

Welcome to the latest Psychology newsletter

February 2021

In this month's newsletter, you'll find the regular updates on our activities, from learning and teaching achievements, new grants and publications, to the conferences and outreach events we've been part of.

To keep up to date with the latest news from the team as it happens, follow us on Twitter [@HWPsych](#) or find us on [Facebook](#).

Links: [Social Sciences](#) | [Psychology](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

The newsletter displays best on tablets (PDF attached also).



Follow our updates on Twitter [@HWPsych](#)

Happy Birthday us!

Did you know that 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Heriot-Watt? To start a year of celebrations, we have a special message from Professor Richard Williams, Principal of Heriot-Watt.

Reflections on Our Bicentennial DNA

Richard A Williams, Principal & Vice Chancellor

"Nearly two hundred years ago a group of concerned residents in Edinburgh raised public subscriptions to help support up-skilling of working citizens through creating the Edinburgh School of Arts. 'Arts' in those days referred to learning arts and the first lecture was in chemistry (or more specifically geo-chemistry) on 16th October. So was to begin our story of education for Heriot-Watt in which, through successive evolution, we share an inheritance and also our collective responsibility for the future continuity of our charitable foundation.

"These roots are deeper than a watermark on paper! To me they are part of the DNA of our being. They set out our global positioning – since from this School of Arts came the formation of the Institute of Mechanics that went on to create over 7000 (yes seven thousand) Institutes all over the world including founding several universities. Then there was the practise of enabling access to people who never had opportunity to study before – this approach to catalyse 'work-based learners' remains a core activity for us today with over 30% of our learners studying whilst at work and home. The original School and Institute taught a defined portfolio of subjects (actually four) but they were theoretically thorough but taught with a clear intent for application – this approach still characterises our Heriot-Watt. We have a specific selection of research specialisations that are intellectually deep but invariably oriented to societal application. And then, finally, the fact that the organisation was founded by philanthropy and as it developed later into Heriot Watt College it benefited from bequests from these two famous donors – we continue to gain significant gifts for development of our University and especially support of students to enable us to be even more inclusive and accessible.

Forthcoming events

Research Seminars/Events
Given the current situation, our events/activities are being hosted online. Check our social media channels for regular event updates ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)).

- Adapting to online education and managing stress featuring Kirin Hilliar
27 February
[Details](#) | [Register](#)
- Psychology on Tap with Alan Gow
16 March
[Details](#)
- Research seminar: Deborah Hall (HWU)
18 March
[Details](#) | [Speaker profile](#)
- Global Happiness Forum featuring Deborah Hall
20 March
[Details](#)
- Research seminar: Dan Hale (HWU)
25 March
[Details](#) | [Speaker profile](#)



"Our own organisation is worthy of a longitudinal in human behaviour and culture – the future will come from how we chose to shape it, and our success in creating a strong sense of purpose in those who learn with us. Let's enjoy this Bicentenary Year ahead of us and celebrate the enduring significance of our four strands of DNA and any epigenetic modifications that may lie ahead."



You can keep connected with the Bicentennial Celebrations and programme at <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/about/history/bicentennial.htm>

Latest publications

Smart, F., Obregon, M. & Garraffa, M. (In press). Positive Effects of Passive Voice Exposure on Children's Passive Production During a Classroom Story-telling Training. *Language Learning and Development*. doi: [10.1080/15475441.2021.1875830](https://doi.org/10.1080/15475441.2021.1875830)



Each new paper is accompanied by a brief and accessible summary. Just search #HWPsychResearch on Twitter, or look in the "Our latest research" album on our Facebook page: <https://facebook.com/pg/HWPpsych/>.



Our latest publications are listed here, but you can find a full list via the [Heriot-Watt Research Portal](#).

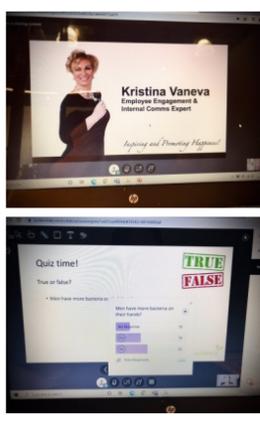
In the news

Scottish Sun: [Scotland has the tech to triumph thanks to world class robot research at Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University, says expert](#)

[Celebrating our academic promotions: Dr Maria Garraffa](#)

[Welcome to the Jungle: Is it all about the money? How a pay freeze affects motivation](#)

Learning and teaching

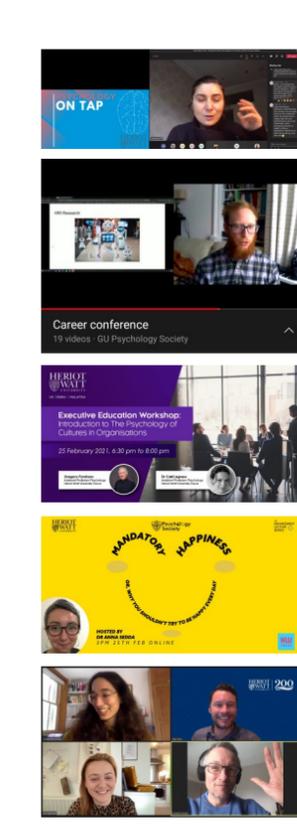


Although face-to-face activities continue to be limited, our MSc students in Dubai have still been benefiting from external speakers across diverse fields. Over the last month Lucy Bolton has hosted workshops from: Kristina Vaneva, Director of Employee Engagement and Communications at Atlantis, discussing applying psychological techniques to the workplace in order to improve engagement and employee happiness; Sarah Christensen about gender inequality in the workplace from a psychological perspective; and Nikita Mikhailov who ran an online guest session discussing the use of personality assessment and psychometrics in coaching.

Looking ahead to future cohorts of students, Alan Gow ran an online workshop as part of the Humanities Study Skills sessions for the Scottish Wider Access Programme. Alan's session explored tutorial learning including a mini tutorial experience.

And for our Final Year students interested in the BPS Scottish Branch Undergraduate Conference, being hosted online on 7 April by St Andrews, the registration deadline has been extended to 3 March. You don't need to present to attend! See the conference details at <https://www.bps.org.uk/events/scottish-branch-undergraduate-conference-2021>.

Conferences and outreach



Our Psychology Research Seminars and events continue to run online. Event details for the semester are available on [Facebook](#).

Our Psychology on Tap series returned this month, with over 130 students and staff joining the first two events. Mioara Cristea explored impostor syndrome, a topic that generated a lot of reflection and discussion. And just this week, Thusha Rajendran's session explored our relationship with technology and robots, and suggested they're maybe not coming to take over. The final Psychology on Tap event in the 2020/21 series is next month, details above and at <https://www.facebook.com/HWPPsych/events>. The events are open to all so please share among your networks.

Also this month, Peter McKenna gave a talk for the Glasgow University Psychology Society, with students from all of Glasgow's universities joining in. Peter's talk, "From Mind to Machine: Transitioning from Psychology to HRI", described his academic journey from psychology undergraduate to Research Associate in human-robot interaction. The event was recorded so you can hear Peter's careers advice here: <https://youtu.be/qli38bzISYw>.

Still on the topic of careers, but this time targeted at those in the workplace, Cakil Agnew and Greg Fantham ran the first Executive Education workshop on the Introduction to the Psychology of Cultures in Organisations.

Closing out the month, Anna Sedda discussed "Mandatory Happiness. Or why you should not try to be happy every day!" The event was hosted by the Student Union and Psychology Society as part of Wellbeing Week and explored the pressures to be happy! And finally, Alan Gow was interviewed by Dr Michael Mosley for a new BBC podcast, "Just One Thing". His episode will explore how activities and learning new things might be good for thinking skills and brain health as we age. The series will launch in April.

Meet the Team

We regularly profile new members of our team based across our campuses in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia.

Euan Dickson, Research Assistant

Euan has recently returned to his post as a Research Assistant working on the Reading in Gaelic for All project led by Maria Garraffa (<https://langlife.hw.ac.uk/multilingualism/reading-in-gaelic-at-all-ages/>), which they first began working on in 2019. Since completing his undergraduate studies in Celtic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, he has had experiencing working on many research projects investigating subjects such as Significant Language Impairment (University of Edinburgh) and the relationship between language use and space in an urban context (University of Glasgow). In addition to his research work, Euan works as a Gaelic language tutor.



Team news

Euan Dickson returned to the team as Research Assistant with the Language Across the Lifespan Lab; Deborah Hall joined the team as Professor of Positive Psychology at our Malaysia campus.

And finally, although we're working apart, it's been great to get together remotely across Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia, this month marking Chinese New Year! We even managed a quiz about traditions, zodiac, celebrations and foods, brilliantly organised by Ke Guek Nee.



Research in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Heriot-Watt University is grouped by three main themes: Cognition, Brain and Behaviour; Lifespan Health and Wellbeing; and Work, Society and Environment. Find out more about our research at www.psych.hw.ac.uk or follow updates on Twitter [@HWPsych](#).