



Research Fellow

Institute of Applied Health Sciences

School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

Closing date: 08 July 2020
Interview date: To Be Confirmed
Reference number: HSR052R



Introduction

The Health Services Research Unit (HSRU) has a national remit to research the best ways to provide health care, and to build capacity in health services research.

The Unit is supported by the Chief Scientist Office (CSO) of the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates, the University of Aberdeen and competitive grant income.

The Health Services Research Unit (HSRU) has a national remit to research the best ways to provide health care, and to train those working in the health services in research methods. Most research projects aim to find out whether developments within the health service really are effective, efficient and appropriate. There are approximately 70 members of staff, working together cohesively, with everyone's contribution valued. The atmosphere is friendly, informal and efficient.

The Unit has responsibility for the following general remit:

1. To study or evaluate clinical activities with a view to improving effectiveness and efficiency in health care;
2. To work for the implementation of proven changes in clinical activities;
3. To encourage and support similar work throughout Scotland;
4. To train NHS staff in Scotland, and others, in the principles and practice of health services research in general, and health care evaluation in particular.

In pursuit of this remit, the Unit has established an internationally recognised portfolio of health services research focusing on two main programmes (described below). Programmes of knowledge synthesis and methodological research underpin the substantive research. The research is marked by being multidisciplinary and collaborative, involving a range of national and international partners. In 2017 the Unit (jointly with the University's Health Economics Research Unit) won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education, the highest national honour available for a UK university in recognition of our world-leading research into health services.

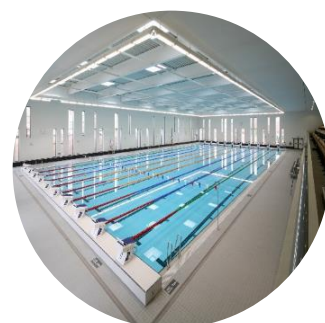
Staff from HSRU made a major contribution to the University's submission to the Unit of Assessment 2 (Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care) in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. REF 2014 confirmed that we are top for Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care research in Scotland and over 80% of our submitted work was rated as "internationally excellent" or "world leading". The Unit has an outstanding publications record – approximately 150 academic articles, monographs, reports and presentations are recorded every year and we also encourage staff to take part in other forms of public engagement. Further details about our publications are at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/hsru/publications/>

The Unit also contributes to health services research training at four levels - undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and continuing.

We also co-host:

- Centre for Healthcare Randomised Trials (CHaRT)
- NIHR HTA Technology Assessment Review (TARs) team

For more information on our research, please see our website (www.abdn.ac.uk/hsru).



Job description

Main purpose of the role:

A full-time (100%) Research Fellow is required to conduct qualitative research as part of a wider study, “Enhancing recruitment and retention of rural doctors in Scotland: a mixed-methods study”, led by Prof Louise Locock and Prof Jen Cleland, and funded by the Scottish Chief Scientist Office. Recruiting and retaining doctors to work in rural and remote areas is a key concern for the Scottish government, and affects the sustainability of remote and rural communities. This aims to understand the experiences, motivations and job preferences of generalist doctors in Scotland, particularly regard to working in rural and remote areas.

As the first component of this study, we plan to:

- map current workforce arrangements and workload patterns across Scotland, using brief telephone interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of policy documents
- conduct in-depth qualitative interviews with approximately 40 generalist doctors in different locations in Scotland and at different career stages, about their experiences and career motivations. Most will be in remote and rural locations, but we will also interview some still in training, some who have worked in remote settings but since moved back to urban practice, and some who have yet to consider this

Where possible, the in-depth interviews may be face-to-face in remote parts of Scotland. However, given the distances involved, and the unpredictable nature of the COVID19 pandemic, we anticipate that many may be conducted by telephone or online. The impact of the pandemic on people’s working practices and career choices will form part of the topic guide for interviews.

Findings from the qualitative interviews will be analysed thematically and used to inform the second stage of the study, a ‘discrete choice experiment’ to test the strength of doctors’ preferences for various factors influencing their career choices. This will be led by colleagues in health economics, with whom the postholder will liaise during the final stages of their work package. Ultimately we plan to develop one or more interventions to test, to improve rural and remote medical workforce recruitment and retention. The qualitative findings will also be published as a standalone paper.

The postholder will be based in HSRU and line managed by Dr Zoe Skea, Research Fellow, but working closely with other members of the multi-disciplinary research team.

Key responsibilities:



Research Fellow

The postholder will be responsible for delivering the qualitative research package described above.

- Identify and recruit participants in Scotland for the stakeholder mapping interviews and in-depth practitioner interviews
- Prepare a topic guide for interviews
- Keep up-to-date with the literature on rural and remote medical practice, including alternative forms of consultation
- Conduct fieldwork, including interviews and documentary analysis
- Ensure informed consent is obtained and work is conducted in line with ethics and R&D approvals (already in place)
- Lead the analysis of qualitative data, in discussion with other team members
- Produce summaries of findings, to inform the Discrete Choice Experiment
- Liaise with the health economics researcher and other members of the research team to identify key factors to include in the Discrete Choice Experiment
- Prepare at least one qualitative research article for submission based on the findings

At a glance

Salary:

Grade 6 (£33,797 - £40,323 per annum)

Hours of work:

Full-Time (37.5 hours per week)

Contract type:

Project Limited (15 months)

Candidate background



You should have a first degree and a postgraduate degree in a health or social science related field

You should have significant experience of qualitative research and experience of working with staff at various levels within the NHS. You should be familiar with Scottish health policy and organisation and Scottish geography. You should have expertise in qualitative data analysis, familiarity with theory, and experience of writing for lay, clinical and academic audiences. You should also be willing to travel extensively across Scotland for fieldwork if possible.



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.

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 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

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Desirable</i>
Education/Qualifications Academic, technical and professional education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD in a health or social science related field 	
Work and Other relevant experience (including training) eg Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant experience of qualitative research in healthcare settings, particularly with NHS staff • Experience of working with both staff at various levels of the NHS • Familiarity with the organisation of the Scottish NHS and health policy • Expertise in qualitative data analysis • Familiarity with social science theory, particularly in relation to professional identity and organisational change • Experience of writing for lay, clinical and academic audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of remote and rural Scotland • Experience of mixed methods research, for example survey design and intervention development • Experience of policy analysis • Experience of elite interviewing
Personal qualities and abilities eg initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to establish rapport with participants • High ethical standards in conducting research on confidential health topics • Sensitivity to participants' emotions • Ability to work autonomously and manage their own time efficiently 	
Other eg special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to travel across Scotland for fieldwork 	

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.

School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition



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.visitabdn.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 08 July 2020

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Dr Zoe Skea, Research Fellow, HSRU
01224 438143
z.skea@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Dr Skea.

Please quote reference number HSR052R on all correspondence