

QMU hosts Connect 2011

✖ Early career university researchers are being encouraged to share their research findings in a bid to help Scotland and improve society.

The ground-breaking Connect 2011 conference, to be held at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh this week, will encourage academic researchers to realise the social relevance of their work and the positive impact that it can have on people's lives and the wider community.

Guest speakers from the media, industry and science will use the conference as a means of encouraging early career researchers to harness the potential of relevant research and share the practical application for the good of society.

Jessica Moyer, a Queen Margaret University PhD student, said: "Often academics don't shout about their research and fail to realise the thirst, beyond the university, for the results of their studies. The business community, media, policy makers, government organisations and the third sector constantly use research findings to inform decisions. We now need to create more opportunities for academics to share research information with external organisations who can find practical applications for the knowledge we generate."

The conference will bring together PhD students from Queen Margaret University, The University of Edinburgh and the north east of England with experts from the Scottish food industry and commerce as well as new media strategists and social activists.

Professor Alan Gilloran, Vice Principal (Academic) of Queen

Margaret University, said: "QMU is focused on producing relevant research that has a social impact and can improve quality of life. Academic research needs to be more easily accessible to external organisations and individual experts and we need to demonstrate that the economy can benefit from the work that is conducted daily within our universities. This conference is a great way to help early career researchers understand the value of their work and encourage them to share their new knowledge with people and organisations beyond the university."

Queen Margaret University is currently in the process of unlocking the potential of several revolutionary research projects – one is a collaboration with a food technology company which involves refining a cooking method which could transform the food processing industry. Another, is the Dietphone, which uses mobile phone technology to monitor the diets of a much wider section of the population than ever before.

Lishia Erza-Evans, a Queen Margaret University PhD student who is helping to organise this conference, said: "There are gems to be mined within our universities. We now need to provide the tools to enable them to be extracted."

Boris Popov, a PhD student from the world renowned Department of Geography, University of Durham, will be discussing the translation issue of integrating social media technologies for science communication. Dan Heap, a PhD student from University of Edinburgh and Deputy Editor of LabourHame.com – Scotland's fastest growing political blog, will highlight interdisciplinary and policy relevance of the institutionalisation of welfare-to-work regimes for sick and disabled claimants and the Great Recession.

The conference will take place on 24th November 2011 from 8.30am – 5pm.