

**PRESS RELEASE – 16th April 2010**

**Gloucestershire Airport-based aircraft monitors ash cloud**



As European airspace grinds to a halt for a second day, one Gloucestershire Airport-based aircraft is very busy. The Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC) Airborne Research & Survey Facility (ARSF), who relocated to the Airport in 2009, is flying its Dornier 228 research aircraft monitoring the Icelandic eruption.

Piloted by Captain Carl Joseph with co-pilot David Davies, the aircraft left for Scotland yesterday and will fly a small research team led by Dr Guy Gratton, Head of the Facility for Airborne Atmospheric Measurements (FAAM), to the edge of the volcanic plume. Using specially adapted research instrumentation, the team will record data relating to the height, density and position of the plume. It is expected that their findings will feed into Met Office dispersion models and forecasts and will aid advice to the airports, as well as improving future forecasts.

Peter Purcell, Head of NERC Airborne Research Facilities, said, 'The Dornier 228 is an extremely adaptable and capable aircraft. The highly professional crew were able to reconfigure the aircraft at very short notice to undertake this mission. The instrumentation will allow the crew to safely monitor the atmospheric conditions as the plume is approached.'

**NERC Press Office**

Natural Environment Research Council  
Polaris House, North Star Avenue  
Swindon, SN2 1EU  
**Tel:** 01793 411727