Research Fellow in Social Policy

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND VISUAL CULTURE

Closing date: 16 October 2023
Interview date: To Be Confirmed
Reference number: ROW116R
INTRODUCTION

This post is based in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture at the University of Aberdeen. The successful candidate will primarily work with Professor Eleonora Belfiore, who specialises in culture and policy, and the connections between research, policy and practice.

The candidate will be associated with the Interdisciplinary Centre for Health Nutrition and Wellbeing, led by Professor Jennie Macdiarmid, where the project will be coordinated and the research fellows and other researchers working on the project in Aberdeen will come together.

This interdisciplinary project will explore the use of plant-based convenience foods (e.g. ready meals) to achieve realistic environmentally sustainable and healthy diets. Current diets in the UK are unhealthy and contributing to environmental damage, with recommendations to move towards plant-based diets and reduce meat consumption (‘sustainable diets’). However, changing diets is notoriously difficult and proposed sustainable diets are often idealistic and do not consider the true cost, accessibility, convenience and appeal of these types of diets in the realities of modern living. This project will bring together the balance of these attributes to explore the inclusion of plant-based convenience foods as part of a sustainable diet, which if nutritionally adequate, healthy and appealing, with a low carbon footprint, could provide an opportunity to accelerate the transition to realistic sustainable diets. Scenarios will be co-created with young women and modelled to illustrate trade-offs between nutrition, carbon footprints, cost, convenience and appeal. The focus is on young women because they are more likely to adopt plant-based diets using convenience foods and are at higher risk of micronutrient deficiencies, such as iron. Visuals and narratives of the scenarios will be created depicting real-life sustainable diets to increase ease of use of scientific evidence by policy makers and practitioner. The project will take an interdisciplinary approach to developing sustainable diets and provide the insights into what needs to be fully accounted for in the policy development and decision-making process to be successful to achieve actionable climate change mitigation polices with health co-benefits.

Four research fellows, with different areas of disciplinary expertise will be recruited and work together on this interdisciplinary project. These include environmental science and modelling, nutrition and health, behavioural science and environmental psychology, and public political science.

This post provides an exciting opportunity to work in a strong multidisciplinary team on a project that will have real impact on changing policy.

JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

The main purpose is to conduct the research with Professor Belfiore to co-create with young women of visuals and narratives depicting scenarios for real-life that clarify the complexity of factors that affect food decisions in actual and everyday circumstances. The candidate will work with the research fellows who will be modelling the scenarios to achieve realistic sustainable diets that are healthy, affordable and appealing, with a low carbon footprint. Ultimately, this work will feed into the engagement with
policymakers, who will be able to better understand the lived experience of the demographic group whose behaviour their policies and interventions aim to influence. This in turn will lead to the development of more realistic interventions, which will be more likely to lead to behavioural change and health as well as environmental benefits. This will involve using collaborative ways of making sense of, exploring and communicating the thinking processes that lead these young women to make food choices in everyday life. The process relies on creative, arts-based and playful approaches to building trust within the participants’ group and facilitating authentic expression. We will work alongside a creative advertising agency that specialise in co-produced bespoke health and wellbeing campaigns with young people using collaborative auto-ethnographic methods. The post will include travelling to run workshops, which may be outside normal working hours.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

To collaborate with the creative agency selected in co-creating with the young women involved in the research a series of visual and narrative scenarios around the trade offs and considerations that drive their food choices and their presentation in a way that can make them a useful tool for policy-development in the nutrition and environmental sphere.

To coordinate stakeholder relations and lead on the organisation of the Policy Advisory Group meetings (2 per year)

To work alongside Prof. Belfiore on a report on the co-creation of the visual and narrative scenarios for use in policy engagement work

To produce, alongside Prof. Belfiore on a report aimed at stakeholders on the policy insights and recommendations originating from the project.

To contribute to disseminating both reports among both academic and non-academic audiences.

To support the team’s policy and industry engagement activities.

To review and analyse policies in the health, environmental and other relevant spheres to the project.

To work together with the other research fellows and collaboratively with the wider project team to deliver this interdisciplinary project.
CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

We are seeking to recruit an ambitious, highly motivated and collaborative postdoctoral research fellow with a PhD in public policy studies, qualitative social sciences research or related subjects and have specific expertise in the role of research evidence in shaping policymaking, and in engaging policymakers with research, to work on the Wellcome funded project Maximising potential of plant-based convenience foods in real-life sustainable diets. The successful candidate will work in a multidisciplinary research team from the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Oxford, bringing together expertise in policy, culture and the research-policy-practice nexus (Professor Eleonora Belfiore, Aberdeen), environmental modelling and food systems research (Professor Pete Smith, Aberdeen and Dr Michael Clark, Oxford), nutrition, sustainable diets and food systems research (Professor Jennie Macdiarmid, Aberdeen), and social and health psychology (Dr Esther Papies, Glasgow).

The candidate must be able to work as part of a multidisciplinary research team as well as independently. Self-motivation, excellent communication skills to work with researchers from other disciplines and a good work ethic are essential, as well as good interpersonal, organisational, and communication skills to ensure efficient working within the wider team. You should also demonstrate a track record of high-quality research publications. Experience in co-production of research with stakeholders, creative research and stakeholder engagement methods, and an understanding of evidence-based policymaking will be an advantage.

The candidate should display the willingness to learn new skills and knowledge required for successful undertaking of this project and working with other disciplines.
**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

Salary will be at the appropriate point on the Grade 6, £37,099 - £40,521 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 Aberdeen and as such the successful candidate will be required to live and work in Aberdeen.

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 successful candidate will need to be based in Aberdeen because of the collaborative nature of the project. Aberdeen University has a working from home policy and any time working from home is discussed and agreed with your line manager. Applicants will not be able to work from home 100% of their time. This will be dependent on the nature of the work being done throughout the project hence this any vary across the project. It is essential that the fellows appointed to the project spend time together to build a collaborative team for the project.

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**AT A GLANCE**

**SALARY:**
Grade 6
£37,099 - £40,521 per annum

**HOURS OF WORK:**
Full-time

**CONTRACT TYPE:**
Indicative start date of early 2024, Funding-Limited for up to 3 years

**LOCATION:**
Aberdeen
# Person Specification

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| **Education/Qualifications**  
Academic, technical and professional education and training  
• PhD in public policy studies or related discipline.  
• Proven knowledge of relevant research techniques and methodologies for this post.  
• Substantial knowledge and understanding of the higher education research sector. |
| **Work and Other relevant experience (including training)**  
e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research  
• Excellent skills in workshop facilitation, co-production with stakeholders.  
• Experience in / working with creative practitioners, industry and policymakers.  
• Proven ability to analyse, contribute to and influence policy discourses and relate findings to the published literature (both academic and grey literature).  
• Excellent written and verbal communication skills.  
• Experience of working in research.  
• Experience of working collaboratively in research teams.  
• Evidence of a good publication record. |
| **Personal qualities and abilities**  
e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills  
• Excellent communication skills to work with researchers from other disciplines.  
• Ability to prioritise effectively.  
• Good time management skills  
• Ability to use own initiative whilst recognising when advice and input is needed. |
<p>| <strong>Experience of working with researchers from different disciplines in multidisciplinary groups.</strong> |</p>
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<td>• Commitment to continuous professional development.</td>
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<td>• Ability to conduct research with integrity and accountability such that results obtained can be reproduced easily by others.</td>
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<td>• Ability to work both collaboratively and independently.</td>
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**Other**

e.g. special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.

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<td>• Ability to work out of normal hours, when necessary to run workshops.</td>
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<td>• Ability to travel, when necessary, to run workshops.</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\(^1\).

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\(^1\) Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021

Updated October 2022
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 LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, MUSIC & VISUAL CULTURE

The School brings together a broad range of arts and humanities disciplines, including Celtic & Anglo-Saxon Studies, English Studies, Modern Languages (French and Francophone Studies, Gaelic Studies, German Studies and Spanish & Latin American Studies), Language & Linguistics and Film & Visual Culture. The School welcomed the Department of Music and the Elphinstone Institute (previously within the School of Education) in September 2015, consolidating a number of links and collaborations established over the years.

The School is home to one of the largest undergraduate cohorts in the University, with around 1,000 students enrolled on our courses, and runs a diverse series of Masters programmes reflecting the research and teaching interests of its staff, including TESOL and Professional Communication (both taught largely by staff from Language & Linguistics). It has a long history of excellent research across all its disciplines, with English and Language & Linguistics being recognised jointly as two of the UK’s leading departments in the REF 2014 research assessment exercise. The School’s research strengths and interests are reflected in its various research centres. It holds approximately fifty academic posts, accompanied by a further fifty part-time and temporary staff (including language assistants), and is supported by ten administrative and secretarial staff.
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](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](mailto: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](http://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 October 2023**

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Professor Eleonora Belfiore, Interdisciplinary Director for Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity
email: e.belfiore@abdn.ac.uk

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

**Please quote reference number ROW116R on all correspondence**