THE STUDENT GUIDE TO ORKNEY

Heriot-Watt University’s Orkney Campus
Information for the Prospective Student
Hello! So you may be interested in studying with us in Orkney? Well this guide is here to help you make up your mind. No doubt you’ll have researched the course you’re interested in by now, and in this booklet we’ll try and show you that Orkney is the right place for you to study. Within these pages you’ll find lots of information about the lifestyle up here, including the sights to see and things to do. We’ll show you some student profiles so that you get a real idea of what living and studying on the islands is like and we’ll give you information about the courses we offer.

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Welcome to Heriot-Watt and Orkney

“Choosing a university is one of the most important decisions in your life and I believe there are many reasons why you should choose Heriot-Watt University.

We are one of the world’s leading universities for business and industry and have a reputation for innovative education, enterprise and ground-breaking research. We are highly regarded for the professional relevance of our degrees and the employability of our graduates. In fact, 2015 was an unprecedented year of achievement recognised in high ranking results across a number of key university league tables. Heriot-Watt is a truly global university – with a lively and vibrant academic community of over 30,000 students, from more than 150 countries, studying for degrees worldwide. This was highlighted in the 2015 QS World University Rankings which ranked us in the world’s top ten for the international mix of our students.

Whether you choose to study in Malaysia, Dubai or the UK, Heriot-Watt offers a proven learning environment, excellent facilities and study opportunities, and delivers the same high-quality education, reflecting our goal to share knowledge across the world, enriching the people and countries in which we work. But choosing a university is about more than numbers and an academic education. Learning at Heriot-Watt is underpinned by our strong emphasis on our values and development of the character of each student as an individual. We believe in providing you with an exceptional student experience, where you will build lifelong friendships and where you will be on the fast track to a genuinely world-class professional career.”

Professor Richard A. Williams OBE, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Heriot Watt University

“It’s great that you are thinking about studying with us in Orkney, and that you want to know more about life up here. Orkney is a different way of life to most other places. It’s the kind of place you can leave your door unlocked without any fear of something bad happening. People say hi to you in the streets, wave at you in cars and help you whenever they can. We hope this booklet inspires you to consider studying at our Orkney Campus, to view our range of MSc courses, and to find out more about our facilities as well as experiencing living in Orkney.

Based in Stromness, the smaller of the two main towns in Orkney, Heriot-Watt University’s Orkney Campus (also known as the International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT)), is recognised as a world leader in research, training and consultancy, with particular expertise in renewable energy, marine science and environmental resources. The smaller nature of the campus, and Orkney itself, allows those who study here to have the opportunity to learn from people directly involved in the industry, the research and projects, for both the development of renewables and marine energy sector.

Orkney offers the opportunity to live and work in an environment that fully embraces the spirit of the Orkney Campus’ MSc programme, preparing the student in every way possible for a career in marine resource management or renewable energy. Students are in contact not only with academic professionals with a multi-disciplinary range of skills, but also with those professionals who themselves live and work in their own specialist fields within a demanding and dynamic environment.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.”

Dr. Sandy Kerr, Director of ICIT, the Orkney Campus of Heriot-Watt University

“A place where legend still competes with fact, passion with logic, ritual with routine.”

- John Fox, author

Looking North from Birsay © Cat Morrison
The Orkney Islands lie off the northern tip of Scotland, where the North Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. Orkney is made up of 70 or so islands, but only around 20 are inhabited. The exact number of islands is hard to say as many are little more than skerries – small, uninhabited islands.

Orkney’s landscape is generally flat, green and fertile, with stunning coastlines of sea cliffs and sheltered beaches. The climate is generally mild with only a 10°C difference between summer (average temp. 15°C) and winter (average temp. 5°C), though it isn’t uncommon for wind and rain to prevail. During the summer, Orkney benefits from long hours of daylight where it barely gets dark, to short days and long nights during the winter.

“Still, Orkney is the best place. Happy are they who never leave it.”

- Edwin Muir, Orcadian poet
About Orkney

There is a rich and famous past to Orkney, spanning 5,000 years from the complex Neolithic archaeological treasures of Skara Brae and Maeshowe to the wartime sights of the Churchill Barriers and Italian Chapel. Nowadays, thriving industries include farming, fishing, tourism and renewables.

Lying a mere six miles north of the Scottish mainland, Orkney is 30 miles across at the widest point, and 53 miles north to south. Orkney can be divided into three distinct regions – the North Isles, the South Isles and the Mainland.

Orkney has a population of just over 21,000, with the majority living on the largest island known as the “Mainland”. Here, there are two main towns; Kirkwall and Stromness. The largest is Kirkwall with roughly 9,000 people, followed by Stromness 16 miles to the west with just over 2,000 people. It is in Stromness that the Orkney Campus of Heriot-Watt University is based.

“Beyond Britannia, where the endless ocean opens, lies Orkney.”

- Orosius, 5th Century AD
ICIT was established in Stromness in 1989. Based in the Old Academy Business Centre, we enjoy panoramic views over the town, the sheltered harbour of Hamnavoe and towards the historic sheltered anchorage of Scapa Flow. The Old Academy Business Centre is also home to other companies such as the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), Aquatera, Green Marine, SULA Diving and a world-class Hyperbaric Chamber.

From the outset we have aspired to develop strong international links and collaboration. From leading and participating in major research projects on several continents to attracting students from across the world to our MSc courses – our reach continues to be global.

Our location also provides a “living laboratory”; one that has supported a wide range of research, teach and consultancy activities for 25 years in areas including:

- Marine science and diversity
- Data modelling
- Marine Planning and Policy
- Fisheries
- Surveying
- Oil and gas sector
- Marine renewable energy

Whilst our research is varied, our current internationally recognised research is focussed on the wave and tidal marine renewable energy sector.

Orkney may be small, but it is mighty. The islands are currently at the forefront of renewables in the UK, and leading the way. For more information on Orkney and renewables see page 10.
Stromness

From the Old Norse *straum-nes*, meaning “point protruding into the tidal stream”, Stromness really is a town linked to the water that it lies next to, with houses clustered tightly next to the bay.

The first impression of Stromness is that of an old traditional stone built port, nestling comfortably against the hillside of Brinkie’s Brae. Not as old as Kirkwall, Stromness flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries as a result of increased trade with the New World.

The wars between England and France also meant that shipping in the English Channel was dangerous, so the vessels made their way across the north of Scotland and used Stromness as a stop-off point. The ships of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the whaling fleets became regular visitors, and the town became an important recruiting centre for crewmen.

“Draped like grey lace on an emerald shore, the Orkney town of Stromness recalls a past of whaling, war and trade.”

- Bill Bryson

Looking towards Stromness from the water © Cat Morrison
The main street of Stromness twists and turns along the shoreline among the houses which are built into the sea on one side, and into the hill on the other. This street is long and winding, with a number of narrow lanes and closes branching off from it. These combine to give the town a labyrinth quality, with steep, narrow paths climbing the hillside on the north side of the street, while on the south the houses and shops back onto the shore. The flagstone street is shared by both pedestrians and motorists. In fact, the street is open to two-way traffic, and can often be quite tricky to navigate! Only those with a heart made of steel should attempt to drive down it (as it can often cause quite a panic in the narrow passageways).

See www.stromnessorkney.com for more details.
At one point, Stromness was a thriving centre for visiting ships, and in 1841 there were four inns, 34 pubs, three schools, three banks and four boatyards building boats in operation due to the strong reputation that Stromness had. Nowadays the town is somewhat quieter but still retains its great character, with its many small local food and craft shops situated along the flagstone-paved street. Stromness is an energetic town for its size with its fishing, renewables, local produce and tourism industries. It is well serviced with general grocery shops, cafes, a supermarket and pubs. As well as hotels, a world class art gallery and museum, Stromness also boasts a very scenic 18-hole golf course, swimming pool and fitness suite, all-weather pitches, squash courts, and is also the base for recreational dive boats. Drama productions are produced throughout the year, and there is even an occasional cinema on a Saturday night! Students based in Stromness can also benefit from opportunities to meet, network and socialise with industry contacts.
For over 30 years, Orkney has been at the forefront of the development of renewable energy technologies. This has led to the islands being in a completely unique situation: we produce too much electricity, and all from renewable resources!

Orkney is linked to mainland Scotland via a two-way cable, but this is at full capacity. When the wind is blowing and the waves are crashing, we cannot export all the energy we produce, and this leads to some of our renewable generators being forced to stop producing, meaning we are one of the few places in the world that is trying to use more electricity to stop the curtailment of renewables.

This unusual problem has pushed Orkney to be pioneers of different projects to try and use this curtailed energy. These few pages will look at where this energy is coming from, what makes Orkney the ‘hub’ of renewable energy, what projects are being looked at and some of the key points from the last few decades.

Where is the energy coming from?
In 1951, Orkney tested the first grid connected wind turbine in the UK. Since then, Orkney has continued to be the experimental site of many turbines, both on land and under the water. At first glance, it might seem remarkable that a small group of islands lies at the cutting edge of renewable energy development and implementation in the UK. Perhaps the clue that explains why Orkney is playing a world-leading role in the adoption and development of renewables lies in the word “islands”. Standing between the Atlantic and the North Sea, Orkney is home to some of the most energy-rich waters in Europe, some of the strongest winds, and a community that have embraced the potential of the islands with open arms.

WIND
As well as larger commercial and community-owned turbines, Orkney is home to the largest number of domestic, micro-generation turbines in the whole of the UK. These are turbines that are found in peoples back gardens. In fact, we have roughly 20% of all of these small turbines in the UK, but with only 0.4% of the UK population! Wind power is the main energy source for Orkney, allowing the islands to become net exporters of energy.

WAVE AND TIDAL
Since 2003, Orkney has been home to EMEC, the European Marine Energy Centre. This is the world’s first and foremost test site for real-life deployment of marine energy devices, both wave and tidal. EMEC offers developers the opportunity to test full scale grid-connected prototype devices in unrivalled wave and tidal conditions – if it works here, it can work anywhere. EMEC also operates two scale test sites where smaller scale technologies, supply chain companies, and equipment manufacturers, can gain real sea experience in less challenging conditions than those experienced at the grid-connected wave and tidal test sites. EMEC is located within the same building as our campus.

SOLAR
While Orkney is not renowned for its sunny weather, solar panels have still seen a fairly successful uptake for both domestic and commercial properties.

The Wello Penguin at the EMEC wave test site, Billia Croo, in Orkney © Mike Brooke-Roper
RENEWABLES OF ORKNEY: KEY POINTS

PRODUCTION
- Orkney produces the equivalent of over 100% of its electrical demand from renewable resources.
- Highest proportion of electricity from renewable devices of any county in the UK.
- 1 in 12 families in Orkney produce their own electricity, either from micro wind turbines (<50kW) or solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.
- 1/8th of the UK’s domestic turbines are located in Orkney.

CURTAILMENT
- Renewable production in Orkney has progressed at a faster rate than the grid infrastructure can handle, meaning that many of the wind turbines are turned off at time when they could be generating due to lack of space from the grid restrictions.
- Local, innovative ideas are emerging to try to reduce curtailment of turbines, reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and alleviate the ever-increasing grid restriction and congestion.

USE
- BATTERY STORAGE: In 2013, a 2MW lithium ion battery was installed at Kirkwall Power Station and connected to Orkney’s electricity distribution network. This project, which is the first of its kind in the UK, is aiming to establish the viability of large scale batteries for electricity storage.
- ELECTRIC VEHICLES: Orkney has the highest concentration of electric vehicles (EVs) in the UK. With free charging from charge points and the limited distance you can travel throughout the islands, these are the ideal transport for the Orkney Islands.
- HYDROGEN: The Surf ‘n’ Turf project aims to use power from tidal and wind turbines to produce compressed hydrogen on Eday, one of the northern isles of Orkney. Once transported to Kirkwall, this hydrogen will power cars, ferries and buildings.

See the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF) website for more information

© Mike Brooke-Roper
1951 The first grid connected wind turbine in the UK is tested at Costa Head, Orkney.

2001 Orkney is chosen as the base for the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), a first for the marine renewables industry globally.

1984-2000 Orkney is home to the largest wind turbine in the world – a 3MW twin bladed concrete monster.

2002 A 2.75MW turbine is erected at the Burgar Hill test site.

2003 The EMEC real sea wave test site is established at Billia Croo, near Stromness.

2004 Wave energy developers Pelamis successfully generate electricity to the grid with their first full-scale prototype at the EMEC test site. This generation of electricity by a grid connected offshore device was a world first.

2004 The UK’s first completely locally owned turbine is erected in Burray, funded entirely by local, private investors.

2005 EMEC’s tidal test site is established at the Fall of Warness, off the northern island of Eday.

2006 Scotland’s first commercial scale tidal energy device, Open-Hydro’s Open-Centre Turbine is successfully installed at EMEC’s Fall of Warness test site.

2008 Orkney remained at the forefront of community wind power, with applications lodged for 6 community wind turbines.

2008 Orkney becomes a net electricity exporter, producing 103% of its electricity needs from local renewable sources.

2009 Orkney remains at the forefront of community energy, with 6 community wind turbines.

2013 Orkney becomes a net electricity exporter, producing 103% of its electricity needs from local renewable sources.

2015 The 2.75MW turbine at Burgar Hill became the first in the UK to generate over 100GWh to the national grid.

2016 Orkney-based company Scotrenewables Tidal Power launches the largest tidal turbine in the world, the 2MW SR2000.

2020 104% of Orkney’s electricity needs is produced from renewable sources, with a net export of 11,263MWh.
For thousands of years, people have lived and worked in Orkney. From the Stone Age Orcadians, who left a legacy of monuments that continue to inspire today, through to the Vikings, who took the islands in the ninth century and made them the centre of a powerful Earldom and part of the kingdom of Norway, and beyond. The Orkney Islands are covered with monuments that stand as constant reminders of the events and people that have gone before.

Houses and tombs dating back to 5,000 years share the landscape with Bronze Age cemeteries, standing stones, 2,000 year old brochs, Viking ruins, medieval churches and Renaissance palaces. The history is not something that exists only in schoolbooks, or in the thoughts of academics. Orkney’s history and heritage is everywhere – an intricate tapestry of events stitched into the very fabric of the islands themselves. The past is alive and remains part of everyday life, albeit unconsciously.
Five thousand years ago the prehistoric people of the Orkney Islands began constructing some extraordinary monuments out of stone. These monuments are found in many different forms; houses, cairns/tombs, stone circles, and some that we do not understand. Within Orkney there seems to be a series of important domestic and ritual monuments, lying close together and only a ten minute drive from our campus; named The Heart of Neolithic Orkney. These monuments lie in a wider archaeological landscape rich with remains from both the Neolithic and many later periods of Orcadian history. Individually, the sites are masterpieces of Neolithic landscapes in Western Europe, and give us exceptional insights into the society, skills and spiritual beliefs of the people who constructed them. In 1999, this area of the Orkney Mainland was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although many sites are found within the area, the name is given to only four sites, detailed over the following pages. For more information visit the Historic Environment Scotland website.

SKARA BRAE
A Neolithic domestic settlement that lies near the white sand beach of the Bay of Skaiill.
Skara Brae is one of the best preserved groups of prehistoric houses in Western Europe. This remarkable monument was uncovered by a great storm that battered Orkney in 1850, and gives an insight into life around 5,000 years ago. Complete with a replica house to fully understand the interior of a prehistoric house, and a timeline through history to give you an idea of how long ago the site was used, this is a location not to be missed!

MAESHOWE
A unique prehistoric chambered cairn (also called a tomb).
Although it appears as merely a large grassy mound, this burial monument is thought to date back to 2700BC, and is one of the largest and most impressive of Orkney’s many chambered cairns.

"London may be the cultural hub of Britain today, but 5,000 years ago, Orkney was the centre for innovation for the British Isles. Ideas spread from this place. The first grooved pottery, which is so distinctive of the era, was made here, for example, and the first henges – stone rings with ditches around them – were erected in Orkney. Then the ideas spread to the rest of Neolithic Britain. This was the font for new thinking at the time.”
- Nick Card,
Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology

The sunset walking to Warbeth beach, Stromness © Cat Morrison
Skara Brae © PJ Dewar
Maeshowe © Undiscovered Scotland
THE RING OF BRODGAR
A great stone circle 130 metres across. Surrounded by a rock cut ditch, the Ring of Brodgar is set in a spectacular natural amphitheatre of lochs and hills, and is larger than Stonehenge.

The Ring of Brodgar is probably the most iconic site that has come to represent Orkney’s ancient heritage. Because the interior of the Ring of Brodgar has never fully been excavated, or scientifically dated, the monument’s actual age remains uncertain. However, it is generally assumed to have been formed between 2500BC and 2000BD. Today, 27 stones remain (including one that shattered after being struck by lightning).

THE STANDING STONES OF STENNESS
One of the earliest stone circles in Britain, with radiocarbon dating suggesting that the site dates back to 3100BC.

Standing at a maximum height of six metres, the sheer size of the stones located on the shores of the Loch of Stenness dominate the landscape making them visible for miles around. Only four of the stones remain in the ring that is located only a mile away from the Ring of Brodgar, but these are much larger.

© The Guardian images found here
THE NESS OF BRODGAR
Sitting between the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness, lies “a Neolithic temple complex that is without parallel in Western Europe” [Nick Card Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology]. More than a dozen large temples have been discovered, linked to outhouses and kitchens by carefully constructed stone pavements. Thought to be the most important construction on the islands, this site is in the early stages of excavation with only 10% being fully excavated so far, and more discoveries happen every summer during annual excavations. The Ness of Brodgar is thought to be over 5,000 years old.

OTHER NEOLITHIC SITES
There are many other Neolithic sites, especially standing stones, scattered throughout all of the Orkney Islands. Many have fascinating stories attached to them, and it’s not unusual for our staff members to pass on their knowledge of these places over a coffee break.

For more information on the Neolithic history of Orkney, visit the Historic Environment Scotland website.
World War I

Scapa Flow is a body of water about 120 square miles in area, with an average depth of 30-40 metres, encircled by the Orkney Mainland and South Isles. Due to the sheltered nature of the harbour, with easy access to both the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, it has often been used as a safe anchorage, but it wasn’t until the early 1800s that the Admiralty first took an interest in Scapa Flow. In World War I coastal defence batteries were built and boom defences, including anti-submarine nets, were stretched over the entrances to prevent enemy vessels from entering Scapa Flow. Old merchant ships were also sunk as blockships to prevent access through the channels. Our campus looks directly at this historic and famous bit of water.

THE WRECKS OF SCAPA FLOW

After the end of World War I, Germany had to surrender most of its Navy fleet, totalling 74 ships. On 21st June 1919, under the mistaken belief that peace talks had failed and the British intended to seize the fleet, Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter gave the command to destroy the entire fleet within Scapa Flow. A total of 52 ships went to the seafloor, and this remains the greatest loss of shipping ever recorded in a single day.

The majority of these ships have been raised thanks to one of the largest ever salvage operations in history. Only seven of the 52 ships remain in the Scapa Flow, and now these contribute to make Scapa Flow one of the world’s top diving destinations. For more information visit Scapa Flow Wrecks.
KITCHENER MEMORIAL

On the 5th June, 1916, in the aftermath of the Battle of Jutland, the Minister of War (Lord Kitchener) visited the Grand Fleet in Scapa Flow on his way to Russia for a goodwill visit. He never made it to Russia. Kitchener’s ship (the HMS Hampshire) was struck by a sea-mine and was sunk in twenty minutes, with a loss of 737 men including Lord Kitchener. Only 12 of the company survived.

There is some rumour surrounding the events on this day, with suggestions that the HMS Hampshire never struck a mine laid by a German submarine, but that it was an I.R.A. assassination, and that locals were stopped from trying to help anyone survive. There is also some tales stating Kitchener never really died on board the ship. For more information, including several conspiracy theories, see HMS Hampshire.

In 1926, a tower was built on Marwick Head on the Orkney Mainland, in honour of the lives lost by the sinking of the HMS Hampshire. This tower sits high above the cliffs, closest to where the cruiser was sunk, and in 2016, 100 years after the sinking of HMS Hampshire, a commemorative wall was added with the names of all 737 men that lost their lives.

The Kitchener Memorial at Marwick Head, with the Brough of Birsay in the distance © Cat Morrison
Inset: Kitchener was the face of the most famous war poster ever produced

Inset: BRITONS YOU WANT GOD SAVE THE KING
Reproduced by permission of LONDON EDITIONS
World War II

The Orkney Islands has a vast History revolving around World War II. The visual remains of war can still be seen across the islands, with aerodromes, coast batteries, wrecks and Nissan huts.

The culture of Orkney was also affected by war, not least the writings of some Orcadians. These few pages look at some of the more substantial remains of World War II.

CHURCHILL BARRIERS

A series of four causeways linking islands to the Orkney Mainland, built in the 1940s as naval defences.

These barriers were originally built to protect the anchorage at Scapa Flow, after a Royal Navy battleship (HMS Royal Oak) was sunk in a night-time attack by a German U-boat, just one month after the start of World War II. Some of the defences from World War I were still in place to stop an attack (sunken block ships, booms and anti-submarine nets) but the U-boat manoeuvred around these. Winston Churchill then ordered the construction of several permanent barriers to prevent future attacks.

These barriers took over four years to build (May 1940 to September 1944), but were not officially opened until 12th May 1945, four days after the end of World War II in Europe.

Nowadays, the barriers are used as roads to access South Ronaldsay and Burray, as well as the smaller islands of Lamb Holm and Glimps Holm. The sunken block ships originally used as protection (before the barriers) can still be seen today, even at high-tide when driving across the barriers. The barriers are closed to vehicles in the harshest of weather as the waves crash over them, and it’s a great topic among the locals to see how bad the weather really is – so you have to be careful not to get stuck one side!
THE ITALIAN CHAPEL

A unique chapel made by Italian prisoners of war, and a very popular tourist destination.

Much of the work on the construction of the Churchill Barriers was carried out by over 1,300 Italian prisoners of war (POW) who had been captured in the desert war in North Africa and transported to Orkney from 1942. The POWs were accommodated in three camps, and one of these camps built the ornate Italian Chapel from the limited materials available to them. The chapel still stands today after periods of restoration, and is constructed from two Nissen huts joined end-to-end. The chapel was beautifully designed and painted by Domenico Chiocchetti, who even stayed on after the end of the War to finish it, and came back to help the local Orcadians restore the artwork.
Traditions of Orkney

THE BA’

Below is an excerpt from American author John Fox’s book, ‘The Ball, Discovering the Object of the Game’. For more information and a further extract see The Cauldron website.

[In Kirkwall], men still gather in cobblestone streets on the coldest, darkest days of winter to play football the old-fashioned way: two large mobs, one cork-stuffed ball, no rules, and nearly four centuries of grudges to keep things interesting. Here they don’t play games. They play the Kirkwall Ba’.

The Ba’ is a rite that for just two days each year, Christmas and New Year’s Day, cleaves the friendly, picturesque port town of Kirkwall down its middle – quite literally – pitting friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor, even family members against each other. Simple to describe, but confounding to understand, the ba’ is a traditional folk football game in which two “teams” of up to 100-plus men each, compete over a homemade ball – also called the ba’ – and attempt to claim it for their side, and for posterity.

The sides, known as the Uppies and the Doonies, represent an ancient, almost tribal, division of the town: the upper inland half and the lower (“downward”, as they say) portside half. Once the ball is thrown up in the town center to the pack of players, the goal of the Uppies is to move it several blocks up the street and touch it to the wall at Mackinson’s Corner. The Doonies, in turn, must take the ball down-street to the port and submerge it in the bay. There are blessed few restrictions on how the ba’ might reach either fate.

“It was irrational, utterly pointless, and absolutely thrilling.”
The wedding blackening

Below is an excerpt from The Orkneyjar website:

There still exists within the islands a pre-wedding tradition simply referred to as “the Blackening”.

The Blackening is a fairly rough ceremony in which the groom-to-be is waylaid by his friends. He is stripped (winter and summer!), bound and “blackened” using a messy mixture that usually contains treacle, flour and feathers. The unfortunate groom is then paraded around on the back of a truck, while his comrades make as much noise as possible by blowing whistles, shouting, beating sticks, banging drums and generally creating a din with anything they can lay their hands on.

The parade through the streets can last a few hours and it is not uncommon for the party to end up in the sea.

The sight of a blackening in full swing is usually something that causes visitors to raise a quizzical eyebrow. The tradition is described in recent years by the Sheriff as an “accepted breach of the peace.”

Although once reserved for the groom alone, recent years have seen an increase in the number of Blackenings in which the bride-to-be has fallen victim to the custom.

For more information see The Orkneyjar website.
STROMNESS SHOPPING WEEK

Stromness Shopping Week is the longest running festival in Orkney. Started in 1949, it was designed to attract shoppers to Stromness. Taking place over a week in summer, the Stromness Shopping Week brings the whole community together with an event packed week catering for all different personalities, ensuring that everyone will have fun. There are outdoor bands at the Pierhead, a Queen is elected from the local school, a parade, Vikings, fireworks, a 10k race, drinking games, a raft race, and a circus... the list goes on! This is one week not to be missed.

For more information visit the Stromness Shopping Week website.
The natives of Orkney are referred to as “Orcadians”, and although we could attempt to describe some of the characteristics of a normal Orcadian, we thought we’d let others do the talking...

“What are the characteristics of the Orcadian? We are basically survivors. In spite of having to exist and thrive on an economy based on agriculture in a climate that is far from conducive to it we are still here. Bullied, moulded, perhaps even coaxed into being what we are; we have stood the test of time, bent but not broken. Recognised for the warmth of our welcome, yet understandably wary of incomers; inclined to be a bit of a plodder, patient, dogged, easy to provoke, slow to react, Orcadians are complex characters. The more you try to analyse, the deeper you try to diagnose, the less sure you are of what you have found. An Orcadian is an Orcadian.”
- David Tinch, “Shoal and Sheaf”

There are many notable characters that have a strong link to Orkney, and the next few pages will look at three of these; Dr. John Rae, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and George Mackay Brown
Some of the bodies had been buried (probably those of the first victims of famine); some were in a tent or tents; others under the boat, which had been turned over to form a shelter, and several lay scattered about in different directions… From the mutilated state of many of the bodies and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched Countrymen had been drive to the last dread alternative – cannibalism – as a means of prolonging existence.”

Dr. John Rae

JOHN RAE

John Rae was born in 1813 at the Hall of Clestrain, visible across the bay from our campus, and he is undoubtedly one of Orkney’s greatest unsung heroes. A surgeon by trade, Rae went on to become a famous explorer discovering the final portion of the Northwest Passage (the Rae Strait is named after him). Rae also discovered and reported on the ill-fated ending of the Franklin Expedition.

THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION

Led by Sir John Franklin, an expedition made up of two ships, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, and 134 men, had disappeared after leaving England in 1845 to search for the fabled Northwest Passage (a navigable Arctic route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific). The failure of the expedition to return resulted in one of the largest, most expensive searches ever mounted. Rae was second-in-command for two missions launched to locate the missing sailors. Throughout these searches he charted the unknown territories of the north Canadian coast which led to him proving the existence of the Northwest Passage, something Franklin had failed to do.

In 1854 Rae learned from the Inuit that the Franklin expedition had ended in disaster when their ships had been crushed by ice, and the last survivors were forced to resort to cannibalism.

THE AFTERMATH

However, Rae never visited the site himself and this “failure” to visit the site led to Rae receiving considerable criticism after his report was published – the doctor was condemned in the eyes of Victorian England. How dare this man, who dresses and mingled with the Canadian natives, suggest that men of the Royal Navy indulged in cannibalism? And more to the point, imagine accepting the word of the natives without verifying it! The main criticism came from Lady Jane Franklin, Franklin’s wife, and Charles Dicken, who both wanted to glorify the memory of Franklin as the man who found the Northwest Passage. According to Dickens, it was unthinkable that the English Navy “would or could in any extremity of hunger, alleviate that pains of starvation by this horrible means”. But Rae refused to back down, stating that he had reported the fate of the Franklin Expedition accurately. The truth was only revealed when an expedition sent by Lady Franklin found a small cairn containing skeletons of the men that confirmed they had resorted to cannibalism.

However, after the controversy all of Rae’s exploits and achievements were ignored and Dr. John Rae began to slip from the pages of the history books. He was the only major explorer of his time not to receive a knighthood, and no recognition was made on his success of discovering the Northwest Passage. Rae died, aged 79, and his body was brought home to Kirkwall where he was buried in St. Magnus Cathedral. A memorial of him has since been placed inside the cathedral, dressed in Arctic gear with a gun by his side, and in 2013 another statue was unveiled at the Stromness Pierhead. More recently, many people, including the Orkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael, the John Rae Society and many Orcadians are searching for greater public recognition of Rae and all he achieved.
Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, or “Max” as he liked to be called, was an English composer and conductor who moved to Orkney in 1971. He initially lived on the island of Hoy, before moving to the different island of Sanday, and the sea and landscape had a profound effect on his music. Max’s compositions were often thought to shock and outrage audiences, especially in the 1960s due to its unorthodox nature, but in 2004 he was appointed Master of the Queen’s Music. His life was often as controversial as his music; he was openly spoken about many topics including religion and politics, and was a fierce environmentalist. He lived for 10 years on Hoy without electricity, and wrote The Yellow Cake Revue in protest of plans to mine uranium in Stromness. More information on Sir Peter Maxwell Davies here.

Considered one of the great Scottish poets of the 20th century, George Mackay Brown was born and grew up in Stromness, Orkney, and lived the majority of his life here. His life was one of poverty, recurrent illness, drinking and anxiety. He regularly wrote pieces for the Orkney Herald as the Stromness Correspondent, reporting events such as the switching on of the electricity grid in 1947. He produced many different poems and stories throughout his life, gaining most of his inspiration from the islands, with Seamus Heaney proclaiming that he passed everything he wrote “through the eye of the needle of Orkney”. More information on George Mackay Brown here.

“The imagination is not an escape, but a return to the richness of our true selves; a return to reality.”

- George Mackay Brown
Given everything already mentioned in this booklet, it is no surprise that the dreamlike landscape of Orkney with standing stones, ancient ruins, burial mounds and spectacular scenery constantly struggling against the raging sea has led to such a rich and varied folklore history. Given that Orkney is an island community, it will come as no surprise that the sea features so heavily in the legends. The sea provided storytellers with an ever-present, but unknown, realm. Below you will find short examples of creatures or stories in the islands folklore – for more information on these stories visit the Orkneyjar website or email us for book recommendations!

**SELKIES**

It is thought that seals, called selkies in Orkney, had the power to cast off their sealskins and take human form during certain times of the tide. Once in human form, the selkie would dance on lonely stretches of moonlit shore, or bask in the sun on outlying skerries.

There were two different stories about how selkie folk came into being. One was that they were angels that had been cast out of heaven for some unknown offence. The crime was not so bad as to see them being sent to hell, but they were forced to live as seals in the sea. The other version is that they were the souls of people who had drowned. Some said that it was only suicides who turned into seals.

When in human form, the selkie-folk were thought to be very lovely looking, and there were tales of many encounters with humans, although these rarely ended well. For more information see here.

“As soon as the seal was clear of the water, it reared up and its skin slipped down to the sand. What had been a seal was a white-skinned boy.”

- George Mackay Brown

**FINFOLK**

There was a race of men who lived under the sea called the Fin Folk. The men had dark complexions and wore fins that were wrapped around the body to look like clothes. The fins were also concealed by the Fin Folk’s magic, for they were powerful sorcerers. They travelled about in boats which they propelled with oars, never a sail. With the power of their magic they could travel from Orkney to Norway or Iceland with just seven stroke of the oars.

The Fin Folk used the fishing grounds around Orkney. If a human trespassed on one of these grounds he was liable to attract the wrath of the Fins. The unsuspecting fisherman could have his boat attacked during the night, a small hole being made where it would not be seen until it was too late. Oars may also have been broken and fishing gear destroyed. To safeguard against attack the fisherman could paint a cross on the side of the boat. The heathen Fins were afraid of this, and would not go near it.

Fin Folk were very fond of human women, and there were many tales of young girls being carried off from the shore by them.

Stories were often told around a peat fire. Image found here.
TROWS
A trow (pronounced “cow”) is probably the best known element of Orkney folklore. They are said to be ugly, mischievous, little creatures that live in ancient mounds scattered across Orkney. It is a well-known fact that the trows of the Northern Isles were passionately addicted to music, particularly fiddle music. So much so, that they took great delight in luring mortal fiddlers into their mounds and making them play. To the poor unsuspecting fiddler, only one night passed whilst he was playing music, but when he emerged more than a year had often gone passed. There are even stories of 50 years passing, and the fiddler returning to no one that he knew. To those that the trows favoured, particularly good musicians, a reward would often be given. One story tells of a fiddler who pleased the trows so much that when he finally left their home after a long musical session, he was informed that he would never again lack money. Thereafter, whenever he needed money he simply put his hand into his pocket and there was always cash there.

“...in Scotland, when people congregate, they tend to argue and discuss and reason; in Orkney, they tell stories.”
- George Mackay Brown

MERMAIDS AND FIN WIVES
The Fin Folk’s women were mermaids, the most beautiful creatures to live on land or in the sea. The typical mermaid of folk tales has a fish’s tail, but the Orkney variety were said to be different. If a mermaid gripped the bow of a boat and asked the state of the tide, a wrong answer had to be given. If the man gave her the correct answer she then had power over him, and could pull him and his boat under the sea. Mermaids were also fond of getting a human husband, and with good reason. If they married a Fin man they were doomed to lose their beauty, becoming old and haggard. But if they married a human, they could keep their dazzling looks forever.

If a mermaid married a Fin and lost her beautiful looks, she was known as a Fin wife. Many of these old women went to live on land and acted as witches. They sold good winds to sailors, and sent the money home to their Fin husband.

THE ORIGINS OF THE RING OF BRODGAR
One dark, starry night, a very long time ago, a group of fearsome giants crossed the causeway on to the Ness of Brodgar. Once across, they gathered in a field that had the Stenness Loch to its left and the Harray Loch to the right. There, they decided to dance. From the folds of his cloak the fiddler took out an ancient fiddle and began a swirling reel. Upon hearing the music, his companions joined hands then, whooping and shouting like fools, formed a circle and danced. The ground beneath their feet fairly trembled as the colossal dancers whirled round and round, faster and faster.

So great was their enjoyment of the dance that they forgot to pay attention to the eastern horizon and lost all thought as to how quickly the night was passing. Then, before they knew it, the morning sun crept into the sky behind them and with a shriek and a moan, the newborn rays of light touched the dancing giants. No sooner had the golden light touched their skin than they turned into cold, hard stone... And there they remain.

To this day, visitors to the Ness of Brodgar can see their gigantic petrified bodies, frozen rigid in the circle in which they danced. A short way away from the ring of giants stands all that remains of the fiddler – the solitary stone now known as the Comet Stone.
The Weather of Orkney

Alright, so pretty much every photo you have seen in this booklet is of bright sunshine and brilliant views. When the sun is shining in Orkney, it really is spectacular, but how often does that happen? Orkney's temperate, but wet, climate is heavily influenced by the sea, in particular the Gulf Stream – a warm, surface ocean current from the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf Stream flows north-east across the Atlantic Ocean and brings with it the humid air that makes Orkney's climate much milder than other areas on the same latitude. Thanks to the Gulf Stream there is less than a 10°C difference between the average summer and winter temperatures, leading to milder winters without much snow, and cooler summers.

The weather in Orkney is not to everyone's taste, but it is somewhat magical. It's not unusual for weather from all four seasons to be experienced within one day. You will find that many people who have been to Orkney often refer to the light of the place – whatever the weather, there is often something special about even the faintest sunshine on the land – and it is every photographers dream with such a changing landscape! There is an old saying that is often referred to on the islands; “if you don’t like the weather wait 5 minutes” – it really is that changeable!

WIND

Now, why Magnus Spence may have believed Orkney to be the windiest place in Britain, this is not actually the case (it's third in the UK). However, the wind is a prominent feature in Orkney and to a visitor it is probably the most commented aspect of the islands' weather. Even in summer there is an almost constant breeze (which you should be thankful for if you have ever encountered an insect called a midge (a tiny, biting insect that swarms around you). Without this breeze it would be impossible to be outside without ingesting some extra protein in the form of these small insects.

Strong winds are common for Orkney however, and as a result of this the islands are virtually treeless, with the winds being too strong to allow much to grow to any great height. Orcadians actually have 14 words for wind, that's how much of a prominent feature it is!

RAIN

Although we see little snow, an Orkney winter is generally very wet (often so is an Orkney summer) – a combination of the low level of the land and the warming effect of the surrounding sea. So bring your waterproofs... All of them.

FOG AND MIST

Fog and sea-haar are perhaps the most frustrating aspect of Orkney's weather. Haar – a damp fog from the sea – is common all year round, but generally more so in the warmer months when there is a lack of wind to clear the air. The eastern coasts are more prone to fog than the west – in these cases it is possible for the West Mainland to be basking in sunshine while the East is blanketed in a thick grey blanket of fog, but don’t worry, Stromness is on the West!

SEASONS

Orkney summers are long, with almost continual daylight. For example, in June the sun is above the horizon for over 18 hours, and even when it sets there is no true darkness, instead more of an extended twilight. This is in stark contrast to the long, dark winter months when the sun rises after 9am and begins to set around 3pm. Depending on cloud cover it can even feel like the sun never rises at all. These extreme differences are due to the high latitude of Orkney (at 59° North).

Depending on what you are used to, this can be an incredibly new and challenging thing to experience, but many students have commented on what a unique experience it is. Many even feel like their body has taken them into hibernation-mode so that you look forward to evenings spent at home, in front of the fire with a movie on.

The rain approaching across Scapa Flow
© Cat Morrison

“[Orkney’s] one outstanding characteristic is wind. No other region in Great Britain can compare with it for the violence and frequency of its winds.”
- Magnus Spence, “The Climate of Orkney” 1908

“These tree-less islands set
Where the wild-good flies,
Lest men should e’er forget
The sea and the skies.”
- Robert Rendall
There is no shortage of wildlife on the Orkney Islands. Towering cliffs are home to over a million seabirds, including puffins, owls and sea eagles, and the waters are home to a variety of marine mammals, including seals, dolphins and killer wales. North Ronaldsay has some famous seaweed-eating sheep, and the island of Hoy is even home to the tallest vertical cliffs in Britain standing at 335m!

On these pages you’ll find photos of interest, but for more information about the wildlife of Orkney, visit www.orkney.com/about/nature
Why study in Orkney?

So far this booklet has shown you points of interest about Orkney, but what is it like to be a student here? You might think that, because Orkney is a set of small islands in the middle of nowhere, that there isn’t a lot to do up here… you’d be very wrong! Orcadians are renowned for their warm hospitality and students are welcomed to join and become involved in many of the clubs and activities available throughout Orkney from football, rugby, badminton, golf, fishing, volleyball, scuba diving and swimming to traditional music clubs and cultural festivals to name a few – you will always be able to find something to do! The £15 million Pickaquoy Centre in Kirkwall is a first class sports, arts, conference and social facility, offering a range of activities from a fully-equipped gym, a climbing wall, a cinema, a swimming pool… the list goes on!

Here at ICIT, we’re confident about the teaching we provide, and the location we provide it in – that’s why over the next few pages we will let our students tell you themselves what they think of studying up here, and why you should consider it too!

“Great course, great people, great place.”

“One of the best and most memorable years so far, and I will always miss it.”

“...one of the best decisions I have ever made...”

“...you very quickly feel part of the community...”

“...we became part of the renewable world from island touchdown.”

“...an enchanting place to live...”

“...living in Orkney was fantastic...”

“The course itself was terrific and the people even better.”

“I loved every minute of being on that island.”

“You get the global benefit of studying with Heriot-Watt University, but the community feel of studying in a small campus – it’s the best of both worlds!”

“...first class educational facility...”

“The course encouraged involvement with local communities enabling a full and practical understanding of the importance and place of local marine issues in national and international marine context. A tremendous experience and one not to be missed.”

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MATHILDE HENRI

Mathilde joined us as part of a Masters in Geology in France. By completing the Masters and carrying out an internship here, it means she will end up with an MSc in Geology Engineering and an MSc in Renewable Energy Development (graduating November 2015). Here’s what she had to say about the course and Orkney...

Why did you choose to come to Orkney?
I have been in love with Scotland since I was young and I had the opportunity in my French Engineering School to study abroad for a year so I thought I should take it. Apart from that, I have always been concerned about the environment and interested in renewable energies, which is why I chose to come to Orkney to learn more about it. Actually, if I had stayed in France I would have specialised in Oil & Gas—so this was a life changing decision!

What do you enjoy most about Orkney?
The pub! No, I’m joking (partially). I really enjoyed several things about Orkney that I will really miss when I leave—the landscapes; being able to see the sea and seals every day; the fresh air; the relaxed and quiet atmosphere; the social life that allows you to meet lots of different people. Also, I love that the weather is so changeable - every 10 minutes can be a different season! Everyone becomes so happy when there is even a bit of sunshine.

What was your learning experience like at ICIT?
Amazing! It was far better than I could have imagined! First of all, the staff are great and available to help whenever needed. This makes it a very nice environment to study in. The facilities are good and the fact that the classes are quite small is enjoyable and helps to create bonds with everyone on the course.

The website said that the courses are ‘intense’, but as I had been through hellish French preparation schools in the French system it didn’t feel too bad for me. We had lectures until 1pm at the most (which was great as it allowed us lots of time in the afternoon). We did have a few weeks when we had several deadlines very close together, but it wasn’t anything unmanageable or insane. On the whole, it was quite relaxed and enriching.

The Masters course that I completed (RED) is quite universal, which is good because the lectures are understandable for everyone with any kind of background, but at the same time, it often felt like we didn’t really go into too much depth for each subject. Still, I feel that I learnt a variety of useful things which now enable me to do jobs I would have not considered before.

What clubs or activities did you take part in whilst in Orkney?
A lot! Sports-wise I joined the racketball and karate clubs in Kirkwall, I played squash with the other students every week in Stromness, I cycled (when the weather allowed!), and I played volleyball in both Kirkwall and Stromness. There are also a lot of festivals throughout the year and we went to all of them, I also volunteered in the Folk Festival which was a great opportunity to meet new people and watch the concerts for free! Some of the students also set up weekly music nights where we could get together and play.

We did a lot of things together as students; we went for walks, on adventures (seeing all the sights of Orkney!) and we often went out looking for the Northern Lights. We also actively contributed to the local economy by going to the pub several times a week—I think the locals appreciated that!

Would you recommend Orkney to other students?
I would definitely recommend coming to Orkney! But only to those that are motivated enough and do not mind rough weather. There are so many good sides to Orkney that it compensates for the bad weather, but I can understand that for someone that isn’t that motivated, or is not keen on socialising or joining clubs would feel depressed. And there is no point in that! Orkney should be a place that you enjoy, not endure.

Studying in ICIT makes you close to the companies working in renewables and consultancy; as close as you could be! Coming to Orkney and ICIT was perfect for me because it happened at a time in my life when I really needed to get away from my previous environment and do something completely different. I met so many great people and had such a good time that I can easily say that it is the best choice I could have made. I do not regret it one bit and will always look back on it with a smile on my face!

Mathilde loved Orkney so much that she, like many of our other students, stayed on a got a job here. She now works for Aquatera Ltd., a renewables consultancy firm, based right next to our campus.
Kate completed a Masters in Marine Resource Management with us in 2010/2011. Here’s what she had to say about the course and Orkney...

“Choosing to do my Masters degree at ICIT is one of the best decisions I have ever made, not only is Orkney a fantastic place to live but the Old Academy gives you all the facilities that you would want from a university, with the added bonus of all being under the same roof. And I think it would be hard to find a University with a better view from its classroom windows! The course can be intensive but I think that is good as it pushes you to work hard and get the most out of the course material.

One of the best things about Orkney is that you very quickly feel part of the community and that you have lived here all your life. There is so much to see and do with various music festivals throughout the year and as much historic culture that anyone could ever ask for. The nightlife in Orkney is good fun and you very quickly fall into a routine of doing the “rounds” of all of the pubs in Stromness. My fellow class mates and I were a regular feature in the pubs and had some amazing times playing pool and finding random songs to play on the jukebox.

I am still living in Orkney, working with local industries and studying for a PhD at ICIT in fishery management for the brown crab fishery in Orkney. Through working with the fishery I met my husband and we’re very settled living in Stromness. I couldn’t recommend Orkney more!”

Hannah is a current student studying Marine Resource Management. Here’s what she had to say...

“I was originally attracted to Orkney because of the course in Marine Resource Management offered by ICIT. The more I read about the place the more I knew I wanted to come and stay here.

I really love both studying and living in Orkney because of the atmosphere. Whether it be in the university or on the street, everyone is so friendly and happy to talk. ICIT is really nice because it is such a small size, and you don’t feel lost or alone like you would in bigger classes. As a result, I feel like I am learning a lot more, as I am more engaged in my subjects, and the lecturers are all really passionate about what they teach.

I love living in Orkney because it is such a beautiful place, and the locals are all so wonderful and interesting. It’s great being able to look out the window and see a snow-covered Hoy, the northern lights, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets.

ICIT is a great place to study. All the lecturers are so enthusiastic about their subjects and ready to help you with any area you don’t understand. All the other students are so friendly as well, and we often go out on walks together, or have dinner parties together. There is a real sense of community.

There are also so many things to do in Orkney. At the moment I play women’s football, but I also enjoy going for long walks, as well as painting and drawing. When it becomes a bit warmer I would like to begin snorkelling and maybe kayaking.

I would definitely recommend Orkney to other students. It is a great place to live and to study, and was definitely the best decision I have made!”

The changing light of Orkney  
© Cat Morrison
The landscape, getting outdoors, the openness of people and the ability to make new friends more quickly than in a city are some of the things I most enjoy about Orkney. I visited Flotta Oil Terminal on several occasions in a previous job without ever getting the chance to visit the Orkney mainland and had wanted to come back ever since. I have also been diving for the first time and have almost overcome my irrational phobia of crustaceans.

A Master’s degree at ICIT is quite intense – with lectures, assignments and revision occupying a fair amount of time – but there is also space to meet other people from the Renewables industry, and pack in some highly valuable social time. I would definitely recommend Orkney to other students, although there’s a definite change in pace if someone is coming from the city.”

"I chose to study in Orkney because I wanted somewhere new and different, with a more personal touch than a “conventional” university and close to the Renewable Energy industry, and to be close to the sea.

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"I quickly realised that Orkney was certainly one of the best places to study renewable energies. To me, the Orkney campus gathers the optimal conditions to ensure the students succeed. The staff/students relationships are just amazing! From the first day, students are so close to the staff (lecturers, researchers and administration) that it creates a familiar and friendly atmosphere, ideal to bringing confidence, comfort and good working conditions to the students. The lectures provide a high-standard of knowledge about every aspect of renewables.

However, in spite of all these great studying aspects, for me, the greatest thing of Orkney is the closeness with industries, involved in the renewables sector and especially in marine renewable energies, and the ease to get in touch with them. Indeed, being a developed wave and tidal testing site thanks to EMEC, the Orkney campus is literally encompassed by companies. Then, either professionally, through field trips organised by the university or conferences organised by industries, or extra-professionally, through sport for example, it is really easy and quick to get professional relationships and build a strong network in the renewables sector. Thanks to that, I managed to do my dissertation project in collaboration with Scotrenewables Tidal Power Limited, a local tidal turbine developer, for whom I have now been working for some years.”

- Axel Bondoux, MSc RED Graduate 2012/2013

"After having lived in Edinburgh for five years coming to study in Orkney was a huge change, but for the better! Heriot-Watt Orkney Campus is unique in its integration with industry. While studying here I got to talk to many people from local and international renewable businesses and find out up to date information on the marine renewables sector, which people studying elsewhere would not have a chance to find out. Looking out of the Campus windows you can see renewable energy devices being towed between port and test sites, so even looking out of a window day dreaming can turn into an educational experience!

Orkney is a great place to study and live. There is so much to do and see in such a small geographical area. There is a wide variety of local sports and recreational clubs so whether it is hockey or knitting you enjoy there is something for everyone to enjoy. Being here throughout the year as well means that some of the archaeological tourist sites open for free/reduced rates in the winter and they are quiet too! I saw the aurora borealis for the first time whilst studying here purely by chance which was amazing.

I secured a job whilst working on my dissertation and started immediately after handing in my dissertation. I wouldn’t have secured a job this quickly without the connections I made here whilst studying!”

- Hermione Wood, MSc MRE Graduate 2012/2013
Distance learning is a way of studying remotely from your home, without having to be in regular face-to-face lecture.

This map demonstrates the international reach of our campus, proving that although we may be a small campus, we have students experiencing the same course all over the world. The red circles represent where we have or have had students studying in Distance Learning format, and the blue circles are where students that have studied on-campus have come from. Each year of students tends to have an international reach, and it is not uncommon to have ‘culture nights’ to learn about the different culture from other students.
Our Courses

We offer four postgraduate, taught MSc programmes:

- MSc Renewable Energy Development (RED)
- MSc Marine Renewable Energy (MRE)
- MSc Marine Resource Management (MRM)
- MSc Marine Planning for Sustainable Development (MPSD)

We also offer the MSc RED and MSc MRE programmes through distance learning.

MSc RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (RED)

This programme provides students with an understanding on the socio-economic, technological and environmental drivers, which are dictating development in the renewables sector. The renewables industry is in a dynamic stage of growth and current technologies are in various stages of development. These developments alongside government support, provide a market push to transform current energy systems and our relationship with energy use. The RED programme prepares students, from a variety of backgrounds, for new career opportunities in specialist engineering, project management, planning, finance and environmental consulting careers.

This is a 12 month Full-Time MSc degree course, with an option of a Part-Time learning structure, or Distance Learning. It involves studying 8 taught courses, and is completed with a research dissertation equivalent to 4 taught courses.

Taught modules:
- Energy in the 21st Century
- Economics of Renewable Energy
- Environmental Policy & Risk
- Environmental Processes
- Renewable Technologies I: Generation
- Renewable Technologies II: Integration
- Development Appraisal
- Development Project

For more information please visit http://www.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/renewable-energy-development-red.htm?programme=242

MSc MARINE RENEWABLE ENERGY (MRE)

This programme encompasses offshore wind, wave and tidal energy resource and technologies. Internationally, marine energy will play an important part in the renewable energy mix. Offshore wind is now a commercial reality and the next frontier is wave and tidal power. ICIT is located where wave and tidal developers are testing their generators at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), the internationally acknowledged leading test and certification centre.

The marine renewables industry is in need of a wide range of professionals working in fields such as engineering, finance, planning and environmental monitoring. With Orkney’s unique geographic concentration of tidal and wave energy resources, expertise and activity, our Orkney Campus is ‘A Living Laboratory’ for study in marine renewable energy.

This is a 12 month Full-Time MSc degree course, with an option of a Part-Time learning structure, or Distance Learning. It involves studying 8 taught courses, and is completed with a research dissertation equivalent to 4 taught courses.

Taught modules:
- Energy in the 21st Century
- Economics of Renewable Energy
- Environmental Policy & Risk
- Oceanography & Marine Ecology
- Marine Renewable Technologies
- Renewable Technology: Integration
- Development Appraisal
- Development Project

For more information please visit https://www.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/marine-renewable-energy.htm

All of our On-Campus MSc programmes involve some aspect of field work, practicals or Laboratory training, and all programmes take part in a tour of Orkney and its relevant industries at the beginning of Semester One.

Classes are often taught in the morning (9.30am until lunchtime, with regular tea/coffee breaks), leaving the afternoon free for students to explore Orkney and/or focus on their studies.

Many of the modules have exams associated with them, and in Semester One these are sat before the Christmas Break, and in Semester Two in May. The summer is for completing a research dissertation on a topic of the students choosing.
MSc MARINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (MRM)

As man increases his demand upon the oceans, their sustainable development will depend on a rational management strategy for the total resource. The professional working in the marine environment is constantly required to be multidisciplinary, and able to appreciate the conflicts that arise between conservation and development. The MRM programme considers the sustainable development, use, conservation and management of marine resources.

Orkney is at the heart of marine resources that support whole communities and beyond. This programme has a keen environmental focus. Students evaluate the importance of sustainable development of our oceans, based on relevant management strategies, while minimising environmental impact. Graduates will gain a comprehensive knowledge of the marine and coastal environments and the communities that depend on them. Employment prospects include posts with industry, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, conservation bodies, research institutions and academia.

Core themes studied are:
- Marine environmental systems
- Resource management and conservation
- Valuation and project management

This is a 12 month Full-Time MSc degree course, with an option of Part-Time learning structure. It involves studying 8 taught courses (1 of which is optional), and is completed with a research dissertation equivalent to 4 taught courses.

For more information please visit http://www.postgraduate.hw.ac.uk/prog/msc-marine-resource-management-mrm-

MSc MARINE PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MPSD)

The rapidly increasing ambition for the ‘Blue Economy’ is made real by new technologies giving access to the wealth of resources in the oceans and seas. In addition to traditional fisheries and shipping, the EU ‘Blue Growth Agenda’ anticipates jobs and new economic activity from industries as diverse as oil and gas, renewable energy (wind, wave and tidal), aquaculture, biotechnologies, artificial islands and deep sea mining for minerals. New approaches are needed to govern the interactions among all these activities while maintaining the aspiration for healthy seas and the preservation of ecosystem services. Marine planning is seen internationally as an essential tool in achieving sustainable development at sea but these are early days and it faces numerous challenges to its development. Working with marine planning now, is getting in on the ground floor and helping to write the rules, evaluate the techniques and set the scene for decades to come.

Available at both the Orkney and Edinburgh Campus, The MSc in Marine Planning for Sustainable Development (MPSD) is designed as a multi-disciplinary transition programme that is relevant to students from a wide variety of backgrounds. The taught part of the programme (6 core modules and 2 optional courses) addresses the technical, environmental, economic and legal drivers that are shaping the use and protection of the oceans and seas. An individual research project allows students to specialize in a topic of their choice.

There are six core subject areas:
- Introduction to Marine Spatial Planning
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Environmental Policy & Risk
- Marine Resource Development
- Oceanography & Marine Ecology
- Development Appraisal

Optional courses are:
- Climate Change: Causes & Impacts
- Economics of Renewable Energy
- Climate Change: Mitigation & Adaptation Measures
- Practical Skills in Marine Surveying

For more information please visit www.postgraduate.hw.ac.uk/prog/506/
CONTACT

If there is anything else you would like to know about Orkney or ICIT, please don’t hesitate to get in touch!

ICIT,
The Orkney Campus of Heriot-Watt University,
Back Road,
Stromness,
KW16 3AW,
ORKNEY

Tel: +44 (0) 1856 850605

Email: icit@hw.ac.uk