

Research Fellow

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Closing date: 1 December 2021

Interview date: TBC

Reference number: EDU117R



We are looking to appoint a motivated and accomplished individual as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to work on the research project, *Shared Headships in the Northern Alliance*. Consideration may be given to appointment of an exceptional experienced candidate without a PhD, with appropriate adjustment to salary. The postholder will support Professor Yvonne Bain from the School of Education to achieve the objectives of the research project.

The University of Aberdeen is one of the UK's top 'research-intensive' universities. Its School of Education participates in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise and its predecessor: the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). It is research-active nationally, through a variety of grant-funded activities, such as the Scottish Attainment Challenge; and internationally, for example, in improving literacy in Rwanda.

The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) which was introduced in 2017 to improve outcomes for children and young people across Scotland, by strengthening collaboration amongst teachers; and between Education Authorities and its partners.

This research proposal seeks to develop further collaboration around evaluative research within the Northern Alliance, building upon recent success in the development and launch of the University of Aberdeen and Northern Alliance Learning Hub.

Across the Northern Alliance, there are a variety of school senior leadership models where the Head Teacher has responsibility for more than one school community. The term "shared headship" is used as a collective, but this includes contexts where the shared headship may be for 2, 3 or 4 schools. This research will gather and analyse data to consider the stakeholders' (Head Teachers, school communities, Local Authority) perceptions of the benefits (or not) of this leadership model, in order to inform future policy around the potential development, appointment, and implementation of shared Headships within the Northern Alliance.

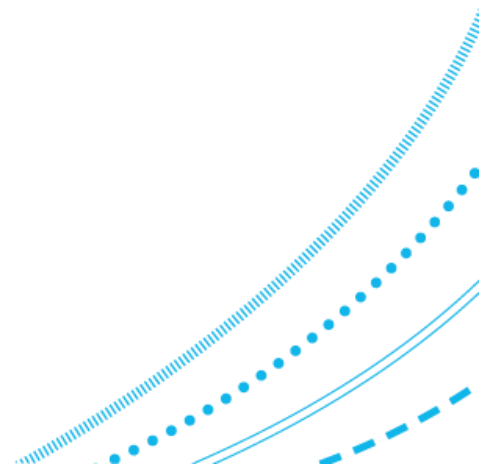
The successful candidate will preferably have a PhD in social sciences and demonstrated experience of qualitative data collection and analysis. Overall, responsibilities include:

- Responsible for the day-to-day communications with project stakeholders and management of qualitative data collection through interviews, analysis and interpretation. Interviews may be undertaken by telephone or face-to-face depending on Covid guidance.
- Contribute to literature review.
- Preparation of research outputs for dissemination, for example: study reports, lay communications and presentations.

The Research Fellow position comes at a significant time of growth in the School of Education, which is now ranked in the top 10 in the UK (Complete University Guide 2022). We have ambitious plans to further strengthen the academic and teaching profile of our collegiate school, and to build new teams of positive, forward-thinking educators, with quality, innovation, and an international outlook, at the core.

The School has four academic departments: Counselling, Wellbeing and Education Psychology; Early Childhood Education and Care; Initial Teacher Education; and Postgraduate Taught and Professional Learning. Research and scholarship capacity cross-cuts these departments. The School has strong partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally; a Learning Hub, in partnership with the Northern Alliance, located in the School of Education's MacRobert Building; and a new Counselling Research Centre: The Bounds.

Further information on the school is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/education



JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

We are seeking to appoint a Research Fellow to work on the research project *Shared Headships in the Norther Alliance*. The postholder will support the research team to achieve the objectives of the research project:

Objectives

- To have informed insight into the possible benefits and challenges of shared headship leadership;
- Through a research-led approach, to inform policies within the Northern Alliance RIC Local Authorities around identified school senior leadership models;
- To strengthen the partnership between the University of Aberdeen and the Northern Alliance RIC through the provision of research capacity in the pursuit of evaluating the effectiveness of school senior leadership models.

This is a time limited project and the postholder will be involved in the data gathering and analysis for the project.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

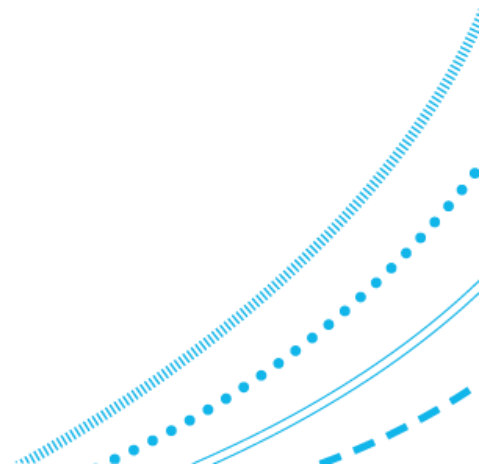
The Research Fellow will be responsible for delivering the aspects of the project as described below and will be expected to be self-reliant and able to manage their time effectively to:

- Compile relevant literature pertinent to the study.
- Make contact with relevant groups and individuals to arrange for interviews.
- Conduct individual interviews and focus groups involving a range of stakeholders.
- Lead the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.
- Assimilate findings in a visually interesting and accessible way.

CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

The Research Fellow will ideally be educated to PhD level in a relevant discipline, preferably with some experience at post-doc level. You will be ambitious, enthusiastic individual, with excellent communication, interpersonal and organisational skills. You should have relevant experience in conducting high quality social science research, demonstrated excellent report writing skills and ideally have publications in peer reviewed academic journals.

The candidate needs to be able to work independently and as part of a team as required.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be paid at the rate of £34,304 per annum on grade 6 of the University salary scale. Consideration will be made for an exceptional candidate who has yet to complete their PhD.

As this post is funded by the Northern Alliance, it is available for 3 months through to 28 February 2022.

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.

The candidates appointed to the posts may be eligible for homeworking on an occasional or regular basis. For more information please refer to our [Homeworking Policy](#).

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 Heather Clark, HR Adviser (e-mail: h.m.clark@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.

AT A GLANCE

SALARY:

Grade 6

£34,304 pro rata per annum

HOURS OF WORK:

Full time

CONTRACT TYPE:

Funding Limited for 3 month period (Dec 2021 – Feb 2022)

LOCATION:

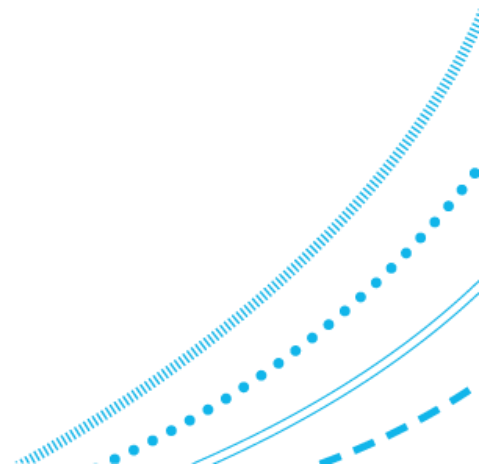
Aberdeen





PERSON SPECIFICATION

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Education/Qualifications Academic, technical and professional education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PhD in relevant discipline.</i> 	
Work and Other relevant experience (including training) e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experience of qualitative research in a relevant social science area.</i> • <i>Experience of conducting in depth qualitative interviews and focus groups</i> • <i>Experience of writing for lay and academic audiences</i> • <i>Demonstrated ability to write high quality research reports.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Record of high quality peer reviewed publications.</i>
Personal qualities and abilities e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experience and ability to work effectively as a member of a team.</i> • <i>High attention to detail.</i> • <i>Good problem-solving and critical thinking skills.</i> • <i>Ability to work independently and use initiative.</i> • <i>Excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to work collaboratively and creatively with others across different disciplines.</i> • <i>Strong organisational skills, able to manage a demanding workload.</i> • <i>Ability and willingness to undertake administrative and research support duties.</i> • <i>Excellent, effective and empathetic communication and presentation skills.</i> 	
Other e.g. special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Willingness to travel within Aberdeen city and surrounding area for data collection if required.</i> 	



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.



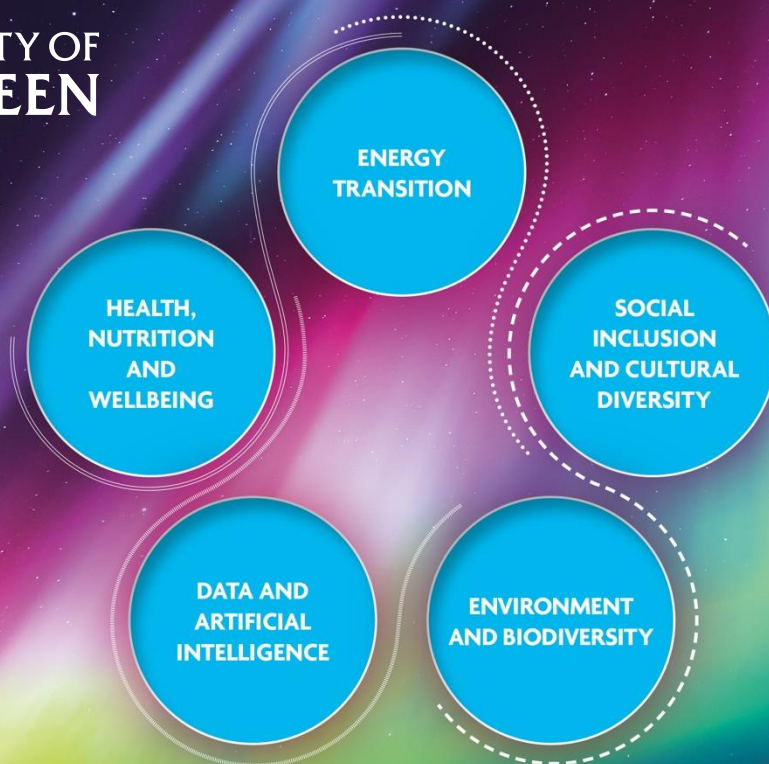
CURRENT CONTEXT

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 students¹ and have been named 32nd in the world for International Outlook². 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 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 17³.

¹ Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021

² QS World University Rankings 2021

³ Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021

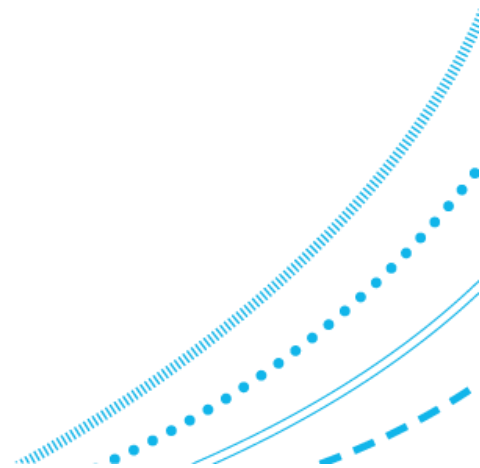


THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The School of Education is a diverse and pioneering School, comprising over 100 staff across four departments: Initial Teacher Education; Counselling, Wellbeing, and Educational Psychology; Early Years and Childhood Education and Postgraduate Taught (Masters-Level) and Professional Learning. Within these departments, you will find a large portfolio of programmes and courses broadly designed for educators, therapeutic practitioners, and researchers.

The School has a thriving research culture, with our research activities underpinning all aspects of the School's work. Our cohort of PhD students enhances our research community. The School's four research themes are:

- International Studies in Social and Educational Development
- Lifelong Professional Education and Development
- Educational Inclusion and Wellbeing
- Pedagogy and Digital Learning



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 **1 December 2021**

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Professor Yvonne Bain (yvonne.bain1@abdn.ac.uk)

Please do not send application forms or CVs to **Professor Yvonne Bain**

Please quote reference number **EDU117R** on all correspondence

