

RGU CLIMBS 27 PLACES IN NATIONAL RESEARCH QUALITY LEAGUE TABLE



Professor Peter Robertson

Following the December announcement of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results, the University has climbed from 114th to 87th in the Times Higher Educational Supplement League tables based on RAE2008 results. This places the University as the top modern university for research in Scotland.

The University returned a total of 171 full-time staff in 11 subjects – a significant improvement from the last RAE in 2001 when only 120 full-time staff were submitted.

In addition to increasing the volume of staff returned, the quality of research undertaken at the University has also improved considerably, with eight of the eleven subject areas submitted containing world-leading research. 73% of research at RGU was classified as being of at least international quality.

Professor Peter Robertson, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and

Commercialisation, welcomed the results. He said, "The University has made a significant investment in its research activities, dramatically improving the number and quality of researchers at RGU. In recent years the University has developed a growing reputation for undertaking quality research which provides solutions to real problems that are being faced by industry and society. It is extremely pleasing to see that success reflected in the excellent results from the RAE."

The University performed strongly in allied health professions, art and design, architecture and built environment, computing, and library and information management as well as business and management studies.

University Principal, Professor Mike Pittilo said, "I'm delighted at the University's performance. The results have put us in a strong position to take forward and grow our research strategy beyond RAE 2008."

CHARITY DONATION ACCELERATES RESEARCH INTO GENETIC DISEASE

Research into a rare genetic disease which can cause kidney failure if left untreated is to take a step forward at RGU thanks to a donation of £26,000 by the Cystinosis Foundation UK.

Cystinosis is characterised by a build-up of the amino acid, cystine, in all the tissues of the body, resulting in widespread organ damage. If untreated, those affected by the disease face death at a young age. The only drug treatment currently available is cysteamine, which must be taken every six hours for life and has a number of very serious side effects, as well as possessing a taste and smell so unpleasant that many patients do not take their medication.

A research team at the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, led by Professor Don Cairns, has been carrying out research into cysteamine in an attempt to decrease the unpleasant taste and smell of the drug. The cheque for £26,000 was handed over by Roy Forsyth, who became an active member of the Cystinosis Foundation UK along with his wife Vicky after their daughter Lena was diagnosed with cystinosis when she was just seven months old.

The funding will allow RGU to support a PhD student for the next two years to look at novel formulations of drugs to treat cystinosis.

For further information, please visit www.cystinosis.org.uk



Roy Forsyth (on the left) hands over the cheque to Dr Graeme Kay of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences.

WELCOME

Welcome to the February edition of RGU: NEWS.

Featuring a host of staff and student achievements, initiatives and events, and collaborations with industry, this issue also includes a feature on the Student Services Department, which hopefully you will find both interesting and informative.

We would be delighted to hear your suggestions for Schools, support departments and specialist research centres around the University to feature in the magazine in 2009. Get in touch by emailing your ideas to newsdesk@rgu.ac.uk. You can also use this email address to contact us if you would like copies of any photos included in the magazine.

This month, we would also like to highlight to staff the option to opt out of receiving a hard copy of RGU: News. Instead, staff will receive an email alert to view the publication online. Email c.a.c.jones@rgu.ac.uk for more information.

The deadline for articles to be included in the March edition is Wednesday 4 February. Deadlines for the rest of 2009 are available on the newsletter website.

Katy Jones
Communications Officer

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT UNDERLINES STRENGTH OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERTISE

Professor Alistair Anderson, Director of the Charles P Skene Centre for Entrepreneurship at Aberdeen Business School, has been appointed by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to advise small firms amid the economic downturn. Professor Alistair will become the FSB's official Professor of Small Business.

In the lead up to this appointment, the FSB approached all accredited business schools in the UK to find a chair in small business. Aberdeen Business School was selected from among the best facilities in the UK and will be endowed with £100,000 per year.

Professor Anderson explained: "A key point in our selection was the very positive support from all members of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and from Dean of the Business School, Professor Rita Marcella. Apparently our enthusiasm for small business shone through at the presentation we made and Heather Fulford, Susan Moulit, Janice Freeman, Vicky Stewart and David Gibbons-Wood (who was co-opted) should be congratulated in this respect. We see this new chair as a ringing endorsement of the work that the Centre has developed, with an outstanding record in research."

RGU: PEOPLE

LECTURER BECOMES FIRST HONORARY CONSUL OF ROMANIA IN SCOTLAND



Dr Liliانا Hiris

Dr Liliانا Hiris, a lecturer in economics at Aberdeen Business School (ABS), has been appointed as the first Honorary Consul of Romania in Scotland, following a ceremony hosted by Aberdeen's Lord Provost, Peter Stephen, on Wednesday 10 December.

Dr Hiris, a graduate of Oxford University and the London School of Economics, teaches in the field of European and International Economics. Since moving to Aberdeen from England, where she relocated from Romania in 1996, Dr Hiris has worked tirelessly towards the promotion of links between Scotland and Romania, setting up the Scottish Romanian Society and giving presentations throughout the North-east on Romania as a new member state, after the country's accession to the EU in 2007.

Dr Hiris commented: "I was very much aware of the limited knowledge about Romania in Aberdeen, and wished to support the Romanian community in setting up links here."

The Romanian Ambassador to the UK, Dr Ion Jinga, and the General Consul of Romania, Dr Mihai Delcea, were present at the ceremony and the Ambassador also marked his visit to Aberdeen by delivering a lecture at the University, 'Romania: Two Years after the EU Accession', on Tuesday 11 December. Dr Jinga's talk explored Romania's European integration, a subject on which he has spoken widely.

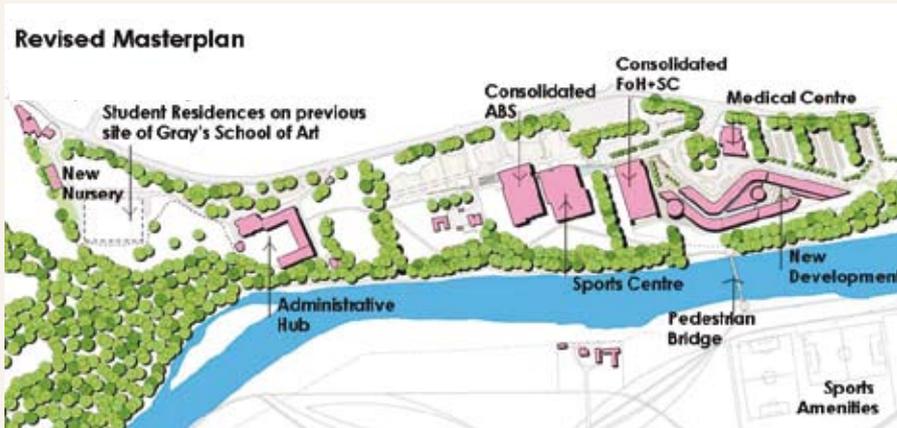
PROFESSOR PREPS SCOTLAND FOR EMERGENCIES

Professor David Alexander, Director of the Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research, has joined the Resilience Advisory Board for Scotland (RABS), a body which advises Ministers and the wider civil contingencies community on strategic policy development to ensure that Scotland is prepared to respond effectively to major emergencies.

Professor Alexander is joined by First Scotrail Managing Director Mary Grant in this appointment, which is reserved for individuals who have particular knowledge of, and expertise in, resilience or change management issues.

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "We believe that both Professor Alexander and Ms Grant will make an important contribution by bringing their business experience and academic knowledge to the table, in order to improve our national preparedness."

REVISED MASTERPLAN GETS BOARD APPROVAL



The University's revised masterplan was approved by the Board of Governors on Thursday 18 December, signalling the start of an exciting period of development which will transform the Garthdee Campus.

The revised masterplan, which has been submitted for planning permission, will see 35,000m² of new buildings built at Garthdee over a period of 10 years, and existing areas within Aberdeen Business School and the Faculty of Health and Social Care being modified for new use.

Following feedback from staff and students early in 2008 and the acquisition of an additional 50 acres of land on the south side of the River Dee, it was agreed that the original masterplan should be reviewed by the University's architects, Building Design Partnership. This identified a number of benefits, including allowing for a major entrance to the campus with all academic activity and student services consolidated within a short walking distance, a shortened construction programme and reduced costs.

Once planning permission has been approved, enabling work is expected to start on site in

summer 2009 with the masterplan construction programme scheduled to commence in 2010. However, affordability is a key challenge and work will need to be phased to ensure that the vision for the campus is achieved without jeopardising core business.

Pat Briggs, Executive Director, who is leading the project said, "The objective is to ensure that the project remains affordable without compromising quality or putting inappropriate pressure on our planned investment in teaching and research."

If achievable, the first phase would consolidate academic activity at Garthdee with 20,000m² of new accommodation providing sufficient space for Engineering; Pharmacy and Life Sciences; Computing; Library provision for the full Garthdee Campus; a communal teaching facility; student services; and an informal learning, social and catering provision for the campus as a whole.

Gray's School of Art and the Scott Sutherland School will remain in their current buildings during this first phase and architects will work with both schools to review current space utilisation and ensure that the activities of these two schools are not disadvantaged during this period. As part of the solution it is also proposed to reconfigure the Clarke building as an administrative hub and options for use of the St Andrews building are currently under review.

A five-year time frame is envisaged for the first phase. It is hoped a second five-year phase of development would provide an additional 15,000m² of accommodation for the remaining schools not already housed in new builds. In addition, the Scott Sutherland site would be remodelled to accommodate the new administrative and support hub for the University and the site of Gray's School of Art is being considered for the development of new student accommodation on campus.

Visual of the Garthdee site after the first five-year phase has been completed.



RGU WORKS WITH ABERDEEN COLLEGE TO PILOT NEW SCHEME

Aberdeen College and RGU are to pilot a groundbreaking new scheme, which will award students who leave University after first or second year an official HNC or HND level qualification to recognise the work they have completed.

The new Flexible Credit Transfer scheme is the first of its kind in Scotland and will offer a new and supported route of learning for students. The SQA has agreed that Aberdeen College and the University may pilot the scheme using the BA Communications with Public Relations degree at RGU, which has close ties with the College's HND Communication with Media in its first and second years.

Senior Vice-Principal, Professor John Harper said, "Higher education is now about giving students the flexibility to complete their studies in a manner and at a pace that suits them. We welcome our close association with Aberdeen College, which has allowed us to develop a unique framework in Scotland where students are enabled to stay within the education system, through the provision of a number of routes, allowing them to complete a qualification either with the College or at RGU."

Many colleges have links with universities that allow HND students to switch seamlessly into the third year of a relevant degree course. However, this is the first time that the process will work in reverse and offer a new form of supported qualification for students who are more suited to college than university.

AL FRESCO SCREENING AT GRAY'S

During December, fourth year students on the Photographic and Electronic Media course at Gray's School of Art put on a large-scale outdoor screening in University grounds between Gray's and the Scott Sutherland buildings. Their attempt to raise funds for the forthcoming Gray's Degree Show, commencing mid-June 2009, was hugely successful, with the event being extremely well attended by students from across the School. Those involved now plan to do a few more screenings as an extension of their 'Tune In' project in the lead up to the Degree Show.



This photo of the event is courtesy of Martin Senyszak.

RESEARCH ROUND UP

RESEARCHER LEADS PROJECT EXAMINING LINKS BETWEEN OBESITY AND BREAST CANCER

Researchers at RGU and the University of Aberdeen are examining links between obesity and breast cancer through a grant awarded by Breast Cancer Campaign, the charity that aims to beat breast cancer by funding innovative world class research.

Led by Dr Giovanna Bermanno, based at the Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology (CORE), the research team has been awarded £9,500 to study the links between obesity, diabetes and breast cancer.

Commenting on the research Dr Bermanno said, "I hope this work will provide the basis for future clinical studies and the development of novel treatments for patients with, or at risk of developing, breast cancer."

If a link is found between obesity, high levels of insulin and breast cancer, preventative measures could be used to reduce the numbers of obese women developing breast cancer. If women are obese in their 30s, they may develop diabetes and breast cancer as they age. Encouraging women of all ages to control their weight through a healthy diet and, as a consequence, insulin levels in their blood, this could greatly reduce the numbers of breast cancer sufferers.

Breast Cancer Campaign currently supports 105 research projects throughout the UK, worth over £13.5 million, three of which are being carried out in Aberdeen.



Dr Giovanna Bermanno

JOINT VENTURE INVESTIGATES HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUES IN SCOTLAND

In a joint bid by RGU and the University of Aberdeen, academics have successfully tendered to undertake research for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) which will investigate issues concerning the challenges facing built environment higher education in the coming years.

Dr Deborah Roberts, Reader in Property at the University of Aberdeen and Professor Richard Laing and Gerry Buda, of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment at RGU, join Steven Devaney, from the University of Aberdeen, as co-applicants with £30,000 in funding from the Institution.

The aim of the project is to work out how built environment education, with a focus on surveying in particular, needs to adapt to meet the needs of industry and Scotland over the next 10 to 20 years. This will involve looking at student intake, staff profiles, research and industrial needs.

The research project is due to be complete this year. Professor Laing explained: "As a project team, we believe that the respective strengths and characteristics of our institutions mean that we are well-placed to investigate these issues. We have combined experience of teaching and research across a wide range of built environment disciplines in both pre and post-1992 Universities."

The School of Computing was host to Indian researchers from IIT Madras during 2008. These visits completed the first round of research exchanges between RGU and IIT Madras funded by a British Council UKIERI research grant for both staff and postgraduate students.

Indian students, Raghunandan Ananthasayanam and Abhishek Ghose, enjoyed five months with Computing Technologies Centre last summer, following on from a trip by RGU students, Ibrahim Adeyanju and Amandine Orecchioni, to IIT Madras for two months at the beginning of 2008, on which they were accompanied by Dr Nirmalie Wiratunga.

There have already been several successful outcomes from this exciting research exchange, including the development of a new software system being selected as a finalist at a recent European conference, and it is hoped that this will continue.

RESEARCH EXCHANGE STIMULATES SUCCESS FOR SCHOOL OF COMPUTING



Back row (from L to R): Susan Crow, Raghunandan Ananthasayanam, Deepak Khemani, Abhishek Ghose and Rob Lothian. Front row: Nirmalie Wiratunga and Ibrahim Adeyanju.

LECTURER PROMOTES CONVERSATION ON CONSERVATION

Professor Richard Laing of the Scott Sutherland School recently gave an invited lecture to the inaugural St Andrew Conservation Conference, hosted by the University of Dundee. The main theme for the conference was 'Ensuring excellence in conservation through working with specialists' and speakers included representatives from academia and architecture, as well as practising skilled craftspeople.

Professor Laing gave a presentation on working with specialists in building contracts, drawing on the work he has undertaken through the ESF and on his collaborative projects with KTS Copenhagen. Organised by Ian Davidson of the National Trust for Scotland, it is intended that the conference will become an annual event.



PHARMACY EXPERTS PROVIDE TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA

School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences lecturers Brian Addison, Ruth Edwards and Kim Munro travelled to Australia in October to provide training to a group of pharmacists who enrolled on RGU's Pharmacist Independent Prescribing short course. The trio were based at Monash University in Melbourne for a week to deliver the contact teaching element of the course since the students were unable to make the trip to the UK.

Brian explained, "The pharmacists took part in the training as part of a pilot project examining how prescribing pharmacists could be used in Australia. Different states in the country have different laws so they are trying to work out how they could implement pharmacist prescribing before changing legislation. We were able to share our experiences of this developing role in the UK."

LGBT ISSUES ADDRESSED BY LECTURER AT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

Mike Sutherland, a lecturer in Social Work, represented the University in Slovakia during October as one of the keynote speakers at a conference on sexualities at The University of Constantin in the Philosopher, in the town of Nitra. The event attracted around 60 delegates, mostly from eastern European countries, presenting papers on a wide range of sexuality related subjects.

Mike presented on the visibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues in residential child care, with findings based on ongoing research into this issue within the sector. He said: "As well as having the opportunity to present at the conference, it was a useful occasion to network with individuals who may be interested in attending and presenting at a Scottish, European-funded, series of four seminars entitled on 'LGBT Lives', the third of which is set to take place at RGU in October 2009."



Professor David Barclay

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH ABOUT RGU EXPERTS

The RGU Directory of Experts and Expert Cards were first created by the Communications Office at the beginning of 2006 and distributed to media and business. They contain the names, contact details and summary of the specialist fields members of staff are able to advise on, in the hope that media and business contacts from across the country are more able to draw upon this, which in turn helps to enhance the reputation of RGU. As the Communications team looks to revamp these important tools and find new specialists who can make a worthwhile contribution, we look to the success story of one academic.

Professor David Barclay is an internationally-renowned forensic scientist who has worked on a plethora of high-profile murder cases with police forces across the world, and advised on a multitude of feature films and TV series, including 'Waking the Dead'. Having taken on a number of key roles in his career, Professor Barclay retired after 10 years as Head of Physical Evidence at the National Crime Faculty at the Police Staff College, Bramshill, in 2006, having undertaken physical evidence reviews in around 230 murder investigations.

He joined the University's School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences as a Senior Lecturer in 2007 and is one of several 'internal experts' to be added to RGU's suite of Expert Cards, for distribution to media and business. Dave's extensive experience of working with the media is incidental to his success as a forensic scientist but he is very conscious of the importance of his role in this domain. He said: "Personally, I enjoy the opportunity to help clear up the misconceptions that people sometimes have about forensic science and educate the media, and therefore the public, on how it really works.

"I'm sure that senior staff from across the University will have specialised knowledge of some sort to offer and can contribute something unique to the RGU Directory of Experts. There are lots of problems out there and it's up to us to help find solutions, whether you're on the front line or explaining something to the media."

Dave's extensive TV work includes several network programmes on the Madeleine McCann mystery during 2007. He is currently involved in advising the production teams of four television programmes, and will appear front of camera in two of them - one in Australia looking at a case of miscarriage of justice and the other looking at a UK case for the BBC. He has worked on more than 10 high-profile murder cases for the Australian police service and is often asked to carry out reviews. Within four days of one review he came to the conclusion that the evidence used against the person who'd been convicted of murder was fatally flawed, and discovered the palm print of the true killer. Following this, the person who had been serving time for the crime was officially exonerated.

In cold cases, Dave works by the motto: "Never give up when looking for items, it's amazing what gets kept accidentally." His work on a major series for UK network TV looks at just this. In his search for lost items from the 1988 murder of Lynette White, he accidentally (and on camera!) found the original clothing from the murder of a young girl in Derby in 1966 and this has led directly to the identification of the offender.

Dave's high-profile work for television is very impressive but he also receives a number of general interest calls from news desks for print and radio on a regular basis, and has appeared frequently on Radio 4. The Expert Card helps to make tracking him down easier for the media and this is true in raising the specialist profile of some of our other internal experts. Feedback from the media on the helpfulness of these tools has been extremely positive. Fiona MacLeod on the Education Desk at The Scotsman made a special effort to let the Communications team know how brilliant she thinks the initiative is, saying she constantly uses both the Directory and Cards, and they are even better than online because the format is concise and it's less tedious than trailing through information on the web.

The updated Directory of Experts will be published later this year. If you are interested in becoming an RGU Expert, please contact Katy Jones for more information on **01224 262206** or via email at **c.a.c.jones@rgu.ac.uk**

INDUSTRY LEADER LAUNCHES CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RGU

iicorr Ltd, a specialist in corrosion, integrity and inspection, has launched a Centre of Excellence for the oil and gas industry in partnership with leading universities. With an investment of over £150,000, its Centre of Excellence is developing a new online site which will help raise asset integrity standards internationally and promote the sector to engineering students.

iicorr has compiled a comprehensive database of asset integrity management information and also trained its team of experts to provide a quick, responsive, cost-effective resource for the oil and gas industry.

iicorr technical director Mark Wilson said: "Nothing like this exists outwith the major operating companies. iicorr's Centre of Excellence will have two distinct streams. The first is the knowledge bank

containing a library of documents covering processes on integrity work at all international locations. The second part is that we will have a large team of experts available to answer specific technical questions with a fast response time."

iicorr has entered into a collaboration agreement with RGU and is in talks with other universities in the UK and at key locations for the oil and gas industry. The intention is to liaise with the academic bodies and industry organisations to help build knowledge by using the intelligence generated by the site.

Mr Wilson concluded: "We want to reach the stage where we have complementary contacts with the universities located where we are around the world and we can lead projects, go in and lecture to students and also offer them placements."

STUDENTS BATTLE IT OUT IN DEBATING COMPETITION

Eight teams of budding legal eagles from Aberdeen Business School (ABS) were whittled down to two through three heats of furious debate for the final of the University's annual Mooting Competition, sponsored by law publisher W Greens, on Wednesday 10 December.

Law students from all stages are involved in the Competition every year. This time round Pamela Smith and Graham McDonald left with the winning trophy, sponsored by Aberdeen law firm, Paull and Williamson, and they also received a cash prize.

The competition concentrates on the students' understanding of the law and mooting skills, and the winning team is decided based on the quality of their debating. Bruce Smith, senior partner at Paull & Williamson said, "We were delighted to be involved once again in RGU's Mooting Competition. This opportunity helps to prepare the students for their careers in the legal profession, allowing them to test their skills in a real courtroom setting."

SUPPORTING ALL ASPI

The breadth and diversity of work carried out by the Student Services Department may not be known to many across the University. This month, we discover, 'at a glance', the teams that comprise the Student Services Department who, on a daily basis, provide specialist support, advice and guidance to students.

INFOZONES

Providing a gateway to Student Services and University-wide information, the University's InfoZones have a presence on each campus and act as a 'one-stop shop' for students' questions about all aspects of student life. In 2008 the InfoZones supported in excess of 32,000 visitors who wanted help and advice about anything from forms to finance, travel to tuition fees, letters to leisure, and welfare to what's on. Students can purchase the Unilink bus pass, parking vouchers and replacement ID cards, and can pay tuition fees, accommodation, loan repayments and fines.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/infozone
Email: infozone@rgu.ac.uk
Tel: 01224 263661 or 01224 262182

CAREERS CENTRE

The Careers Centre offers students and graduates immediate access to job vacancies and specialist advice on all aspects of gaining employment, whether they are looking for part-time work, graduate opportunities, work experience placements or voluntary work. The Centre's Jobshops, based at the Careers and International Student Advice Centre on University Street and at the St Andrew Street StudentZone, offer students daily drop-in advice sessions, bookable appointments with qualified Careers Consultants, and the chance to access directories of employers. The Careers Centre also provides advice via email, as well as organising essential skills sessions, employer on-campus presentations, other careers events and fairs.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/careers
Email: careers@rgu.ac.uk
Tel: 01224 262110

STUDENT UNION

The Student Union exists to support and represent students, with the aim of enhancing the student experience. The Union currently has more than 50 societies and sports clubs, ranging from the traditional to the slightly more obscure, such as the Toast Appreciation or Pirates societies. The Union itself boasts a cafe, two bars, live DJs, a big screen TV, games and nightly entertainment.

Visit: www.rguunion.co.uk
Email: union@rguunion.co.uk
Tel: 01224 262263



Pointing you in
the right direction

COUNSELLING S

Students may seek out depression, bereavement. The Student Counsellors can reflect on the difficulties they are Services Building (low

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/c
Email: counselling@rgu
Tel: 01224 262120

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVICE, VISA AND IMMIGRATION SERVICE

The International Student Advisers advise students on general immigration matters, particularly with regard to students who wish to extend or renew their student visa. They play an integral role in welcoming international students to RGU through orientation sessions, developing dedicated international student handbooks and organising social events. Their role will become even more important as the department moves towards implementing some of the biggest immigration changes the UK has seen in the last thirty years, such as the move towards the Points Based System and the introduction of identity cards. The Service is delivered from the Careers and International Student Advice Centre on University Street.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/international
Email: isa@rgu.ac.uk
Tel: 01224 262109

THE DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA SERVICE

The Service provides advice and practical support to students, enquirers with disabilities, offering a tailored package of support person according to their specific requirements. The Service can examination provision, applying for Disabled Students' Allowance term loans of equipment, technology training, workshops and tuition, and psychological assessments for specific learning difficulties. The Service now undertakes the majority of assessments for Disabled Students' Allowance in-house (where previously students had to go to an Assessment Centre in Dundee). The Service is located in the Student Services Building (lower ground floor).

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/disability/
Email: disability@rgu.ac.uk
Tel: 01224 262103

THE TREEHOUSE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CENTRE

Fully qualified staff provide the highest quality early care and education at the Treehouse. The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm for babies and children aged three months to five years.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/treehouse
Email: treehouse@brighthorizons.com
Tel: 01224 316192

CHAPLAINCY

A Chaplaincy Service is available for the whole University community and can provide information about local representatives of other faiths.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/chaplaincy

STUDENT HEALTH ZONE

A Nurse Practitioner (who can prescribe for the majority of basic health conditions) operates a clinic on campus at Schoolhill on Wednesday 1.30-4.30pm. This service is available to all students.

Visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/medical
Email: studenthealthzone@rgu.ac.uk
Tel: 01224 262120

'CHECKOUT' WHAT DESIGN CAN DO: GRAY'S STUDENTS DEVELOP SELF-SERVICE SOLUTIONS FOR INDUSTRY

Students studying Product Design at Gray's School of Art have achieved resounding success in an industrial project which has both commercial and international significance.

The third-year students worked on a live project with NCR; the world's leading self-service provider. Now in its fourth year, the self-service solutions competition between students from Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone College and Gray's School of Art, has seen Gray's participants claiming the winning and third place prizes. Their designs are now on display in NCR's Headquarters in Dundee.

There are approximately 18 million interactions every year through each one of NCR's self-service channels, including ATMs and self-service desks in supermarkets. The competition challenged the students to design a self-service solution for themselves, based on experiences they had had of poor self-service design.

The winning design, by Steven Paxton, proposed a solution to facilitate and plan packing your car after a visit to IKEA. Other student solutions included a supermarket 'bag share' scheme which helps build community links while reducing plastic bag use, and a service to help pharmacists and their customers communicate better about complex allergies and potentially dangerous pharmaceutical interactions.

Jon Pengelly, Course Leader of the Product Design programme explained: "It is hoped that those who take part gain a better understanding of consumers' needs, which is after all at the centre of every service design solution."

Steven Paxton (front) shows off his award-winning design alongside his fellow students.

INDUSTRY EXPERTS ENHANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Helen Krushave and Vicky Corley, two solicitors from McGrigors LLP, made a visit to Aberdeen Business School before Christmas to provide a practice seminar on data protection to Honours Law students. As part of the Media Law module, students consider data protection law, and in particular the thorny issue of enforcement via the Information Commissioner.

The students who attended were very impressed by the interactive presentation and workshop organised by Helen and Vicky, who encouraged and challenged their audience with thought-provoking material on a very topical subject.

RGU GRADUATE ELECTED WHITWORTH SCHOLAR

One of the UK's most prestigious scholarships has been awarded to an Aberdeen-based Senior Engineer with Petrofac, who is also a graduate of the School of Engineering.

Eddie Schrader was elected Whitworth Scholar at an engineering award ceremony in London during October 2008. He was one of the first students recruited to the Petrofac Undergraduate Sponsorship Programme in 2005, and continued with work placements at Petrofac throughout his degree at RGU, before becoming a full-time employee in June 2007. Eddie will become an ambassador for the Society, in particular through mentoring and encouraging young engineers to join the industry.

Derek Wilson, Metering Director at Petrofac Facilities Management, said: "I'm delighted that Eddie has received this accolade, as it is evidence of his hard work and perseverance. He is an asset to the team and if it were not for Petrofac's placement programme, we would not have found such talent. Eddie is positive proof that a proactive approach to the industry skills gap issue can produce excellent results."

Eddie Schrader is congratulated by Derek Wilson.



YOUNG LEGAL EAGLES SWOOP ON ABERDEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

School pupils from Aberdeen City and Shire and the Inverness area got a chance to find out about a career in law on Thursday 20 November, with a visit to Aberdeen Business School (ABS).

The S5 and S6 pupils enjoyed a tour of ABS, a quiz session and a presentation from law experts before getting the chance to visit the Moot Court.

Well-known legal firms Aberdeen Considine, Ledingham Chalmers and Turcan Connell were represented by legal practitioners who graduated from RGU and the pupils also heard from a current law student and a recent graduate about their experiences at the University.

Pupils from Aberdeen Grammar School get serious in the Moot Court.



GRAY'S STUDENTS SET FOR RSA EXHIBITION

Seven students from Gray's School of Art have been selected to exhibit at the revamped RSA Student Exhibition this month. 'RSA New Contemporaries 2009' will showcase a selection of the finest emerging artists and architects in Scotland. The artists have been selected on the basis of their efforts in Gray's Degree Show 2008 and were invited to make new works for this exhibition.

Sean Ambrose, Ivonne Adel-Bureos, Callum Chapman, Mary Freeman, Margaret Livingstone, Wendy MacDonald and Teresa Sciberras will be given a significant space and be able to show 'a body of work', as opposed to the single work of the old RSA exhibition format. The exhibition, which will take place from 14-25 February 2009, will be arranged on a grand scale, encompassing all 12 of the RSA galleries.

As exhibitors, the Gray's students will automatically be entered into the running for a number of prestigious awards. Francis Convery, Head of Painting at Gray's, said: "This event will provide the students with an opportunity to exhibit their work in possibly the best galleries in Scotland, alongside their selected contemporaries from the other Scottish Art Schools."

ENERGY STUDENTS HONOURED BY KEY INDUSTRY BODY

The academic efforts of six students from RGU and the University of Aberdeen who excelled in completing degrees related to the Energy sector, were recognised at a ceremony in December organised by the Energy Institute Aberdeen Highlands and Islands branch.

Each of the students gave a short presentation showcasing their postgraduate projects at the event, before David Campbell, Director and Vice President of BP's North Sea Business presented them with a cash prize and certificate.

All six of the prize winners recently graduated with Distinction from their chosen courses of study. Aprad Galvao Barata Pinto, Yerkebulan Soltbayev and Thelma Ochonogor were the lucky recipients from RGU.

Denis Pinto, Chairman of the Aberdeen Highlands & Islands Branch of the Energy Institute and a lecturer at RGU said: "These six students are prime examples of the outstanding quality of talent entering the industry at this all-important time and we are delighted to commend them with these awards."



One of Ben's award-winning photographs.

STUDENT EXCHANGE INVOLVEMENT RESULTS IN COMPETITION SUCCESS

The University has triumphed in two categories in a UK-wide, British Council-run competition to promote the EC programme ERASMUS. ERASMUS is a European-wide network which supports and develops student exchange and the prize winners from RGU travelled to London in December 2008 to receive their awards.

The University's European Office, which administers the programme, won first prize in the promotion category of the Institution Prize, and Ben Cooper, who graduated with a degree in nursing in December, won the regional prize for Scotland in the photography category of the Student Prize, for his photographs of his study abroad time in Norway.

Ben, who originally worked as a graphic designer before opting for a career change, now works at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and decided to apply for the chance to study abroad during the final year of his degree.

The European Office's winning entry was described by the judges as "innovative and user-friendly", making good use of the University's online environment, Moodle, to promote the ERASMUS programme. Marlene Forsyth, European Development Manager said: "I am delighted that we have won the award for a project that is the result of extensive research into how students receive and absorb information. We found that students look less at traditional promotional materials such as posters and flyers and rely more on the internet and their mobile phones."

More information about Erasmus can be found by visiting:
<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/erasmus>

MENTORING AWARD FOR WOODEND NURSE

The School of Nursing and Midwifery's Mentor of the Year Award 2008 was won in December by Staff Nurse Margaret Wallace, who works at Woodend Hospital, Aberdeen. The annual award recognises the invaluable role mentors in clinical areas play in supporting and guiding student nurses and midwives through their placements. It is the second year in a row that it has been won by a nurse from Woodend Hospital.

Students and education and clinical staff were asked to nominate mentors who they felt provided an outstanding learning environment for students and Margaret was nominated by Charlotte Litherland, who was mentored by the Staff Nurse during her first-year placement.



Left to right: Jennie Parry (Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery), Margaret Wallace, Charlotte Litherland, Elnor Smith (Nurse Director, NHS Grampian) and Fiona Weir (Nurse Manager where Margaret works).

MICROSOFT'S HEAD OF SECURITY DELIVERS CHRISTMAS LECTURE



Ed Gibson

School pupils from across the North-east were given the chance to hear about the growing problems of internet crime when Microsoft's Head of Security, Ed Gibson, visited the School of Computing on Wednesday 10 December.

Mr Gibson explained his personal experience in deterring cyber crime during his 20-year career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and then with Microsoft, in a lecture which was both entertaining and thought-provoking. Ed received dozens of emails after the event from school pupils who were intrigued by his talk and eager to tap more of his experience and knowledge.

Professor Ian Allison, Head of the School of Computing said, "Businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to attract IT professionals with the skills they need to drive their companies forward. As a University we are keen to show school leavers that a career in IT can be both rewarding and stimulating, and the inspirational lecture provided by Ed has clearly had a big impact on the pupils and teachers who attended."

STUDENTS ARE 'THE BUSINESS' IN PRESTIGIOUS AND COMPETITIVE NATIONAL COMPETITION

Two of three teams from Aberdeen Business School (ABS) have made it to the semi-final stages of the IBM Universities Business Challenge competition, set to take place in Edinburgh this month. The first stage of the challenge gave students the opportunity to run a virtual company over a period of eight weeks in order to put their business skills to the test. The teams which operated the most profitable companies were then invited to attend one of 10 semi-final rounds held at various locations throughout the UK.

The shortlisted RGU teams progressing to the semi-final round are now two of 80 from an original 250 participating groups from universities throughout the UK and are all currently studying on the BA (Hons) Management programme at ABS.

The two teams representing RGU will be up against six other teams in the semi-final stages and will face a number of new challenges, as well as a faster pace with a lot less time in which to consider their business decisions. The winner from this round will go forward to The Grand Final to be held at IBM Southbank on Friday 6 March. At this event a total of ten teams from across the UK will attend for the chance to win the UBC 2008/9.

UNIVATION DOES BUSINESS VIA WEBCAM

During November Univation conducted its first sales proposal meeting with an overseas client via webcam. The meeting with a senior group of managers from Premier Oil, based in Singapore, was conducted by Ian Campbell, Univation MD, with Doug Cruickshank and John Taylor of ABS.

Using web conferencing system WebEx, requiring only a telephone and a web browser, the meeting was both extremely successful and cost effective. Without the need for an expensive flight and accommodation, the web meeting also ensured a low carbon footprint.

Mr Campbell noted: "It is a few years since I participated in a video conference and I am really impressed with the technology advances that have been made. This is a tool that we will definitely look at using again."

For more information on Webex, visit:
<http://www.webex.co.uk/smb/web-meetings.html>



STAFF AND STUDENT RETREATS NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Members of staff and students may be pleased to find out about two first-rate study and holiday centre facilities that the University is subscribed to, offering reduced rates to RGU staff, students and graduates alike.

Held in trust by Goodenough College, The Burn is a unique establishment situated in Glenesk, near Brechin in Angus, less than an hour from the University. The grand house encompasses a large drawing room, library, indoor games room and twenty bedrooms, as well as a range of outdoor sporting activities in its impressive grounds. It stands in 190 acres of beautiful woodland and affords peace and relaxation for holidays and study in excellent accommodation, in addition to being well placed for golf at any of the good quality local courses. Low cost, the facility offers staff and students a getaway whether it be with colleagues and classmates or friends and family. Call 01356 648281 or email burn@goodenough.ac.uk to enquire about costs and availability as it can be very busy, especially during term-time.

Goodenough College was founded in 1930 as a residential college for students from The Dominions. It has expanded greatly since that time and as part of the London base that it boasts, a non-profit making Club in the heart of Bloomsbury is open to staff, students and graduates from around the world to enjoy bed and breakfast from £95 per night. Located only 10 minutes from Kings Cross Station, RGU staff and students are entitled to a 10% discount against standard rates. Guests are provided with free internet access, good quality subsidised dining, admission to a full programme of events (such as on-campus lectures and concerts), reduced rate membership of an onsite health club and access to private gardens complete with a tennis court, children's play area and BBQ. Call 020 7769 4727 to book for the Goodenough Club.

Andrew Turnbull, a member of staff at Aberdeen Business School who now acts as RGU's representative on the Burn House Management Committee said: "The Burn is a particularly good option for away days and is far more economical – and in my view more comfortable and attractive – than any local hotel. I haven't had the pleasure of visiting the London facility but I have been advised by colleagues of just how attractive an option the accommodation there represents. Fantastic prices for the centre of London, with a range of other benefits thrown in for good measure."

GRADUATE SHINES IN NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS

Cathy Guthrie, a PhD Tourism graduate of the University, reached the final of the prestigious Shine tourism awards in November. They are the only national awards to celebrate companies and individuals in Britain's travel, tourism and hospitality sectors for their efforts to retain, attract and develop talents.

Cathy completed her PhD last year and was nominated for an award by her colleagues for the Public Sector Woman of the Year category. She has worked for the Tourism Management Institute (TMI) and its predecessor body, the

British Association of Tourist Officers, for more than ten years. The nomination was in particular recognition of Cathy's work in developing a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme, including a new qualification which is a first for the industry.

Since finishing her PhD, Cathy has been working as a tourism consultant, Cathy Guthrie Associates, specialising in destination management. She can be contacted on 01467 620769 or via email at: cathy.guthrie@dsl.pipex.com

FORGING LINKS WITH BRAZIL'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

RGU recently hosted a visit from a delegation of Brazil's leading universities and a representative from the research and development arm of National Oil Company, Petrobras.

Professor John Harper, Senior Vice-Principal, welcomed the group to RGU and Professor John Watson, Dean of the School of Engineering, led a round table discussion with presentations from Ken Russell,

Associate Dean of Aberdeen Business School, Greg Sloan, Regional Business Development Manager at Univation, and Iain Steel, Head of the School of Engineering.

The visit was organised by SDI (Scottish Development International) in conjunction with UKTI. The delegation was accompanied by Kimberley Daly of SDI and Laura Netto from the Consulate in Rio de Janeiro.

SPIN OUT COMPANY APPOINTS TWO NEW DIRECTORS

RGU spin out company Mirspot Ltd, founded in 2007 by Dr Alan Owen of the School of Engineering, has appointed two new Directors to its board. David Russell and Uisdean Fraser, both Directors of Inverness-based Synergie Scotland, joined Mirspot to drive forward the commercialisation and development of its service. With this appointment Synergie Scotland has acquired the controlling interest in Mirspot.

Mirspot specialises in the provision of localised data collection, analysis and modelling for renewable energy choices, personalised to customers' specific circumstances. Director, Dr Alan Owen, explained, "This is a very exciting development in Mirspot's commercialisation strategy. The appointment of two new influential directors will give the company a strong position in the market. The surge of interest in sustainable energy means that the market for Mirspot's products is now much larger than was envisaged, even two years ago."

RGU PRESENCE AT RUSSIAN OIL AND GAS CONFERENCE

Laurie Power, Senior Lecturer at the School of Engineering, was invited to speak at the prestigious Russian Oil and Gas Conference, which took place in Moscow on 8 and 9 December 2008. The topic of the presentation, which he delivered on the first day of the conference, was 'Design of Oil and Gas Masters programmes in the UK: how they meet industry needs and how they are delivered internationally'.

Laurie was in exalted company, with some of the most senior figures in the Russian oil and gas industry also speaking at the conference. Laurie's presentation described the processes that govern design of Masters courses in the UK and how it is ensured that students are equipped with the competencies needed to make them job ready. Then, focussing on RGU's experiences, he explained how the University works with the international oil and gas industry to make sure that individual needs are met, and considered some of the lessons that RGU and Univation have learned from working with National Oil Companies.

The opportunity to speak at this conference followed on from a presentation given by Greg Sloan, Univation Regional Business Development Manager, to a high level round-table event, involving TNK-BP, Russian Universities and representatives of the Russian Government, in Moscow last year. Greg's talk was on a similar theme and he and Lawrie worked closely together on both presentations.

SPORTS UPDATE



Rebecca Stephen

RGU: SPORT SCHOLAR REPRESENTS BRITAIN AT INTERNATIONAL EQUESTRIAN COMPETITION

One of the latest cohort of RGU: SPORT scholars, sponsored by Technip in her endeavours at university, was selected to represent Britain as part of the GB Student Riding Team in the International University Equestrian Federation World Finals, Luxembourg, from Tuesday 30 December to 1 January. Rebecca triumphed at the event, helping the GB team to secure the World Number One ranking for showjumping and to be placed third out of 15 overall.

Now in her second year of a degree in Sports and Exercise Science, Rebecca Stephen has been awarded a share in the Technip scholarship cash

for the second year running. Since joining the programme she has enjoyed some of her most successful achievements to date.

Rebecca has been riding since the age of six and has been competing as a member of the Under 21 Scottish Dressage squad for the last nine years, but it would have been difficult for her to fulfil sporting ambitions at the same time as studying at university if it had not been for the scholarship.

Further information on the scholarships, including how to apply, is available from: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/rgusport>

GOLFERS SWING FOR FLORIDA WITH RGU: SPORT BACKING

Two RGU: SPORT scholars, sponsored by Technip to continue their sport whilst studying at RGU, were selected to participate in Florida's foremost golfing event, The Orange Blossom Tour, which was comprised of three events last month.

Laura Murray was joined by Jane Turner when she headed across the Atlantic to begin the Tour with the Harder Hall Women's Invitational in Sebring from 7 to 10 January. At the end of the first round of this event Laura was the best placed British or Irish player taking part. Just four days later the duo went on to the Women's South Atlantic Amateur Championship, then Laura continued the tour onto the third event, the Doherty Tournament, at Coral Ridge Country Club, Fort Lauderdale.

Laura has been selected to benefit from the RGU: SPORT Scholarship Programme sponsored by Technip for the second year running, while Jane joins the sports cohort for the first time this session. Both are being supported to continue competing at a high level with a range of tailor-made programmes devised to care for their individual needs.

Jane explained: "RGU is one of the only universities in Scotland where I am able to study my specific art course whilst still having the opportunity to follow through my golfing ambitions and have access to great sporting facilities. Being a sports scholar gave me the opportunity to travel to Florida, which was a great chance to get some off-season tournament play and practice."

MEN'S HOCKEY CUP AT RGU: SPORT

The biggest ever RGU: SPORT Men's Indoor Cup took place at the facility on Sunday 28 December. The involvement of the top three Scottish Hockey Union (SHU) National League sides was a major coup for the event.

Menziesshill, the current National League 1 Champions and European Semi Finalists in 2008, left with the winning trophy, using the event as a warm-up event for their European adventure representing Scotland in 2009.

For further information on the annual event, please contact Kevin McNab, Grampian Hockey Development Officer, on 01569 768351.

RGU STUDENT STEALS TABLE TENNIS CROWN FROM UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Following a successful stint at the Scottish Universities Sports (SUS) table tennis competition in Edinburgh in 2008, the newly-formed RGU Table Tennis Club had early reason to celebrate before Christmas as one of their members won Aberdeen University's Christmas Open Singles tournament.

Libin Bai, a Masters student studying International Trade, faced stiff competition from around 40 competitors of all ages at the event, held at the Butchart Recreation Centre. Skilful play, supreme



Libin Bai (left) with Thorsten Lauterbach, Course Leader of International Trade and TT Club Secretary.

tactics, and technique saw Libin through and this represents a great return on the very limited practice time that the small but growing table tennis group has gained so far. The possibility of staging a similar tournament at RGU: SPORT in the coming months is currently being investigated.

STUDENTS BATTLE IT OUT FOR WORLD CUP

Italy has done it again, this time in the Aberdeen Business School International Student Society World Cup. Eight teams of students battled it out over seven weeks towards the end of 2008 to win the title, with teams representing Venezuela, Argentina, Scotland, San Marino, Angola, Italy and Nigeria.

The Italian team played a storm, winning seven out of seven games, and coach and organiser of the World Cup, Moe Alramahi commented, "It has given our international students the opportunity to meet and form friendships with other students from Aberdeen Business School and they have shown us an example of true sportsmanship!"





Anne Daniel, Lennox Dunbar, Pamela Mackay and Julie Beynon.

PRINTMAKING PORTFOLIO TOURS NORTH OF SCOTLAND

A limited edition print portfolio produced by students and invited artists of Gray's School of Art is currently making its debut at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, with an exhibition continuing until 7 February, and will tour venues across the Highlands and Islands thereafter.

The works will also be showcased at the largest print-related conference in the world when the portfolio is sent across the Atlantic to the Southern Graphics Council Conference in Chicago, in Spring 2009.

The portfolio project is undertaken by final year students of Gray's each year, taking their individual prints and combining these in an attractive box set format (approximately 25cm² in size) to be easily transportable. Some 40 unique box sets are produced each year, with a sample displayed at Gray's annual Degree Show.

Now in its seventh year, the printmaking portfolio project has established a successful reputation as far afield as Prague, Chicago and Tallinn. The project has proved to be extremely successful, both in terms of exposure for the students and in financial rewards.

Dean Melville, Exhibitions Co-ordinator at the Highland Council, said: "We're delighted to be representing the North-east in the North of Scotland with an exhibition of such high quality that's so well suited to our touring exhibitions remit. It's also great to help raise the profile of Gray's School of Art and expose the first-class work of its students."

To find out more about the exhibition in the North of Scotland, visit: <http://inverness.highland.museum/atAglance.php> or call 01463 710978.

LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES WITH HOST OF PROMINENT ARCHITECTS

The 57'10 Architectural Society Lecture Series has seen another successful term of high-profile architects provide a special insight into their work for participating students and guests, and this is set to continue as the new term gets into full swing.

The first guest speaker of 2009 will be Stephen Willacy of Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects on Thursday 12 February, and on 19 February Neil and Alasdair Stephen will represent Dualchas Architects for another interesting talk.

The Society is celebrating 20 years as a student-run Society and their lecture series continues during term time in Room SB42. Each presentation costs just £4 to attend, or £20 for a yearly membership, and this includes a cheese and wine reception.

President of the Society, Ciaran Garrick, said: "Through featuring a balance of internationally established architects, up and coming professionals of the future, and leaders in the field, we seek to inspire students of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture in their studies."

Ciaran can be contacted for further information via email at: c.garrick1@rgu.ac.uk



BE HEARD: NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY LAUNCHED

All final year part-time and full-time undergraduate students are encouraged to take part in the National Student Survey (NSS) which is now online at: www.thestudentsurvey.com The purpose of the Survey is to provide information to help potential students and their advisers to make choices about higher education.

As well as aiming to provide robust data on the learning experience for prospective students and their advisers, the NSS is also a useful tool in helping institutions to identify areas where they perform well and what could be improved. Results where the response rate is less than 50% will not be published on the official Unistats site, although the results will still be sent to the institution directly, so it is important that as many students take part as possible.

The survey replaces the RGU Experience Questionnaire, which has been conducted internally in the past, and is administered by independent market research company Ipsos MORI, using a defined sequence of email, post and telephone reminders. Once a student completes a questionnaire, they are removed from the target list and no further contact is made. At any stage during the Survey process students are able to opt out and will not be contacted again. More information for staff can be found at: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicaffairs/committees/page.cfm?page=20692>

Results will be published online at www.unistats.co.uk

EVENTS DIARY 2009

For further information on all events, visit: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/eventsdiary.cfm>.

FEBRUARY

- 12 Feb 57'10 Architecture Lecture Series presentation by Stephen Willacy of Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects at the Scott Sutherland School
- 18 Feb Elphinstone Defence Lecture by Lord John Alerdice at the Faculty of Health and Social Care
- 19 Feb 57'10 Architecture Lecture Series presentation by Neil and Alasdair Stephen of Dualchas Architects at the Scott Sutherland School

MARCH

- TBC Guest Lecture by Edi Stark at the Faculty of Health and Social Care

APRIL

- 22 April Professorial Lecture by Iain Richardson at the Faculty of Health and Social Care
- 22 April North of Scotland Graduate Recruitment Fair (NSGRF) 2009 at the Music Hall

MAY

- 5 May Professorial Lecture by Gokay Devenci at the Scott Sutherland School