including training)</strong></td>
<td>• Experience with designing, programming, setting up, conducting and analysing behavioural experiments</td>
<td>• Experience using and programming motion tracking hardware and analysing motion tracking data</td>
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<td>e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research</td>
<td>• Publications in experimental psychology</td>
<td>• Successful track record in authorship of research publications</td>
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<td>• Excellent statistical skills and knowledge</td>
<td>• Crafting of stimuli and materials</td>
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<td>• Programming skills in Matlab</td>
<td>• Experience in supervising students or research assistants</td>
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<td>• Experience of presenting research to an academic audience</td>
<td>• Experience with virtual reality programming</td>
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<td><strong>Personal qualities and abilities</strong></td>
<td>• Ability to work in a team</td>
<td>• Interest in developing independent research ideas and devising new experiments</td>
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<td>e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills</td>
<td>• Excellent oral and written communication skills</td>
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<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>• Willingness to travel (to visit collaborators in France and Germany and to conferences)</td>
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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>
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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 uphold the principals of the foundational purpose. We remain committed to delivering positive change both locally and globally. We work together and with our partners in an interdisciplinary way, catalysing world-leading research in our areas of strength: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing. We are investing in our future and have committed £100m to upgrading our campus, including the new fully digitised Science Teaching Hub, the regeneration of the historic King’s Quarter and a new Business School building. Our commitment to our students, campus and community has led to us being named a Top 20 UK institution in two major league tables¹ and 4th in the UK for overall student satisfaction².

¹ The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023 and the Guardian University Guide 2023
² National Student Survey (NSS) 2022
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 around the world, including Qatar, China, North America, Europe. We feature in the top 50 institutions worldwide for international students.

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3 Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021
IMPACT

In 2020 the University signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals accord, solidifying our commitment to developing the world in a sustainable way. In 2022 we were listed in the global Top 100 for 8 of these goals\textsuperscript{4}.

Our highly cited work in zero-carbon technology and global outlooks makes us Scotland’s best institution for environmental research\textsuperscript{5}.

\textsuperscript{4}Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022
\textsuperscript{5}QS World University Rankings 2022

Updated October 2022
**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

The School of Psychology provides an exciting and collaborative research-led learning environment for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The School has approximately 1000 students and currently offers BSc, MA and MSc programmes in Psychology, all of which are accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS), as well as research degrees (MRes, MSc by Research, and PhD).

We have a strong track record in research led teaching and in the 2022 National Student Survey, the School was ranked 1\textsuperscript{st} in Scotland and 3\textsuperscript{rd} out of 124 Higher Education Institutions in the UK for overall student satisfaction.

Research within the School is structured around three themes: Cognition, Perception & Attention, and Social Cognition. In the last UK-wide assessment of research quality, REF 2021, our School was ranked 27\textsuperscript{th} in the UK in overall league tables, which reflects a combination of working environment, research outputs and research impacts.

The School is committed to a supportive and inclusive work environment and in 2020 we were proud to become the first School in the University to be awarded the Athena SWAN Silver Award for equality and diversity: [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/about/working-environment-291.php](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/about/working-environment-291.php).

More information about the School is available on our website: [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/).
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 are 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.

The city and the surrounding area have ranked consistently highly in nationally recognised quality of life surveys, coming out top 10 as one of the best places to live in Scotland in 2020 in the annual Bank of Scotland survey.

To find out more visit www.visitabdn.com
EQUALITY 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 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 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 15 January 2023

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Dr Constanze Hesse, Senior Lecturer
c.hesse@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Dr Constanze Hesse.

Please quote reference number PSY055R on all correspondence

Updated October 2022