

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](#)

Research showcase

Our Psychology Seminar Series closed with a special Research Showcase this week. The event was about sharing and celebrating the research and engagement activities that our colleagues in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia have been taking part in. The whole team have been busy over the past year, conducting research across our three main themes: Cognition, Brain & Behaviour; Lifespan Health & Wellbeing; Work, Society & Environment.

The showcase closed with a packed poster and hands on activity session. We were delighted that colleagues from across the Schools and Research and Engagement Directorate attended the event, as well as the Deputy Principal for Research and Innovation and the Principal.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the showcase, and to our colleagues and students who attended. You can always find out more about our activities throughout the year in these monthly newsletters (check out the newsletter archive here <https://www.hw.ac.uk/schools/social-sciences/psychology/newsletters.htm>).



Forthcoming events

Research Seminars/Events
- Alyx: the Social Robot, Edinburgh Science Festival 9-10 and 16-17 April, National Museum of Scotland

[Details](#)

Full **Psychology Research Seminar** details are available on [Facebook](#).

Latest publications



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

In the news

Age UK blog: [How our thinking skills change with age](#)

SoSS blog: [Can new activities help an ageing brain?](#)

Research updates and funding

Grajfoner, D. Coaching in Higher Education: An Exploratory Study of the Experience of Academic Staff Acting as Personal Academic Coaches. Special Group in Coaching Psychology at the British Psychological Society, £6,690.

Student voice

In "Student voice", we hear from our students. Every contribution is different, so if you have something you'd like to share, get in touch with [Alan Gow](#). This month, we have two contributions from Dubai.

By School Officer (Dubai): After a year of hard work and planning the first official peer mentoring system was launched in Dubai. I worked along with the student engagement officer, Ms. Nicki and our very own faculty members Dr. Annie, the Head of School and Dr. Kirin, who is also a practicing clinical psychologist. As School Officer, I have been in touch with all year groups and could see freshers year after year struggle with the same day to day problems. The transition from high school to university isn't an easy one, it takes time to settle in. This sparked the idea of a social support system of peers.

Another one of my goals as School Officer was to create work opportunities within university for graduating students. These would not just improve their experience but also add value to their learning. It was noted later that this was quite relevant to our course Educational Psychology as well as gave us a gist of what it's like to practically apply the learnt skills.

Students from 3rd and 4th year volunteered to become mentors (Big Pals). Following registration Big Pals were randomly matched to freshers as their Little Pals. They were then required to attend a training session where they were educated on different skills such as active listening, goal setting, developmental mentoring style and self-reflection. Fundamentally, the pals are a referral point for students who can guide them to right resource within university. Additionally, they also help freshers navigate their way in university by helping with fundamentals such as using Vision, other databases or showing them submission procedures, etc. Lastly, to avoid misunderstandings and other issues both parties have signed a contract agreeing to the rules set out in the guidelines including university plagiarism rules and regulations, meeting frequency, personal boundaries and confidentiality.

Overall, the whole team hopes the programme is beneficial to all students and helps ease their transition. This initiative is currently exclusive to the 1st year Psychology Students as a pilot run, yet there are plans of extending it to other departments as well as the other campuses.

SoSS Watt: Our story, our progress

As a group of Final Year students, we realized there was gap that needed to be closed. With the rapid changes and digitization of everything from education to conversations, we thought of doing our bit for the university. Little is known about the Psychology Department in Dubai and what goes on within, for the world outside psychology, we're mysterious students that learn mysterious things and so we created our own team called 'SoSSWatt' to spread awareness about our course, our experiences and to showcase our work.

We started off slow as most small initiatives do. From creating the social media pages, on Instagram and Twitter, to doing little talks to promote the team in all classes, having interviews and growing our team - it's been a constructive process. Starting with less than 20 followers, we are now at 250 followers who are not just university students but also psychology professionals around the UAE who are greatly appreciative of the content being posted. For a small brand, this is a great foot forward and we hope to continue providing guidance to students and raising awareness in the field of psychology, keeping in mind the power of social media.

Some of our popular content among students as well as professionals has been our mental health awareness campaign where we encouraged students to share their experiences with mental health on social media in order to overcome the stigma. This online campaign saw a lot of brave students coming forward with their stories and we applauded them for their strength. Our other content included career advice sessions from our various professors teaching courses (e.g. Psychology of Education, Forensic Psychology and Clinical Psychology), time management tips, tackling procrastination and conferences such as IPCD. Not to forget the fun surprises we organized for world kindness day which included faculty and student council members.

We also promoted our 4th Years students' research projects for data collection, which was highly beneficial and a convenient method of advertising. Our newest addition has been the Soss-Watt open mic, where we aim to talk about issues that matter. Check out [@soss watt](#) if you haven't already to watch Episode 1, covering topics such as feminism, toxic masculinity and the Gillette ad. As for Episode 2, it is in the making and highly awaited, specifically because like everything on our page this too is open to all students as we aim to spread awareness and give students a platform to express their opinion with the others and join the dialogue.

Lastly, we would like to thank all our active supporters, because of whom we feel motivated to come up with different and creative content every day.

Team members: Luka and Tooba representing Year 1; Divya representing Year 2; Ethan and Najma representing Year 3; Bushra, Maggie and Misha, co-founders. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter ([@soss watt](#)) to stay updated.

Conferences and outreach activities

Our Psychology Research Seminars closed for the semester with our Research Showcase this week, but other events continue to occur throughout the Spring and Summer; full details are available on [Facebook](#).



The team regularly present at national and international conferences and at a range of public engagement events. A selection of the most recent include:

Gow, A. J. (2019). How to stay sharp: Lifestyle and the ageing brain. Presentation at the Scottish Government Age Equality Network speaker series, Edinburgh, UK, 26th February.

Gow, A. J. (2019). Lifestyle and cognitive ageing: From public beliefs to interventions. Research seminar at the School of Psychological Sciences and Health, University of Strathclyde, UK, 20th February.

Meet the team

Each month we profile members of our team based across our campuses in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia.



Dr Michael Craig, Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Edinburgh)
Michael joined Heriot-Watt in 2015 following his PhD in Psychology at The University of Edinburgh. He is a full-time researcher in the department investigating memory in human health and disease. In 2017 he was awarded a 3-year Fellowship from the Alzheimer's Society investigating the causes of severe forgetting in Alzheimer's Disease. Michael is using sensitive memory tests and brain activity recording methods to explore how memory changes as we grow older and how this is different in people with dementia. It is hoped this can lead to the development of new diagnostic markers and therapeutic interventions to support people to live healthier for longer.



Dr Monica Tamariz, Assistant Professor (Edinburgh)
Monica obtained a MSc in Cognitive Science and a PhD in Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. After postdoctoral positions at Edinburgh, Granada (Spain) and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (The Netherlands), she joined Heriot-Watt in 2016. She teaches research methods and a new course on the Philosophy and History of Psychology, and is 1st Year Coordinator, 4th Year Dissertation Coordinator and contributes to the Athena Swan application for SoSS (this recognizes and promotes equality in UK universities). Monica's research focuses on effects of cognitive biases on the evolution of culture and language, social learning in children and adults, transmission of cultural traits (e.g. from parents, friends, through social media), and communication and leadership in partner dance. She is also a tango dancer.



Dr Dasha Grajfoner, Assistant Professor (Edinburgh)
Dasha completed her PhD (Differential Psychology) at Edinburgh University assessing personality and emotions in humans and animals. She has practiced as a Registered Coaching Psychologist (BPS) since 2008. Her research interests cover the application of coaching psychology and animal assisted intervention in leadership development, diversity, wellbeing and mental health. Dasha has been a Principal Investigator on a Leadership Foundation for Higher Education grant, looking at academic leadership coaching, and a British Psychological Society grant investigating the experience of academic staff acting as personal academic coaches. Dasha joined Heriot Watt in 2013, teaching Coaching Psychology and Psychology of Leadership on the MSc in Business Psychology. Dasha is also the co-chair of SoSS Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team.



Dr Ke Guek Nee, Associate Professor (Malaysia)
Ke Guek Nee obtained her PhD in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from National University of Malaysia (UKM). She is a chartered member of the British Psychological Society (BPS), member of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Malaysian Psychological Association (PSIMA). She joined HWUM in 2014 and her research interests include prevention of human addiction, leadership and workplace well-being. She has secured various research grants namely Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC: 2012-2019) and the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2012-2014; 2017-2018). Her research work is often covered by the national media and other media platforms.

Team news

And finally, our congratulations to Yiannis Argyropoulos and family as they welcomed their new arrival, Isla - Anastasia, at the end of last month.

Research in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, at 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](#).