Research Fellow in Environmental Social Science
School of Geosciences

Closing date: 14 January 2024
Interview date: 25 January 2024
Reference number: GEO454R
INTRODUCTION

The Department of Geography and Environment seeks to appoint a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to work on Creating Healthy and Resilient River Systems Across Scotland: Prioritising Research and Development Gap Opportunities for River Woodlands. This project is funded by the Scottish Government via their Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW). The post involves a full-time fixed term (12 months) appointment, with an anticipated start date from March 2024.

The River Woodlands project involves an interdisciplinary team of physical and human geographers at the University of Aberdeen, working together with collaborators at the James Hutton Institute and with stakeholders from various policy and practitioner organisations across Scotland. With these stakeholders, the River Woodlands project focusses on identifying gaps in the evidence for improved healthy and resilient river systems because of improved riparian and floodplain management. It also seeks to identify opportunities to address these gaps to enable investment in new and extended river woodlands, and improved/restored riverscape environments.

The Department of Geography is part of the School of Geosciences at the University of Aberdeen. Geography research at the department is aligned under the theme of ‘Smart Sustainable Futures’ which aims to build successful collaborations that identify theoretical insights and practical pathways to enhance environmental, social, and economic wellbeing through high quality and impactful research. Ongoing research projects include those that focus on nature conservation and restoration and the environmental and socio-economic effects of integrating trees in rural environments.

JOB DESCRIPTION

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:
The main purpose of the role is to deliver the requirements of the River Woodlands project, which focusses on the requirements for creating healthy and resilient river systems across Scotland. This will include creating an evidence review database and identifying knowledge gaps and barriers, as well as opportunities for the establishment of riparian woodland. The role will involve playing a central role in the project’s stakeholder engagement (workshops, focus groups and interviews), and synthesising the results of this stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders that are anticipated to be a key influence and be involved in this project include forestry, water and environmental agencies and NGOs, Scottish Government, local and national park authorities, wildlife and nature trusts, and nature conservation and restoration groups.

The postholder will be supported in their professional development through the mentorship of project colleagues at the University of Aberdeen and James Hutton Institute, supplemented by resources and support available through the University of Aberdeen.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

• Establish and maintain excellent communication links to project steering group and wider stakeholders
• Conduct interviews
• Organise workshops and focus groups
• Create evidence review database
• Write and publish project report and academic papers
• Support project administration and management
• Disseminate project findings and outputs
We are looking for a candidate who has an interest in ecological restoration and nature recovery. It is expected that the candidate holds a PhD (or has equivalent professional experience) in a related topic and relevant discipline, e.g., social science, human geography, environmental management, or policy, and ideally already has postdoctoral research experience. They should have excellent skills in empirical social science research, for example conducting interviews or focus groups with participants, and have experience in engaging with a broad range of stakeholders. Experience in producing diverse outreach materials is also desirable. Knowledge and interest in river restoration or river corridor processes and an understanding of the environmental policy and practice context in Scotland are beneficial.

Excellent time management and organisational skills are necessary for this role, as well as an ability to work independently and willingness to travel in Scotland.
TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary will be at the appropriate point on the Grade 6, £37,099 - £44,263 per annum, pro rata and negotiable with placement according to qualifications and experience. Interviews will be held on 16 January 2024.

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 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 Lucy Redmayne, HR Adviser (e-mail: lucy.redmayne@abdn.ac.uk) for further information.

The candidate appointed to this post may be eligible for homeworking on a regular or permanent basis. For more information, please refer to our Homeworking Policy. Please note that where permanent homeworking is approved there will still be a requirement to work at a University location from time to time, albeit on an infrequent basis.

AT A GLANCE

SALARY:
Grade 6
£37,009 - £44,263 per annum

HOURS OF WORK:
37.5 hours per week

CONTRACT TYPE:
Funding limited: 12 months

LOCATION:
Aberdeen
**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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<th>Education/Qualifications</th>
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<td>Academic, technical and professional education and training</td>
<td>• PhD (or relevant professional experience) in a relevant field, e.g., social science, environmental management or policy</td>
<td>• Postdoctoral work experience</td>
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<td>• Knowledge of environmental policy and practice context in Scotland</td>
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<td>• Experience with compiling structured evidence reviews</td>
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<td>• Experience in participatory research methods</td>
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<td>• Experience in producing outreach materials for a broad public</td>
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<th>Work and Other relevant experience (including training)</th>
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<td>e.g. Specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research</td>
<td>• Experience of undertaking empirical social science research and data analysis (e.g., conducting interviews and focus groups)</td>
<td>• Knowledge of environmental policy and practice context in Scotland</td>
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<td>• Knowledge of and experience with stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>• Experience with compiling structured evidence reviews</td>
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<td>• Experience of workshop design and facilitation</td>
<td>• Experience in participatory research methods</td>
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<th>Personal qualities and abilities</th>
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<td>e.g. initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, communication skills</td>
<td>• Excellent presentation, oral and written communication skills</td>
<td>• Working in transdisciplinary projects</td>
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<td>• Ability to connect with and generate commitment from a range of stakeholders</td>
<td>• Experience of publishing Peer-reviewed journal publications</td>
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<td>• Excellent time management and organisational skills</td>
<td>• Experience of producing accessible briefings or reports targeted to different stakeholder groups</td>
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<td>e.g. special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as unsocial hours, travelling, Gaelic language requirements etc.</td>
<td>• Willingness to occasionally travel within Scotland</td>
<td>• Driving licence valid for use in the UK</td>
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<td>• Ability to work independently</td>
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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 4\(^{th}\) in the UK for overall student satisfaction\(^2\).

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\(^1\) 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\(^3\).

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\(^3\) 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.

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

THE SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES
The School’s areas of expertise and interest include geology, geophysics, planetary science, environmental and social geography, energy transition, archaeology. Much of the research within the school delivers on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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4 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022
5 QS World University Rankings 2022
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 is on a continual journey to respond to, and combat, GBV in our community and beyond. We are proud to be working towards the EmilyTest Charter, in partnership with the charity, EmilyTest. We all have a role to play in knowing how to signpost colleagues and students to support for gender-based violence, and training and support is available to all staff on this topic.

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
Please include a motivational letter as part of your application.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 14 January 2024

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Dr Josie Geris
j.geris@abdn.ac.uk

or

Dr Flurina Wartmann
flurina.wartmann@abdn.ac.uk

Please do not send application forms or CVs to Drs Geris and Wartmann.

Please quote reference number GEO454R on all correspondence