

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDICINE
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
ESTABLISHED CHAIR OF SOIL SCIENCE
REF NO: YPL061A
FURTHER PARTICULARS FOR APPLICANTS

1. THE POST

The Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences is seeking an internationally renowned research leader for appointment to the Established Chair of Soil Science, to enhance its capacity as a world-leading research centre. This Chair builds on existing strengths recognised in UK Research Assessment Exercise 2008, in which the Institute's research was ranked 2/34 in the UK. The successful candidate will join one of the top Soils groups in the world and must demonstrate evidence of a leading international research profile, including exceptional skills in research, a strong record of publication in high impact journals and a proven track record of securing external funding for innovative research. The Chair will be expected to contribute to a world-class research group in Aberdeen that complements and integrates with existing research strengths in the Institute in the area of biological interactions in soils. These strengths include the role of soils as providers of functional services in ecosystems and agriculture or as drivers of microbial diversity, environmental change and wider ecosystem/human health. The Chair will also be expected to provide leadership for the discipline of Soil Science both nationally and internationally and will have the opportunity to play a key role in the development of new directions and initiatives within the Institute.

The duties of this post will be carried out in the Cruickshank Building on King's campus, recently refurbished as part of a SRIF funded capital development programme.

2. SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

The School was formed 7 years ago, with the merger of the Departments of Agriculture & Forestry, Plant & Soil Science and Zoology. Recent capital investment has been significant and two of its main buildings on the Old Aberdeen site, the Cruickshank building and the Zoology building, have undergone major multi-million-pound refurbishments in the last 3-4 years. Together with 23 St Machar Drive, these buildings are situated around the Botanic Gardens and provide an invaluable facility for research, teaching and public engagement. The School also has two manned field stations; Oceanlab at Newburgh, and the Lighthouse field station at Cromarty. Oceanlab has seen two new buildings created in recent years, the second completed in spring 2009. Lastly, it has two unmanned field stations, at Bettyhill and at Eynhallow, Orkney. The School has approx. 50 academic staff, 80 research staff (RAs/RFs), 10 teaching fellows, 35 technicians, 3 gardeners and 17 secretaries/admin/finance staff. The school student population consists of approx 140 PGRs, over 50 PGTs and almost 500 UGs (ftes).

Research is organised within the Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences that seeks to address the fundamental biological consequences of environmental change. It has significant international expertise in understanding and modelling the soil/microbe/plant interface, the population and physiological responses of animals and plants from habitats as diverse as the Deep Ocean and tropical forests, along with environmental effects on mammalian physiology, the immune functions of fish and fundamental relationships between diseases and their vectors.

Staff are members of Research Council Peer Review Committees, reflecting the national standing of our groups. Indeed, many of our staff have strong international reputations and regularly publish in the highest impact journals such as Nature and Science. There is a large postgraduate population, whose training and career development go hand in hand with laboratory and field work.

Research within the School is facilitated by a number of major resources, such as the sea and freshwater aquarium, currently undergoing a £1m plus refurbishment, analytical and molecular biology laboratories, and excellent field stations.

There are strong links with the Macaulay Institute and the Fisheries Research Service, Marine Laboratory.

The results of the 2008 RAE saw the Institute's research ranked 2/34 in the UK and staff regularly win research grants from a wide range of sources including BBSRC, NERC and other sources. Most recently the School was jointly awarded a Scottish Funding Council funded research pooling award under the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS) initiative worth £4.3m over seven years. The Director post has been won by Aberdeen and is currently being filled. Similar SFC funding was also recently obtained for the Aberdeen Centre for Environmental Sustainability (ACES).

3. THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Aberdeen, which was founded in 1495, has over 14,000 full-time matriculated students. The University is a world-class, research-led centre of learning and teaching excellence.

The University has two campuses. The King's College Campus retains its medieval layout and village atmosphere, its fifteenth-century cathedral and its sixteenth-century university chapel. This heritage is fused with modern, state of the art facilities for research, learning and teaching, making it fit for purpose for the students of today. The Foresterhill campus is approximately 1.5 miles from King's, a comfortable walk through leafy streets. The University currently employs more than 3900 staff including 1600 academics and has a turnover in excess of £200 million per annum (web site: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/>). In total eleven of our research areas were ranked among the top 25% in the UK: Agriculture and Food Sciences, Computing Science, English Language and Literature, French, Health Services Research, History, Hospital Based Clinical Subjects, Pure Mathematics, Town and Country Planning, Sociology, Theology and Divinity and Religious Studies.

The University's organisational and management structure operates within a devolved managerial and budget system. Academic units are grouped into three colleges: Arts and Social Sciences, Life Sciences and Medicine and Physical Sciences.

4. THE COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDICINE

The College comprises the following five academic Schools, supported by the Graduate School:

School of Biological Sciences (Head of School: Prof Chris Secombes)
School of Medicine and Dentistry (Head of School: Prof Mike Greaves)
School of Medical Sciences (Head of School: Prof Colin McCaig)
School of Psychology (Head of School: Prof Peter McGeorge)
The Rowett Institute for Nutrition and Health (Director: Professor Peter Morgan)
Graduate School (Director of School: Dr Bernadette Connolly)

The College of Life Sciences is home to over 3000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, and is internationally recognised as a research-led centre for teaching excellence and, increasingly, commercialisation. The College is run by Professor Neva Haites, the Head of College, and by Heads of School, who have line management responsibilities, with strategic direction and leadership provided by College Directors of Teaching and Research together with Directors of Research Institutes.

The College has benefitted from significant estate and infrastructure development in the past 10 years with refurbishments of its Polwarth, Cruickshank and Zoology buildings, the last incorporating a science teaching facility. New build projects have created the Institute of Medical Sciences, the Medical Research Facility, the Health Sciences Building, the deep sea facilities at Oceanlab 1 and 2, the Life Science Innovation building and the Suttie Centre for Teaching and Learning in Healthcare (opened summer 2009). The aquarium facilities within the Zoology building are currently undergoing major refurbishment.

Looking ahead, a new home at Foresterhill for the Rowett Research Institute that merged with the University in summer 2008 is being developed, to be opened during session 2012/13.

5. THE CITY OF ABERDEEN

With the population approaching 250,000, Aberdeen is big enough to provide all the advantages of city life, yet compact enough to enjoy the more intimate atmosphere usually associated with small towns.

Aberdeen caters for a wide range of tastes in sporting and cultural activities. To find out more about Aberdeen and its surrounding area go to www.VisitScotland.com and click on Aberdeen on the map.

6. SALARY AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Should you require a visa to undertake paid employment in the UK you will be required to fulfil the minimum points criteria to be granted a Certificate of Sponsorship and Tier 2 visa. As appropriate, at the time an offer of appointment is made you will be asked to demonstrate that you fulfil the criteria in respect of financial maintenance and competency in English. Please do not hesitate to contact Diane Norris, HR Adviser, for further information on this.

This appointment will be made subject to the usual terms and conditions of employment of the University. This permanent appointment will be available from a mutually convenient date. Salary will be at the appropriate point of the professorial scale with placement according to qualifications and experience.

It is the policy of the University, in line with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, to carry out Disclosure Scotland checks on all staff. Any offer of employment will be conditional on the completion of a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland check and employment will not commence until such a check has been satisfactorily completed.

7. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

To discuss the post informally or to arrange a visit, please contact Professor Chris Secombes, Head of School (tel: 01224 272857, email c.j.secombes@abdn.ac.uk) or Professor Jim Prosser (Tel: 01224 273254 or 272681, email j.prosser@abdn.ac.uk).

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CV'S OR APPLICATIONS FORMS TO THE SCHOOL OR PROFESSOR SECOMBES OR PROFESSOR PROSSER.

Online application forms and further information is available at www.abdn.ac.uk/jobs.

If you are unable to submit an electronic application via our website, one copy of the application form, personal details form, curriculum vitae and covering letter should be completed and returned to :

Human Resources
University of Aberdeen
University Office
King's College
Aberdeen
AB24 3FX.

Please quote reference YPL061A on all correspondence.

The closing date for the receipt of applications is **Friday 8 January 2010.**

The University pursues a policy of equal opportunities in the appointment and promotion of staff.