

Head of School
School of Psychology

Closing date: 16 April 2023
Interview date: 19 May 2023
Reference number: PSYHOS



INTRODUCTION

The origins of Psychology at the University of Aberdeen reach as far back as 1896, the year in which the Anderson Lectureship in Comparative Psychology was founded. The School of Psychology was also the first in the University to have a female Chair and Head of School, Prof Elizabeth Fraser, appointed in 1963.

Excellence in research is a key success area and strategic priority for the School. In the last UK-wide assessment of research quality, REF 2021, 94% of our research activity was assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent and our School was ranked 27th out of 93 in the UK in the overall league table, which reflects a combination of working environment, research outputs and research impacts.

The School has undergone a period of expansion in recent years, in terms of both staff and student numbers. We currently have 41 academic, 1 technical, 8 administrative staff and 6 postdoctoral staff. Our School provides an exciting and collaborative research-led learning environment for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. We teach approximately 1000 students each year, while our OnDemand short course provision attracts over 300 students.

We are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive work environment. In November 2016, we became the first School in the University to be awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze Award for equality and diversity, and in October 2020 we were proud to become the first School in the University to be awarded the [Athena SWAN Silver Award](#). We are also currently working to develop a Neurodiversity Network.

Research

Research in the School falls broadly into three themes: (1) Perception & Attention, (2) Cognition, and (3) Social Cognition. Although each staff member is assigned to a single theme, there is extensive collaboration and overlap of interests within the School. Many staff are also part of the Applied Psychology grouping, which applies basic psychological research to important societal challenges. Within our themes, specialist groups conduct research funded by research councils, government, charitable groups, and industry on topics ranging from understanding the fundamental processes of the human mind and their link to underlying brain structures to the application of this theoretical knowledge to current societal problems. The School houses state-of-the-art facilities to support world-leading research across these three themes, including extensive eye tracking facilities (both lab-based and mobile), EEG and TMS systems, psychophysics laboratories and motion tracking facilities. We have also developed strong skills for online research, which has proved useful in accessing a more diverse range of participants.

The new Head of School will work closely with the research theme leads to develop research activities within the School. In addition, in 2020, the University launched our [Aberdeen 2040](#) strategy which identifies five [interdisciplinary challenges](#) of our time: Data and Artificial Intelligence; Energy Transition; Health, Nutrition, and Wellbeing; Environment and Biodiversity; and Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity. This commits our academic community and the five Interdisciplinary Directors to work collaboratively across Schools to address these challenges. The

School contributes to a number of these challenges, particularly Data and Artificial Intelligence, Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity, and Health, Nutrition, and Wellbeing. The new Head of School is expected to work closely with the Interdisciplinary Directors to support interdisciplinarity in research and education and foster the engagement of the School in new initiatives that can help to achieve our targets.

Teaching

The School of Psychology provides an exciting and vibrant research-led learning environment for both [undergraduate](#), [postgraduate](#) studies. At undergraduate level, we offer single honours degrees in Psychology along with a range of joint honours degrees. Both our single and joint Honours undergraduate Psychology degrees are accredited by the [British Psychological Society \(BPS\)](#). At taught postgraduate level we offer a BPS accredited MSc Psychological Studies (conversion), which can be studied with specialisms in Mental

Health, Organisational Psychology, or Applied Developmental Psychology. We also offer a vibrant and well-established MRes in Research Methods, providing key skills on programming, statistics and varied scientific communication and dissemination.

As an experimental Psychology department, the School is committed to research-led teaching, informed by world leading research. We have a strong track record in research-led teaching and in the 2022 National Student Survey, we were ranked 1st in Scotland and 3rd out of 126 Higher Education Institutions for overall student satisfaction.

More information about the School is available on our website: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/psychology/>

JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

You will provide scholarly and intellectual leadership, fostering collegiality and further develop the School's strong research, teaching, and learning environment. You will be a research leader with an understanding of the dynamics of research in different areas of psychology and be able to contribute to existing research within the School. You will be responsible for developing and delivering the School's strategic plan and leading the School's contribution to the University's strategic ambitions as set out in the Aberdeen 2040 vision.

Therefore, excellent interpersonal skills together with a proven record of strategic vision, revenue generation, financial accountability and effective team management are essential.

The successful candidate will undertake the duties of Head of School for the first 5 years of their employment, renewable for a further 3 years. Thereafter they will be employed on an ongoing basis in the School. A specific package of support for research will be agreed with the successful candidate in discussion with the Senior Vice-Principal, who is the line manager for all Heads of School. Applicants with a background in any of the School's three research themes are welcome.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Academic Leadership

- To lead and manage the School of Psychology as a thriving academic community committed to pursuing excellence in our research and teaching
- To maintain and further develop the reputation of the School as a distinctive and successful academic enterprise on regional, national, and international levels
- To ensure robust consolidation and development of world-leading research and impact
- To ensure the continued provision of high-quality teaching and learning programmes as well as their regular review, evaluation and development
- To foster an interdisciplinary culture across the School
- To ensure that the School works collaboratively both with other Schools and the Directorates in the University

Management of People

- To manage, motivate and mentor staff, inspiring them to think creatively and ensuring their continuous professional development
- To ensure equitable workload allocations which recognise the contribution of all staff

Financial and Resource Management

- To ensure that the School continues to be financially sustainable in the short, medium and longer term
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- To maintain effective financial management of the School and budgetary stability, delivering budget targets particularly as regards income generation and surplus creation
- To lead the realisation of University and School strategic visions and the development and realisation of objectives set out in the School Plan and to develop these objectives
- To oversee effective, efficient and equitable administration of all the School's resources and activities

Values and Communication

- To exemplify the University's values of integrity, trust, respect and inclusion and champion them in the School
- To encourage the maintenance of existing, and development of new, inclusive communication and discussion within the School and through partnership in national/international networks
- To promote partnership working in the broadest sense as key to investing in and positively impacting activities and outcomes of external stakeholders
- To lead efforts to achieve good student and staff satisfaction as measured by internal and external surveys
- To represent and champion the School within the broader University and with stakeholders from, for example, industry, government, and the not-for-profit sector

CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

The University wishes to recruit a Head of School with outstanding expertise to inspire, lead and manage the School.

A dynamic, collegial, and creative individual who wishes to embrace the opportunities of leading the School is sought. Applicants should be ambitious in their vision for the School, be able to build on our track record, further develop the School's research culture, and be prepared to lead change to meet requirements of students, staff, research funders and the organisations we interact with. We welcome applicants with a background in any of the School's experimental research themes.

Applications from women and individuals from protected characteristic groups (such as individuals from racialised groups) currently under-represented in University senior leadership positions who would further enhance diversity are particularly welcome.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be at the appropriate point for academic appointment negotiated according to qualifications and experience. A responsibility payment for headship applies over and above the academic salary.

It is anticipated that the interviews for this position will be held on 19 May 2023, with presentations to the School on 18 May 2023.

Any appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references

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.

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.

AT A GLANCE

SALARY:

Chair- Competitive Remuneration

Senior Lecturer/Reader- Grade 8 £56,048 -
£63,059 per annum

HOURS OF WORK:

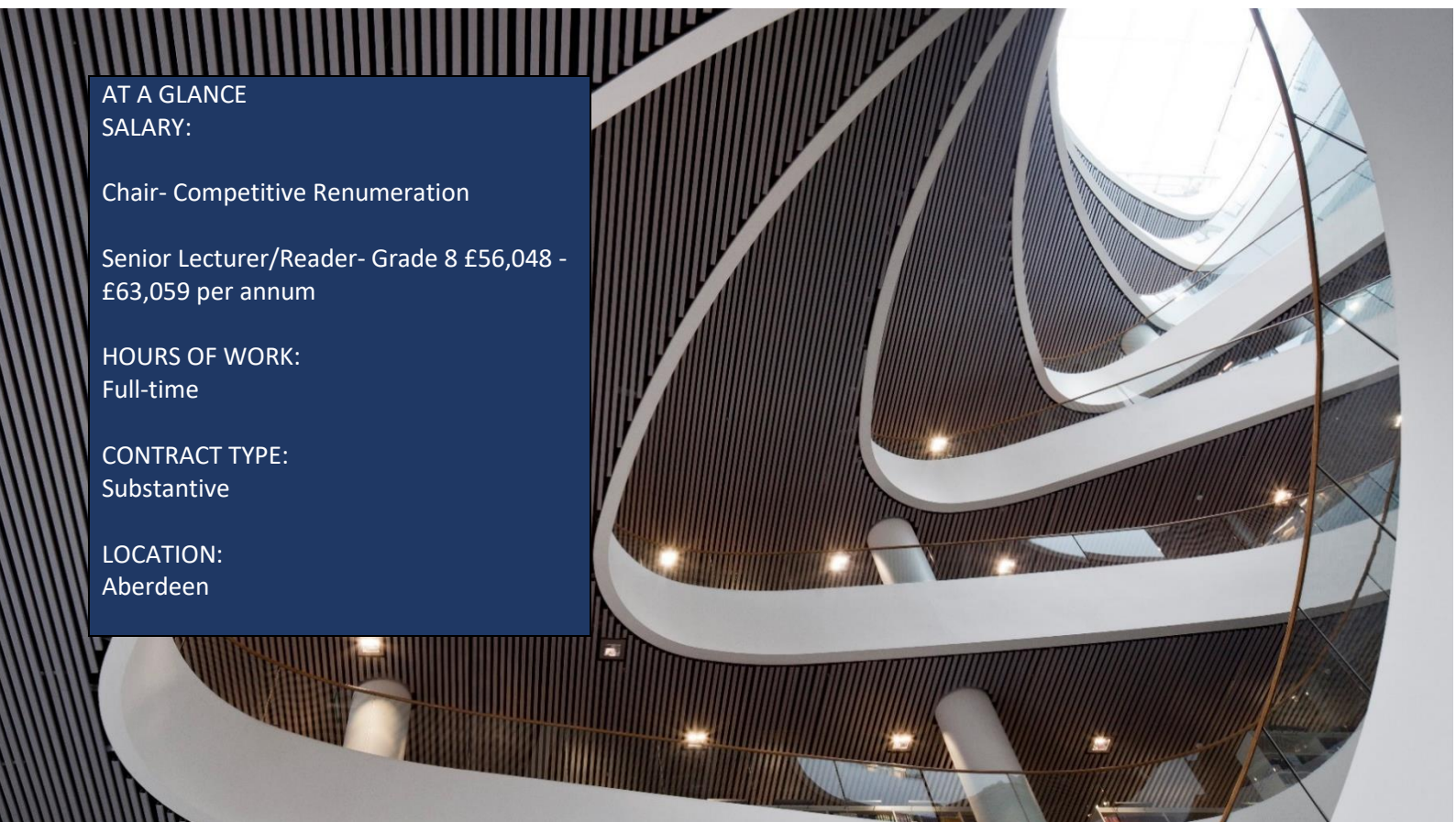
Full-time

CONTRACT TYPE:

Substantive

LOCATION:

Aberdeen



PERSON SPECIFICATION

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Education/Qualifications Academic, technical and professional education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD in Psychology or cognate disciplines • Skills and research interests which complement and extend existing expertise in the School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG Certificate in Higher Education or international equivalent qualification • Fellowship of the UK Higher Education Academy or equivalent
Work and Other relevant experience (including training) e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management experience at an executive level and a demonstrable commitment to listening to and being transparent towards colleagues • Experience of academic administration and an understanding of academic governance • Ability and willingness to act as an advocate for the School within and outside the University • Appreciation of wider HE environment, including financial acumen • Understanding of the key issues facing higher education in Scotland, the UK and internationally, especially as these relate to the disciplines of the School • Experience of generating revenue and a desire to identify and pursue opportunities for future growth to support the School's diverse research and teaching ambitions and to contribute to the achievement of wider institutional goals • Evidence of being active in the wider professional sphere by, for example, member of editorial boards, grant awarding bodies, active in professional societies or associations encouraging academic achievement • A current track record of internationally recognised research which fit with and extend the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement in research collaborations • Experience of disseminating research to academic peers at national and international conferences, and involvement in public engagement in research • Knowledge of ethics and research governance procedures

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>Personal qualities and abilities e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills</p>	<p>available resources and expertise in the School and appropriate to career stage; a commitment to continuing on this pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective organisational and communication skills • Ability to demonstrate a collegiate, team-working approach • Ability to lead and develop collaborative partnerships, both internally and externally • Ability to encourage innovative approaches to teaching & research • Presence as a leader who can make difficult decisions • Experience of financial management • An understanding of the career pathways open to staff in academic, technical and supporting roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatibility of areas of expertise with an established research area within the School • Experience of student recruitment and marketing • International recognition amongst the wider academic community - e.g., keynote lectures at major conferences, nominated UK expert, invited research visits to world-leading institutions, national and international awards, etc.
<p>Other e.g. special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing commitment to personal career development • Willingness to be involved in the full range of University activities detailed in Aberdeen 2040 and its accompanying Implementation Plan to 2025 and Key Performance Indicators 	

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 principles 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.

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**

¹ The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023 and the Guardian University Guide 2023

² National Student Survey (NSS) 2022

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 students³.

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 goals⁴.

Our highly cited work in zero-carbon technology and global outlooks makes us Scotland's best institution for environmental research⁵.

³ Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021

⁴ Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022

⁵ QS World University Rankings 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 teaches over 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 1st in Scotland and 3rd out of 124 Higher Education Institutions 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 27th out of 93 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>.

More information about the School is available on our website: <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 and celebrates a diverse working and learning environment and recognises the richness this brings, both in terms of contributing to the success of the University and creating safe and inclusive cultures. The University welcomes applications from individuals with diverse lived experiences.

The University supports flexible working, including hybrid working arrangements, and has policies in place to facilitate this where it is appropriate. The policies can be found at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/flexible-working--5607.php>.

The University is committed to progressing gender equality across all its functions and has been a proud member of the Advance HE Athena Swan Charter, achieving an institutional Bronze award, one Silver departmental award for the School of Psychology and eleven departmental Bronze awards. LGBTQ+ equality is championed through the University's membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme, where the University has achieved a Silver award in the Workplace Equality Index. The University has progressed work to eradicate gender-based violence and is proud to be a signatory to the EmilyTest Charter.

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 staff and students who identify as belonging to a racialised group. The University launched its Antiracism Strategy in 2022, representing a bold framework for progress on race equality. Recognising the importance of addressing the under-representation of racialised groups in the senior team, the University's new Recruitment and Selection Policy embeds specific positive action measures to address this.

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. The University's Wellbeing Strategy commits it to progressing work to tackle stigma related to mental health and action to promote and improve health and wellbeing for staff and students. Candidates who are British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us directly by using [contact SCOTLAND-BSL](#)

The University's work on equality, diversity and inclusion is supported by a range of networks and engagement activities, designed to provide safe spaces and raise awareness of the support available and the steps everyone can take to create inclusive campuses.

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 16 April 2023

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Professor Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal

karl.leydecker@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Professor Leydecker.

Please quote reference number PSYHOS on all correspondence