

# University Research Update (6th edition)

Welcome to the university's research newsletter which has been developed to inform you about research in the university, relevant information, news and support. You have received this newsletter as you are on the university's mailing list as being research active / interested. If you would like to unsubscribe please reply to this mailing.



I am writing this on 1st February 2021, the date of the University of the Highlands and Islands' tenth birthday. Despite the global pandemic which is still raging around us, it is a day of celebration, and we should be immensely proud of what has been achieved across our research and knowledge exchange activities over those years, especially in terms of the very significant growth in research and knowledge exchange income, research students and impactful research outputs that have been secured. The history of the University can be articulated as a book of many chapters. Chapter 1 is before University title in 2011, the period of conceptualisation and formation; chapter 2 is the period of growth and development that we have seen from 2011 until 2021 and we are now at the beginning of chapter 3, the next ten years. It is fitting that Professor Todd Walker has joined us today as our new Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and it is fitting too that whilst we see challenges ahead as we emerge (eventually) from COVID-19 and we navigate the effects of BREXIT, we also see immense opportunities too. The university's contribution to the sustainable aviation project is an example of a new contribution in recognition of one of the biggest issues of our age – climate change. It is indeed an example where our work is having impact on major global issues. Taking this dynamic context fully into account is reflected in the discussions about the university's new strategic plan and the place of research within it. We have affirmed the necessity for our research to be world leading and internationally excellent. We have underscored the criticality of the international connectedness of our research – and it is the case that we have over the last five years hundreds of international research connections and activities. But we have also confirmed that our research must have impact on the economy and society across our university's operating area. As Professor Donna Heddle suggested, a strapline for the research and knowledge exchange element for the new strategic plan could be “created in Scotland, inspiring the world”, or perhaps “local research in a global context”; Professor Ben Wilson's variant – “locally inspired research for global challenge” equally captures a sense of being embedded in the region, but always iterating internationally.

A major milestone in the REF cycle will be achieved on 31st March 2021, when we will submit our case studies, environment statements and outputs for scrutiny, along with nearly every other university and higher education institution in the UK. There is no doubt that our REF submission reflects the attributes of chapter 2 of the university's development; the full time equivalent submitted rises from c69 to c118, the number of case studies, outputs and environment statements has grown too, and we present a more cohesive entity as well. It is this submission and the growth that it represents that will provide the foundation as we face the challenges and opportunities that our time presents.

Professor Neil Simco

An t-Àrd-Ollamh Niall Simco

Vice-Principal (Research and Impact) | Iar-Phrionnsapal (Rannsachaidh agus Buaidh)

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Located research: regional places, transitions and challenges. Editors: Campbell, Angela Duffy, Michelle Edmondson, Beth

Congratulations to Simon Bradley and Anna-Wendy Stevenson (pictured) who contributed to the above book which was published by Palgrave MacMillan in November 2019. The chapter written by Simon and Anna-Wendy is entitled 'Real and Virtual Communities of Practice: A Case Study from the Outer Hebrides' and tells the story, which might well be replicated across the university, about the development of further education and higher education provision in a specific local community context, charting the impact; economic, social and cultural.



Below, Anna-Wendy talks us through her journey and how she has grown and developed the university's music studies provision and how it has influenced her research

Local context

Anna-Wendy's story is fairly significant. Her leadership of innovative curriculum including a flagship, pioneering BA (Hons) Applied Music degree has helped to facilitate the Lews Castle College UHI partnership with local Gaelic arts organisation Ceolas -resulting in a multi-million investment to build a new Gaelic arts and education centre 'Cnoc Soilleir' in South Uist.

Reading this chapter, which Anna-Wendy co-wrote with fellow music lecturer and programme leader for MA Music and the Environment, Simon Bradley, it is easy to see how they have been focused on building the ‘Nead nan Ceòladair –The Musicians’ Nest’, the title of a double album Simon curated showcasing the talent nurtured through providing educational provision in an island community context. In many ways their journey has been their research, and research in action, which has made impact in real time.

#### Anna-Wendy’s practice in music

Anna-Wendy’s background is in performance and community music. She has toured the world as a performer (violin) and lecturer; collaborated, performed and recorded with musicians, theatre and film, across genres - bridging classical and traditional music. She has invested time in technique and fluency in both genres which has served her well in many musical contexts. Anna-Wendy’s mission in her teaching has been to share technique between the genres, to make music accessible and inclusive, as well as promoting engagement with the tradition through development of new work, both her own and through community project work, where impact is clearly evident in the successful musical careers of participants. She looks forward to the university’s development of practice-based PhDs.

#### Anna-Wendy’s academic role

Anna-Wendy took on the role of programme leader for applied music in 2012 from her Uist community location where she had been teaching FE and HNC music since 2006. As a networked degree her focus had to be on the university’s network. If you consider this journey as a flight– she had to lead the team to build the plane they were flying (the curriculum) and sell the tickets (recruit). Her flight crew were all qualified, not with PhDs but with both experience in education and, importantly, with relevant national, international industry performance, recording professional profiles. The degree flight path had never been flown in the UK before. Anna-Wendy and her team were truly innovative in the blended learning, networked delivery.

#### Research potential

There is a lot of research potential in Anna-Wendy writing up her academic and curricula journey, not least in terms of the context from which her leadership has emerged and is situated (in the Outer Hebrides).

#### How the chapter emerged

Promoting the local context as a study destination caught the eye of the editor of this book, Angela Campbell, who was visiting Scotland from Federation University Australia and touring the islands. Angela had seen the films Anna-Wendy had produced with Trixpix media about the experience of students going to the islands to learn music in a specific community context, a located research. Anna-Wendy’s story was an obvious fit exploring transitions and challenges and this was her opportunity to capture her team’s work and its’ impact.

#### Learning and Teaching Academy – connector, investor

The university’s Learning and Teaching Academy offers many opportunities for early career academics and higher education practitioners to have their research supported. Preparing the chapter, Simon signed up for the academy’s 2-day writing workshop where he completed the first draft. The workshop enabled him to meet and have peer support. Editing ended up being the most challenging aspect. The Learning and Teaching Academy offers a range of mentoring to support research, scholarship, learning and teaching enhancement.

These functions often overlap – and spending time on professional accreditation helped Anna-Wendy in considering research activity. When the professional accreditation ALPINE scheme was developed in 2017, this gave her a fantastic opportunity to reflect on her practice and support teaching and learning on her programmes.

#### Anna-Wendy's research journey

Anna-Wendy's research mentor helped her to better appreciate the experience she has amassed and the research she has undertaken, better understand the complexity of the research world with regard to the Research Excellence Framework exercise, and encouraged her to consider undertaking a PhD. She is passionate about practical music making and the opportunity to develop and lead curriculum for the university has enabled her to explore the transformative potential of musical collaboration. Bringing these two strands together – practice and pedagogy – seems to her the most obvious route. It has been incredibly informative and rewarding for her to share best practice with other programme leaders across the network, in Learning and Teaching Academy seminars, and in less formal structured set ups, and to realise that these conversations can have significant impact on curriculum strategy, and on developing ones' own confidence in research initiatives. The Aurora women's leadership programme supported through the Learning and Teaching Academy has been another highly valuable opportunity which has supported Anna-Wendy in her leadership responsibilities in so many different contexts. Each year the university offers 'mini' sabbaticals of up to 3 months for staff to develop research. Anna-Wendy applied for and has received the award to write up the research she and her team have conducted into the Virtual Music residency and collaboration with the Learning and Teaching Academy's project: University of the Highlands and Islands Cultural Resilience Team – Project Senegal: African Digital Academy.

#### The road less travelled

Anna-Wendy is extremely grateful to the academy for all the frameworks and opportunities for support that they offer. Without a research contract, apart from the mini sabbatical, she did not receive additional time allocation to participate in those enhancement activities. Engagement has allowed her to invest in herself and to find a way to find support and map her own research and leadership journey. Having several research interests, she has found it both stimulating and sometimes stressful to try and bring these together, often feeling inadequate for 'spreading herself too thin'. Now she sees those strands of music, community and leadership as mutually beneficial and wouldn't change it. She sees the positive impact on students, graduates, alumni, community and the curriculum, and is starting to feel that the house is in order enough to take time to develop and document her own research journey. It maybe the road less travelled, however she would rather have been on the journey and been involved helping to build the arc, contributing to the university's vision and reach.

It has taken Anna-Wendy a year to get over the 'stage fright' of sharing this chapter. Maybe because it also represents to her the story of our own resilience in the face of change. She is now ready to celebrate that!

Anna-Wendy encourages other early career researchers to take advantage of the many Learning and Teaching Academy opportunities which are delivered by a wonderfully positive team who are there to support academic staff to realise their potential and in so doing our students and our university.

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## An ethnography of home during the pandemic



PhD student Karen Hughes outlined the importance of ethnographic study during the pandemic at The Eastern Corridor Medical Engineering Centre's 2020 conference in December.

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## Assisting the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic



Our COVID-19 area, attached to our research repository, can be accessed [here](#) and brings together all research activities relating to COVID-19 now and its affects over time from across the university.

## Staff and student research conference 2021



We should like to advise that due to the ongoing uncertainties associated with the current pandemic and the disruption that this will continue to cause across a wide range of plans and activities for the foreseeable future, it has been decided that the face-to-face staff/student research conference that was due to take place in Moray College UHI, Elgin, in November 2021, will not go ahead.

In the light of this, we will be exploring with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee what form of suitable alternative event could be delivered instead in late November/early December 2021. This could be a single day-long on-line research showcase event, which can be arranged in discussion and agreement with the research clusters; but equally some other form of event might arise in the course of our discussions. Whatever is decided, we will aim to keep you apprised accordingly and will hope that as many staff and students as possible will be able to take part and thereby stay connected.

While it is hoped that the face-to-face event will be able to be rescheduled for the end of 2022, it is also hoped that colleagues will accept the need for continuing caution at the present time and will therefore understand the reasons for the above noted decision.

With very best wishes.

Professor Neil Simco (Acting Principal and Vice Chancellor, and Vice Principal Research and Impact)

Professor Michael Rayner (Dean of Research)

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## Research Publishing and Open Access

We already have 'read and publish' deals with Springer Nature and Wiley, with Cambridge University Press and Oxford University press now following, the Elsevier deal is up for renewal soon, it seems more of these style deals will inevitably follow. Read and publish is becoming the new way journals publish and supply research work so if you are publishing

you need to make sure you understand what these terms mean and what the deals mean for you – your work can be more visible and you can get the publishing charges paid for. The University of the Highlands and Islands Libraries have a guide available as part of the Open Access area to take you through the terms, if you are not familiar, and then into the detail should you be about to publish work. Please make sure you bookmark the guide as it is constantly updated as new deals are confirmed and as the Open Access landscape changes.

<https://libguides.uhi.ac.uk/openaccess>

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## Converge challenge 2021

[Converge searches for the next generation of innovators.](#)

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## Scottish knowledge exchange awards 2021



Applications are now open! – deadline for applications is 5pm, Friday 12 February 2021 and the winners will be announced at The Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards which will be held online on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

Full information can be found here: <https://www.interface-online.org.uk/scottish-knowledge-excha...>

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## SAMS' Christine Campbell recognised for contribution to marine science in 2021 New Years Honours List



Congratulations to Christine (pictured) who has been awarded an MBE for her dedication to and role in the flourishing of the Culture Collection of Algae and Protozoa.

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## NHS Research Scotland – an update from Frances Hines, NHS research & development manager



NHS RESEARCH SCOTLAND

As the number of COVID-19 patients has increased very substantially since the beginning of the year with some 800 cases in the first couple of weeks, there has been a corresponding impact on the research development and innovation staff. Research nurses and research doctors have been engaged in recruiting patients from COVID-19 wards and the Intensive Therapy Unit into the ten or so COVID-19 studies we are doing at the moment. This means that we have had to suspend some studies (especially those taking place in Raigmore Hospital or those expecting patients to visit the Clinical Research Facility), although we continue to support as much as we can in non-COVID-19 studies, and to restart studies where risk assessments allow us to do so.

We are open for business as usual, however, and continue to help anybody who emails or phones us, in relation to governance issues, funding, projects, research design, EU and other projects and innovation activities.

We aim to provide a summary, probably around Easter time, with some analysis of our COVID-19 activity and recruitment which you may find interesting.

One other thing! We are carrying out a UK wide COVID-19 surveillance study called Sarscov2 Immunity & REinfection Evaluation. In NHS Highland we have to recruit 620 patient facing staff by the end of March 2021. It is a self administered polymerase chain reaction swab test and a monthly blood test for 12 months. If you know anybody who is NHS and deals directly with patients in some way (nurse, porter, doctor, catering staff) or if you fall into this category because you have a dual contract or similar, I would be happy for you to email me and I can let you know more and/or forward your name onto the research nurse running the study. Keep safe.



## Covid Health and Adherence Research in Scotland



Prof Gill Hubbard, Department of Nursing and Midwifery (pictured) is one of four core members leading behavioural research about COVID-19 funded by the Chief Scientist Office. The CHARIS project is a unique suite of studies that uses behavioural science to investigate the issue of central importance to the pandemic, namely, adherence to coronavirus guidelines, such as physical distancing, hand washing and wearing a face covering. The project collected data over 6 months from a nationally representative sample of adults in Scotland (n=6976). The evidence from the project is being used to inform evidence-based public health messages by identifying: behaviours to target, who to target, beliefs to target, and intervention content.

Ben Cavanagh, Head of Research - Covid-19 Analytic Hub, Scottish Government said,

"Covid Health and Adherence Research in Scotland has been a hugely helpful contribution for understanding the public understanding and behaviour in response to the risks of COVID-19. It has specifically helped provide information about how well the public understood the public health messages, and the factors that drive it – and we have used this information in government for assessing the effectiveness of the response, and how to improve it."

Using University of the Highlands and Islands funding, the project will collect data about vaccination behaviour. Findings will be used to inform the development of public health messaging. Marina McIver and Fiona Grist, research nurse and lecturer in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at the university will collect vaccination information from participants using telephone interviews.

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## £3.7 million sustainable aviation project at Kirkwall Airport



Colleagues from across the university partnership will be supporting a new £3.7 million project to develop a sustainable aviation programme which could transform short flight travel between remote communities. The sustainable aviation test environment project will create the UK's first operationally-based, low-carbon aviation test centre at Kirkwall Airport.

Colleagues from Perth College UHI, North Highland College UHI's Environmental Research Institute and Orkney College UHI will be exploring areas including the socio-economic impact of low-carbon aviation, implications for aircraft design, hydrogen safety and skills required to support new technologies.

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## Contacting students to participate in student research

If students would like to recruit students from the University of the Highlands and Islands to participate in their research they should, when their ethical approval has been granted, complete a research email template form (available on the university's [research ethics website](#)) after which it should be emailed to Fiona Leiper who will then forward it on to the university's helpdesk for them to process. An email will then be sent to the relevant cohort of students who will have opted in, during online enrolment, to participate in the research.

Neither staff or students should contact students directly to ask them to participate in their research; doing so is an unlawful use of data.

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## An opportunity to help with student research

Benjamin Clubbs Coldron, a postdoctoral researcher, is looking for people with diabetes to help him by completing a survey on self-managing diabetes during a pandemic. The survey is open until 11 February: <https://uhi.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/experiences-of-people-with-diabetes-during-the-pandemic>

Prof Gill Hubbard and Ms Julie Munro, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, have been awarded funding from Bowel Research UK. The study involves co-production of a self-management intervention to improve the health and wellbeing and quality of life of people with a parastomal hernia. They aim to understand the daily trials of people with a parastomal hernia – and develop a ‘regime’ they’ll use to improve their quality of life.

About 130,000 people in the UK have a stoma. Half of these – some 65,000 people - cope with what’s called a parastomal hernia i.e., a bulge around the stoma. People with a parastomal hernia have told us it is unsightly, uncomfortable and often debilitating. Currently, no interventions exist to help people live with, and manage a parastomal hernia. It is essential that people with experience of parastomal hernia are involved in designing future interventions. The study will:

1. Recruit 20 adults in Scotland (Raigmore hospital, Inverness) and England (St Mark’s hospital, London) who’ve had a stoma formed and who now have a parastomal hernia.
2. Conduct in-depth interviews to find out about their experiences of living with a parastomal hernia.
3. Conduct a UK-wide survey of 500 people with living with a parastomal hernia.
4. Meet with the UK wide Patient Advisory Group to discuss the findings and co-design a self-management intervention.
5. Evaluate the intervention in a future study.

The intervention will improve health and wellbeing and bring real quality back to people’s daily lives.

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## Graduate School resources

The Graduate School’s sharePoint site is available for all staff and supervisors looking for more information about the postgraduate research provision.

The code of practice for postgraduate research degrees and the brightspace postgraduate research area remain the go-to places for student procedural guidance and forms - the aim of this new site is to provide staff with complementary information, templates and checklists to assist with, e.g. candidate interviews and new student local inductions. The Postgraduate Research page on Brightspace has been updated to include a new page entitled ‘COVID-19 (coronavirus): Information for students and supervisors’ which contains Covid-related info and FAQs.

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## Innovation funding

There are a number of challenge, innovation and government grant programmes aimed at driving innovation across the UK in universities and businesses, many focus on improving the links between universities and business. Descriptions and links for some of the major programmes are available [here](#).

## Haplo Ethics Monitor for online applications for ethical approval



The online application for ethical approval, provided by Haplo through their ethics monitor system, is available [here](#). Please access the university's research ethics website for guidance and supporting documentation.

It is essential that any post graduate research students and staff who intend to submit an application for ethical approval complete the Ethics Reflection and Practice module before completing their application.

It is essential that any line managers / supervisors / research directors who have responsibility for signing off applications for ethical approval complete the Ethics Reflection and Practice module.

For access to the Ethics Reflection and Practice module, which is available through Brightspace, please contact Fiona Leiper.

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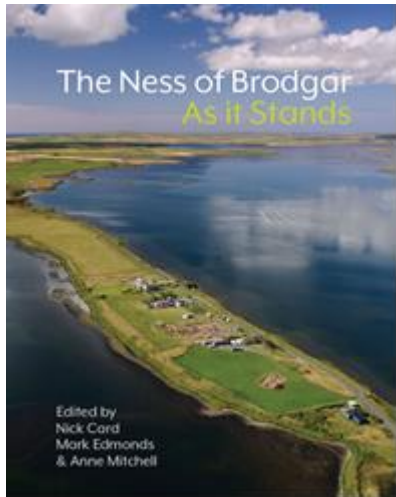
## Research publications

You can browse all research outputs published during 2020 on the university's [research database](#).

Please remember to keep your Pure record up to date using [this link](#).

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## Ness of Brodgar book a best seller with second print underway



Less than two months since its launch, the third volume in the University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute research series has almost sold out.

The book, *The Ness of Brodgar: As it Stands*, presents over a decade's worth of information on all aspects of the monumental Neolithic site in Orkney.

Demand has been such that almost all the original 1,000 copies have gone and a second print run is under way. <https://archaeologyorkney.com/2021/01/22/ness-of-brodgar-boo...>

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## The university's research web pages

The university's support pages for research staff can be accessed [here](#); it contains a host of researcher resources, policy information and news.

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If you want your research colleagues across the university to learn about your project, a recent publication, your work in general or have information about research news, a funding collaboration you are building, events or training opportunities then please contact [fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.leiper@uhi.ac.uk)