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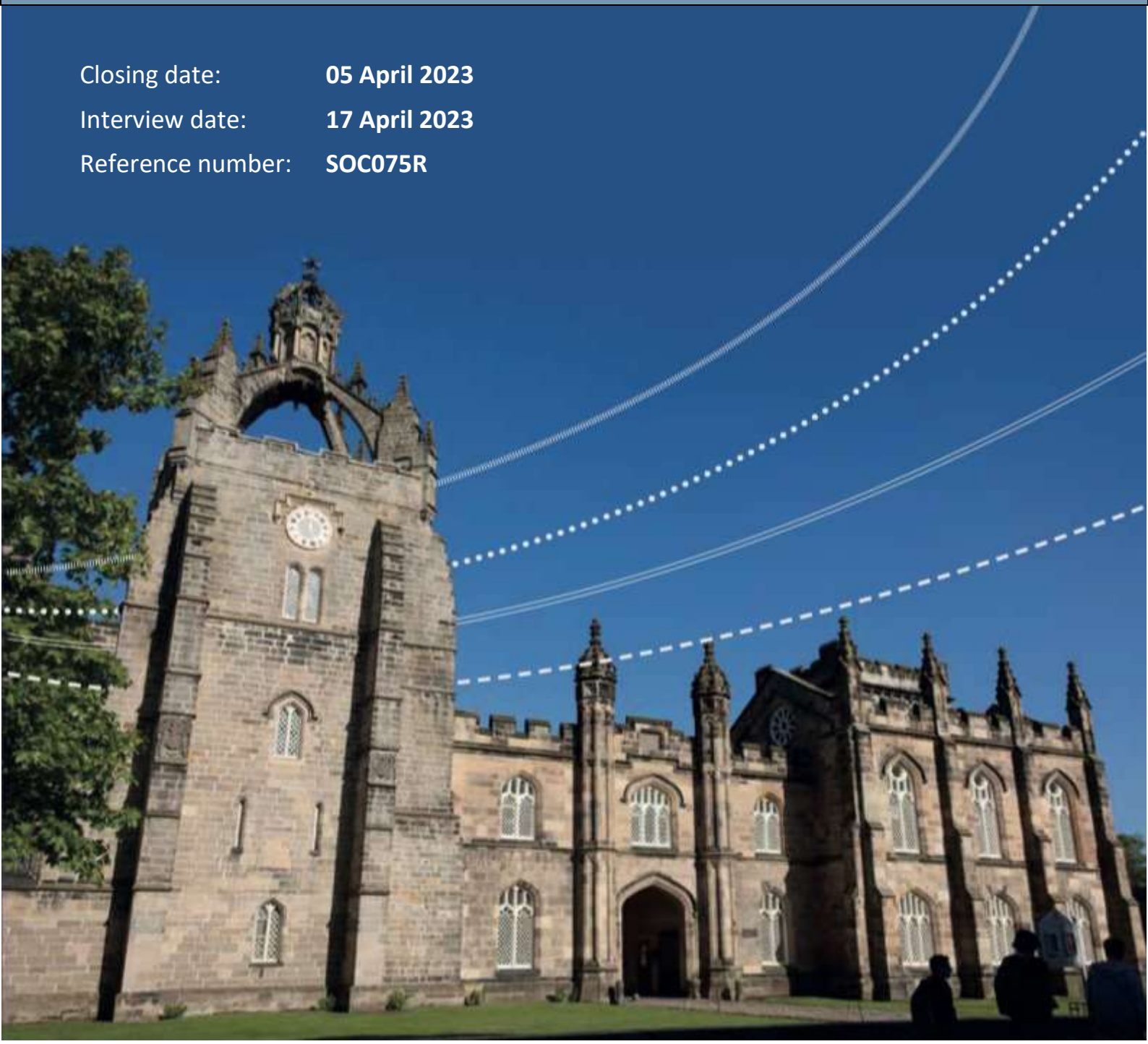
RESEARCH FELLOW in Politics & International Relations

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Closing date: **05 April 2023**

Interview date: **17 April 2023**

Reference number: **SOC075R**



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Athena SWAN Bronze Award

Stonewall Scotland Diversity Champion

INTRODUCTION

Politics and International Relations (PIR) is a medium-sized department within the School of Social Science. The University of Aberdeen has an international reputation in Politics and International Relations and is distinguished by diversity in teaching and research interests, with very robust undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers. The Department of Politics and International Relations teaches on both the University of Aberdeen's Old Aberdeen and Qatar campuses.

This is an exciting opportunity for a talented Research Fellow to work on the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) programme funded project "Solar Power in the UK – Planning for a Sustainable Future". The post is available from 01 June 2023 until 30 November 2025. The successful candidate will be expected to take up post on 01 June 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Solar Planning project will bring further understanding of factors influencing the outcomes of planning applications for ground mounted solar photovoltaics (pv) farms at a local authority level. This will be done through analysis of stakeholder narratives, qualitative interviewing, surveys, ethnographic analysis and statistical analysis of GIS data and data from planning reports. This is a vitally important topic because of the importance of renewable energy to the target of obtaining net zero UK emissions by 2050. It is also important because this will advance the theory of the role of narratives and how this interacts with a range of spatial and demographic factors and also communities' relationships with the landscape.

This is an interdisciplinary project involving the Departments of Politics and International Relations, Anthropology and Geography and the Environment.

The Project

The role will be based in the Department of Politics and International Relations (PIR), in the School of Social Science at the University of Aberdeen.

Politics and International Relations is a long-established discipline at the University of Aberdeen and has many diverse research themes. Themes which are relevant to this project include Energy Politics and also research into (comparative) public opinion research, and social and political psychology. The Department of Anthropology and the School of Geoscience are also key partners in this project. Politics and International Relations and Anthropology are two out of three disciplines within the School of Social Science, the other being Sociology. The research will involve considerable collaboration between these disciplines.

A strong research ethos runs throughout the Departments of Politics and International Relations, Anthropology, and the Department of Geography and the Environment, and the University of Aberdeen. Whilst research is centred around disciplines, there is also a developing culture of cross-disciplinary building partnerships across the University. This project's focus on the politics, geography, and anthropology of planning of solar farms in the UK will forge connections between Politics and International Relations, Anthropology and the Department of Geography and Environment in the Schools of Social Science, and Geosciences.

JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

The post holder will assist the project team in conducting interviews and ethnographic work, conducting spatial analysis, analysing planning reports and stakeholder narratives. In addition, they are asked to undertake organisational tasks such as organising impact activities, performing administrative tasks, and preparing project reports. The post holder has the opportunity to be involved in collecting and analysing stakeholder narratives, planning and analysing the survey and/or spatial data.

The post holder will work closely with and report to Dr David Toke (Principal Investigator). The post holder is also required to work with the other members of the Research Team, namely Co-Investigators Dr Kathrin Thomas, Dr Jo Vergunst and Dr Paula Duffy and a further Research Fellow (to be appointed to the project).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The post holder is expected to perform the following activities in conjunction with the PI and the other members of the Solar Planning Research Team:

- Conduct interviews with a range of actors involved in selected solar pv farm planning cases. These will include local planners, solar pv developers, objectors (to solar pv planning proposals) and local Councillors.
- Document research output, including analysis and interpretation of all data relating to the project, maintaining records and databases, drafting technical/progress reports, blogs and papers as appropriate.
- Conduct ethnographic work in selected localities where solar pv is an issue.
- Analyse narratives generated by groups involved in solar pv planning cases.
- Conduct spatial analysis following training in geographical information systems (GIS)
- Collect and anlayse reports made by planning officers regarding planning applications for solar pv farms
- Take a leading role in developing and maintaining collaborations with colleagues across the research team and wider community (e.g., academic and stakeholders).
- Take a leading role in social media engagement across the project.
- Presentation of work at conferences, at internal and external seminars, colloquia and workshops to develop and enhance our research profile.
- Work collaboratively on the co-authorship of project-led academic publications.
- Perform administrative tasks related to the activities of the research team.
- Undertake any other duties of equivalent standing as assigned by the PI.

CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

Qualitative research skills are essential, ideally experience with ethnographic methods and interviewing. It is desirable that the research fellow has quantitative data analysis skills and also, desirably, experience with designing and writing for public-facing websites. A desire to learn new techniques and ability to build relationships when involved in multidisciplinary project work is required. A PhD in Social Science or related subject is essential.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be £37,386 per annum; Grade 6 (sp31) on the University pay scale.

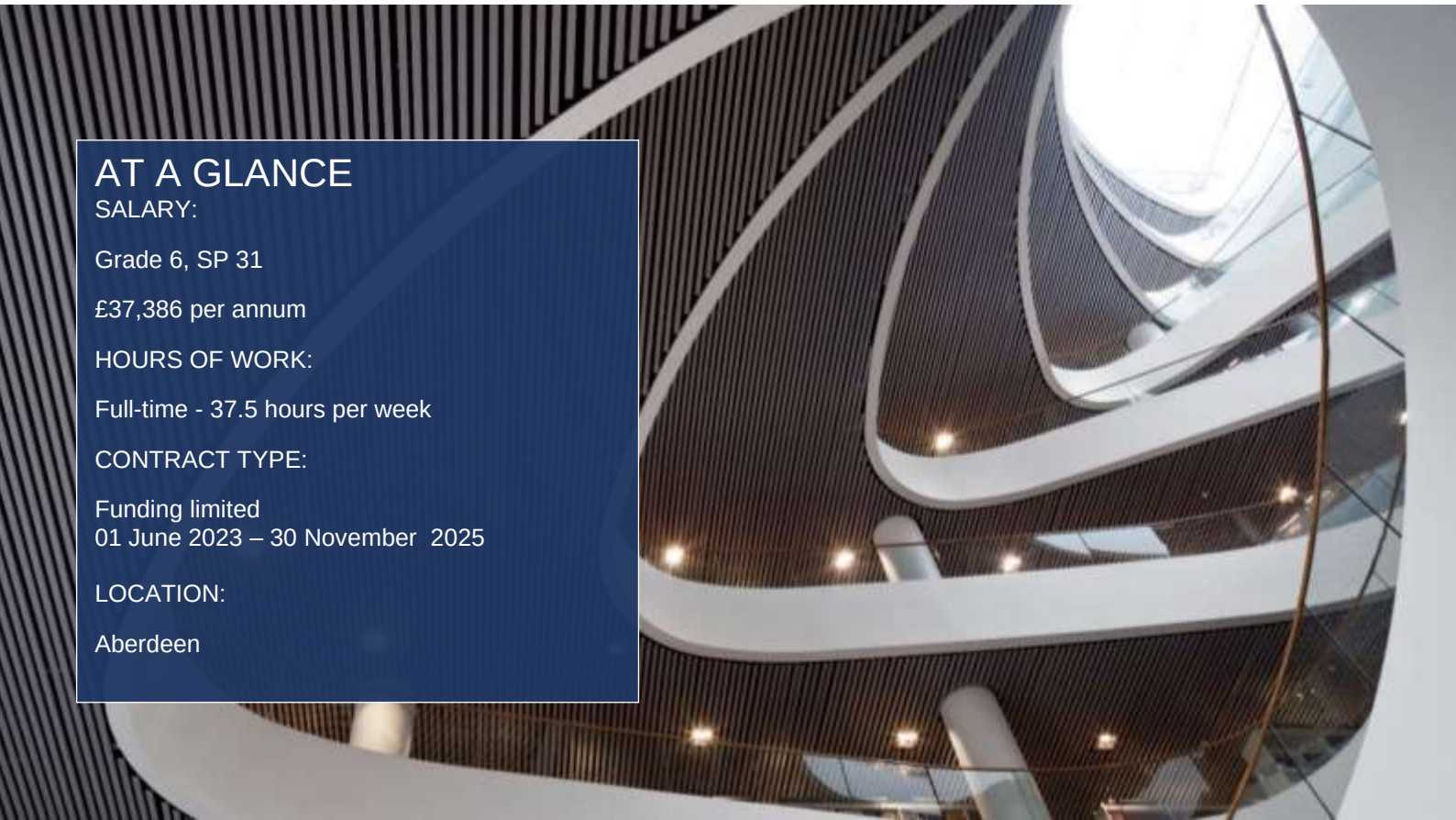
As this post is externally funded by ESRC it is available for a fixed period from 01 June 2023 to 30 November 2025. The successful candidate will be expected to take up post on 01 June 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter.

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/workinghere.

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.

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 Laura Sleigh, HR Adviser (e-mail: laura.sleigh1@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.



AT A GLANCE

SALARY:

Grade 6, SP 31

£37,386 per annum

HOURS OF WORK:

Full-time - 37.5 hours per week

CONTRACT TYPE:

Funding limited
01 June 2023 – 30 November 2025

LOCATION:

Aberdeen

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Education/Qualifications Academic, technical and professional education and training	• PhD in Social Science or relevant subject	
Work and Other relevant experience (including training) e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research	• Qualitative research skills	• Theoretical and practical knowledge of energy and environmental issues in the context of climate change • Experience with social media engagement • Experience in undertaking fieldwork research
Personal qualities and abilities e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills	• Ability to deliver quality outputs in a timely and efficient manner • Highly motivated, ability to use initiative and quick to learn new techniques • Ability to demonstrate a degree of independence as illustrated by identification of project objectives • Excellent communication skills (oral and written) • Excellent interpersonal skills including team working, the ability to form and maintain international collaborative research relationships and a collegiate approach • Willingness and aptitude to work on a multidisciplinary project • Problem solving skills including a flexible and pragmatic approach • Appropriate workload and time management skills	
Other e.g. special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.	• Travel to research sites will be required	

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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 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 tables[1] and 4th in the UK for overall student satisfaction[2].

[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[3].

[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[4].

Our highly cited work in zero-carbon technology and global outlooks makes us Scotland's best institution for environmental research[5].

[4] Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022
5 QS World University Rankings 2022

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The School of Social Science is home to three departments (Anthropology, Politics and International Relations, and Sociology) and more than 45 research active members of staff. The research conducted within the School covers several themes and topics. Within Anthropology scholars have focused on the themes of Anthropology of the North, Environment, Creativity and Perception, Museums and Histories of Science, Religion, Politics and the State and Anthropology with Art and Craft. Within Politics and International Relations scholars focus on the department's key research themes of Comparative Politics and Public Policy; Conflict and Security Studies; Democracy and Representation; and Political and International Relations Theory. While in Sociology staff have focused on religion and secularization, peace and conflict studies, global political economy, Identity and Gender, and human and animal studies.

All three departments in the School have excellent reputations both within the UK and globally, with all three departments ranked in the top two quartiles in the most recent Guardian University Rankings (for 2022). The pursuit of excellence in research and teaching within the School echoes the wider University's commitment to these goals in its Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and staff within the School benefit from a variety of institutional mechanisms that promote and encourage research excellence and innovative teaching. New staff, and particularly early career researchers are further supported by a probation system, and all new staff benefit from a robust yet collegial mentoring system within their department that partners them with a senior academic to guide them through their probationary period.

The School actively strives to provide an engaging environment for research, teaching, impact and exchange both for staff and students. Staff in all three departments participate actively in regular seminar series throughout the academic year, for example, which host external speakers, provide a forum for staff to present their ongoing work, and encourage PhD students to engage with emerging research and present their own work to an academic audience. The School benefits from participation in two of Doctoral Training Programmes, the first in Anthropology and managed by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities, and the second in Sociology and managed by the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science. Both provide access to competitively awarded PhD funding opportunities and provide, along with the University's own Postgraduate Research School, a host of opportunities for PhD and early career researchers to develop their skills in research and teaching. Collectively these various support mechanisms encourage rigorous, engaged and impactful research and innovative and inspiring teaching.

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 05 April 2023

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Dr David Toke, Principal Investigator

david.toke@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Dr Toke

Please quote reference number SOC075R on all correspondence