

Queen Margaret University researching public relations

Academics at a Scottish university are the first to explore how public relations professionals in Scotland got into their profession and how they conduct their daily work.

A pilot study, led by a research team from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh is exploring the professional expertise of public relations professionals in Central Scotland. The research will involve professional PR bodies and a range of both private and public sector PR practitioners.

Jacquie L'Etang, Chair of Public Relations and Applied Communications at Queen Margaret University, explained:- "In recent years the PR profession has experienced significant changes. By working closely with professional bodies, we aim to get a clearer understanding of current working practice in Scotland for the benefit of both academics and the wider PR profession."

The pilot study, which looks at the knowledge base and daily professional practice of PR professionals across Scotland, involves interviews and focus groups with practitioners across Central Scotland, and some from the north of the country. The research team will also offer interventions that may change the way practitioners think about their work and methodologies.

Laura Sutherland, Chair of the Scotland Group of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), explained: "After speaking to Professor L'Etang at Queen Margaret University, we realised that there was no real research into how people got into the profession and indeed the way in which people approach their work. We agreed to contact members and non-members of the CIPR, allowing a better 'cast of the net', to

participate in the study.”

Laura continued: “It is important, as a profession, that there are high standards set across the board, both in terms of employment and every day work. We are delighted to be supporting Queen Margaret University with this pilot study and we hope this research will allow us to understand, to some degree, where people practising PR in Scotland came from, what their work involves and may demonstrate trends that we can use to further advance the profession.”

The QMU research team is currently analysing data and designing interventions that will form the next phase of the project. Early findings from the project will be available in November.