



Recruitment Pack

Research and Knowledge Exchange Theme Leader: Pollution

November 2025

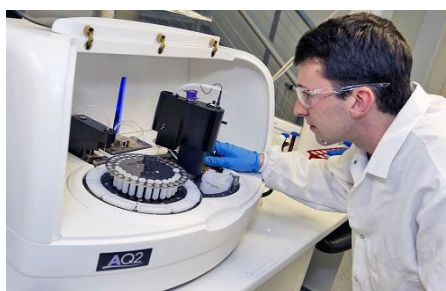
Summary

Job title:	Research and Knowledge Exchange Theme Leader: Pollution
Location:	ERI, Thurso
Salary:	Research Fellow (band I £45,153 - 49,512; band II £50,757 - £56,223 Senior Research Fellow (£57,692 – £64,027)
Term:	This is an open-ended position (subject to funding, and probationary period)
Pension:	Local Government Superannuation Scheme
Annual leave:	33 days in a full year plus 12 public/general holidays, pro-rata for part-time workers
Section:	Environmental Research Institute (ERI), UHI North, West and Hebrides
Responsible to:	Prof Stuart Gibb, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange

The successful candidate will:

- + Provide strategic leadership for ERI's Pollution research theme, focusing on the occurrence, fate, impacts and mitigation of contaminants in the environment.
- + Lead and grow a portfolio of externally funded research and knowledge exchange projects, aligned with national and international policy priorities.
- + Contribute actively to UHI's research strategy and to REF 2029 preparation and delivery.
- + Support the development of early career researchers and foster a collaborative, outward-facing research culture.
- + Engage with external partners including government, agencies, industry and communities to maximise real-world impact.
- + Oversee the ERI's commercial analytical service provision
- + Contribute to the wider academic and operational environment of the ERI and UHI

By joining ERI's Pollution Research and KE Team, you will help lead innovative, impact-driven science that shapes solutions for cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environments. We welcome researchers who can contribute to, collaborate with, or challenge our existing areas of focus, helping to define the next generation of research, policy, and practice in pollution prevention and environmental resilience.



The Environmental Research Institute

The Environmental Research Institute (ERI) is based in Thurso, Scotland and is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, North Highlands. Since 1999 our multidisciplinary team has sought to transcend scientific boundaries to undertake and promote high-calibre research, innovation, and education in the environmental sciences that 'makes a difference'. We aspire to excellence in all we do.

We seek to advance scientific understanding of contemporary environmental issues using our proximity to outstanding natural resources combined with state-of-the-art facilities. We advance our goals through development of networks with strong, strategic partnerships and collaborations with academic, commercial and stakeholder organisations within regional, national and international contexts.

We aim to ensure that our work has tangible value to society, helping address new societal, economic and policy challenges related to use and management of the natural environment and its resources, and responding to changes in the environmental, organisational, financial and political landscapes. In doing so, we seek to contribute to the University mission of having a transformational impact on the region's economy, people and communities.



Our vision is a natural environment that is healthy, sustainable, and valued by all.

We strive to provide dynamic leadership in research, innovation and education that advances understanding and informs management of our natural environment.



The ERI has four Research and KE priorities:

- + **Energy:** Sustainable energy transitions and environmental interactions.
- + **Pollution:** Investigating Environmental Contamination and Developing Sustainable Solutions.
- + **Peatlands:** Studying peatland resilience across scales and discipline boundaries.
- + **Society:** Connecting Environment, Economy and Wellbeing to environmental change

The following websites may be useful in providing further information.

- + The University of the Highlands and Islands: <http://www.uhi.ac.uk/>
- + UHI North, West and Hebrides: [Home - UHI North, West and Hebrides](#)
- + The Environmental Research Institute (ERI): [Environmental Research Institute](#)

ERI Pollution theme: Investigating Environmental Contamination and Developing Sustainable Solutions

The Environmental Research Institute (ERI) addresses one of the most pressing global challenges of our time: Understanding, monitoring, and mitigating environmental pollution. An ever-increasing array of anthropogenic contaminants is now present in the environment, including emerging pollutants such as plastics, pharmaceuticals, and heavy metals.

Our research focuses on evaluating their fate, behaviour and impacts, from sources to sinks and on developing sustainable, circular solutions that reduce risks to ecosystems and human health.

Aligned with the global One Health agenda, which recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, ERI's work integrates natural, applied, and social sciences to deliver holistic, transdisciplinary solutions. Our findings aim to influence policy and practice at national and international levels.

ERI also leads the UHI WaterHub KE team, which addresses key challenges in drinking water provision, wastewater treatment, and resource management in rural and sparsely populated regions of Scotland and comparable environments across Europe and the world.

Our Current Research Priorities are:

- + **Sustainable Water Quality Management and Wastewater Treatment:** Developing innovative and circular wastewater treatment solutions, including waste repurposing, advanced adsorption technologies, and low-cost, nature-based systems such as constructed wetlands. A key focus is on resource recovery through nutrient recapture, reuse, and recycling.
- + **Monitoring and Assessing Acute and Chronic Impacts of Pollutants:** Applying advanced biomonitoring, eDNA metabarcoding, and remote sensing to detect emerging risks such as antimicrobial resistance. Integrating citizen science and novel ecotoxicity testing to evaluate pollutant impacts across species, ecosystems, and scales.
- + **Minimising Pollution in Rural Sectors:** Working with agriculture, forestry, conservation, and game management sectors to reduce pollution from land-use practices such as deforestation, afforestation, wind farm construction, and agrochemical application.
- + **Preventing Harm from Priority Pollutants:** Building partnerships to prevent pollutant release by promoting behavioural and practice change (e.g., sustainable pharmaceutical prescribing) and by advancing recovery, recycling, and repurposing of materials.

We are looking to appoint a Theme leader who will contribute to our current research portfolio and / or expand our activity and impact in areas such as:

- + Environmental Modelling & Data Science
- + Environmental Microbiology & AMR Ecology
- + Ecotoxicology & Environmental Health
- + Green Chemistry & Circular Innovation
- + Catchment Biogeochemistry & Hydrochemistry
- + Science, Governance & Policy Translation

Specification

The appointment may be made at Research Fellow (I or II) or Senior Research Fellow grades

	Research Fellow	Senior Research Fellow
Job summary	The post holder will be accountable for developing research objectives and proposals, engage in individual and/or collaborative research and plan, co-ordinate and implement research programmes; disseminating research results by, for example, conference presentations and publications in peer reviewed journals; having a responsibility for the acquisition of research contracts and for the acquisition of funding for future research projects, as appropriate to their discipline; participating in Departmental and, on occasion, Faculty or University Committees. Postholders supervise research students and/or other research staff and may contribute to Departmental teaching efforts.	The post holder will be accountable for: providing research leadership, including the ability to foresee new research directions for themselves and research teams. Postholders play a key role in developing new research strategies and contribute to teaching and student supervision at all levels; contributing to the strategic direction of the college and enhance its research reputation e.g. through; publications in refereed journals, contributions to edited volumes or authorships of major text(s) as appropriate to the discipline, over a sustained period (generally over five years); identifying and obtaining sources of funding of significant value as appropriate to the discipline; having or developing a national reputation within their specialism evidenced by invitations to present at national and/or international conferences together with, for example, membership of editorial boards, membership of councils/committees of national or international learned societies; dealing with complex and difficult problems, which colleagues have referred to them as the recognised expert, where there may be a lack of precedent in how to deal with such problems; playing a significant role within the college, e.g. through acting in senior administrative positions and contributing to teaching and learning programmes. They also contribute through institutional committee membership and participation in administrative, management and other service responsibilities.
Qualifications	Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a PhD plus research experience to enable the delivery and dissemination of independent research e.g. 4 years relevant post-doctoral work experience; or a professional qualification and 7 years relevant professional experience (Research Fellow I; 10 years for Research Fellow II)	Postholders have the knowledge, skills and experience normally associated with a PhD and a sustained track record of research within a specialism; or a professional qualification and significant relevant professional experience at a senior level.
Knowledge and skills	Sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline to effectively contribute to as well as develop and deliver research programmes	Having a growing national reputation, evidenced by activities such as: membership of the editorial board of learned journals; invitations to present papers at national/international conferences; authorship of a major textbook based on original research;

	The ability to develop research proposals and to attract research students and funding, as appropriate to the discipline. Planning and organising workload including the ability to supervise and delegate work to ensure the timely completion of research programmes.	sustained record of publications in refereed journals. The ability to attract significant research funding and supervision of students as appropriate to the discipline. Experience of managing and leading research team(s), including staff motivation and management. The ability to organise own workload and manage the workload of others.
Other	Commitment and ability to undertake and/or continue professional development in a relevant discipline Clean driving licence Be willing to work flexible hours when necessary to meet requirements of the post Be willing to regularly travel on College business, between centres, UHI and within Scotland Satisfy appropriate Disclosure Scotland checks	
Quality Indicators	Research project deadlines and objectives are met. Engaging in continuing professional development and possess membership of professional organisations as appropriate. Research Fellow I: Research proposals are developed, and research students and funding are attracted. Clear contribution to the department's research outputs. Research Fellow II: Clear and sustained contribution to the department's research outputs. Emerging contribution at Department and Faculty/University level through membership of committees	Externally recognised authority in discipline/field. Attraction of significant research funding/grants. Evidence of positive innovation and impact (e.g. funding, income, national agendas). Evidence of a clear contribution at Departmental and Faculty/University level through chairing/membership of committees. Knowledge of, and adherence to, the University's Policies such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies
Quality indicators	Delivery – Completes work on time and to agreed standards with the Line Manager. Teamwork – Makes a meaningful contribution to internal and external teams, providing mentoring or supervision where applicable. Communication – Engages effectively with all relevant stakeholders through clear written and verbal communication in reports, presentations, and collaboration. Customer Service – Delivers high-quality service to key stakeholders, including funders, students, and partners. Time Management – Priorities tasks effectively and, where appropriate, manages projects efficiently. Systems – Demonstrates competence in relevant software, systems, and processes. Adaptability – Embraces change, adopts new methods, and engages in continuous professional development. Ethics & Integrity – Upholds ethical research practices and academic integrity. Technical Proficiency – Applies appropriate research methods, data analysis, and tools effectively. Policy - Knowledge of, and adherence to the Institutions policy environment	

Key Terms of Employment

Hours of Work:	This 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.
Holidays:	33 days in a full year plus 12 public/general holidays, pro-rata for part-time workers
Duration	This is an open-ended position (subject to funding and probationary period).
Salary:	Research Fellow I, £45,153 - £49,512 Research Fellow II, £50,757 - £56,223 Senior Research Fellow £57,692 - £64,027
Location:	The position will be based primarily at our ERI Campus in Thurso, Caithness, but you may be required to work in any campus of UHI North, West and Hebrides.
Pension:	You will be contractually enrolled into the Local Government Superannuation Scheme. Further details are available on joining.
References:	For external candidates' appointment will be subject to references and a PVG check, which will be taken up after an offer has been made.

Working environment

ERI offers an excellent research environment within the University of the Highlands and Islands, combining academic excellence with the opportunity to work in one of Europe's most distinctive natural and cultural landscapes. Researchers benefit from:

- + Access to unique field sites and laboratory facilities.
- + A collaborative, interdisciplinary research culture.
- + Strong links to government, industry, and community partners.
- + A commitment to equality, diversity, and career development.

Our researchers are encouraged to pursue innovative, high-impact research that connects local action with global sustainability goals.



Making an application

Completing your application

Your application should include the following:

- + **Completed Application Form (both parts):** Please read the form carefully and complete it electronically. Make sure all sections are fully completed. If you need more space for any answers, use a continuation sheet and attach it to the form.
Your personal statement/further information should provide clear evidence of how you meet each of the selection criteria set out in the job description.
References: Please give the name, address, telephone number and email address (if known) of two referees, including your existing or last employer, to whom reference may be made in support of your application concerning your professional ability and performance at work. References will only be taken up for short-listed candidates. Please note that any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of satisfactory references from your current/last employer or academic institution, unless advised otherwise.
- + **Current CV:** Please include an up-to-date CV outlining your relevant experience and qualifications.
- + **Optional Covering Letter:** You may also include a covering letter to highlight your motivation and suitability for the role.

The information that you provide in your application form & other supporting information is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be short listed for interview. Your application will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Submitting your application

Completed applications must be returned by the closing by e-mail to recruitment.nwh@uhi.ac.uk

Or: Human Resources, UHI North, West and Hebrides, Ormlie Road, Thurso, Caithness, Scotland KW14 7EE. We will acknowledge receipt of completed applications by e-mail.

Written acknowledgement of completed applications will only be provided where requested and where a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed with your application for this purpose. We will contact you concerning your application once shortlisting has been completed

Timeline

Closing date for applications: 9am, Wednesday 17th December 2025

Interviews: January 2026 (initial interviews may be online)

Start date: Negotiable, available January 2026 onwards (subject to receipt of satisfactory references and securing PVG Scheme membership via Disclosure Scotland).

For further information on this position:

Please contact Prof Stuart Gibb, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange:

Stuart.Gibb@uhi.ac.uk

About the area

The North Highlands is home to Scotland's most famous drive - the North Coast 500, and to one of our most famous destinations - John O'Groats. The landscape is breathtaking, featuring iconic mountains and flat rolling moorlands. High tech companies sit side-by-side with vibrant, innovative SMEs. At the centre of offshore wind, wave and tidal stream renewable energy developments, the area also hosts Rolls Royce, Subsea 7 and BT among the global companies investing in employment in the far north of Scotland.

The area is a draw for outdoor sports enthusiasts and hosts the internationally recognised surf spot around the Thurso East reef. With beautiful beaches and bays, wildlife, high hills and big skies, the region of Caithness and Sutherland has much to offer. Thurso (population c. 8000) has origins dating back to Viking times when it was an important Norse settlement (its name comes from the Norse *Thorsa* meaning Thor's River). Thurso later grew to become a market town and was noted for its trade with Scandinavian and Baltic ports from as early as the 14th century.

Situated on the Pentland Firth in the beautiful, sheltered Thurso Bay it is the most northerly town on the Scottish mainland. Thurso has a fine harbour, beach and looks out over the Firth to the Islands. Just west of Thurso lies Scrabster, the main ferry port for Orkney.

For a town of its size, Thurso has numerous amenities including:

- + A vibrant local shopping centre, three primary schools and one secondary school
- + Several hotels, lively bars and restaurants, leisure facilities including gyms, a swimming pool, tennis & squash courts, yoga studio, and a cinema
- + Clubs and societies including dancing, drama, walking, kayaking, surfing, sailing, music, community greenhouse, etc.
- + Railway, bus, ferry connections and Wick airport within 30 minutes

Explore the area:

[Caithness and Sutherland | HIE](#)

[Things to do | Venture North](#)

[Things to Do & Tourist Guide, North Caithness | Venture North](#)

Click these links to view these videos on YouTube:

[Venture North Discovery: Summer in Caithness & Sutherland](#)

[Venture North to Caithness & Sutherland](#)



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Salary: Research Fellow I, £45,153 - 49,512; Research Fellow II, £50,757 - 56,223; Senior Research Fellow £57,692 - £64,027

Contract: Open-ended (subject to funding) | 35 hours per week

Pension: Local Government Superannuation Scheme.

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

Closing Date: 9am, Wednesday 17th December 2025

The Environmental Research Institute (ERI), part of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) North, West and Hebrides, is seeking an outstanding researcher to lead and develop its **Pollution Research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Theme**. ERI is internationally recognised for high-impact, interdisciplinary research addressing major environmental challenges. The Pollution Theme is closely aligned with the global **One Health** and **sustainability** agendas, focusing on real-world solutions that bridge science, policy, and practice.

Based in the far north of Scotland, ERI offers exceptional access to natural laboratories, strong partnerships across government, industry, and communities, and a supportive, collaborative research environment. www.uhi.ac.uk | eri.ac.uk

About the Role

The successful candidate will:

- + Provide leadership in pollution research, focusing on the occurrence, fate, impacts and mitigation of environmental contaminants.
- + Lead and grow a portfolio of externally funded research and knowledge exchange projects.
- + Contribute to UHI's research strategy and REF 2029 preparations.
- + Mentor early career researchers & support a collaborative, outward-facing research culture.
- + Engage with government, agencies, industry and communities to deliver real-world impact.
- + Oversee ERI's commercial analytical services.

Applications are welcome from candidates who can contribute to one of our existing areas of our current work:

- + Sustainable Water Quality Management and Wastewater Treatment
- + Monitoring and Assessing Acute and Chronic Impacts of Pollutants
- + Minimising Pollution in Rural Sectors
- + Preventing Harm from Priority Pollutants

And / or one or more of the following areas is particularly welcome:

- + Environmental modelling and data science
- + AMR ecology and environmental microbiology
- + Ecotoxicology and environmental health
- + Green chemistry and circular innovation
- + Catchment biogeochemistry and hydrochemistry
- + Science, governance and policy translation

How to Apply

Applications should include: Completed application form (with personal statement addressing selection criteria); Current CV; Optional covering letter

Applications should be emailed to recruitment.nwh@uhi.ac.uk. Start date is negotiable from January 2026.

For informal enquiries, contact: **Prof Stuart Gibb**, Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange
Email: Stuart.Gibb@uhi.ac.uk;