

**A Librarian for our
Sixth Century.**

The opportunity of a lifetime

For over five centuries, our library at the University of Aberdeen has supported a centre for learning and research, growing pioneers who have influenced the world in many areas of scholarship and innovation.

Looking to the future, the University's vision is to establish the library as a major intellectual and cultural centre, supporting an ambitious academic strategy which has seen our intellectual mass grow dramatically during the last two years with the appointment of over fifty internationally-distinguished professors in a range of disciplines.

We now need an enthusiastic and innovative University Librarian to play a pivotal role in shaping and driving this exciting development. If you are a visionary leader with a distinguished record in academic librarianship - you could be the pioneer we are seeking.

Contents

Excellence in teaching and research since 1495	1
A learning environment for the 21st century	2
Maximising benefits of a unique cultural inheritance	3
Developing a critical mass of expertise	4
Opening the doors of knowledge	5

The University Librarian will play a key role in determining the strategic direction of the University's library services, in support of the overall vision and goals of the University of Aberdeen.

Excellence in teaching and research since 1495

The University of Aberdeen is one of only five universities in the English-speaking world with a history reaching from before the Renaissance, through the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the period of European expansion to the present day. Over the centuries it has been recognised as a centre of excellence in learning and research with a strong tradition of producing pioneering scholars and pioneering achievements.

Today, this history and tradition underpins a thriving institution committed to academic excellence and international leadership in tackling the challenges of the 21st century.

The heart of a dynamic centre of learning

The University library has always been at the heart of our business. As a centre of excellence in learning, the University has accumulated a remarkable and historically significant collection of books, manuscripts, maps and journals, which provide a major intellectual resource for the people of northern Scotland and beyond.

The outstanding quality and variety of our special collections and archives touch on almost every field of human knowledge, and constitute a rich record of the intellectual history of the University, Scotland, Europe, and the world. The collections also chart the pioneering lives of Aberdeen graduates across the globe as explorers, scholars and entrepreneurs.

The future of the University is in growing its reputation as a centre of academic excellence and one that attracts high-calibre academics and students. Library services, supported by robust and effective information technology (IT), lie at the heart of this future for both our academic and student communities, and are core to the research, learning and teaching business of the University. As our ambition is to be a leading-edge world-class institution, then the library and the IT that supports it must be appropriate to that endeavour.

Inspiring, leading, championing...

Our vision is to develop an excellent library into a major intellectual and cultural centre of learning, recognised throughout the world. To do this we need an outstanding individual with the vision, qualities and experience to ensure that the University is at the forefront of addressing the changing functional and technical demands of providing library services for the 21st century, including:

- flexibility and capacity for growth in line with lifelong learning and changing needs
- a user-focused environment, with e-learning adding value to traditional library functions
- the technical safeguarding and vigorous promotion of our irreplaceable, historic cultural inheritance
- developing a critical mass of expertise which provides an internationally-recognised expert resource
- building relationships with major donors and other supporters, to maximise external financial support for library facilities and collections
- developing the inclusion agenda, and widening physical and virtual access for the community and all potential users, locally, nationally and internationally.

A learning environment for the 21st century

The University's strategic plan for 2004-2009 indicates commitment to investing in new library facilities, addressing the 21st century needs of a modern forward-thinking University and the demands of the undergraduate, postgraduate and research communities.

Central to achieving our ambitions is the need to accomplish the following :

- Increase the capacity of our library facilities, creating a modern and flexible environment which fully integrates the tools of modern learning, and in which electronic resources and technology add value to the collection of over one million books and the expertise of library staff.
- Fully integrate this environment with a purpose-designed home to preserve and promote our fragile and irreplaceable special collections and archives.

Influencing the vision, creating the benefits...

The new librarian will be a key influencer of our strategy, and will play a pivotal role on the project team which is working to make it a reality, by:

- ensuring that the perspective of all who work in the library, and all who use these services, contribute to the vision and its implementation
- taking an entrepreneurial approach to the way in which services and facilities are developed for the benefit of all
- exploring opportunities to maximise the use of services and facilities for exhibitions, learning initiatives and a wide range of other events
- widening access, physical and virtual, through the online catalogue and virtual tours of facilities and collections via the world wide web.

The library is the centre of University life, with nearly three-quarters of a million visits every year from undergraduates, postgraduates, research students and staff, as well as members of the public.

Maximising benefits of a unique cultural inheritance

Our special library collections and archives represent the development of knowledge of the world and all that it contains, and are of national and international importance. Among these are:

- the private collection of our founder Bishop William Elphinstone, with over thirty 15th and 16th-century works
- the sumptuous Aberdeen Bestiary, created around the year 1200, and one of the finest surviving manuscripts of its type
- the 18th-century papers of Thomas Reid and other writers of the Scottish Enlightenment
- a 6000-volume collection of the influential 19th-century works of Sir Walter Scott
- the most comprehensive collection of popular 18th-century fiction, and the most important Dickens holdings outwith the British Library
- internationally-important treasures of Jewish religion and history, including a 15th century illuminated codex of the Hebrew Bible, scrolls of the Book of Esther, and the Biesenthal Collection of Rabbinical texts
- a magnificent collection of medical works, from the 16th to 20th centuries, charting the evolving science of medicine throughout the world to medical practice at the front during the First World War
- an acclaimed collection of books and pamphlets on the Jacobite rebellions, including their international implications and the personalities involved
- tales of voyages and adventure in the illustrated journals and diaries of great Scottish travellers of their journeys through Europe, Asia and the New World between the 17th and 20th centuries
- a fascinating collection of manuscripts charting the natural, social and political history of America and Canada, through the eyes of early settlers with Aberdeen connections.

Protecting, preserving, promoting...

The University Librarian will play a key role in helping the University maximise the benefits and research potential of these treasures for students, staff, researchers and interested individuals from around the world, including:

- playing a key role on the project team working to re-house these treasures in a modern, environmentally and climatically-controlled facility to ensure their continued preservation and wider use
- improving access to scholars, interested individuals and the general public from all around the world
- using personal and professional connections and networks to stimulate interest at the highest level
- pursuing a programme of active marketing to generate interest and promote this inheritance vigorously – locally, nationally and internationally
- identifying potential further acquisitions of national treasures currently housed elsewhere in Scotland
- bringing the collections to the world via the world wide web, with virtual tours and easy online access
- securing recognition for Aberdeen, the North-east, and Scotland, as being home to unique treasures of great historical significance.

Developing a critical mass of expertise

The library needs at its heart a core of experts, working as a team, to:

- inspire, guide, support and nurture the undergraduate community of today, who will be the pioneers of tomorrow
- support the climate of innovation and challenge within our postgraduate population
- nurture the ethos of innovation and achievement in our academic and research community
- underpin the ambitious aims of our colleges as internationally-recognised centres of academic excellence.

Establishing the library as a major intellectual and cultural centre requires a critical mass of expertise in library and information technology services, matching an ambitious academic strategy and increasingly heavyweight intellectual capital.

Recognising the talent and experience we already have is vital in creating that critical mass, as is sourcing the right person to lead it.

Leading, inspiring, team-building...

Key challenges for the new University Librarian will be to:

- provide leadership, strong management and direction to existing library services
- introduce new organisational structures to optimise the effectiveness of services
- develop and implement an institutional strategy for library services, and central policies to support achievement of the University's vision
- work with a rejuvenated internal IT function to optimise use of IT developments to support and promote the library
- provide support to, and have oversight of, services for the University's colleges
- establish effective partnership-working with library staff, senior managers and academic staff across the University
- be an entrepreneur, and explore how services could be developed further with all user groups
- champion the library internally and externally through all professional networks
- maximise the benefits of national and international contacts and professional networks
- take a proactive and innovative approach to ensure that opportunities for external funding are fully exploited.

The University currently employs around 3,200 staff, with a further 1,400 jobs sustained elsewhere locally, and with over 13,000 students representing 120 nationalities. With a turnover in excess of £150 million, the University generates nearly £300 million for the Scottish economy each year.

Opening the doors of knowledge

Core to our academic strategy is the further development of our library as a major centre to match the intellectual capital and cultural inheritance of an institution with a growing reputation and influence throughout the world.

Central to this is widening access to the benefits of our facilities, expertise, and historic holdings beyond the immediate University population, to the communities of the North-east and rest of Scotland, throughout the UK, and internationally.

We are aiming for:

- top-quality facilities and services to be used and enjoyed by all who study and work at the University
- more opportunities to extend these benefits to the local community, business sector and all who live, work and visit in this area of Scotland

Championing, developing, partnering, promoting...

The new University Librarian will lead the development of a vigorous programme to maximise the benefits of our facilities, expertise and national treasures and:

- explore new opportunities to contribute to the life of the local community through outreach programmes with community groups, schools and the general public
- develop an annual programme of events - including readings, exhibitions of the special collections, pictures and artworks, and more
- work with inhouse communication experts to market the library locally, nationally and internationally
- work in partnership with other institutions and organisations both locally and nationally to increase the range of activities and audiences
- develop mutually-beneficial partnerships with enterprise, private and public sector partners
- work in partnership with individuals, trusts, foundations, corporate bodies and other organisations to maximise support for this internationally-recognised centre of learning.

Are you the visionary and talented expert we are looking for?

- An exceptional, talented, highly-experienced and forward-thinking individual - seeking a new challenge?
- A strategic operator – keen for a pivotal role in shaping our vision to create an outstanding centre of intellectual excellence and cultural heritage?
- An inspirational leader – looking to build the expert team which will underpin our strategy to become an outstanding international institution focused on finding global solutions to the global problems of the 21st century?

Letters of application should be addressed to

Office of the Principal

University of Aberdeen

King's College

Aberdeen AB24 3FX

For informal discussion please contact

Professor Christopher Gane

Vice-Principal (Library and Information Services)

Tel +44 (0) 1224 273689

Email c.gane@abdn.ac.uk

For more information on the University of Aberdeen visit www.abdn.ac.uk

To find out more about living and working in the north-east of Scotland visit

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk