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In the spring edition of bulletin, we once again celebrate the achievements of our University community.

One of the most dynamic events in the academic calendar so far has been the second Innovative Learning Week, which gave staff the opportunity to experiment with their teaching and students the chance to develop new skills and try alternative modes of learning. On pages 16–17 we showcase some of the event’s highlights.

Another innovation the University has engaged with this year has been MOOCs, and on pages 10–11 we find out more about this new education trend and why the University became the first in the UK to sign up.

We also explore the Scottish Sensory Centre’s groundbreaking British Sign Language Science Glossary project on pages 12–13, and talk to Thought for the Day regular Professor Mona Siddiqui on pages 8–9.

Plus, there’s all the usual news and updates, as well as the chance to win a meal for two at Edinburgh eatery the Gardener’s Cottage and a month’s supply of delicious Border Biscuits to share with your whole department. Just enter our competition on page 26.

St Mary’s, Scilly by Ben Nicholson, taken from the Edinburgh College of Art Collections. Go to Showcase, page 28, for more on what has been uncovered from this fascinating resource.
The University has officially opened its Office of the Americas, marking its ongoing commitment to enhancing links with Latin America.

Based in São Paulo, Brazil, the new office will seek to develop partnerships for teaching, research and knowledge exchange, throughout the Latin America region.

To celebrate the launch of the Office of the Americas, the University is to fund 12 new scholarships to support talented students from the region. The Edinburgh Global Latin America Masters Scholarships are each worth £5,000 and will be available to students undertaking a one-year masters degree in any field.

“Edinburgh researchers are already working closely with partners across Latin America, helping address global issues such as climate change, health and economic development,” said the University’s Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea. “The Office of the Americas will help us to extend this important work.”

The University has a long tradition of academic interaction in Latin America, across a diverse range of fields including energy, telemedicine, literature, history, public health, economics, entrepreneurship and the preservation of delicate ecosystems.

“So I have also seen first hand the enthusiasm in Brazil for engagement with Scotland’s academic institutions.”

Michael Moore MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The University has appointed Sarah Smith, formerly the Scottish Government’s Director of Learning and Head of Policy Profession, as University Secretary.

Ms Smith, who has worked for the Scottish Government since 2001, has strong links to the University of Edinburgh’s Academy of Government and has been a Visiting Professor with the School of Social & Political Science since 2007.

She spent a secondment year with the University in 2007 as Associate Vice-Principal and was largely responsible for devising the University’s Internationalisation Strategy.

“I am delighted to be taking on this role. I very much look forward to playing a full part in the University’s future. The next few years are going to be exciting ones,” said Ms Smith.

The Secretary’s role includes responsibility for all governance and planning functions, student services, development and alumni relations and the University’s International Office.

New Director of Planning

The University will welcome a new Director of Planning to Governance and Strategic Planning. Tracey Slaven, currently Deputy Director for Higher Education and Learning Support for the Scottish Government, will begin the role in early May. Ms Slaven has worked with the Scottish Government since 2005, where she has been involved in roles in higher education and third-sector policy.
Summer completion for world-class wave tank

The world’s first “sea simulator” capable of reproducing tidal currents as well as waves is on schedule to be operational by the end of summer at the University’s King’s Buildings site.

The All-Waters Combined Current and Wave Test Facility will be able to test generators powered by tides and waves in realistic ocean conditions and on an unprecedented scale – helping the University strengthen its position as a global centre for marine energy expertise.

The main construction phase of the facility is complete and the wave-making and current-generating technology is now being installed.

“It’s been described as the most complex machine being built in Scotland at the moment,” said Stuart Brown, Chief Executive Officer of FloWave TT, the University subsidiary company that will run the facility. “There are no other test tanks on the planet like this.”

The circular tank is 25 metres across and will hold more water than Edinburgh’s Royal Commonwealth Pool. Twenty eight giant propellers will produce current and 168 paddles will make waves, all precision-controlled to simulate the changing conditions found in locations that promise the greatest marine energy potential.

“It’s fantastic that a project as complex as this is running so well, especially considering it was always said to be an ambitious deliverable,” said Professor Ian Bryden, Head of the Institute for Energy Systems and Chair of Renewable Energy.

“This is the most sophisticated marine test facility in the world, and it anchors advanced marine energy research firmly in Edinburgh.”

As well as being a unique tool for academic research, the FloWave tank will be used by commercial clients, enabling them to test marine power generators and other devices while avoiding the risks and costs of sea trials.

Student information streamlined

New student information points, launched last year, are helping students gain quick and easy access to the services they need, as part of the University’s ongoing commitment to enhance the student experience.

The two staffed student information points, based at the Main Library and the King’s Buildings Library, offer a one-stop shop for information related to all aspects of University life, and can also be used as a communication channel to reach the student population.

However, staff at each desk will be giving out information, not advice. The service is designed to refer students to the expert teams around the University best placed to handle their queries.

Since the information points have opened, their staff have helped with more than 3,800 enquiries. In addition to delivering face-to-face support, the team is also offering students an email and text message service.

Principal takes part in EUSA Q&A

Questions on issues ranging from the University’s ethical investments policy through to its regulations on smoking were asked of the Principal by students at a forum organised by Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA).

The evening event, held earlier this year at George Square Lecture Theatre, was the first of its kind, giving students the opportunity to meet the Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea, and ask him about issues of concern to them.

Other areas of discussion covered during the 90-minute session, chaired by the University Rector, Peter McColl, included pay and training for postgraduates who teach part time, support for Syrian students, graduate employability and studio space at Edinburgh College of Art.

“This was a valuable opportunity for students to air their views and raise a variety of issues and questions and I thank EUSA for organising it and the Rector for chairing it so effectively,” said Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea. “I certainly feel that it would be worthwhile for the event to be repeated in the future.”
The bulletin

Why are we moving to a new timetabling system?

Dave Laurenson, the Timetabling Project’s Academic Lead, explains.

The new system introduces the first University-wide solution to scheduling teaching. It will be used by all Schools, and a number of support units, resulting in many benefits, including:

- timetable planning that considers all courses students are taking, even those in different Schools;
- up-to-date timetables for both students and rooms on a day-by-day and week-by-week basis;
- easily accessible, personalised timetables for students (covering all taught activities including tutorials);
- online room-booking facility for staff members to request meeting rooms.

The system will help to focus teaching space refurbishments to improve the student experience. Staff can also be added to events, supporting better planning of teaching.

These tools are available through the Timetabling at Edinburgh MyEd channel (with different versions for staff and students).

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The School of Chemistry is to champion its illustrious 300-year history with a programme of events and activities celebrating the School’s achievements and impact.

Teaching of Chemistry began in 1713 with the appointment of Professor James Crawford to the Chair of Physick and Chymistry. Today, Edinburgh continues to make its mark on the field, counting a 100 per cent student satisfaction rating and a top Research Assessment Exercise ranking among recent successes.

The Chemistry anniversary was acknowledged at this year’s Edinburgh International Science Festival, and in the summer a tercentenary symposium will open with a public lecture from nanotechnology and molecular chemistry pioneer Professor Sir Fraser Stoddart, who is an Edinburgh Chemistry alumnus. A special graduation ceremony will also be held.

Treasures from the Chemistry archives will be on display at the Main Library as part of an exhibition highlighting the School’s significant discoveries. Among the featured items will be knitted models of compounds made by Professor Alexander Crum Brown and analytical scales for weighing chemicals used by Professor Joseph Black, who discovered carbon dioxide. The exhibition runs from August to October.

In October, a symposium will explore how Chemistry at Edinburgh in the 18th century helped to shape the discipline and inspire the founding of other chemistry departments around the world. The celebrations will culminate in the performance of a musical composition created specially to commemorate the tercentenary by Chemistry’s Composer-in-Residence Julian Wagstaff.

For more information contact: chemistry-300@ed.ac.uk

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What Chemistry gave the world

The School of Chemistry has nurtured some outstanding scholars, and below are just some of their contributions to society:

- first demonstration of artificial refrigeration using a pump (William Cullen, 1756)
- discovery of carbon dioxide and its production in respiration and fermentation (Joseph Black, 1754)
- first isolation of morphine hydrochloride, leading to the first commercial production (William Gregory, 1831)
- development of graphical formulae to represent the structure of molecules, with atoms labelled as letters and bonds as lines, still in use today (Alexander Crum Brown, 1861)
- Kendall’s dilution law for weak electrolytes (James Kendall, 1928).
Research in focus

ANIMAL HEALTH INVESTMENT

The University has been awarded £10 million to support its research into improving animal health. The funding, awarded by the Scottish Government, will support the development of an international livestock improvement centre at the Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh. "The support from the Scottish Government provides a wonderful opportunity for the University to enhance its research excellence in animal biosciences and food security", says the University’s Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea. "This additional resource on the Easter Bush campus will allow the Roslin Institute to continue to provide solutions to global challenges within the livestock industry.”

FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED

Four University researchers have been made fellows in a prestigious awards scheme that identifies and supports talented international academics at the early stages of their careers. The four Edinburgh recipients of this year’s Newton International Fellowships are Olga Feher, Alberto Godioli, Annie Priyadarshini Louis and Yuliya Zabyelina. The awardees, who are among 41 successful applicants, receive support in the region of £100,000 each for a two-year fellowship in the UK. The fellowships, awarded jointly by the British Academy and the Royal Society, are part of a £29 million initiative to ensure that the UK engages with the world’s most promising academics.

INTERACTIVE GAMES EVALUATED

A five-figure sum from the BBC, awarded to Professor Lydia Plowman, Chair in Education and Technology, has enabled the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of interactive games available on the CBeebies website. Teachers, parents, and children aged from four to six, were involved in the study, which provided the BBC with parental feedback on interaction design and support for learning. Education’s Professor Plowman, who has more than 20 years’ experience of conducting research with children and technologies, has also helped make a film for the CBeebies website, which offers advice for parents on the benefits of playing online educational games with children.

Prehistoric remains discovered more than a century ago have been identified as a new species of marine super-predator, distantly related to modern-day crocodiles. University geoscientists confirmed that the partial skeleton – including a jawbone and teeth – belongs to a group of crocodiles that were similar to dolphins. The animal’s pointed, serrated teeth and large gaping jaw indicate it would have been suited to feeding on large-bodied prey. The species is the oldest known member of this group of animals. The newly confirmed species helps scientists to better understand how marine reptiles were evolving about 165 million years ago.

Scientists soar to track UK gas emissions

A team of scientists, led by the University of Edinburgh, is taking to the sky and the sea to measure greenhouse gases emitted in the UK. The team will fly across the UK in a research aircraft equipped with sensors to measure carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide in the air. Samples will also be taken from sensors on a North Sea ferry, and from a series of multi-storey towers, situated across the UK. Air sampling at the BT Tower in London and observations at a tower to be built in the South East of England will enable the first long-term study of greenhouse gas emissions from London.
Captured on camera

Research from across the University has been showcased in a series of short films, available online. More than 400 one-minute movies have been produced featuring researchers from a range of disciplines talking about their work. The initiative, named Research in a Nutshell, was designed to encourage collaboration between staff from different backgrounds. Many interesting stories have been uncovered with broad appeal, for audiences both within and beyond the University community. The project was developed by a team in the School of Informatics, led by Professor Robert Fisher.

What I’m discovering...

School of Mathematics Lecturer Dr Tibor Antal is collaborating with researchers from Johns Hopkins and Harvard universities to investigate and predict the growth of pancreatic cancer tumours.

"Pancreatic cancer has a high mortality rate; less than five per cent of diagnosed patients survive for five additional years. The reason is the presence of metastases [secondary malignant growths] that have spread from the pancreatic cancer to other parts of the body by the time of diagnosis. The question is why it is so advanced at detection.

"By studying the DNA of both cancer and metastasis samples from patients, we estimated that the cancers were already growing for about 20 years by the time of metastasis. This is good news: it gives a large window of opportunity for detection.

"A faithful mathematical cancer model can be extremely useful. For example, one can calculate the effect of a particular drug therapy for different values of dose and duration, and find the optimal therapy choice. To achieve this, one first needs a working model of tumour progression, and then one needs to apply a model of the drugs to it. We have made some promising attempts on the first part, and are currently working on the second phase.

"I’m trying to learn new things about the biology of cancer, and about mathematics as well. I’m particularly interested in mathematical problems raised by biological questions.

"The challenging aspect of this research is first finding the relevant questions, building a simple but meaningful model for it, and then trying to solve this model to some degree. Each part has its own challenges and beauties."

To find out more about this project, email: Tibor.Antal@ed.ac.uk

In the spotlight

bulletin highlights some of the University research milestones that have been hitting the headlines.

AT THE HEART OF IT

Professor Keith Fox, Duke of Edinburgh Professor of Cardiology, was in the news after revealing that better access to heart drugs could help people at risk of stroke. His research findings were covered in a range of national and regional newspapers, including the Times, Daily Mail, Herald, Courier & Advertiser, Edinburgh Evening News and Metro.

GLOBAL HEALTH CONCERNS

International media reported on Harish Nair’s study that around 12 million children under the age of five are hospitalised with chest infections, such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis, each year. Dr Nair’s findings were covered in a range of news and specialist medical titles globally, from the Edinburgh Evening News to China Daily and the Times of India to Modern Medicare, Infection Control Today and Health News Digest, to name a few.

ALTERED IMAGES

Dr Iain Woodhouse’s alternative versions of famous paintings made an impression in the international press. The geoscientist digitally removed trees from works by Constable and Van Gogh to highlight the threat of deforestation. The images appeared in a range of online and print news sources, including the Herald, BBC Online and the Italian news service Ansa Newswire.

HIDDEN SKILLS UNCOVERED

A University study that has identified the hidden skills of bacteria has attracted extensive media coverage. The research, led by Professor Anura Rambukkana, found that bacterial infection could alter the make-up of nerve cells so that they can take on the properties of stem cells, which could help develop stem cell treatments. This important breakthrough was covered in a broad range of international, national and specialist publications, including the Scotsman, Herald, and Guardian, as well as Wired, Die Welt, India Gazette, Science Now, Nature News, Healthcare Today and BBC Online.
feature...

Vocal harmony

Mona Siddiqui, the School of Divinity’s first Muslim professor, talks to Edd McCracken about crossing boundaries, the relevance of religion and why it is important to speak out.

Professor Mona Siddiqui is protesting. Sitting in her neat office she laughs at the suggestion that she is a compulsive builder of bridges between the faith of her birth and life, Islam, and the faith that the University’s School of Divinity was founded on, Christianity.

“People think my work means I must be bringing harmony to the world; what I’m trying to do is raise awareness of issues – bridge building is not about saying nice things all the time either about your own faith or any other,” she says.

She is equally demure about her status as a trailblazer. Professor Siddiqui is New College’s first Muslim professor.

“It does make me sound rather grand,” she says. “But I try not to look back into history too much. If you say I’m the first this, or the first that, you can blow your status out of all proportions. And that’s the point: I am here first and foremost to do a job.”

In December 2011, after 15 years at the University of Glasgow, where she founded the Centre for the Study of Islam, Professor Siddiqui was appointed as the Professor of Islamic and Inter-religious Studies and Assistant Principal for Religion and Society.

Both titles reflect her passion. For her, religion is “relevant, not something private, marginal, or impotent.”

“When I give public lectures, I can tell the thirst has not gone away,” she says. “People do want to know of things beneath the surface. It is up to academics to relate to them and say, religion is not something disconnected. Some people think it is not part of who you are. But it is. Even if you don’t have a religious faith, religion plays such a relevant role in the way many people would make sense of the world.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Professor Siddiqui moved with her family to England in 1968. Her father, a doctor, wanted to improve his qualifications. What was initially supposed to be a fleeting stay grew into something more permanent.

Professor Siddiqui spent much of her youth studying, gaining a BA in Arabic and French from the University of Leeds in 1984, and then graduating with a PhD in classical Islamic law from the University of Manchester in 1992.

Then, she travelled north to another country. To Scotland. To Glasgow. Her initial reaction, she recalls, was that it felt like “a foreign country” but she soon settled and within six months began to enjoy her new environment.

More recently, of course, her career has moved her to Edinburgh (she still lives in Glasgow) and Professor Siddiqui says the University and the School of Divinity have been “incredibly supportive and welcoming”.

Since arriving she has set up a course on gender and ethics, which looks at classical Islamic sources and what they can say about today’s issues, and she also teaches a course on Christian-Muslim relations.

Her courses, she says, are designed to reach beyond the School. She wants to attract students from across many different disciplines.

So, if Professor Siddiqui is not a bridge builder, she is certainly set on dismantling man-made boundaries.

For example, her new book, due to be published this spring, is Christians, Muslims and Jesus. It is an examination of where Jesus fits within Islamic theology, and an encouragement to Muslims to engage with and debate the symbolism of the cross.

“When people have become so defensive about religion, feeling that they need to protect what they believe,” she says. “I’ve never felt that. If you know you’re grounded in your relationship with God, then all these things are up for discussion.”

And then there is the blurring of the lines between her life in academia and the...
In order to make any changes in life you really have to speak out loudly, but respectfully. If you don’t speak, nothing changes.

media. Professor Siddiqui is a regular contributor to various media, including BBC Scotland and BBC Radio 4’s Thought for the Day.

“People ask if I got media training,” she says. “No, I just went on the radio and thought this was fun. But I knew instantly the media wants you to talk quickly and get to the point. If you can do that, and relay complex ideas to a wider audience, you never know who is listening and whose thinking you might influence.

“There is still snobbery in the UK, as opposed to the US. Here in the UK, people often distinguish between public intellectuals and academics as if you can’t be both. People suspect that if you are so free with your words to the public, how can they have any value in the books? I think that’s a load of rubbish. Universities are publically funded institutions. This is one way of giving something back.”

After one of Professor Siddiqui’s many public talks, a few Muslim parents asked her how they can bring their children back from fundamentalism’s insularity. This is another issue she believes public academics like her have to address because the public want to understand.

“In order to make any changes in life you really have to speak out loudly, but respectfully. If you don’t speak, nothing changes,” she says.

“So for me, why I want to be engaged in these debates is that it is not simply about me and my generation, but about my children’s generation. It is about what kind of world they want to live in. It is about the kind of world I can leave for them.”

Watch Professor Siddiqui’s ‘Religion, Rights and the Secular Space’ video for the Our Changing World lecture series: http://goo.gl/oRPAq
Massively popular

MOOCs have hit the headlines for making higher education mainstream. Claire Simpson finds out more about this latest trend in open education and why the University is taking the lead in the UK.

This year, the University opened its doors to a new community of learners. Exploring topics as diverse as equine nutrition and astrobiology, these 300,000 learners did not come to campus, or pay for their tuition. They did not matriculate and will not graduate. Instead they are part of a growing band of people from around the world signing up for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

MOOCs are free undergraduate-level courses that can be taken online by unlimited numbers of participants (a small administration charge can apply). No credit is awarded, but MOOCs can offer users a commitment-free glimpse of a university education or a chance simply to indulge a passion for learning.

An estimated three million people worldwide are taking advantage of this new open learning movement that is seeing elite Ivy League universities, such as Stanford and Harvard, open up their expertise to anyone, anywhere, with an internet connection.

The concept of open-access education is not new. However, in 2012, the launch of three major MOOCs platforms – Coursera, EdX and Udacity – helped MOOCs capture the zeitgeist and claim a place in the media spotlight.

Many universities, mostly in the US, rushed to sign up, and Edinburgh hit the headlines as the first UK higher education institution to offer MOOCs, swiftly positioning itself as the British leader in this innovative educational sphere. The Open University has also launched its own MOOCs platform, Futurelearn, demonstrating that the movement is now gathering momentum in the UK.

The University’s long-standing partnership with Stanford University pointed to the Coursera platform – developed by a Stanford spin-out – as a logical choice for Edinburgh.

“We’ve a really strong relationship with Stanford University, and so it was through personal contacts that we were invited to join,” says Professor Jeff Haywood, Vice-Principal Knowledge Management and Chief Information Officer. “They were offering a comfortable model for us. It seemed more like an academic collaboration than joining a company.”
The decision to participate in this open education venture presented opportunities to enhance the University’s already strong reputation for innovative learning and teaching. As an early adopter of MOOCs, Edinburgh has had a “substantial” reputational advantage, says Professor Haywood. Plus as a potential leader in the field, the University can play a role in shaping the future direction of MOOCs, as well as experimenting with different teaching styles.

“It’s a possibility for us to demonstrate our quality learning and teaching to a very wide audience,” Professor Haywood explains. “Importantly this is educational research and development – a chance to explore educational spaces that you can’t try in the confines of the formal curriculum.”

MOOCs also provide the University with an opportunity to reach out to groups of learners that may otherwise not be able to access university-level education. This is one of the factors that make the teaching of MOOCs appealing to academics.

“MOOCs break down barriers to educational experience,” says Jeremy Knox, co-tutor on Edinburgh’s E-Learning and Digital Cultures MOOC. “What’s unprecedented about these courses is the scale and the reach you can achieve. MOOCs allow you to express your passion for your subject to new groups of people.”

The response to MOOCs has not been unanimously positive. Concerns that they may signal the beginning of a slippery slope towards an unsustainable model of free education have been widely publicised.

“There’s lots of hyperbole in the press saying MOOCs are going to disrupt higher education, but I don’t think that’s going to happen,” explains Mr Knox, who is also studying for a PhD on the topic of open education. “I think they’re going to find a place within the current provision and they’re going to complement it.”

Professor Haywood compares MOOCs to the existing service offered by the University’s Office of Lifelong Learning, which enrolls around 12,000 students each year. He acknowledges that although MOOCs are free to take, they are not free to run.

“It’s costing this university real time and effort and real cash to build the MOOCs, but if you look upon that as educational research and development that’s a very sensible investment,” he says. “It’s sustainable on a small scale. We have six MOOCs now, and we’ll probably launch another six or seven. But with our second wave, we’ll be more targeted about why we’re doing it.”

With 300,000 people signing up to the University’s first six MOOCs, the demand for this type of study is evident, and a second batch is likely to launch in autumn. So although the University’s MOOCs offering is expected to remain modest, there are signs that it’s a mode of learning that is here to stay.

“I think there’s been too much publicity and too much of an interest for MOOCs to entirely disappear or be a flash in the pan,” says Mr Knox. “It’s an interesting area and I think the sensible thing people who are interested in education and technology can do is to develop it and push it forward.”

Would you like to launch a MOOC?

Running a MOOC is a voluntary activity at the University. These courses run for a three-year lifespan and need to be offered for a minimum of three times in that period, so your MOOC need not be an open-ended commitment. University MOOCs tutors meet on a regular basis to share their experiences. Proposed MOOCs will be carefully considered for selection.

If you would like to get involved, contact Professor Jeff Haywood or Amy Woodgate, DEI Student Experience Project Officer, in the first instance.

Email: Jeff.Haywood@ed.ac.uk  Amy.Woodgate@ed.ac.uk

The Edinburgh MOOCs

Through the Coursera platform, the University offers:

**Artificial Intelligence Planning**

**Tutors:** Gerhard Wickler and Austin Tate

Offers a foundation in artificial intelligence techniques for planning.

**Astrobiology and the Search for Extraterrestrial Life**

**Tutor:** Charles Cockell

Covers the origin and evolution of life and the search for life beyond the Earth.

**Critical Thinking in Global Challenges**

**Tutors:** Celine Caquineau and Mayank Dutia

Learners develop their ability to think critically, assess information and develop reasoned arguments about contemporary global challenges.

**E-learning and Digital Cultures**

**Tutors:** Jeremy Knox, Siân Bayne, Hamish Macleod, Jen Ross and Christine Sinclair

Explores how digital and learning cultures connect and what this means for e-learning theory and practice.

**Equine Nutrition**

**Tutor:** Jo-Anne Murray

Covers many topics ranging from anatomy and physiology of the gastrointestinal tract to dietary management of horses and ponies affected by nutrition-related disorders.

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**Tutors:** Dave Ward, Duncan Pritchard, Michela Massimi, Suilin Lavelle, Matthew Chrisman, Allan Hazlett and Alasdair Richmond

Introduces learners to the most important research areas in contemporary philosophy.

Watch a video about the University’s MOOCs courses: http://goo.gl/HaqSc
Deaf teenagers who wish to investigate the mysteries of the universe could have a whole new world opened up to them, thanks to a project created by the University’s Scottish Sensory Centre. Completed last year, the British Sign Language (BSL) Physics Glossary provides 201 signs to communicate specialist terms commonly used in physics teaching at Standard Grade and GCSE level.

The Physics Glossary is part of the centre’s wider BSL Science Glossary, which includes signs related to the curricula for chemistry, biology and maths. Previously teachers working with deaf learners had to explain specialist terminology using time-consuming fingerspelling or relied on students’ abilities to lip-read.

Not surprisingly, many students with hearing difficulties have found it challenging to access science subjects, and likewise teachers have encountered hurdles in communicating the curriculum.

There are several reasons for this, explains BSL Science Glossary Project Manager Audrey Cameron.

“Deaf children have difficulties in picking up general knowledge from family and friends and it is from these foundations that children base their school science knowledge,” she says.

Reading the signs

A University-based project to enhance science education for students with hearing difficulties takes a hands-on approach to broadening access. bulletin reports.
Their English vocabulary is often very much reduced compared to hearing children and so their access to reading is often limited. Support staff are often not fluent in BSL and acoustics can be poor in classrooms."

An example of the clarity which a BSL explanation can provide can be seen in the signs developed for mass, density and weight. The team found that in many cases new signs, which arose from deaf scientists during the development stage, were iconically and semantically linked. For example the closed fist hand shape for mass is part of all three signs, and the explanations in the definitions show why that’s important for understanding the concepts.

Dr Cameron, who was born profoundly deaf, understands first hand the obstacles to science study faced by young people with hearing difficulties. A student of chemistry, Dr Cameron became Scotland’s first PhD graduate and subsequently qualified as a teacher of higher grade chemistry in mainstream schools. Her experiences have played a vital role in developing the Science Glossary.

“I can empathise with what the students are going through in schools,” she explains. “I have experience in working in research in the polymer chemistry field so I’m able to explain some theories to the rest of the team to help them to create new signs. I’m also a teacher so I know what the curriculum is and how to explain it to students.”

The idea for a BSL Science Glossary originated in 2005, when the late Dr Mary Brennan, who was Reader in Deaf Studies at the University and an influential figure in the promotion of BSL, carried out a trial to create a glossary of signs to be used in mathematics.

Two years later, Rachel O’Neill, Lecturer in Deaf Education at Edinburgh, applied for Scottish Government funding to establish a BSL Science Glossary. She brought together a group of deaf scientists, all with their own skill set.

Today, the project organising team comprises Ms O’Neill, Dr Cameron, who also works as a Deaf Studies tutor at Edinburgh, Gary Quinn, a deaf linguist from Heriot-Watt University and Elisabeth Izatt, Web Manager at the Scottish Sensory Centre. The team works with a wider group of around 16 consultants, including deaf scientists who use BSL as their first language, deaf and hearing teachers and sign language linguists.

The signs are demonstrated through video clips hosted on the Scottish Sensory Centre’s website. Project outreach is carried out by Dr Cameron and Mr Quinn, who participate in science shows throughout the UK, for deaf and hearing audiences.

“We have had a very enthusiastic response from communication support workers and teachers of deaf children who use the BSL definitions to help them prepare before going into class to explain or interpret science concepts,” says Dr Cameron.

The BSL Science Glossary is just one step towards removing barriers to the study of scientific subjects for deaf children and young people. But for Dr Cameron, there is still much work to be done, as there are still relatively low numbers of deaf children and young people accessing science education.

Continuing to expand the Science Glossary will help, she says, as will training for teachers, lecturers and communication support workers, as well as more notetakers and tutorial time to help deaf learners build their technical science vocabulary.

In the meantime, the work of Dr Cameron and the rest of the team will go a long way to opening up science to a new generation of learners.
In March the University enrolled all eligible employees into its workplace pension schemes to keep in line with government legislation (The Pensions Act 2008). bulletin finds out what this means for you.

Who is being enrolled in the University of Edinburgh pension schemes?
Everyone, unless you earn less than the minimum amount (£8,105 in 2012–13, £9,440 in 2013–14), are already in a qualifying workplace scheme, are aged under 22 or over state pension age, or don’t usually work in the UK.

Why is this happening?
The aim is to help more people have another income, on top of the state pension, when they retire. The state pension, currently £107.45 a week for a single person, is a foundation for your retirement. If you want to have more, you need to save during your working life. Otherwise you may reach retirement facing a significant fall in your standard of living.

Can staff who don’t qualify for automatic enrolment still join a pension?
Staff who don’t meet the above criteria will not be automatically enrolled in a scheme but can still join the relevant workplace pension scheme by completing an application form.

What pension scheme will staff be enrolled into?
The University’s pension schemes have all been confirmed as qualifying schemes. Employees on grades UE06–UE10 (or equivalent) will be enrolled into the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). Staff on grades UE01–UE05 (or equivalent) will automatically join National Employment Savings Trust (NEST), a new scheme established by the University as a low-cost alternative to the Staff Benefits Scheme (SBS), which will still be available for staff.

Who will pay into the pension?
You will pay into it and the University will pay into it. The government will also contribute in the form of tax relief. This means some of your money that would have gone to the government as tax goes into your pension instead. Employee contributions for NEST are 1 per cent, while the University contribution is 3 per cent. The employee contribution for SBS is 7.5 per cent and the University will contribute 20.3 per cent. Employee contributions for USS members are either 7.5 (final salary) per cent or 6.5 per cent and the University will pay 16 per cent.

What about staff who don’t want to join a workplace pension scheme?
You may elect to opt out of the new scheme, but this must be a well-informed, individual choice. It cannot be encouraged or incentivised by the University. People who opt out will be automatically enrolled every three years.

What happens when staff leave the University?
NEST or USS members who join a new employer which also contributes to those schemes will simply continue making contributions to their account. If you are contributing to SBS your membership of SBS will cease when your employment with the University ends. You have the right to transfer the value of the benefit you have built up in SBS to your new employer’s scheme should you wish.

Where can staff get more information?
Visit the University’s pensions website at www.ed.ac.uk/pensions.
On course for lab safety

With a high concentration of biological and biomedical research carried out at the University, biosafety expertise is essential. *bulletin* learns about the professional training run by our Health and Safety team that ensures lives are protected in the laboratory.

When UK medical photographer Janet Parker became ill with flu-like symptoms in 1978, a diagnosis of smallpox was initially far from anyone’s thoughts. An international smallpox vaccine programme had been in place for two decades and the disease was just 12 months away from being officially eradicated.

However Mrs Parker, who used a darkroom above an English university laboratory where scientists were investigating the deadly smallpox virus, contracted the disease at her workplace. She was the last person to die from smallpox in the UK.

Such cases are extremely rare, reassures Alastair Reid, the University of Edinburgh’s Director of Health and Safety, but they do highlight the importance of biosafety in environments where potentially dangerous micro-organisms are handled, and the University’s Health and Safety team is suitably positioned to offer expertise in this area.

Since April 2011, a team including Mr Reid has been running the Biosafety Training Institute (BTI) at the University, with visiting tutors from other Scottish universities contributing. The Institute was initially set up as part of the Scottish Funding Council’s Coordinating Health and Safety in Tertiary Education (CHASTE) project, and was taken on by the University when CHASTE came to an end.

The BTI offers professional biosafety practitioner courses, accredited by the UK Institute of Safety in Technology and Research (ISTR). The five-day residential course is suitable for health and safety practitioners or biological or biomedical researchers working in higher education or industry. It is also validated by the University at SCQF Level 11 (MSc module), is approved by the UK Society for Biology for continuing professional development and is in line with the European CEN Workshop agreement on biosafety competence.

“We’re particularly well placed to run this course because we have a very experienced Biological Safety Adviser, Dr Chris Perrons. Our Training and Audit Coordinator, Lawrence Dickson, is a geneticist, so it’s our forte,” explains Mr Reid, who is also a trained biologist.

The vast quantity of biological and biomedical research being conducted at the University also makes it a suitable home for such a training facility. Edinburgh hosts Containment Level 3 research: work at the highest hazard level that can be performed at a UK university. This research can involve handling potentially dangerous bacteria or pathogens, including those that have been genetically modified.

Many Edinburgh staff members have benefited from the course, taking advantage of fee subsidies for internal candidates, but the course also attracts participants from further afield, mainly from higher education settings but increasingly from the biotechnology industry too.

“Candidates are a mixture of health and safety practitioners who want to learn more about biological safety and academic or technical biologists who want to know more about health and safety,” explains Mr Reid. “We’re getting quite a few candidates coming from the big pharmaceutical companies as well.”

Marketing the course to industry in the UK and internationally is part of the team’s vision for developing the Institute. Plans are also afoot to develop the course portfolio and introduce e-learning options.

“Right now we’re trying to get the five-day professional course as good as it can be. We’d then like to move to what we call a hybrid course – part e-learning and part face-to-face – because it’s difficult for people to get away from work for five days,” Mr Reid says.

And with a 100 per cent pass rate, and unanimously positive feedback from all the course’s participants, the potential for expansion is high – keeping the University at the forefront of ensuring biological and biomedical research across the UK remains safe, for both scientists and the wider public.

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/training/bti
The alternative timetable

From drawing dogs to protecting eggs, Edinburgh students had the chance to participate in a broad range of alternative activities as part of the University’s Innovative Learning Week.

Now in its second year, Innovative Learning Week offers staff the chance to experiment with alternative ways of teaching instead of running regular lectures and tutorials.

More than 200 creative and experiential learning events took place across the University for the week-long celebration of innovative learning and teaching. These activities were designed to give students a chance to develop new skills, prepare for employment, network with staff and students from different areas of the University, and gain new perspectives on their studies.

This page, clockwise from above: getting to grips with Portuguese cookery, organised by the School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures; taking part in the Composers Orchestra Improvisatory Composition at the Reid Hall; sketching dogs for Edinburgh College of Art’s Best in Show event, which gave proud pooches their day in the spotlight.
This page, clockwise from below: Engineering meets art for a hands-on creative event at Edinburgh College of Art’s studios; maths students help local schoolchildren solve puzzles; philosophers document the history of their subject by creating a time tree; Informatics’ smart data hack gives participants the chance to tackle real-world data problems presented by organisations including Skyscanner and the City of Edinburgh Council; a Japanese tea ceremony, held at the National Museum of Scotland, gives students a fascinating insight into east Asian culture.

The student perspective
A team of student bloggers and photographers recorded this year’s Innovative Learning Week action.

View their work: http://ilwuofe.wordpress.com
www.flickr.com/photos/ilw2013
In 2005 the Scottish Parliament voted unanimously to pass The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, declaring an aspiration to establish Gaelic as “an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language”. The Act followed decades of grass-roots activism to sustain and support the language in Scotland. Efforts to promote Gaelic and secure its future have gained momentum since the passage of the Act, most visibly with the launch of digital television service BBC Alba in 2008.

Once widely spoken throughout Scotland – and widely spoken in Edinburgh itself during the central Middle Ages – Gaelic has declined dramatically through the centuries. The 2001 Census recorded 58,650 Gaelic speakers, just 1.2 per cent of the population, and a total of 92,350 people with some ability in the language. (Figures from the 2011 Census will be published later this year.) Although the original language of the Scottish kingdom, Gaelic was for centuries stigmatised as a language of poverty and barbarism, with the Scottish Privy Council famously declaring in 1616 that the language should be “abolishit and removeit”.

Since the 1960s, and especially since the 1980s, Gaelic has been increasingly valued as a key component of Scotland’s diverse cultural heritage. Many of the key steps to develop provision and support for the language were taken under Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government. The first Gaelic development agency was established in 1984, Gaelic-medium school education began in 1985, and significant funding for Gaelic television came in 1990. These initiatives have gathered force in the subsequent decades. In Edinburgh, for example, demand for Gaelic-medium education has grown rapidly in recent years and a dedicated Gaelic-medium primary school will open in August 2013, with a total roll approaching 300 pupils.
Ann an 2005 dh’aontaich Pàrlamaid na h-Alba le aosta guth ri Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba), a’ miannachadh Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh mar “cánhain oifigeil ann an Alba aig a bheil co- ionnanachd spéis ris a’ Bheurla”. Bha an t-adhartas seo mar thoradh air strì luchd-taice na Gàidhlig thar bhliadhnaichean airson an cànann a chumail beò agus a bhrosnachadh. Bhon a fhuaire an Achd aonta, thainig spionadh as ùr air oichirpean gus Gàidhlig a chur air adhart agus a dheanamh seasmhach, mar a chunnacas gu soilleir ann an stèidheachadh BBC Alba, an t-seirbheis teilebhein dhideateach a thoiseach ann an 2008.

Bhathas a’ bruiddhinn Gàidhlig faid is farsaing an Alba – agus ann an Dùn Èideann fhèin ann am meadhon nam Meadhon Aoisean – aig aon àm achar tha crionachd an airbharrach air a thighinn air àireamh luchd-labhairt thar nan linntean.

Sheall Cunntas-sluagh 2001 58,650 neach a’ bruiddhinn Gàidhlig, dreach 1.2 sa cheud den t-sluagh, agus 92,350 le comas air choireigin sa chànann. (Thèid fiosrachadh bho Cunntas-sluagh 2011 fholliseachadh nas thaide am-bliadhna). A dh’aindeoin ’s gur a’ Ghàidhlig cànann roghachd na h-Alba bhò thuis, bha i fad ceudan bliadhna a air a cur suasach mar cànann nam bochd agus nam borb, le Comhairle Phiobaireachd na h-Alba a’ gairm ann an 1616 gum bu chùr don Ghàidhlig a bhit “abolishit and removeit”.

Bho na 1960an agus gu h-àraidh bhò na 1980an, chaidh barrachd is barrachd luaich a chur ann a’ Ghàidhlig mar phriomh phàirt de dhualchas na h-Alba. Thachair móran den obair airson taic is solrachadh a chur air a dìogh don Ghàidhlig fo riaghaltais Tòraidheach Mairead Thatcher. Chaidh a’ chiad bhuidheann leasachaidh a stèidheachadh ann an 1984, thòisich sgoiltean fighlaim tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an 1985, agus thainig maoinseachadh susbainteach gu teilebhein na Gàidhlig ann an 1990. Bhon a’ sm sin tha neart nan iomraithean leasachaidh air fàs. Ann an Dùn Èideann, mar eisimpleir, tha iantsa airson fighlaim tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig air a dhòil am meud gu luath agus bidh sgol làn-
Although Gaelic promotion sometimes attracts controversy, notably in relation to bilingual signage, research suggests a broad base of public support for the language. For example, a national survey commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2011 found that 65 per cent of respondents agreed that “the use of Gaelic should be supported and encouraged throughout Scotland”, while only 16 per cent disagreed.

Edinburgh, along with the other four Scottish universities that teach Gaelic, is now completing a Gaelic Language Plan that will be formally launched later in 2013. More than 40 public bodies, including the Scottish Parliament, the City of Edinburgh Council, Historic Scotland and the National Library of Scotland, have published Gaelic language plans, or are currently developing them, working with the statutory Gaelic language planning board, Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The University's Gaelic Language Plan recognises that the position of Gaelic in Scotland is extremely fragile. If Gaelic is to be revitalised as a living language in Scotland a concerted effort on the part of government, the public and private sectors, community organisations and individual speakers is required to enhance the language’s status, promote its acquisition and learning, and encourage it to be used more.

The Plan sets out a wide-ranging programme of concrete measures and targets, including bilingual publications and signage, educational and cultural events and new academic courses, including a new degree in Gaelic and Primary Education, planned to run from 2014. Later this year the University plans to make an appointment to the Chair of Celtic, established in 1882, to lead the development of Scotland’s oldest academic department teaching Gaelic.

In February 2013, the University appointed a Gaelic Officer, Bria Mason, who will have principal responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Plan. The work will be overseen by the Gaelic Language Plan Working Group, chaired by Frank Gribben, Registrar of the College of Humanities & Social Science.

Though anchored in Scottish intellectual and cultural traditions and situated in Scotland’s capital, the University of Edinburgh is a diverse international institution with staff and students from many countries, speaking many languages. Promoting Gaelic within the life of the University, inclusively and engagingly, can make a very positive and creative contribution to that cultural richness.

For more information on the Gaelic Language Plan, contact:
Bria Mason
Gaelic Officer
Bria.Mason@ed.ac.uk
0131 650 3059
www.ed.ac.uk/gaelic

Ghàidhlig a’ fosgladh san Lùnastal 2013, anns am bi faisg air 300 sgòilear.

Ged a bhios connspaid ag éirigh bho am gu am mu oídhearpean gus Ghàidhlig a bhrosnachadh, gu h-àraidh a thaobh shoidhnichean dà-chànanach a’ chànanach. Tha rannsachadh a' sealtainn gu bheth a' mhòr-chuid a' cur taic ris a' chànan. Mar eisimple, fhuair suibhdean Nàiseanta a dh'òrdhaich Ràghaltas na h-Alba ann a’ chòrr 2011 gu robh 65 sa chaidh den luchd-fregairt ag aontachadh gum bu chùbur ’cleachdadh na Gaèidhlig a bhrosnachadh air feadh na h-Alba’, le dìreach 16 sa cheud a’ dol ann a’ ghaidhealtachd.

Tha Dùn Èideann, collach ris na ceithir oilitheòin Albannach eile a bhios a’ teagasg a’ chànan, a’ deasachadh Plana a thoirt air a cheur air bhog gu formile na fhaidh ris a’ chìrthadh ann an 2013. Tha córr is 40 buidhean phobail nam measg Pàrlamaid na h-Alba, Comhairle Baile Dhùn Èideann, Alba Aosmhur agus Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba, air flanaichean Ghàidhlig fhòilseachadh mar-thà, no tha iad a’ deasachadh plana an-dràsta, ag obair cómhla ri Bòrd na Gaèidhlig, buidhean flanaideach reachdail na Gaèidhlig.

Tha Plana Ghàidhlig an Oilitheòin ag aithneachadh gu bheth staid na Gaèidhlig ann an Alba air leth laig. Tha ma neart as ur dol a thighinn air a’ Ghàidhlig mar chànan beò, feumaidh an Ràghaltas, na roinnean poblaich is pròibhdaicheadh, buidhean coimhearsnachd agus daoine fa theth air obair cómhla gu chòrsach gus piseach a thoirt air inbhe a’ chànan, agus daoine a bhrosnachadh agus a chuideachadh gua Ghàidhlig ionnsachadh agus a cleachdadh. Tha prògram farsaing anns a’ Phhila de tharagaidean agus gniomhan broilghmhor, a’ gabhail a-steach shoidhnichean is foilseachaidhean dà-chànanach, tachartasan cultarach agus oideachaidh agus cùrsaichean sgòilearach ura, a’ gabhail a-steach ceum ur ann an ghlanam a’ Phhila na stiùireadh. Bidh Buidheann-brach Plana na Gaèidhlig a’ cumail sùil air an obair stiùr Frank Gribben, Fear-clàraidh Colaiste nan Daonnachd agus Sagaidheansan Sìosailta.

Ged a tha Oilitheòin Dhùn Èideann freumhaichte ann chom thraidisean sgòilearach is cultarach na h-Alba agus stèidhichte ann am prionmh bhailte na h-Alba, tha e uile-gu-lèir eadar-nàiseanta, le luchd-brach a’ chòrasach bho iomadh dà-thaich a’ brodhnach iomadh cànan. Faoaidh breachdachadh na Gaèidhlig ann am beatha laitheil an Oilitheòin, ann an dòigh chàirdeil, chruthachail, fior phiseach a thoirt air a’ chultar eagsunshail, shaighdeir sin.

Airson tuilleadh fìosraichd mun phhlan Ghàidhlig cùribh fios gu:
Bria Mason
Oifigear Gàidhlig
Bria.Mason@ed.ac.uk
0131 650 3059
www.ed.ac.uk/gaelic
health & wellbeing

Bringing you news and information to celebrate and maintain good health at work. Stay informed at www.ed.ac.uk/staff/health-wellbeing.

Free sessions promote exercise

FASIC, the sports medicine centre based at the Centre for Sport and Exercise, is offering staff free lunchtime sessions promoting the health benefits of exercise for people who may not consider themselves to be sporty.

FASIC’s chartered physiotherapists visit staff at their workplace to talk about the anatomy of the back and deliver a 30-minute practical session.

The team offers a total of six free sessions per year, which are available to departments on a first come, first served basis. Contact Treena Shaw for more information.

Contact: treena.shaw@ed.ac.uk

Students beat stress with sport

The Centre for Sport and Exercise has teamed up with EUSA and the University of Edinburgh Sports Union to promote Healthy Body, Healthy Mind to staff and students.

Run by the National Union of Students and Scottish Student Sport, Healthy Body, Healthy Mind is a national scheme launched to recognise the role sport and fitness can play in universities and colleges to help students maintain mental wellbeing.

To support the initiative, the University hosted a pilot scheme to provide students with some active respite from exam stress. Held during the December exams period, Active Escape gave students the opportunity to get involved in exercise. Activities offered were yoga, kickboxing and jogging in the Meadows.

The scheme is to run again during the May exams period. Further initiatives to boost the health and wellbeing of the University community are also being developed. These include more mental health training and stress-busting workshops.

Edinburgh catering earns quality mark

Edinburgh has become the first university in Scotland to achieve formal recognition in an awards scheme that celebrates high-quality and sustainable catering.

The University earned the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark in recognition of its commitment to serving healthy and ethical meals to students in Pollock Halls, where 24,000 meals a week are served to 2,000 students.

“The University of Edinburgh has a history of playing a pioneering role in sustainable issues,” says Ian Macaulay, Assistant Director (Catering) Accommodation Services. “The catering team has overcome a number of challenges to meet the high standards required by the Catering Mark.”

Run by the Soil Association, the Food for Life Catering Mark is a UK-wide certification scheme, which provides an independent assurance that food being served is fresh, free from controversial additives and better for animal welfare.
people news

Three outstanding members of staff have been awarded Principal’s Medals, which they collected at the University’s winter graduation ceremony last year. Jane Haley, Scientific Manager at Edinburgh Neuroscience; Sharon Douglas, Administration Assistant for the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility Education Programme; and Dee Isaacs, Lecturer in Music at Edinburgh College of Art, were all recognised by this University awards scheme, which rewards exceptional contributions made by staff.

Dr Haley was awarded the Principal’s Medal for Outstanding Service in recognition of her leadership at Edinburgh Neuroscience. Her work has enhanced the University’s reputation in neuroscience locally, nationally and internationally. (See page 24 for an interview with Dr Haley.)

Joint recipients of the Principal’s Medal for Service to the Community were Ms Isaacs and Ms Douglas. This award is given to individuals who have made an impactful contribution to the wider community outside the University.

Ms Isaacs is the lead academic on the successful undergraduate course Music in the Community, which offers its students the opportunity to take part in outreach work through their music. Ms Isaacs, a composer and musician, has also staged performance projects at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and the National Museum of Scotland.

Ms Douglas was honoured for her role in setting up the Scottish Network for Arthritis in Children, a charity that has helped improve the lives of children and their families affected by juvenile idiopathic arthritis in the UK.

2013 nominations
The closing date for nominations to this year’s Principal’s Medals is 22 April. Contact Shireen Jawas for more information.

Outstanding staff rewarded

New Head of Engineering appointed

Professor Hugh McCann has joined the University as Head of the School of Engineering. He took up the role on 1 March.

A Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Professor McCann was formerly at the University of Manchester’s Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, where he was Associate Dean (Research), since 2010.

Professor McCann joined the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (now the University of Manchester) in 1996. Prior to that he worked in research and development for the Royal Dutch/Shell Group.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and chaired the UK Professors and Heads of Electrical Engineering from 2003 to 2005.

“I’m very excited to join the School of Engineering. I’m looking forward eagerly to working with new colleagues, many of whom are known to me because of the excellence of their work over many years,” says Professor McCann. “Indeed, ever since my awareness was awakened through my research at Shell in the mid-1980s, I have held engineering at Edinburgh in the highest regard.”
New Year honours recognition

Our members of University staff have been recognised in the New Year’s Honours List.

Peter Higgs, Emeritus Professor of Theoretical Physics, was made a Companion of Honour in recognition of his services to physics.

The recognition confers no title but is restricted to a select group of 65 for achievements in the arts, literature, music, science, politics, industry or religion.

David Porteous, Professor of Human Genetics and Molecular Medicine, was made OBE for services to science.

Professor Porteous’ work focuses on applying knowledge emerging from the Human Genome Project to help identify risk factors for disease and new treatments for common disorders such as cystic fibrosis.

Peter Buneman, Professor of Database Systems, was made MBE for services to data systems and computing.

Academic Registry staff tackle conservation work

A team from Academic Registry has undertaken some essential conservation work in Holyrood Park as part of a volunteering project organised by Historic Scotland.

"Academic Registry wanted to contribute to the University’s volunteering efforts and the Historic Scotland challenge in Holyrood Park was an ideal opportunity to do this," said Karen Osterburg, Head of Business Process Enhancement. "We are a large department and the project gave the opportunity for staff to bond with a far wider group."

The 11-strong team was tasked with clearing an area of gorse on the hillside above St Margaret’s Loch to create a firebreak. Overseen by a Historic Scotland ranger, the team spent the morning hacking their way through the prickly undergrowth. They needed to ensure the firebreak had uneven, natural, edges, to avoid looking too man-made. The volunteers also helped clear litter.

"We had to work as a coordinated team to be able to clear the gorse in an organised manner. Although we work together in an office environment, being out on the hillside doing unfamiliar tasks brought us closer together," said Ms Osterburg.

Their efforts were rewarded with a certificate from Historic Scotland and the satisfaction of their work being visible in one of Edinburgh’s most famous parks.

Top class for first aid

The University’s First Aid Trainer, John Nimmo, has been recognised for excellence in first aid. Mr Nimmo, who is responsible for all the University’s first aid at work and emergency first aid training, received the inaugural Scottish First Aid Award for the Public/Non-Profit Sector.

"We are delighted that our contribution to first aid as an organisation, together with John’s contribution as an outstanding individual practitioner, supported by key colleagues in the Health and Safety Department, have been recognised by this award," said Alastair Reid, the University’s Director of Health and Safety.

The Scottish First Aid Awards have been created to champion first aid in Scotland and recognise the individuals and businesses that are leading the way in its provision.

The University has a long-standing reputation for the excellent quality of first aid training, dating from the early 1980s.

Peter Buneman, whose University career began in 1969, is a key member of the Database Group, part of the University’s Laboratory for Foundations of Computer Science, and is Research Director of the Digital Curation Centre, which provides expert advice and practical help to anyone in UK higher education and research wanting to store, manage, protect and share digital research data.

Alan Walker, Honorary Fellow in the School of Physics & Astronomy, was made MBE for services to science engagement and science education in Scotland. Mr Walker officially retired in 2009 but has continued working in public engagement activities. His Particle Physics for Scottish Schools (PP4SS) project introduces particle physics to school pupils who would not usually have access to that branch of physics.
My nine to five: Dr Jane Haley

Dr Jane Haley is Scientific Manager at Edinburgh Neuroscience, a virtual institute hosted by the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine. In 2012 she was awarded the Principal’s Medal for Outstanding Service. She shares some insights into her working life with bulletin.

Neuroscience is very broad: it covers everything to do with the brain and nervous system: from genetics and molecular-related research through to looking at networks of cells, modelling cells, imaging and behavioural studies with people and animals.

Edinburgh Neuroscience is a virtual institute. We have an array of very diverse researchers all over the University – every campus, including the hospitals, has neuroscience on it somewhere, so our researchers aren’t based in any one department.

I act as a communication hub. Every week I compile and send out a digest of all the seminars that may be of interest to neuroscience researchers. I also send out a news email, which lets people know about grant and job opportunities, high-profile news stories or publications and meetings coming up around the world.

These emails reach about 800 people and are the absolute foundation of our community. By making my inbox a nightmare, I make their lives easier. I also run our website and operate our Facebook page and Twitter account.

It’s my job to encourage and support interdisciplinary interactions between researchers, so I organise a lot of events and provide support for international collaborations. I also support early-years researchers, people who are at a pivotal point in their careers, by providing training and funding opportunities. Finally, I also develop and run Edinburgh Neuroscience’s public engagement programme as well as a collaboration with Edinburgh College of Art.

My job often grows arms and legs and there seems to be a seamless fusion between my job and my life. I was an electrophysiology researcher for the best part of 20 years and my husband is a neuroscience professor, so my home life and my work life are almost indistinguishable.

The thing I like the most about my work is its diverse nature. No two days are the same.

A lot of administrators are really good at keeping a tidy desk but I have totally failed – my academic background keeps bursting through! I’m a list person, though; I work part time so lists are essential.

It was a huge honour but slightly overwhelming to get a Principal’s Medal. When I opened the letter I was so shocked I closed it again and put it in my drawer.

Lunch spot
It’s usually on the hoof. I’ll sometimes bring back soup from the van on George Square.

Best view in Edinburgh
As you come down the road from Edgehead towards Edinburgh the panorama is spectacular – it encompasses the entire Pentlands, right across the city with the Castle and Arthur’s Seat, out to North Berwick along the Firth of Forth and beyond the Bass Rock.

Ideal holiday
Anywhere with my husband and my son, but it would be an added bonus if it was warm and sunny.

Favourite time of year
Spring.

Perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon
Sitting in my garden in the sunshine reading the Sunday papers.
**obituary**

**Scott Ward (1966–2013)**

Edinburgh College of Art tutor Scott Ward, who died in February 2013, was a cinematographer and a teacher of cinematography – two jobs that were quite contiguous. You couldn’t work with Scott without learning, not because he would lecture as he worked – he was far too efficient for that – more because of the questions he asked in advance, the conclusions he reached, and the sensitivity with which he put a plan into action.

Friends and colleagues have been shocked and saddened by the unexpected death of Morag Watson, Digital Library Development Manager in Library & Collections.

Morag joined the University as Systems Librarian in March 1995, and one of her early successes was completing implementation of the Geac library system, which led to a key role in the selection and implementation of its successor, Voyager. The introduction of Voyager, a joint procurement with National Library of Scotland, marked an important step for the University Library, forming what eventually became the Scottish Digital Library Consortium.

In 2000, Morag’s focus turned to service planning and development, and defining a strategic view of the digital library of the future. Her input was a key success factor in external project funding bids, helping to support service development. She was instrumental in the introduction of a wide range of resource discovery and repository systems which transformed library services, further enriching the user experience and promoting the University’s Collections in learning, teaching and research. She wanted the best, and was not afraid to challenge others.

Outside of work, Morag maintained her interest in history and archaeology, was a voracious reader and had a great love of music. She was great company, with a fantastic wit and humour, and colleagues have fond memories of Friday evenings in a local hostelry, enjoying her tales and stories.

At the heart of her life was her partner, Clare, and their dog, Jake, and nothing gave Morag greater joy than to spend time with them, whether on a windswept beach, or applauding Jake’s achievements at dog agility.

Despite increasing health problems Morag’s commitment remained as strong as ever. Her death leaves a huge gap in our lives.

A Breath of Life fund has been set up in Morag’s memory, and donations are welcome.

Elize Rowan, Liz Stevenson, Colin Watt
Library & Collections

http://lunguk.tributefunds.com/fund/Morag+Watson

**David Cairns**
Film and Television Lecturer
Edinburgh College of Art

**obituary**

Morag Watson (1962–2012)

Always calm, patient when he had to be, but briskly decisive when it was time, he made all his collaborators look good, by framing and lighting expressively, always taking the most interesting and courageous route but never overstating an effect or being guilty of the obvious. He raged – gently – against the problem of the “default film,” where decisions are made for reasons other than creativity. He would say: “You’re making a film so you think you need the latest camera and the best lights and the most expensive actors, but until you ask what the film is about, none of that can be assumed. You might not even need a camera at all.”

The whole film department at Edinburgh College of Art is shocked at this sudden loss of an essential colleague and friend. Scott was somebody who could be consulted on any project, experimental, fiction or documentary, about any technical or creative question. His answers were beautifully practical, and told you as much about what you were trying to achieve as how to achieve it, and always with enthusiasm, spirit and vision, generosity and humour.
Two prizes are on offer this edition: a meal for two with a bottle of house wine at the Gardener’s Cottage and a case of Border Biscuits for a runner-up. To enter, compare the two pictures on the right. The image on the right differs from the one on the left. You are looking for five differences. Circle each one and send us your entry by Tuesday 30 April to the address on page 2. Correct entries will be entered in a draw and the winner will be selected at random.
It costs £5 to advertise in bulletin, which is published twice a year. Please email your ad to small.ads@ed.ac.uk and send a cheque payable to the University of Edinburgh to Small Ads, Communications and Marketing, C Floor, Forrest Hill Building, 5 Forrest Hill, Edinburgh EH1 2QL.

Only current members of staff and students are eligible to place an ad.

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Showcase

In every issue of bulletin we highlight a piece of history from the University’s Collections.

Edinburgh College of Art Collections

Early investigations into the Edinburgh College of Art Collections have revealed works that the college purchased in the 1950s with funds from the Carnegie Trust. St Mary’s, Scilly by Ben Nicholson and Studies for a Man and a Woman by Barbara Hepworth (pictured) were among these. On the reverse of the Hepworth piece, a label (inset) revealing that it was part of the 1950 Venice Biennale was discovered. Also uncovered was a letter by Nicholson in which he writes about awards won by Max Ernst and Joan Miró and his return from the 1954 Venice Biennale, where he gained the Ulyssi award. He also refers to his ex-wife Barbara Hepworth sending Studies for a Man and a Woman to the College.

The Edinburgh College of Art Collections are being investigated and catalogued by Curator Neil Lebeter and Archivist Rachel Hosker.

www.ecacollections.tumblr.com

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