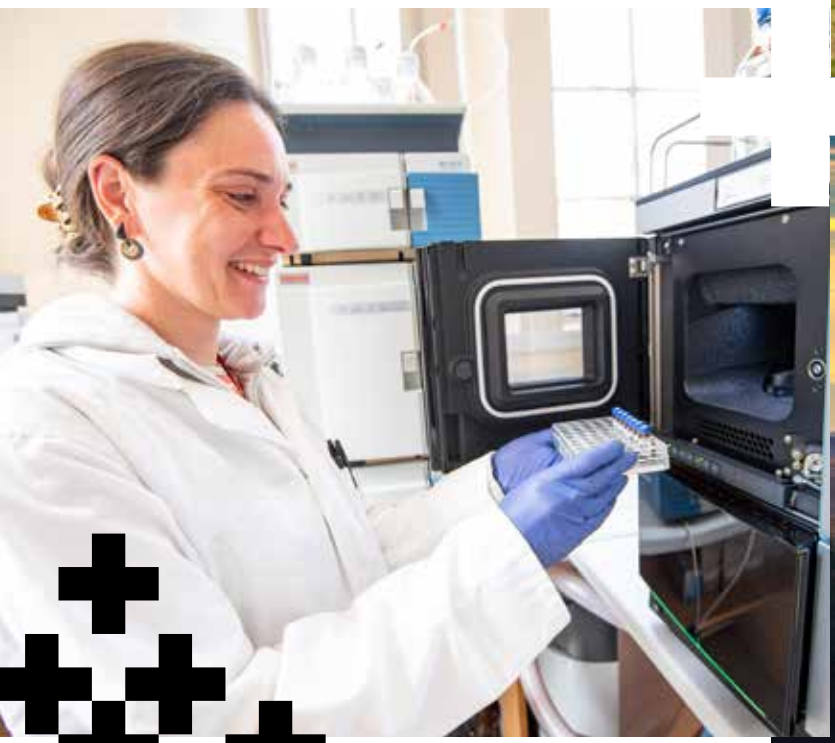
eri environmental research institute



Recruitment Pack

UHI | NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES
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The Environmental Research Institute (ERI; eri.ac.uk), part of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI; uhi.ac.uk) North-West and Hebrides UHI a tertiary institution which operates across a distributed network of campuses and centres including Thurso, Fort William, Stornoway, Portree, Dornoch, Ullapool and others across the North Highlands, Skye and the Outer Hebrides

Based in Caithness in the north of Scotland, the ERI is a centre of excellence for environmental science, innovation, and sustainability. It delivers research and knowledge exchange with strong regional roots and global relevance and addressing some of the most pressing environmental and societal challenges of our time, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and the transition to sustainable energy systems. At the ERI, we work closely with communities, industry, government, and international partners to generate knowledge that supports resilient environments, sustainable economies, and thriving communities.

ERI's research is organised around four interconnected themes:

+ Peatlands
+ Pollution
+ Energy
+ Society

Together these themes reflect our place-based approach. We combine environmental science with social, economic, and cultural understanding to support sustainable development across rural, coastal, and island regions.

We now seek to expand our research capacity through up to three new appointments that will strengthen ERI's leadership in the above themes and / or in cross cutting topics such as sustainability, the circular economy and One Health.

These roles offer outstanding opportunities to develop independent research profiles within a collaborative and interdisciplinary research environment. Successful candidates will contribute to internationally recognised research while working closely with regional partners and communities.

The roles may be based at the Thurso or Stornoway campus, see detail provided on each theme.

Pollution: Investigating Environmental Contamination and Developing Sustainable Solutions

Environmental contamination from emerging pollutants presents a growing global challenge. ERI's pollution research investigates the sources, behaviour, impacts, and mitigation of pollutants including plastics, pharmaceuticals, nutrients, heavy metals, and other emerging contaminants.

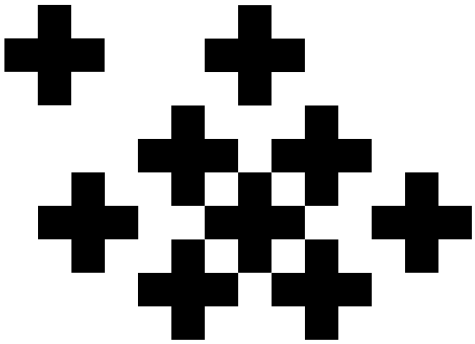
Our work spans the full pathway of pollutants, from sources and environmental transport to ecological and human health effects. It combines monitoring, experimental research, modelling, and technology development to deliver practical solutions.

The theme works closely with national and international partners through initiatives such as the IBioIC, SAGES, SULSA, CENSIS, InterFace, Converge addressing water quality challenges in rural and sparsely populated regions.

Aligned with the global One Health agenda, this research recognises the interdependence between environmental quality, ecosystem health, and human wellbeing.

Current research priorities include:

+ Sustainable wastewater treatment and water quality management
+ Monitoring and assessing acute and chronic pollutant impacts
+ Antimicrobial resistance and emerging contaminants
+ Minimising pollution from rural and industrial activities
+ Preventing harm from priority pollutants through circular innovation
+ Industrial biotechnology and nutrient recovery



Recent publications from this theme includes:

+ Pilot-scale phosphate recovery from wastewater to create a fertiliser product: An integrated assessment of adsorbent performance and quality. Water Research, 2023
+ Exploring the removal of flame retardants and chlorobenzenes by plastic-based materials. Chemical Engineering Science, 2025
+ Patterns and trends in marine microplastics density distributions using a long-term, global, field database. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 2025
+ Applying biochar to treat and detoxify whisky distillery effluent. Environmental Technology and Innovation, 2025

We welcome applications from candidates whose expertise complements or expands our work in areas such as:

+ environmental monitoring, modelling, and risk assessment
+ ecotoxicology and environmental toxicology
+ antimicrobial resistance ecology
+ green chemistry and sustainable materials
+ environmental policy, behaviour change, or circular economy systems
+ computational chemistry and material sciences

A post in this theme will be based in Thurso, Caithness, where the ERIs analytical laboratories and instrumentation are located. These facilities support advanced measurement and monitoring of environmental pollutants in water, soils, and biological systems, providing the technical capability required for high quality research in pollution science. Additionally, we have the capability to support trials from bench-scale experiments through to pilot-scale trials, including processes such as filtration, adsorption, catalysis, coagulation–flocculation, and constructed wetlands. The role will involve developing strategic research partnerships, securing funding, and supporting early career researchers.

Peatlands: Studying Resilience Across Scales and Disciplines

ERI leads internationally recognised research on peatland resilience and sustainability, supported by unrivalled access to the Flow Country of Caithness and Sutherland. Covering around 4,000 km², this landscape represents the largest blanket bog system in Europe and was inscribed in 2024 as the world's first peatland UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Peatlands across the Highlands and Islands are dynamic landscapes undergoing rapid change. Large scale restoration programmes, renewable energy infrastructure development, and climate related pressures such as drought and wildfire create both opportunities and challenges for sustainable land management.

Our work generates scientific and socio-economic evidence to inform policy, guide practical land management, and support local decision making.

Researchers work closely with land managers, community groups, policy partners and peatland practitioners. This collaborative approach supports resilient landscapes and a fair transition for the communities who live and work in the region.

Current research priorities include:

+ Peatland resilience under climate and land use change
+ Organic matter, carbon, and nutrient cycling across catchments
+ Restoration science and ecosystem recovery
+ Sustainable land use and thriving rural communities

Recent publications from this theme includes:

+ Unprecedented UK heatwave harmonised drivers of fuel moisture creating extreme temperate wildfire risk. Nature Communications: Earth & Environment, 2025
+ Northern peatlands in transition in the 21st Century–land use, status, policies and future trajectories: comparisons between Finland, Ireland and Scotland. Environmental Management, 76(3), p.73. I
+ Restoration of formerly afforested blanket bog: Estimating time for vegetation recovery. Ecological Applications, 2025
+ Bird assemblage changes on peatland affected by large-scale non-native afforestation in the Flow Country (Scotland). Mires and Peat, 2025

We welcome applications from candidates whose expertise complements or expands our work in areas such as:

+ climate and ecosystem modelling
+ biogeochemistry and hydrology
+ restoration ecology
+ environmental social science
+ remote sensing and spatial analysis

A post in this theme will be based in Thurso, or in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis to develop research in internationally significant and uniquely positioned peatland landscapes subject to rapidly changing environmental pressures .

Energy and Environment: Supporting the Transition to Sustainable Energy Systems

ERI conducts research on renewable energy systems and their interactions with natural and human environments. Northern Scotland hosts some of Europe's most significant wind, wave, and tidal resources. These resources create opportunities for sustainable energy generation and regional economic development.

Our research examines how renewable energy systems interact with ecosystems, communities, and wider energy systems. We work with industry and government partners to support responsible energy development and to improve environmental monitoring, planning, and assessment.

Research areas include:

+ ecological and environmental impacts of renewable energy
+ oceanographic and hydrodynamic processes affecting marine energy
+ environmental monitoring technologies and sensor systems
+ energy systems for rural and island communities
+ integration of renewable energy with storage and smart grids

Recent publications from this theme includes:

+ Cumulative barriers to renewable energy development: Can we adjust our perspective and approach to benefit biodiversity? Ecological Solutions and Evidence, 2025
+ Methodology for wave power estimation at remote sites with satellite altimeter validation applied to Indonesia. Journal of Ocean Engineering and Marine Energy, 2025
+ Ecological impacts of floating offshore wind on marine mammals and associated trophic interactions: current evidence and knowledge gaps, Marine Pollution Bulletin, 2025
+ 10 Things to consider before approving another offshore wind farm: A case study for Highland, Scotland. Ocean & Coastal Management, 2025

We welcome applications from candidates whose expertise complements or expands our work in areas such as:

+ Community energy systems, governance, and social licence to operate (SLO)
+ Off grid and hybrid energy systems for remote and island communities
+ Energy storage, flexibility, and smart grid integration
+ Whole system modelling and techno economic assessment for net zero transitions
+ Cumulative environmental and socio-economic impact assessment of energy development
+ Circular economy and nature-based solutions in energy systems and infrastructure

Candidates across all posts will have opportunities to contribute to interdisciplinary research in this area, supporting the transition to low carbon energy systems while protecting biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Society and Place Based Innovation: Connecting Environment, Economy & Wellbeing

ERI's research recognises that environmental, social, and economic change are closely linked. The Society theme focuses on how environmental systems shape rural economies and community wellbeing.

A central focus is One Health. This brings together human, animal, plant, and environmental health to address shared challenges such as food and water security, climate change, antimicrobial resistance, and pollution. At ERI, One Health provides a clear, cross-cutting focus that connects research and knowledge exchange across the university.

The theme is grounded in delivering impact. Work contributes directly to Scotland's transition to a net zero economy and to the development of resilient rural communities across the Highlands and Islands.

Research is also closely aligned with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on practical outcomes for communities, public services, and the environment.

Using place-based approaches, we work with communities, businesses, public agencies, and policymakers to develop practical solutions that support sustainable development and resilience in rural and island regions e.g. through initiatives including the North Highland Innovation Centre and One Health Breakthrough Partnership. These collaborations support applied research and knowledge exchange to address regional and international challenges in sustainable development, environmental preservation, and sustainable healthcare.

Research in this area explores:

+ Circular economy approaches across sectors such as energy, food, and materials
+ One Health approaches linking environmental quality, healthcare, and wellbeing
+ Pathways to net zero that support both environmental and social outcomes
+ Sustainable and regenerative land use systems
+ Community participation in environmental decision making

Recent publications from this theme includes:

+ Do you think medicines can be prescribed in a more eco-directed, greener way? Focus groups on the impact of pharmaceuticals in Scotland's water environment. BMJ Open, 2025
+ Pharmaceutical pollution from health care: a systems-based strategy for mitigating risks to public and environmental health. Lancet Planetary Health, 2026.
+ Co-developing frameworks towards environmentally directed prescribing in Scotland – A mixed methods study. Science of the Total Environment, 2024
+ The high-altitude peatland carbon cycle: A review of the impacts of climate change, human disturbance and management. Geography and Sustainability, 2025

We welcome applications from candidates whose expertise complements or expands our work in areas such as:

+ One Health and systems-based research
+ Sustainable development, just transition, net zero, and circular economy
+ Nature-based solutions and sustainable/ regenerative land use
+ Cost-benefit analysis and life-cycle assessment
+ "Theory of Change" logic models and participatory methodologies

A post in this theme will be based in Thurso, Caithness, where the ERI provides a hub for interdisciplinary research linking environmental science, policy, and community engagement. The role will involve collaboration with colleagues across ERI themes and with partners in government, industry, and the third sector in developing methods to effectively translate research to policy and practice.

Appointments and Grades

Appointments will be made at either Postdoctoral Research Associate (PDRA) or Research Fellow level depending on experience, track record, and career stage.

PDRA appointments may suit early career researchers with a PhD who are seeking to build their research profile within a collaborative research team.

Research Fellow appointments may suit candidates with a more established research track record who can demonstrate the capacity to lead research activity, secure external funding, and contribute to postgraduate supervision and partnership development.

Salary:

- **Postdoctoral Research Associate:** £42,211 - £46,308
- **Research Fellow I:** £47,072 - £51,616

Hours of Work:

Each post is for 35 hours per week but you may be required to work additional hours to meet service requirements. The normal full-time working week is one of 35 hours.

Duration:

These are full-time, permanent positions.

Annual Leave:

33 days in a full year plus 12 public/general holidays, pro-rata for part-time workers.

Pension:

You will be contractually enrolled into the Local Government Superannuation Scheme. Further details are available upon appointment.

References/Medical Assessment/PVG check:

For external candidates' appointment will be subject to references and a PVG check, which will be taken up after an offer has been made.

Why Join ERI

Working at ERI offers the opportunity to join a small, energetic team undertaking research that addresses global environmental challenges while being grounded in a region of exceptional natural and cultural significance.

Researchers benefit from:

- access to exceptional field sites including the Flow Country World Heritage Site and the Pentland Firth
- strong interdisciplinary collaboration across environmental science, engineering, and social science
- partnerships with government, industry, and communities
- involvement in national and international research networks
- opportunities to shape research that informs policy and practice

ERI forms part of the wider UHI research environment, contributing to national and international initiatives aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Scotland's net zero transition, Circular Economy Strategy and sustainable rural development.

How to Apply

Applications are invited from candidates with a strong or emerging research track record in relevant areas.

Please submit:

- a cover letter outlining research interests and alignment with ERI themes
- a curriculum vitae including research outputs, grants, and collaborations
- a completed application form available through the UHI recruitment website
- a personal details form available through the UHI recruitment website

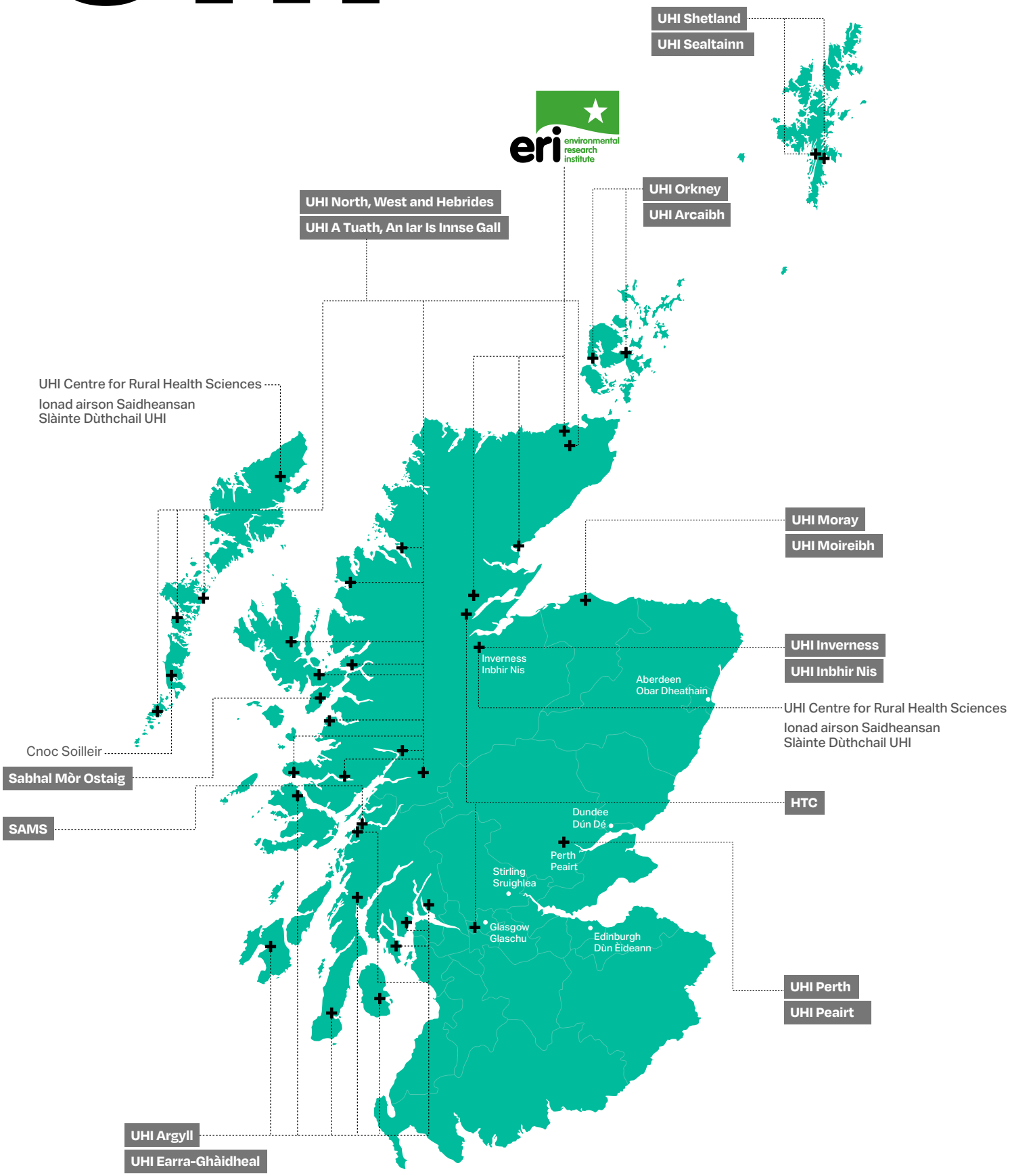
Closing date: 17th July 2026

Interviews: From 10th August 2026 onwards

Start date: By negotiation, available upon offer and once PVG check and references are complete

To Apply: For a full job description and an application form, download the pack at: Staff - Vacancies (uhi.ac.uk) or email recruitment.nwh@uhi.ac.uk

Should you require further information, please contact: eri-info@uhi.ac.uk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UHI Argyll
UHI Earra-Ghàidheal

ERI - Centre for Energy and the Environment, Ormlie Road, Thurso

ERI, Castle Street, Thurso


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