

Research activity, support and opportunity here at the university

University Research Update (8th 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](#).



Hello, there! I am Professor Donna Heddle, normally Director of the [UHI Institute for Northern Studies](#), but for the next nine months Acting Vice-Principal (Research and Impact). I am very much looking forward to this challenge during a period which will be very important for the university as a whole as we face a very different academic landscape. My motto is *"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."* There are great opportunities for new developments and initiatives for research and impact in the new

world in which we find ourselves. We should seize the moment and we will. Some of the initiatives I will be taking forward in the first instance are: the development and realignment of the next REF submission; looking at ways to support emerging research areas; and coordinating the implementation of the UHI projects in the Islands Deal. I will be kept busy – but my (virtual) door is always open to colleagues across the university. I am here for you.

Best wishes,

Donna

Professor Donna Heddle

Acting Vice-Principal (Research and Impact)

University of the Highlands and Islands recently awarded professorships



Congratulations to the following staff (pictured above) who were recently made Professors:

Gary Campbell, University of the Highlands and Islands
 Alex Sanmark, Institute of Northern Studies
 Ingrid Mainland, Orkney College UHI
 John Howe, SAMS UHI
 Roxane Andersen, North Highland College UHI
 Roxane Permar, Shetland College UHI
 Sarah-Anne Munoz, Division of Rural Health and Wellbeing

Inaugural lectures

16/09/21: *'Women and men of the Viking Age' - with Professor Alexandra Sanmark*

21/09/21: *'On my planet.....' - with Professor Gary Campbell*

23/09/21: *'Swimming against the tide – the journey from interested spectator to active researcher' with Professor Michael Rayner*

30/09/21: *'Re-Presenting Rev. James Fraser (1634-1709): The Scottish Highlands and Europe in the Century Before Culloden' with Professor David Worthington*

Sarah-Anne Munoz's inaugural lecture 'Rural Health: why our connections to land, landscape and community shape our wellbeing' can be viewed [here](#).

Roxane Andersen's inaugural lecture 'Carbon Planet: a journey into the science of peatlands' can be viewed [here](#).

John Howe's inaugural lecture 'Getting into deep water: adventures in marine geology' can be viewed [here](#).

Details of Ingrid Mainland and Roxane Permar's inaugural lectures will be available soon on the [university's events webpage](#).

Peatlands



For peat's sake: How saving Scotland's peatlands could be the key to saving the planet

Roxane Anderson (pictured) has been working on the [Forsinard reserve](#) since 2012 as the area's only peatlands scientist. Read more about her extensive research into peatland resilience and land management, as well as taking a leading role in the bid to have the Flow Country recognised as a site of outstanding natural importance and granted UNESCO World Heritage status [here](#).

Satellites track "bog breathing" to help monitor peatlands

Using satellite technology to look at how bogs "breathe" could help build a better picture of peatland condition and restoration progress in Scotland.

[New research](#), published on International Bog Day (July 25th), demonstrates the potential for measuring "bog breathing" to monitor restoration sites in future.

A collaboration between NatureScot, University of the Highlands and Islands, University of Nottingham, and Forestry and Land Scotland, the research uses Satellite Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar, which can map the movement of the ground's surface.

MRes in creative practice

Congratulations to Jack MacGregor (pictured) who is our first student to graduate from the new master's by research (MRes) in creative practice. Jack's new play 'Nightlands' is going to be made into a stage production next year. Read more [here](#).



Agronomy Institute



Figure 1A range of products released by Scottish companies and produced with assistance from the Agronomy Institute

A research facility for the development of plants and plant-based products, focussing particularly on the Highlands and Islands, the Agronomy Institute is now in its 19th year of operation.

During the past 12 months the institute has worked on a range of exciting projects including a heritage barley project in collaboration with the [James Hutton Institute](#). Collaborations continued with the Universities of [Copenhagen](#) and [Sheffield](#) and [Trinity College Dublin](#) on Bere barley and with former partners in the [Northern Cereals project](#).

On the commercial side, it continued to manage a Bere barley supply chain to provide grain for malting to [Bruichladdich Distillery](#) and other end users and a collaboration continued with [R & B Distillers](#) to help it source high provenance malting barley for use by its new Isle of Raasay Distillery. A project with Norse Pilgrim Ltd continued to help the company grow tea on the island of Shapinsay while a new project started with [Orkney Craft Vinegar](#) aimed at developing novel kombuchas flavoured with locally grown fruit. An exciting new development was the inclusion of a proposal for an Orkney Community Vertical Farm, based at the institute, which is scheduled to start early next year.

2022 staff and student research conference



The next staff and student research conference will be hosted online from 1.30 p.m. on Thurs 13 January to 1 p.m. on Fri 14 January 2022.

To register, if you haven't already done so, please contact [Fiona Leiper](#).

Further information to follow in the next edition of this newsletter.

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](#).

Below are a selection of recent publications, from the [UHI Research Database](#), which make interesting reading and showcase the breadth of research happening across our university:

[Using Peatland Surface Motion \(Bog Breathing\) to monitor PeatlandAction Sites](#)

Commissioned Report

Marshall, C., Bradley, A., Andersen, R. & Large, D. J., 25 Jul 2021, Scottish Natural Heritage. 46 p. (NatureScot Research Report 1269)

[L'Ambition de l'Espagnol: Fireworks and Frontiers in Early Bourbon Paris](#)

Book Chapter

Woodcock, P., 2 Aug 2021, *Fluctuating Alliances: Art, Politics and Diplomacy in the Modern Era*. Díez del Corral Corredoire, P. (ed.). Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, p. 127-143 17 p.

[Enabling large-scale production of algal oil in continuous output mode](#)

Contribution to journal

Slocombe, S. P., Huete-ortega, S., Kapoore, R. V., Okurowska, K., Mair, A., Day, J. G., Stanley, M. S. & Vaidyanathan, S., 23 Jul 2021, In: iScience. 24, 7, 24 p., 102743.

[A multi-institutional exploration of the social mobility potential of degree apprenticeships](#)

Contribution to journal

Fabian, K., Smith, S., Taylor-Smith, E., Berg, T., Zarb, M., Barr, M. & Paterson, J., 10 Jul 2021, In: Journal of Education and Work. p. 1-16 16 p.

[Modelling small scale impacts of Multi-Purpose Platforms: an ecosystem approach](#)

Contribution to journal

Serpetti, N., Benjamins, S., Brain, S., Collu, M., Harvey, B. J., Heymans, J., Hughes, A., Risch, D., Rosinski, S. & Wilson, B., 8 Jul 2021, In: Frontiers in Marine Science. 8, 18 p., 694013.

[The Appin Murder: The Killing That Shook a Nation](#)

Book

Hunter, J., 1 Jul 2021, 2 ed. Edinburgh: Birlinn. 320 p. Please remember to keep your Pure record up to date using [this link](#).

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Publication from Universities Scotland

'[Getting results for Scotland](#)' shows the role that Scotland's higher education sector is already playing in social and economic recovery through education, research and partnerships. Our university has most mentions in the [report](#)! (page 6, 11 and 22).

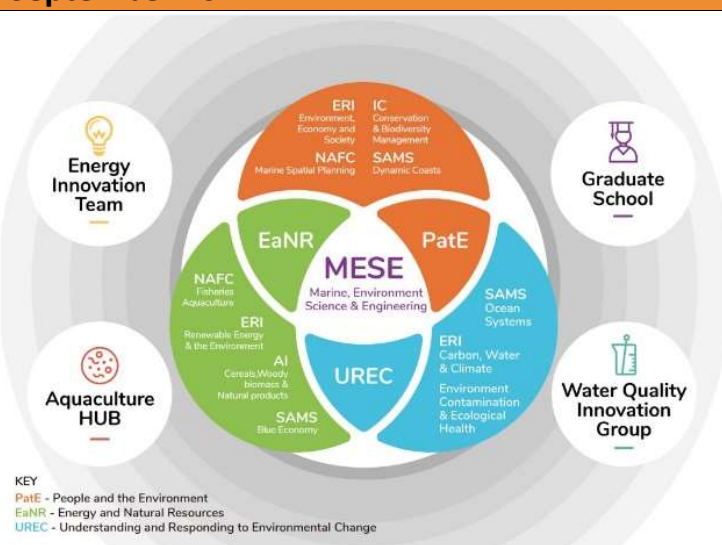


Type 2 diabetes and physical activity study



The study aims to develop a web-based educational tool kit that can be successfully integrated into a community setting. The hope is to develop a tool that is efficient and easy for personal trainers to use to support people living with Type 2 diabetes in becoming more physically active. The study is led by Professor Sandra MacRury (University of the Highlands and Islands) in partnership with [NHS Highland](#) and [High Life Highland](#). Read more [here](#).

Marine, environmental science and engineering (MESE) workshop – 2nd to 3rd September 2021



For the attention of MESE researchers.

The M,ESE Cluster will be holding two ½ day online events in early September focussed on **YOU** and your UHI researcher connections. The aim is to **get to know each other again** after the chaos of the last 18 months. It will involve the popular speed-dating and networking

opportunities that worked so well at the 2018 research conference as well as funding opportunities and the latest on several new University cross-partner groupings.

The event is free, online, **will** re-stretch any shrunken comfort zones and **broaden** your knowledge of your fellow researchers across the UHI Partnership and theirs' of you.

Joining couldn't be simpler; you will receive a Teams meeting invitation for 1.30-4.30 Thursday 2nd Sept and 9.30-12.30 Friday 3rd Sept. Just accept!

Further information available on [Sharepoint](#).

Scottish Policy and Research Exchange

The Scottish Policy and Research Exchange supports researchers and officials as they seek smart solutions to policy challenges. It is a network of professionals working together to deliver evidence-informed policy in practice. SPRE helps researchers and policymakers to collaborate more effectively.



For further details please register on the SPRE website: https://spre.scot/current-inquiries/?utm_source=The+Brokerag...

Football fitness programme to support cardiac patients



Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Trust have joined forces with the university and NHS Highland to offer Football Fans in Training to people who are recovering from health attacks or surgery. Football Fans in Training is a national initiative which is already run at many of Scotland's top football clubs, but which has never been specifically offered to cardiac patients before. The free, 13-week programme will include advice and support on physical activity, diet and weight loss and researchers will work with participants to evaluate the initiative. Read more [here](#).

Sustainable development goals projects

The Development Office and CDEEOs are looking to identify and/or set-up 17 different projects which align with the [UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Inclusive and multi-disciplinary (all levels and subject areas) but all with the same aims – to work towards ending poverty and other deprivations, improving health and education, reducing inequality, and spurring economic growth; all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. More information is [available here](#).



We're hoping to generate momentum working with local businesses and donors, identifying new and existing work to showcase how we're contributing to SDG efforts – pulling it all together as a 17-project example to highlight the wide range of innovative and meaningful work being undertaken by students, staff, graduates, and regional businesses. Particularly relevant given the UN's COP 26 in Scotland later this year. [Let us know about your idea](#)

Alana MacLeod

Curriculum Development Employer Engagement Officer

Orkney: Beside the ocean of time



Over the last year, Anne Bevan (artist and Curriculum leader in Art & Design at Orkney College UHI) has been continuing to develop, exhibit and publish her work connected to *Orkney: Beside the Ocean of Time* (<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/archaeology-institute/our-research/research-projects/oceanoftime/>). This was a multi-disciplinary research project supported by the AHRC, examining layers of time and change from a range of

perspectives, from the slow geological shift of deep time to our more rapid human development and intervention. The project was named after the book by Orcadian writer and poet, George Mackay Brown

(<https://georgemackaybrownfellowship.com>). 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of his birth and has seen a number of events and exhibitions take place, including online talks which Anne took part in.

This summer saw the publication of a co-authored paper with Richard Irvine, Niamh Downing and Carina Fearnely. *"Time horizon: intersections of deep time and biographical time on the West Shore, Stromness, Orkney"*

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2373566X.2021.1910534?journalCode=rgeo20>) The publication coincided with an exhibition of Anne's work in a lighthouse in North Jutland, Denmark (<https://hanstholfyr.dk/project/knowing-nature/>) which included sculpture, photography and video works

(<https://vimeo.com/335875161>) developed in collaboration with film maker Mark Jenkins. Anne presented a new work made during the easing of the pandemic lockdown, *Moon Rock, Vardi*, which refers to reflected light or a beacon.

COVID-19 research



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.

Public Health Scotland have launched a specific search engine that has indexed all the COVID-19 referenced work that already exists in participating universities. The results reference the repository the work is available in, and provides a link direct to the published version of the work via the digital object identifier, they do not hold a copy of the work. UHI are participating and Stuart Knight worked with Public Health Scotland to ensure work our researchers have added to Pure is included in the results they return. There is a delay of a week or so from when we add data to our repository to them picking it up and indexing it in their search engine but it is great news that UHI researchers are represented. Please advise those you need to that this is now live and encourage, as ever, all staff to create a record of any new research in Pure so their work is picked up by the ever increasing incidences of re-use of Pure data across other platforms.

Congratulations to Argyll College UHI student John Frace who was named as the University Student who has made an outstanding contribution at June's [Herald Higher Education Awards](#). In March last year, John created [Scotland's Coronavirus Tracker website](#) which has now attracted 1.5 million users, and at the height of lockdown had over 1,000 people logging on every day for the 3pm update. John's Twitter following has exploded to 22,800 followers, including Professors Devi Shridhar, Jason Leitch, Linda Bauld, and the First Minister.

The University of the Highlands and Islands has been rated positively for its response to COVID-19 in a UK-wide survey of students. The National Student Survey found that the university performed significantly above average in both the Scottish and UK sector in all questions relating to COVID. The results of the 2021 National Student Survey can be viewed at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss

Professor Michael Rayner, pictured, is a co-author of '[Learning from the experience of postgraduate research students and their supervisors during COVID-19](#)' (a paper written for the QAA), which identifies future approaches to supporting and supervising postgraduate research students, drawing on practices developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researcher resources move to SharePoint



Most people across our partnership are now using SharePoint (SP), thanks to the March cyber-attack. It gives us the perfect opportunity to move some resources currently on our public website onto SP. This will enable us to share more information that we might not want in the public domain but still need to share internally. The area has always gathered together useful information to help you in your work; **policies, systems,**

funding info, other department pages, guides to IP or data management, REF info and so on, but we can now also add documents and links to other SP areas. All the information from the existing webpages has now been duplicated and updated into SP with the SP area continuously developed and expanded from now on, with the webpages being retired during September. The area is intended as a hub to discover research information and will link to other relevant SP areas as they are developed. Please get in touch with stuart.knight@uhi.ac.uk if you would like links added or information included.

New SP area - <https://myuhi.sharepoint.com/sites/eo-ro/resources/> - the information is open to any member of staff but is not public.

If you have not been using the webpages please take a look to familiarise yourself with the information available on university policies and resources available to help your work.

Most of the pages in the web area will be deleted during September so if you have webpages you are responsible for editing that link to anything contained at the [old public webpages](#) then please now update the link to point to the corresponding are in SP. There will be some pages that remain for regulatory reasons (the policies page for example needs to remain public) but almost everything else will move to SP in September.

Research publishing – Open Access regulations at UKRI are changing

UK Research and Innovation's [newly published open-access policy](#)—which demands that any peer-reviewed articles funded by UKRI submitted from April 2022 onward be made openly available immediately—has been met with a mixed reaction from the research sector. The policy determines which routes to publication the funder will support with its annual budget of almost £8 billion. [UKRI will provide up to £46.7m](#) annually to implement it, with funding ringfenced for also transitioning monographs to open access from 1 January 2024.



What does this mean for publishing authors? It means any UKRI funded research articles must comply with the new requirements from April 2022, with monographs also coming under OA regulations come January 2024.

The university [Library Guide](#) giving OA information will be updated over the coming weeks and expect more information coming from RKEC representatives, Yammer and SharePoint over the coming months. But be aware that publishing requirements are changing from April 2022, and this will also affect publications to be submitted to REF2027.

Read various articles surrounding these policy changes on Research Professional - See more at: <https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/rr/news/uk/open-acces...>

The UKRI policy webpage is: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>

An update from the SAMS news room



Seal scarer' noise may harm porpoise

Marine scientists have found that the cumulative sound from devices used to deter seals from fish farms on the west coast of Scotland may have had unintended consequences for other species, such as harbour porpoises. A [study](#) published by scientists at SAMS and the Centre for Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) has modelled the combined noise from ADDs from 120 fish farms covering an area from Cape Wrath to the Clyde.



Acoustic research sheds new light on whale sounds

Scientists from SAMS, British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and international collaborators have this week published [the first detailed research](#) on the sounds made by southern right whales on their high latitude feeding grounds at South Georgia.

The summer 2021 issue of Ocean Explorer magazine, which is filled with the latest science stories from SAMS' awe-inspiring ocean environment can be accessed [here](#).

News from the Graduate School

Online PGR system update - Postgraduate research students and their supervisors will already be aware of the on-going development of our new web-based system; [this brief presentation](#) provides a reminder of the processes that will be supported in the system and an update on how things are progressing.



New format Code of Practice – For those who don't get to the end of the presentation (we hope you do!) we're pleased to present to you all our new-format [Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#). We hope you agree that this provides an easier way of finding the information you need. Let us know what you think - gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk

PGR student re-enrolment time - Please be sure to re-enrol as soon as possible – you should by now have received an email about this. All students, regardless of their start date, have to re-enrol in August and it's especially important that funded students or students holding a Tier-4/Student route visa re-enrol promptly. However, all students should make this quick task a priority because,

when the online system is launched, if you don't have a current 2021/22 SITS record, you won't have access to the system. The email contains student record contact details, so if you experience difficulties re-enrolling, please contact them direct as they will be able to respond quickly.

Graduate School SharePoint site – Don't forget about our [SharePoint area](#) (staff log-in only). Lots of information available here, including the 2021-22 RD1 research degree application form – available on the front page under 'Useful links and resources'. Please be sure to use this updated form from now on.

Research Degrees Committee – in April Professor Bhavani Narayanaswamy (SAMS UHI) took on the role of Deputy Chair of Research Degrees Committee and, within this role, an important set of responsibilities is to work closely with Val Cooper and Professor Michael Rayner (Dean of Research) on research students and supervisors training and development activities. Bhavani will take the Chair of Research Degrees Committee in the absence of Professor Rayner, and will also have a number of responsibilities for University-level engagements with external bodies, including her ongoing role in respect of the SUPER DTP.

Graduate School Committee – in April Professor Roxane Andersen (from the Environmental Research Institute which is part of North Highland College UHI) took on the role of Chair of the Graduate School Committee. In this role, Roxane leads the meetings and activities associated with the routine monitoring of PGR students' progress and also helps to address issues that occasionally occur relating to matters of student experience and concerns. Roxane will also represent the University at occasional external meetings and events, as required.

Professor Rayner wishes to offer his thanks to both colleagues for stepping up to the plate to help at this very interesting and challenging time, not least given the very busy and wide-ranging portfolios of work and responsibility they already cover in their home academic partners.

Researchers show the value of the Step Count Challenge



Researchers from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Stirling and the University of the Highlands and Islands pooled together anonymous data from four years of delivery and over 10,000 Step Count Challenge participants to better understand how step-count behaviour changes over the course of the 8 week challenge. Read more [here](#).

News from the Centre for History

MLitts 'sans frontières'

There has been a big rise in masters' students joining our online MLitt programmes with another seventeen postgraduates enrolling with the Centre earlier this year. The seventeen joined a postgraduate student body nearly ten times that size and are now studying online from their homes all over the world, including Inverness, Sligo, Tarland, Somerset, Singapore, West Hollywood, Edinburgh, Humberside, Germany, North Uist, Canada, Wick, Dunfermline, Oban and Lewis!



Whisky in the Highlands

We encourage our PhD students to give lectures and talks so we were delighted when Darroch Bratt gave the Institute of Archaeology's first seminar of 2021. Darroch is jointly supervised by the Centre for History and the Institute of Archaeology and his talk [Whisky Distilling in the Highlands and Islands](#) combines both disciplines.

History Talks

Further information on forthcoming live online talks and events throughout the new academic year can be accessed [here](#).

DataFest21

Upcoming events are as below:

7-8 September: *#OurPeople*. Focusing on using data and AI ethically to benefit our society and wellbeing.



5 October: *#OurPlanet*. Focusing on the environment and climate change and how data and AI can enable us to understand the current situation and be used for positive change.

We have a number of exciting speakers lined up for Our People and Our Planet, including Dr Katherine Trebeck who is a writer, researcher and advocate for economic system change. We also welcome Ann Daniels, a record-breaker polar explorer.

23-24 November: *Data Summit and Data Talent*. Tickets are free and available [here](#).

New report highlights impact of marine plastic pollution on seabirds

A new report has highlighted the threat marine plastic pollution poses to seabirds across Northwest Europe. Researchers examined 10,274 nests across the UK, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and the Faroe Islands, finding that 12% of nests contained plastic debris. Atlantic Puffins were found to be most affected by the issue, with 67% of the species' nests including plastic. The four-year study was led by scientists at North Highland College UHI's Environmental Research Institute, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. The team asked observers who were visiting seabird colonies for other monitoring activities to help gather data as a cost effective and environmentally friendly way to conduct the study. Information was collected from 14 seabird species in 84 colonies between 2016 and 2020.



Dr Neil James, a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the Environmental Research Institute, was one of the scientists involved in the project. He explained: "Marine plastic pollution is an increasing global environmental issue which poses a threat to marine biodiversity. Seabirds are particularly affected by because of the risk of entanglement or ingestion. Our study found that a significant number of nests included plastic debris, with some species more likely to incorporate it than others. As well as providing important information about our seabird populations, this type of study can also reveal valuable insights into the prevalence of plastic in the marine environment."

The results of the study have been published in the Marine Pollution Bulletin. You can access them at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2021.112706>

Research job vacancies



[Director of Research – Biodiversity and freshwater conservation](#)



[Research Fellow – Offshore renewable energy and the environment](#)



[Biochemistry research technician](#)

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.



Student spotlight



The Association of Research Managers and Administrators had a [virtual coffee and chat](#) with Fiona Leiper (pictured) about her experience of studying with them.

Analysis suggests two young males left fingerprints on Ness of Brodgar pottery fragment

Analysis of Neolithic fingerprints from the [Ness of Brodgar](#) has revealed details of two individuals who left their mark on a clay pot 5,000 years ago.



In April, [a fingerprint was found on a pottery sherd](#) recovered during the ongoing University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute excavation of a Neolithic complex in Orkney's West Mainland.

Haplo Ethics Monitor for online applications for ethical approval



documentation.

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

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](#).

Collaboration

Openness

Respect

Excellence

If you want to 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 click the button below!

[Submit an article](#)

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