

AUTUMN '18 | ISSUE 02

RGView

Connecting the University Community

*Stop,
Collaborate,
and listen.*

RGU's approach to
partnerships explained.



HAVE YOU LISTENED TO OUR PODCAST - RGU TALK?

Each episode features interviews with academics, students, staff and alumni, on a wide range of topics – from fascinating research and personal success stories to learning about the initiatives that are changing our tomorrow.

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And if you have a story to share or an idea for the show, talk to us at podcast@rgu.ac.uk

RGU
TALK

A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL



As we start the academic year I would like to offer a warm welcome to the university community. I hope you have all enjoyed the summer and are looking forward to the new semester.

You will be aware that there has been a change in leadership at the university. It is with an acute sense of responsibility and great pride that I assume the role of Principal.

Throughout a career spent within the organisation I have witnessed and participated in the progressive evolution and growth, both in size and status of the university. This is a trajectory that I am committed to maintaining.

RGU has many strengths. We are recognised for our leadership in the national skills agenda, for continuing the development of student-centred excellence and teaching, for our focused research and our industry engagement. We are once again top in Scotland for graduate employability, we hold a 'Gold' ranking in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and are continuing to break down barriers to higher education.

I am extremely proud of RGU's achievements but even more so of its committed and professional workforce which underpins the university's success. RGU relies on its community to achieve its goals. I look forward to working with you all as we build on our strengths, address challenges, deliver new initiatives and pursue opportunities with agility and focus.

Through collaboration and partnerships, we will continue to lead the way as a progressive, professional and innovative university committed to further enhancing our teaching, the student experience, research and graduate employability.

John Harper
Principal

THE OVERVIEW

WELCOME TO RGVIEW.

You've just joined a community of over 1,300 readers and that number is steadily growing. Since the first issue, we've had some amazing feedback and we want to encourage you all to continue sharing your thoughts with us so we can continue to improve. We hope you find this second issue enjoyable and informative.

- RGU Communications Team

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STOP, COLLABORATE AND LISTEN

Partnerships often birth the greatest ideas. It's something we've taken to heart at RGU and so there's a team whose core focus is on identifying our ideal partners and putting in place the foundations for collaboration.

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Six quotes uttered in the moment to enlighten, reveal and inspire.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

What are your collaboration top tips? Do you dream of entrepreneurship? Would you holiday with the supernatural? Share your RGView (sorry), your stories and your thoughts with the editor by emailing RGU.Communications.

Stop, Collaborate, and Listen

Strategic Partnerships

RGView explores the world of partnerships at RGU, focusing on how teams work with partners to build strong relationships and secure benefits for both parties.

Here's Director of Business Development, Donella Beaton's, view.

Why do we have strategic partnerships?

I think, first of all, it's important to say something about partnerships because often people only think of partnerships as being contractual, but there's more to it than that at RGU. For almost everything we do we take a partnership approach. We look at how we can add value to the partner, where we can bring something that is different and important to them, help them solve problems and at the same time bring value to RGU.

We do partnerships which are short-term but our primary focus is on strategic partnerships where it's all about the long term where the value grows over time.

What's RGU's approach?

It's all about a mutual respect. Partnerships are two-way, it's not us parachuting in and sorting something out and leaving. It means really trying to solve the problem, not selling something off the shelf and saying 'make that fit', as that won't work.

We need to sit down, listen and have the conversation to find out what the needs are, understand if RGU can help and then provide potential solutions, being ready to change once we get the partner's feedback. Very often we try and start with something small and discreet, get to know each other, have some quick wins and build on that for the long term.

What are the benefits?

Partnerships are not only important to generate income. They can also bring other significant benefits to the University. Working together we can significantly raise the University's profile and reputation, which in turn can support other activities such as student recruitment; and we can get involved in opportunities and countries which we wouldn't be able to do on our own. There is also the opportunity to learn from other institutions and indeed from other countries.

What are the different types of partnership?

There are a whole range of different types of partnerships. In addition to student recruitment articulation partnerships, RGU has some excellent local Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP). We partner with other universities

"...often people only think of partnerships as being contractual, but there's more to it than that at RGU."

internationally and also have really good relationships with companies, agencies and governments around the world.

When we strategically prioritise countries we tend to focus on ones which are going through significant change and where we have expertise, but sometimes an amazing opportunity just presents itself for example, our very strong relationship with Mexico began when the President of Mexico visited RGU while on his State Visit. That wasn't enough though. We then had to work very hard to build the relationship and develop a strategy and plan to get it to the stage where it is now.



As the university widens its portfolio, we'll collectively have to be more strategic to make sure our resources are prioritised wisely.

Some examples?

We have our really positive relationship with NESCol which has been built on the back of student access and articulation. We're now building on this partnership to present an innovative and inclusive tertiary education model, TWO PLUS which will really change things for learners in the north east of Scotland.

Internationally, Aberdeen Business School and the School of Creative and Cultural Business have been working for some years in hospitality and management with Benedict School in Switzerland. We're now developing this relationship further as Benedict becomes an associate college of RGU.

We've been working with the Nippon Foundation from Japan for a number of years; we held our third summer school for them this year. This relationship grows year on year and last year we signed a letter of intent to work collaboratively to meet the needs of young people looking to work offshore.

We've now heard the background to strategic partnerships. Let's take a closer look at some of these collaborations.

In Mexico

The Mexican Government introduced Energy Reform in 2013 which allowed foreign participation in its oil and gas sector for the first time.

On the back of this and a visit by the Mexican President, RGU was commissioned by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to develop a skills development framework to address how Mexico could retain value from these developments. Drawing on decades of experience in the sector, RGU was able to map a framework to address Mexico's oil and gas skills gap over the next 15 years including recommendations for higher education; vocational training; sector leadership and Mexico's education system. The twelve recommendations made in the Framework were fully endorsed by the Mexican Government, industry and the regulators.

More recently, a team from RGU travelled to Mexico to deliver a pilot Sector Leadership Development programme for energy regulators. Funded by the Prosperity Fund Programme run by the British Embassy in Mexico, the sector leadership programme was a key recommendation of the skills development framework.

RGU is currently in discussions with the Mexican Government regarding how to support capability and capacity development for the energy sector in the country.

Sharing Knowledge

Gray's School of Art has joined forces with Angus-based design and manufacturers, Montrose Rope & Sail, to help the company break into new high-end markets.

Over two years, they will work together under a Knowledge Transfer Partnership to develop a product range that is design-led, builds on heritage branding and focuses on the luxury end of the market.

Montrose Rope & Sail is one of the oldest independent companies in Scotland, founded over 200 years ago by a rope and sail maker in Leith, which currently focuses on niche markets and produces a range of products - primarily all-weather bags for the oil and gas industry. In the midst of the downturn in the energy sector, Montrose Rope & Sail developed a new strategic



The fastest F1 pit stop is an amazing 1.92 seconds. This is only possible because of the strong partnerships within the team.

“Providing courses that meet community needs is a core focus of RGU and this is often achieved by working in partnership with industry to address specific skills gaps.”



direction through diversification of products towards other markets.

Under the guidance of Gray's academics, Josie Steed, Course Leader for Fashion and Textiles, and Keith Gray, lecturer in Fashion Design and a KTP associate, the collaboration provides Montrose Rope & Sail with support in luxury design-led markets, opportunities for routes to market and branding.

Local Industry

Providing courses that meet community needs is a core focus of RGU and this is often achieved by working in partnership with industry to address specific skills gaps. The MSc in Strategic Service Planning and Delivery in Health and Social Care is a great example.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a UK-wide programme that has been helping businesses for the past 40 years to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base.

A KTP serves to meet a core strategic need and to identify innovative solutions to help that business grow. KTP often delivers significant increased profitability for business partners as a direct result of the partnership through improved quality and operations, increased sales and access to new markets.



Oxpeckers feed almost exclusively on whatever they find on mammals' backs, and the mammals are freed of potentially harmful parasites. Photo credit: RayMorris1 on Visualhunt.com / CC BY-NC-ND

The Scottish Government's 2020 Vision for health and social care is that everyone can live longer healthier lives at home or in a homely setting. However, as the population is growing and ageing, there is an increased prevalence of dementia, cancer and long-term conditions which puts a strain on existing services and requires a more strategic and efficient approach for the future, whilst keeping in mind the quality of care.

Consequently, academics and professionals from across RGU have been working closely with NHS Grampian on ways to address this skill shortage. The result was the creation of the MSc course.

The programme provides students with the opportunity to learn the range of skills and

knowledge they need to be successful in strategic service planning and delivery. The unique programme draws on interdisciplinary expertise from across the university, in a collaborative effort between the School of Health Sciences, Aberdeen Business School, School of Applied Social Studies, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, School of Computing and Digital Media, and the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Degree Link

Widening access to higher education, ensuring local talent is nurtured, is a core element of RGU's strategy. A central part of this commitment is the Degree Link programme.

Degree Link is a longstanding partnership

between RGU and North East Scotland College (NESCol). The partnership provides a broad range of linked courses and flexible study options to students in the north east of Scotland. RGU currently also extends this partnership to Dundee and Angus College and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

A recent evolution of RGU's partnership with NESCol is TWO PLUS. This will see the two institutions take new active steps to strengthen their connection within and beyond traditional higher and further education streams. The goal is to work collaboratively to deliver a high-value, inclusive, unified tertiary education system in the north east which meets the needs of learners and employers across Scotland's society and economy.

Committed to your development

HAVE YOU MET THE POD (PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) TEAM?

[Susan MacLennan](#), Senior OD Specialist, [Tina McGregor](#), OD Specialist and [Susan Mackay](#), OD Coordinator make up this crucial arm of HR.

"We support the university's strategic ambition by supporting staff in realising their full potential," says Susan MacLennan. "Working collaboratively, we promote learning, development, creativity and resilience at individual, team, school and department level. Our overall aim is to make sure staff at RGU feel supported throughout their career and personal development journeys, making sure they're aware of the opportunities on offer.

The team offers a varied range of staff development opportunities:

AURORA

Aurora is the women-only leadership development initiative launched by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE). It was launched to address the reduction in the number of women in senior posts in Higher Education. Since its inception in 2013, 50 women at RGU have gone through Aurora.

PIONEER

This is the RGU Future Leaders Programme. It's been developed by HR in collaboration with the LFHE. The programme supports the development of staff in their career aspirations and nurtures a cohort of talented 'RGU ready' leaders.

VOYAGER

The ILM accredited Voyager programme has been designed for RGU's middle managers. The programme equips managers with the skills and tools they need to be effective.

DISCOVERER

Discoverer is aimed at both aspiring and existing first line managers/ team leaders. It equips participants with an understanding of essential management tools and techniques. Again this course is ILM accredited.

SKILLS4SUCCESS

The Skills4Success portfolio has been designed by the POD team to support the university's HR strategy. This comprehensive portfolio of leadership, management and personal development sessions provide all staff with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in relevant professional areas.

RGU LINKS

This is RGU's staff mentoring programme. It supports staff in fulfilling longer term objectives, exchanging knowledge and strengthens career development.

THE RGU MANAGER

This one-day course is essential for all new managers at RGU.

GET IN TOUCH

Contact any member of the POD team for more information on how they can help you or your team. [Visit the website](#) for more information.

The POD team also offers one-to-one sessions with experienced leadership coaches, the facilitation of bespoke development interventions, including psychometric tools, as well as an online archive of leadership and development resources.

CONJURING A CULTURE BOOM

When it comes to tourism, what are the most important factors? Location, activities and amenities certainly, but culture and history also play a large part. What role does the supernatural play, however? That's a question that Dr Rachael Ironside has been exploring for some time.

"The supernatural has been a draw for tourists around the world for many years. In Scotland, you just need to look at examples like the Loch Ness Monster, which has captured the visitor imagination since the 1930s and continues to be a driver for tourism in the area. However, in recent years, we've seen an even bigger boom in the supernatural being used as a way to both attract and engage tourists.

"Ghost tours are now big business in many towns and cities, particularly across the UK and USA, and industries such as Dracula tourism in Romania are bringing large numbers of people to lesser visited destinations in the world. Cities even compete for the 'most haunted' title each year!"

With the allure of the supernatural being beneficial to visitors and destinations across the world, Rachael has focused her doctoral research on how people make sense of paranormal experiences they encounter together. She is now exploring how these stories and experiences can help people make sense of place and heritage.

This work led her to host the first-ever Supernatural in Contemporary Society Conference, which took place at RGU last month. Rachael was keen to provide an opportunity for researchers to share their work across disciplines and look at the prospect of future collaborations, while also addressing the role of the supernatural in the modern world.

"It was very exciting to host this first-of-its-kind conference and for the university to welcome researchers from across the world who are exploring a topic that continues to be a popular feature in our lives. The conference was never about whether the supernatural is 'real' or not, but it was about looking at the very real influence it still has on our society and culture."

The conference attracted a range of speakers on topics that reflected those taught at RGU, including tourism, events, fashion, journalism and media. This included Professor Dennis Waskul from Minnesota State University Mankato, who presented on the promise of the supernatural, and Dr David Clarke who will present on his experience working with the government on The National Archives UFO project.

Not only did conference delegates get to explore varied and exciting international research, they were also able to experience one of the north-east's own haunted castles.

"Both VisitAberdeenshire and the National Trust for Scotland have been hugely supportive throughout the conference process. We hosted an industry panel one evening at Crathes Castle, which involved discussions on the future of the supernatural with key individuals in the heritage and tourism industries in Scotland.

"The fact that this took place in a 16th century tower house with a rich history and its very own Green Lady ghost was an obvious added bonus!"

"Ghost tours are now big business in many town and cities, particularly across the UK and USA."

Change our tomorrow: community view

Following on from the first issue of RGView which illuminated our strategy, here eight more members of the RGU community share how their work is supporting our strategic vision.



A LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

PAUL MATTHEWS

Head of Employability and Professional Enrichment

I joined RGU in May this year and having been both a graduate and an employer I was fully aware of the emphasis that the university placed on graduate employability. In fact, two key factors in me accepting this new position were its continued success in this field and equally importantly, its corporate commitment demonstrated through its strategic intent.

We're proud of our excellent reputation for graduate employability and this has been reinforced more recently with the latest Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) rankings, published in the first week of July, which places us first in Scotland and fourth in the UK overall.

While these results are great testimony to our strategy, it's essential that we consolidate and build on this success to maintain our current position. What were previously the Careers, Placements, Study Abroad and Information and Communications teams are now co-located on the third floor of the Ishbel Gordon building, combining to form the Employability and Professional Enrichment team meaning greater visibility and easier access for our students.

Branded the Employability and Professional Enrichment Hub, the new department has

been created chiefly to further promote a key strategic element, 'achieve high graduate employability'. Nevertheless, it's also an essential factor in our goal 'to enrich the student experience'.

"We're proud of our excellent reputation for graduate employability and this has been reinforced more recently with the latest Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education rankings."

Strong employer links and wide student engagement are critical elements to our success in employability to date and the commitment to the Hub will further enhance this. We're currently working on a new Graduate Attributes Framework and this will be complemented with our imminent investment in a new employability platform.

Not only will this offer an improved service to our existing students but it will enable us to forge even greater links with our Alumni from the perspective of a lifelong learning partnership, reinforcing our commitment to both their personal and professional enrichment.



SUPPORTING OUR NEW BRAND

JO FLEET

Senior Web Editor, Marketing

The new website is a huge departure from anything we've had in the past, not only with its dramatic new design but behind the scenes too. Built 'mobile-first' with an entirely different Content Management System and Information Architecture, the new site aims to make sure you can easily find the information you're looking for, with much clearer navigation and better overall experience.

Any website is never completely 'finished', so there are always opportunities to utilise emerging technology and innovations and to analyse how people are browsing our pages, adding strength to what we offer, a challenge I relish! We're continually developing the site to be flexible to the needs of the content and the growing needs of our target audiences, working closely with our invaluable developers in IT, refining requirements for functionality, layout

and structure, enabling us to be ever more creative in our desire to engage a challenging audience who have grown up with all things digital.

Phase one of the project focused on a large chunk of the externally facing content on the website, with lots more to come to improve the experience for our very different stakeholders, both inside and outside the university. Key to this, and any future development of the website, is to continue to maintain our editorial style and voice in line with brand guidelines, upholding web usability protocols and accessibility standards.

RGU is a forward looking institution and I'm excited by the plans and strategies being put into place now, for the future.



FOCUSING ON WIDENING ACCESS

BRIAN WEBB

Access Pathways Lead, DELTA

Scottish Government targets state that by 2021-22, 10% of full-time undergraduate students will come from areas identified as being in the 20% most deprived in Scotland. The Access Team is working to fulfil the commitment made by RGU to reach this target, recognising the challenges given the university's regional recruitment.

Working with this in mind, the team is building strong strategic links with local authorities across Scotland to provide an opportunity to promote RGU and its wider access routes, outside of and within the local region. Successful relationships continue with NESCol to support pathways from college to university through our TWO PLUS programme. Furthermore, the team provides opportunities to local schools through the Northern Lights programme, targeting first and second year students, and the Access

“The team is building strong strategic links with local authorities across Scotland to provide an opportunity to promote RGU and its wider access routes.”

- Brian Webb

To programme, offering fifth and sixth year students on campus opportunities to experience what RGU has to offer.

A firm commitment this year has been to offer accommodation discounts to SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) entrants to support their transition to university life. This offer is designed to remove the barrier of coming to study in Aberdeen, and alongside the support of staff within RGU, supports a successful learner journey.

The Access Team's future priorities include widening our reach and opportunities across Scotland and we aim to become the most student focused enhancement team within Scotland.



INTEGRATED LEARNING

KETAN PANCHOLI

Lecturer, School of Engineering

The School of Engineering has developed an interdisciplinary BEng, MEng and MSc in Biomedical Technology. Supporting the ever growing life science industry in the north east of Scotland, the MSc programme will launch in January 2019 and the BEng/MEng programmes in September 2019.

Rather than providing a condensed version of the current knowledge in biomedical technology, the course offers the most industry relevant syllabus which emphasises engineering, biology and regulatory quality management. At RGU, the students will devote a significant amount of time to working with industry, allowing them to develop their clinical and communication skills while they study the core sciences.

The course will be delivered in partnership with the School of Health Sciences and the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences. This partnership will allow students to understand the working links between medical sciences and engineering technology.

The development of these courses shows that RGU is reacting to the industry's need for more engineers by drawing upon those who are interested in cutting edge biomedical engineering technology and also the newly developing industry in north east of Scotland.



LOOK AGAIN FESTIVAL

HILARY NICOL

Lecturer, Gray's School of Art and Associate Director of the Festival

SALLY REAPER

Festival Director

Look Again delivers an annual festival of visual art and design in Aberdeen, commissioning artists and designers to engage with the city's iconic civic spaces and inviting the public to see the city through fresh eyes.

Look Again also works to cultivate the creative industries in Aberdeen, developing a partnership approach and securing external income to do so. This means that RGU, through Look Again, is significantly impacting on the high level Design, Public and Cultural policy aims of the university strategy, as well as making a substantial contribution to the new Culture Aberdeen strategy. Look Again will continue to work within these frameworks, delivering cultural and creative programmes for the city.

Partnership working is core to Look Again, and we work at a strategic level with Creative Scotland, to develop support for the creative industries in the north east, as well as with key cultural providers in the city, such as City Moves, Peacock and the Art Gallery, to develop projects for the festival.

“Our recent elective with Scott Sutherland School of Architecture, resulted in the highly popular ‘Playable Pavilions’ for Look Again 2018.”

We're developing viable career paths for creative graduates in the city, providing the conditions to retain creative talent by creating projects that allow students to gain practical experience of delivering public projects. Our recent elective with Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, resulted in the highly popular 'Playable Pavilions' for Look Again 2018.

We also develop innovative professional development programmes for graduates that provide mentoring and support to develop confidence and skills, and to connect them with leading practitioners beyond Aberdeen.

Look Again will become part of Gray's School of Art in autumn, and looks forward to continuing to deliver on the RGU strategic framework from within this new environment.



NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

DANIEL SUTHERLAND

Academic Strategic Lead, Gray's School of Art

Gray's School of Art has a vibrant history of creating meaningful disruption and positive change, with artists and designers working hard to stimulate and engage others through creative practice.

As such, the school is well placed to support the university's core strategy and to thrive in doing so. The team at Gray's have been working closely together across art and design disciplines to create new ways to implement the strategy within daily life through a range of new projects and initiatives.

Our new Pop-Up Art School will connect all departments in Gray's with the wider community and region. It'll have a mobile remit to engage with schools, colleges, and community groups to raise the profile of Gray's and RGU, whilst providing new links for a more diverse demographic to access creative education.

The Gray's Products initiative is another school-wide example of how enterprise and entrepreneurialism is being engrained in our culture. Gray's Products will feature work for sale that is made by students, staff and alumni

to create a unique and high quality collection of work for sale. Our first iteration of this was shown at the 2018 Degree Show.

We're also working in partnership with Lords Taverners to develop a new and innovative approach to a Table Cricket Game system that provides collaborative gaming experiences for a diverse range of children across the UK. We'll engage our own students in the design and development process to create meaningful social impact.

Alongside my colleague Ben Durack, I've submitted an entry for the Converge Challenges that will allow us to develop a mini circular economy within RGU where we can take throw-away plastics and recycle them in-house to develop new products that staff and students can then purchase on campus.

Capitalising on the range of skills and expertise that sit within the school, the core strategy of the university's plan for future development is being embraced with an attitude of positive action and inclusion.



ENABLING THE SELF-MONITORING INDEPENDENT LEARNER

LESLEY ROBERTSON

Online Distance Learning Coordinator and Content Designer, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment

Critical thinking is a core skill throughout the Built Environment online distance learning postgraduate courses. This skill is greatly developed within the evaluation and assessment process.

We introduced an opportunity for our students to develop peer assessment focused communication during their group work assignment. Each group (41 in total) produced a themed presentation and with guidance and support, students adopted the assessor role and set about formally evaluating and marking their peer group's products.

There is growing discourse around moving to this type of peer assessment, away from the customary formative assessment, and we were keen to engage with this. We also wanted to investigate whether our students would report any of the associated learning benefit gains described within the literature. This study event was concluded with a student experience survey.

In the survey 92% of students felt the approach broadened their knowledge and understanding, and again 92% felt comfortable, empowered and enlightened performing the assessor's role. Further, 96% said they'd consider using the assessment guidelines before submitting their next assignment and 96% also said they'd welcome the opportunity to be involved in peer assessment again.

Delighted with such positive student feedback we intend to continue with this type of summative peer assessment, encouraging our students in self-monitoring their own performance by applying critical thinking to their coursework prior to submission.

Bright Ideas

Innovation. The word is often used to describe a new and exciting way of doing things, thinking outside of the box to find solutions.

"Innovation is at the heart of true progress; it's essential to growth, so that's why embracing and supporting it is a fundamental part of RGU's strategy," says Chris Moule, Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. "There are a number of exciting innovative initiatives being planned at the moment. In July, Opportunity North East (ONE) announced the development of a dedicated regional hub for digital and entrepreneurship activity which will be developed in partnership with CodeBase and RGU."

Making the most of an iconic building, this move will see RGU's old administration building at Schoolhill upcycled into a space dedicated to pure innovation.



Photo by My Life Through A Lens

“The £1.5million refurbishment will create the ONE Digital & Entrepreneurship (ONE D&E) Hub which aims to be a focal point for activity and investment to develop a vibrant digital cluster in the north east economy,” says Chris. “It’ll be the base for the recently formed ONE CodeBase partnership between ONE D&E and the UK’s leading digital tech incubator CodeBase. It’ll also house start-up teams who are on RGU’s new accelerator programme.”



Photo by Chris Palomar on Unsplash

The Accelerator

RGU’s accelerator programme is a mentor-driven business start-up initiative focused on developing entrepreneurial teams in Aberdeen and the north east region. It aims to accelerate the growth of the overall start-up ecosystem in Scotland by supporting start-ups at the earliest stages, providing access to resources, infrastructure, capital and guidance. Selected entrepreneurial teams will go through a structured six month program that provides them with up to £10k seed funding, office space and access to a network of mentors, investors and domain experts.

“Things have changed. To say that you’d built a start-up and it failed used to be a bad thing but now companies are actively looking for people like that. People with vision and an entrepreneurial, innovative spirit,” says Chris. “So, entrepreneurship is now a career choice for many and the accelerator gives teams a strong and stable support network to help them develop.”

Accelerators themselves are not a new concept. Many universities and companies have been delivering these programmes for years. However, unlike many the RGU one has seed funding directly available to each selected team and this is a significant help.

“This funding, on top of the valuable mentoring we’re offering, means that we can better equip students, staff and alumni with the resources required to pursue their ideas and work towards success.

“When it comes to the programme itself, we are looking for ideas that can scale, but more importantly we’re looking for strong, committed and collaborative teams. If you talk to any other accelerator they’ll tell you that the team is the most important thing. Any good team will pivot and adapt their idea according to market and consumer feedback. You have to accept that ideas are always changing so that’s why our focus is more on supporting the teams, making sure that they are able to be agile in a constantly evolving environment. The mentorship aspect of accelerators is great because teams might not naturally adapt an idea, particularly one they have been working on and feel protective of. A mentor provides a safe, independent sounding board they can trust.

“The RGU start-up accelerator is one of the pillars upon which we can build an innovation ecosystem where people with an entrepreneurial spirit can flourish and grow successful businesses.”

Applications for the six month programme will close in November and it’s planned to induct the first cohort of 25 plus teams in January 2019. Only one member of the founding team needs to be connected to RGU as a member of staff, students or recent alumni (three years after graduation).

In a nutshell...

“What good is an idea if it remains an idea? Try. Experiment. Iterate. Fail. Try again. Change the world.”

- Simon Sinek



A CLOSER LOOK

The ONE D&E Hub features a mix of hot-desking, co-working and office space for early stage digital companies, providing an effective working space as they grow towards investor readiness. The refurbishment of the Hub has already begun and it’s due to open in spring 2019. The reinvigoration of an iconic and historic RGU building is an important evolution in the relationship between RGU and ONE as both invest in the future success of the north east economy.



Photo by SpaceX on Unsplash

More information on:

[THE START-UP ACCELERATOR](#) →

[INNOVATION SKILLS](#) →

[INNOVATION MASTERCLASS](#) →

Coalition of the willing

A unique opportunity for cross-disciplinary work at RGU, building expertise and partnerships while addressing the needs of a community.

THE PROJECT

There are a number of reasons why RGU has decided to focus on delivering solutions in Orkney.

“Importantly, there’s a real entrepreneurial and innovative spirit in Orkney,” says Kelly Fraser, Research Funding Manager. “There’s an abundance of cultural heritage and a strong sense of community and identity, but as with most isolated areas there are challenges. We can see RGU’s research offering fitting well on Orkney, and by working closely with local partners, we can deliver transformational and meaningful results.”

Working in partnership with Orkney Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the local community, the Orkney project will establish a transformational research hub in Stromness to drive and support collaboration and innovation. This will be done alongside Heriot-Watt University and the University of the Highlands and Islands who already have an active presence on the islands.

“Research activities will be grouped into three broad clusters: smart islands, creative innovation, and sustainable quality of life,” says Professor David Gray, Academic Lead for the project. “These clusters combine existing RGU expertise with the strategic needs of the Orkney stakeholders.”

[Read a summary](#) of the work in Orkney in Research, RGU’s research focused magazine. Or browse the next few pages which will discuss a few of the proposed projects more deeply. The majority of these projects are awaiting funding but they give a great idea of RGU’s vision for the Orkney community.

MEET ELSA COX

Orkney Project Development Manager

Tell us about yourself.

I grew up in Orkney on a farm next to the Neolithic village of Skara Brae. The site was somewhat of a playground for me and this inspired an interest in archaeology which I went on to study at the University of Glasgow. I then undertook a masters in Museum and Gallery Studies at the University of St Andrews before returning to higher education six years later completing an MSc in Science and Technology Studies at the University of Edinburgh. I met my husband, a horologist, in Edinburgh and the city was our home for 11 years before returning to Orkney.

What’s your background?

Prior to joining RGU as Orkney Project Development Manager I spent 15 years in the museum sector, most recently as Senior Curator of Technology at National Museums Scotland. I also published widely in the areas of energy technology and contemporary collecting of science and technology in museums.

Previous roles included Curator for the South Georgia Museum, during which time I was fortunate enough to spend six months each year living and working on the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia. Here I cared for, researched and promoted remarkable Antarctic science,

exploration, military, whaling, maritime and natural history collections. I also had the unusual honour of caring for the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton, someone I had read a great deal about as an armchair explorer.

Any hobbies or interests?

I have a passion for contemporary designer jewellery, mostly silver, handmade in Scotland. My favourite designers include Dorothy Hogg and Malcolm Appleby, and I regularly visit degree shows to discover new designers.

Traditional upholstery is also a keen interest, transforming tired old furniture into loved household features.



“I also had the unusual honour of caring for the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton”

Tell us something we don’t know about you.

When I was 11 I was in a feature film called Blue Black Permanent created by Orcadian filmmaker Margaret Tait. I’m still quite proud to have an IMDb entry (however scant) for my fleeting appearances.

What’s the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

Quite possibly my husband advising me to apply for this position! It has afforded us the opportunity to return to Orkney to live and work close to my family while also giving me the chance to support the economic and environmental sustainability of the island through this unique project.



STORY-TAGGING

Professor David Gray, School of Creative and Cultural Business and Dr John Isaacs, School of Computing Science and Digital Media

This is about harnessing Orkney's stories: its folklore, its heritage, its identity. Taking what makes it distinctive to the people who live and work there and using it to increase the market reach of local products such as textiles, craft work and jewellery, and build a greater emphasis on tourist trails, the tourist experience as a visitor to the islands.

Story-tagging is essentially digitally connecting places, experiences or products with local heritage. Potential users and customers access stories through physical and virtual tags linked to an app and website.

The technique can also benefit local business. Embedding providence has shown to increase sales/visits and the data can help businesses to refine and design their products. It also brings the potential for tourism bodies to gain an understanding of visitor numbers, helping them to exploit emerging markets.

This project has partners from Scotland, Iceland, Russia, Norway and Northern Ireland. RGU has led the proposal development on behalf of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Funding options are being explored.

AGEING POPULATION AND HOUSING DEMAND

Professor Gokay Deveci, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment



There is a general housing shortage in Orkney; there are currently 10,600 houses and many are no longer fit for purpose compared to contemporary standards. This issue is further compounded by high levels of fuel poverty and social isolation, against a backdrop of demand for specialist housing with support.

In partnership with Orkney Islands Council, we're developing a proposal to address this which focuses on the exploration of co-housing as an alternative housing option for the elderly. These energy efficient, innovative homes are designed collaboratively by professionals from architecture, computing, health and social care and design backgrounds. Co-housing is particularly well suited to island communities where one in five residents are over 65.

“There is a general housing shortage in Orkney; there are currently 10,600 houses and many are no longer fit for purpose compared to contemporary standards.”

It's proposed to trial this technology enabled housing proposal in Orkney. This will be in a pioneering co-living community, where facilities such as utility spaces and garden areas are mutually shared between residents. The proposals will have integrated, interactive dialogue systems situated within the homes. The incorporation of artificial intelligence assists the monitoring and identification of early symptoms of ill health whilst contributing to the management of the resident's wellbeing.

This solution offers the opportunity for the elderly to receive care whilst living in contemporary homes which have been thoughtfully designed to meet their needs. These homes offer increased independence, enabling residents to stay active and engaged, improving their health so reducing demand for health services. It also offers privacy whilst encouraging social interaction and creates an alternative solution for those who don't wish to reside in a care home facility.



Photo by Joe Yates on Unsplash



COMMUNITY LED CARE

Liz Hancock and Professor Kay Cooper, School of Health Sciences

The community led care project was a partnership between RGU, Voluntary Action Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and development trusts/community councils from seven of the non-linked islands. It was funded through the Aspiring Communities Fund (Scottish Government/European Social Fund).

The research looked at how community led care solutions could be implemented in the small island communities of Orkney. Initial findings showed a strong community with access to GP and nursing services and emergency healthcare. Collectively, the community priorities were adapted housing, home care, home help, improved transport and improved infrastructure.

It was found that community innovation in non-regulated services areas was possible and home care services could be delivered through community-service provider partnerships. However, the full benefits of this innovative community led approach would require partnership with statutory providers.

The initial feedback on Orkney was extremely positive. The project team, along with five of the seven island communities, are awaiting the outcome of a further funding application which would facilitate the development and implementation of community led interventions such as lunch clubs, befriending and information services.

GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS

Fiona Campbell, Business Development – VIDEO



TOURISM TRAILS

Dr Rachael Ironside, School of Creative and Cultural Business

It's proposed to investigate how Orkney uses stories and folklore to engage visitors with heritage. This could see a collaboration with Tom and Rhonda Muir, a local couple who are already passionate about the island's folklore and are using this to encourage visitors to safely explore Orkney's lesser known sites.

Some of the questions being considered are: Can a self-guided folklore trail encourage visitors to explore lesser known areas of Orkney? Will it help visitors engage with the culture and history of the island? How can it be offered in a safe and feasible way?

The proposed research will explore a few different possibilities; a folklore trail app with audio storytelling; an app offering the collection of art/stories throughout the trail; and the gamification of the app to offer a greater experience.

"It's proposed to investigate how Orkney uses stories and folklore to engage visitors with heritage."



FROM SHEEP TO SHOP: ORCADIAN TWEED

Professor Sarah Pedersen, School of Creative and Cultural Business and Dr Andrea Peach, Gray's School of Art

This area investigates the history of Orcadian tweed and aims to establish the current state of the industry with a view to understanding what the future holds.

Professor Sarah Pedersen and Dr Andrea Peach visited Orkney to meet with the community and work in the archives in Kirkwall. The way forward will explore the potential for collaboration with Harris Tweed, address

the need for more weavers and investigate whether there is potential for a curated exhibition detailing the history of Orkney tweed, establishing heritage and developing a unique identity.

An article on the 20th century history of Orkney Tweed has been submitted to the Journal of Design History titled: 'Crones or Vikings? The Contradictory Branding of Orkney Tweed in the Twentieth Century'. This paper explores the recent history of Orkney tweed to understand the different ways the tweed was branded for national and international markets, and whether this had an adverse effect on market longevity.



3D SCANNING

Professor Richard Laing and Dr Marianthi Leon, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment

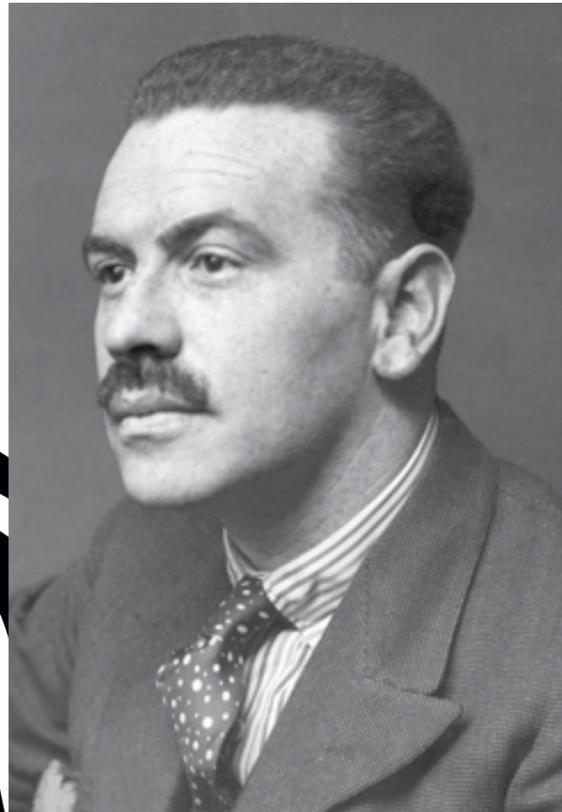
Professor Richard Laing and Dr Marianthi Leon will be undertaking preparatory 3D laser scanning in Stromness, along the historic and architecturally unique Victoria Street. This will provide pilot urban environment 3D scanned data, and will allow the team to present a highly visual model of the town. The project will involve active community engagement through public outreach work with an exhibition and presentation to schools, college, and community heritage groups to achieve enhanced impact.

The purpose of this project is to increase visibility of RGU on Orkney, underlining the institution's commitment to the project and the area and to provide further opportunities for community engagement. The 3D scanning project will also have direct links to the Stromness Research and Innovation Campus development work while data collected during the course of this visit would be used in several planned research project applications relating to the Stromness area. The work will be undertaken in collaboration with UHI Archaeology Institute, who have a very strong track record and reputation with regards to analysis and understanding of the Orcadian built and natural landscapes, and the team hopes this will lead to many more exciting projects and activities in the future.

SIACOASTS

Leslie Mabon, School of Applied Social Studies - VIDEO





Thomas Scott Sutherland, 1899-1963 was born in Torry, Aberdeen. He was an architect, a town councillor and a successful entrepreneur. To RGU, he is a greatly important benefactor: he gave the university Garthdee House, for fifty years the home of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture, as well as the Garthdee Estate.

Our history: **Thomas Scott Sutherland**

“My greatest ambition was to overcome my physical disability by beating the other guys in business, accomplishments and sport.”

Childhood osteomyelitis meant that Thomas Scott Sutherland had his leg amputated aged seven. He later identified this disability as the spur which forced him to fight to equal and better his contemporaries. This desire to achieve success meant that Thomas would try anything enterprising. He once paid for lessons in conjuring from a professional he met at the Tivoli Theatre. His conjuring and ventriloquism act saw him appear at many charity fundraisers in and around Aberdeen. He became a distance swimmer and taught swimming to injured servicemen after the First World War. He also learned to play competition tennis and became excellent at golf.

“Find a need and fill it, get out when the need has been filled.”

Thomas carried out his motto, printed above, successfully throughout his life. After school he joined J.A. Ogg as an apprentice architect and formally trained at the Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology. Around this time he began to profit by buying, refurbishing and selling on motorcycles, then successfully trying his hand at the stock market.



Immediately after graduating he bought into a small firm, McAndrew and Sutherland. Within a year he bought his surveyor partner out. Through the 1930s his architectural practices became extremely successful, building significantly in areas of Aberdeen such as Beechgrove and Broomhill, as well as designing well known buildings such as Regent Cinema on Justice Mill Lane, now Nuffield Health, and Amicable House on Union Street. This work led to opportunities to back fledgling businesses. Over his lifetime, these 40 or so businesses ranged from orthopaedic footwear, miniature golf, furniture, retail, pharmaceutical manufacturing, hotels, whisky distillery and cinemas and theatres.

He was elected progressive councillor for Ruthrieston in 1934 and appointed housing convener. He was responsible for the Kincorth Housing Scheme in 1936. By the end of the year as housing convener he had increased the number of council houses being built from 250 to 800 per year. By 1946, a quarter of Aberdeen's population had been re-housed with 7,000 slum houses demolished and 8,500 new houses built. He visited the USSR behind the iron curtain, the US, the Caribbean, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East as an ambassador of the city.

“Tom Scott Sutherland was a man of brilliance and tenacity of purpose, fired with ambition and determination to succeed; a man of great foresight who knew where he was going. But it wasn't easy. Few people realised the bitter disappointments that confronted him on the ladder of success. He was a fair man, a man of great compassion and feeling for his fellow men and champion of the underdog. Such a man I knew and I am glad of it.”

In 1948, Thomas met Georgina Buchanan, the secretary to the Governor of Hong Kong and they married in 1950. Georgina survived Tommy by more than 50 years. Before her death in 2014, she achieved many philanthropic goals, including funding the library at RGU, now the Georgina Scott Sutherland Learning Centre.

With thanks to the RGU Arts and Heritage Collections and www.scottisharchitects.org.uk for the information.

Study Abroad Self-Discovery

By Ailidh Brown, BA (hons) Journalism Fourth Year Student

Last year I studied in Toronto, Canada for a semester. It was such a rewarding experience, filled with self-reflection and self-discovery. I'd like to share some of the lessons I learned in the hope that they may be helpful to others who are considering studying abroad.



1. Be Self-Confident

Studying abroad pushed me to navigate numerous challenges and make important decisions without parents or close friends nearby for guidance. I came back a more confident and self-assured person.

2. Accept your Individuality

You won't be best friends with everyone you meet – and that is ok. I've learned to be more secure in my individuality and to do my own thing instead of following the crowd. Learning to let go and not take things personally was a tough but vital lesson to learn.

3. Trust

I found myself in a couple of tricky situations abroad and was helped immensely by the kindness of strangers, without whom the situations could have been much worse. Of course, it's important to exercise your best judgement when approaching strangers for help – but I learned that, usually, people mean well.

4. Accept the Unknown

Not knowing exactly where you're going can actually be advantageous. Not having one specific goal in life can make for immense flexibility and open-mindedness.

5. Forgive your Mistakes

Life is a learning curve and nothing taught me that more than studying abroad. While it was a fantastic experience, there were mistakes made along the way. Prior to studying abroad I would have been more critical of these mistakes, but the experience taught me to take them in my stride.

6. Live for the Moment

I was only in Toronto for a very short period of time. For once in my life I wasn't having to work and had no commitments other than studying and exploring my new surroundings. With this realisation it was important to enjoy things one day at a time.

Meet Peter Reid

RGView spoke to Professor Professor Peter Reid, School of Creative and Cultural Business, to find out more about himself, his experience at RGU and how he spends his spare time.

Tell us about yourself.

I've been teaching at RGU for twenty years now and don't know where the time has gone. I'm passionate about our north east corner and its history, heritage and culture. I live in a little village on the Moray Firth coast called Port Gordon (yes, it's a long commute) and have a cat called Mountbatten who is a megastar in his social media feed.

What do you like best about RGU?

The friendships that I've made over the years, right across the university, and they really matter to me.

What got you into teaching?

Good fortune really, in that a lecturing post came up just as I was finishing my PhD back in 1998. I wasn't convinced I'd be any good at it though because I'd hated public speaking at school.

What's been the most memorable moment of your career so far?

There are a couple of things that stand out. The first would be the year I spent as president of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland. It was a great honour to be recognised by your professional community and was also a fantastic opportunity to go out and see the great work being done in libraries across the country.

The other thing that stands out was when I was appointed as professorial lecturer in 2015 in e Doric. It was a great honour to be recognised by your professional community and was also a fantastic opportunity to go out and see the great work being done in libraries across the country.

How does it make you feel seeing your students succeed in their careers?

If you teach in a vocational field then one of the greatest pleasures is seeing former students go on to have successful careers. There are so many former students that I can think of in this respect, making a real contribution to the profession and to the communities they work in. There are also a number who have gone on to become colleagues here at RGU too, like Dina Martzoukou or Lizzy Tait. I'm always proud of what our students achieve.

Tell us something we don't know about you.

I've got loads of family in Denmark, mostly in Jutland or Copenhagen. I love Denmark and Copenhagen is probably my favourite city. Though, I still really struggle to pronounce the Danish soft d (the stød) correctly.

Have you heard Peter Reid on RGU Talk? Listen as he looks back on his career at the university - particularly his passion for local heritage and culture. Of course, not forgetting his professorial lecture, which was delivered entirely in Doric to much amusement!



Moments

A collection of moments from across the university community. If a story captures your interest, click the images to find out more. For more community news visit the [RGU website](#).



TOP FOR EMPLOYMENT

RGU is the top university in Scotland for employment. The latest statistics from the DLHE survey shows that RGU has the best employment record of universities in Scotland.



GROUND-BREAKING

The results of a ground-breaking project into the body sizes of UK offshore workers on board various helicopter crafts has been recognised with an award for outstanding contribution to ergonomics.



ABERDEEN YOUTH GAMES

The biggest ever Aberdeen Youth Games marks Year of Young People. Around 1,400 pupils from 45 city primary schools converged on Aberdeen Sports Village as the annual Aberdeen Youth Games culminated in a Festival of Sport.



EXTENDING OPPORTUNITY

More than 100 secondary school pupils have been recognised for their commitment to learning and skills development by RGU as it celebrated the fourth year of its Northern Lights programme.



MENTAL HEALTH IN FOCUS

A new Student Mental Health Agreement which aims to raise awareness and promote positive wellbeing for staff and students was signed by the student union and the university.



SKILLS STRATEGY PROJECT LAUNCHED

A project to develop a new UK oil and gas skills strategy has been launched following wide spread industry and government support for the findings in OPITO's UKCS Workforce Dynamics Review.

INNOVATIVE RESOMATION PROPOSAL

Talented Architecture student Sophie Perrott has designed a resomation complex and memorial gardens to tackle funeral poverty in Scotland.

The back page

“This is how we will collectively shape our creative future providing creative opportunities for all, celebrating and valuing the impact of our arts and cultural activities for all people in our community.”

A snippet of Head of Gray's School of Art, Libby Curtis' fantastic speech at the Degree Show launch. She's discussing the new culture strategy for Aberdeen and how it embraces a collaborative and entrepreneurial spirit.



‘The belief that men and women are equal, it’s as simple as that. There’s a great line from Rebecca West, a 1920’s novelist who said: “People always call me a feminist when I express views that distinguish me from a doormat.”’

PODCAST: Professor Sarah Pedersen’s (School of Creative and Cultural Business) response when asked what the true definition of feminism is.

“It’s fine wearing a rainbow lanyard, it’s fine having events to celebrate LGBT History Month. But we are a university that is training the professionals of tomorrow... I think we have an obligation to ensure that those individuals know about the communities that they will work with.”

PODCAST: Dr Duncan Cockburn, Director of Planning and Policy Development and Equality Champion shares what life is like at the university for members of the LGBT+ community on RGU Talk.



LISTEN TO THE PODCAST EPISODE HERE



“Being an RGU student isn’t just about cramming yourself onto the bus in the morning. It’s about taking up shared responsibility in learning, through which you gained useful insight to personal management, organisation, conflict-resolution and teamwork; while contributing meaningfully to the general enhancements of the student experience at the university.”

Michael Ife, Student President for Communication and Democracy delivered his speech during this year’s summer graduations.



“Life does continue and there is that decay and death, but from it there is birth and regrowth, and it’s about celebrating this lifecycle.”

VIDEO: Jade Gilbert, Contemporary Art Practice Alumna, discussing her Degree Show piece ‘Borrowed Existence’.