

# Application Pack for NERC Science Committee Chair

**June 2022**

**Closing date for all applications: 29 July 2022**

**Interviews will take place: 26 September 2022**

**Date of first meeting: 19 & 20 October 2022** (To observe first meeting)

**APPLICATION PACK SCIENCE COMMITTEE**

**APPOINTMENTS**

**CONTENTS**

Page 3 Introduction

Page 4 Role and responsibilities of Science Committee

Page 5 Role and responsibilities of Science Committee Chair

Page 6 Person specification

Page 7 Appointments

Page 7 Meeting arrangements

Page 7 Honorarium

Page 8 How to Apply

Page 9 The Seven Principles of Public Life

# INTRODUCTION

NERC - the Natural Environment Research Council - is the driving force of investment in environmental science in the UK. NERC advances the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs. We do this because understanding our changing planet is vital for our wellbeing and economic prosperity.

We invest public money in world-leading science, designed to help us sustain and benefit from our natural resources, predict and respond to natural hazards and understand environmental change. We work closely with policymakers and industry to make sure our knowledge can support sustainable economic growth and wellbeing in the UK and around the world.

NERC is part of UK Research & Innovation (h[ttps://w](http://www.ukri.org/))ww[.u](http://www.ukri.org/))k[ri.org/),](http://www.ukri.org/)) a body which works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. UKRI aims to maximise the contribution of each of its component parts, working individually and collectively. We work with our many partners to benefit everyone through knowledge, talent and ideas.

We are supported mainly by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), but our activities and funding decisions are independent of government.

For further information on NERC see: [NERC website.](https://nerc.ukri.org/)

# ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NERC SCIENCE COMMITTEE

NERC is looking to appoint a Chair to the NERC Science Committee with expertise as set out in the person specification section.

Science Committee brings broad strategic perspective and expertise to support the development and delivery of the UKRI-NERC strategic priorities, investments, and policies. The Committee will advise the Executive and Council across NERC’s research, innovation, training and national capability portfolio, and will recommend NERC strategic research and innovation investments.

Members sit on the Committee as individuals, rather than representing a particular organisation and will provide advice on:

* How to support an excellent and sustainable UK environmental science community that seizes opportunities, in UKRI and international contexts, to achieve the following goals:
  + to advance the frontiers of knowledge;
  + to address government, UKRI and NERC strategic priorities;
  + to deliver beneficial economic and social impacts.
* Priority areas for future rounds of NERC strategic research and innovation investment.
* Commissioning, effectiveness and performance of NERC and UKRI investments including: discovery science; strategic research and innovation; postgraduate training, fellowships and early career support; national capability; scientific infrastructure and capital; international partnership and subscriptions.
* NERC funding policy for all of the above funding streams.

Provide recommendations for new NERC investment:

* Strategic Research and Innovation Programmes – assess submitted proposals against published criteria and recommend which proposals should be funded by NERC.
* Strategic Research and Innovation Highlight Topics - assess submitted ideas for Highlight Topic against published criteria and recommend which should go forward to a funding call, and at what level of expenditure.

Terms of Reference: [Science Committee Terms of Reference](https://nerc.ukri.org/about/organisation/boards/science/tor/)

Actions of the Science Committee and its members are subject to the UKRI-NERC governance framework and the seven principles of public life.

# ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NERC SCIENCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair is responsible for leadership of the Committee and for working with the Executive to ensure its overall effectiveness.

* Ensure Science Committee carries out its business efficiently and effectively
* Work with the Executive in planning and conducting Committee meetings effectively (including agenda setting)
* Ensure papers and other information for the Committee are appropriate for the decisions they have to make.
* Ensure the Committee answers to its Terms of Reference

* Ensure Science Committee members know their roles and responsibilities.
* Support the members in their involvement with the Committee’s work
* Represent Committee’s views and outcomes to Council. Attend Council meetings.
* Lead, in consultation with the Executive, on the Committee’s composition and development
* Participate in the induction of new members.
* Undertake an annual assessment of Science Committee members
* Invest significant time; expected to be up to 30 days pa.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Applications are sought from individuals who possess a range of expertise and experience in research and innovation across the higher education sector. You should have a range of subject matter knowledge appropriate to the Council’s areas of research, innovation, training and capital.

Our ideal candidate will have the enthusiasm and time to commit to advise us on how we can best achieve our [Delivery Plan](https://www.ukri.org/files/about/dps/nerc-dp-2019/) ambitions.

**Essential Skills**

We are seeking a candidate that can communicate well and can lead the Committee to work collaboratively to support members to challenge the Science Committee’s debates, **and** have the following skills:

* Understanding of the environmental challenges confronting the world based on a deep understanding of environmental science with a whole-systems, solution-focused approach. Recognised expertise as an environmental scientist
* A clear, strategic vision for the work of Science Committee
* The ability to chair a complex, strategic meeting, and ensure that when required, Science Committee reaches agreed decisions.
* The ability to act impartially and ensure the actions of the Committee are objective and fair across the entire Science remit.
* Experience in strategic planning and pre-sight of large investment portfolios and programmes involving some or all of: research; innovation; training and skills; scientific infrastructures and services; international partnership.
* An understanding and appreciation of the role of the NERC institutes alongside that of the Higher Education Institutions
* The ability to quickly gain the confidence of stakeholders and communities across NERC;
* Insights to support [NERC’s responsible business statement](https://nerc.ukri.org/about/policy/responsible/) ambitions and ensure Science Committee considers equality, diversity and inclusion in its advice;
* Sufficient time to commit to the role. The time commitment for Science Committee Chair is expected to be up to 30 days pa.

# APPOINTMENTS

The successful candidate will be appointed by the Natural Environment Research Council, on the recommendation of a selection panel.

At NERC as part of UKRI we believe that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with the appropriate opportunities and tools to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that enables them to do so and that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us. For further information, please visit [‘How we support EDI in the workforce’](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/work-for-us/edi-in-the-workforce/#contents-list)

At NERC as part of UKRI are proud to be users of the [disability confident scheme](https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/). We guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for any of our vacancies. There is a section on the application form to indicate if you would like to be considered under this scheme.

The members will be appointed for a period of three years, subject to annual performance review.

# MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

## Availability

The Science Committee Chair is expected to participate in all formal Science Committee meetings (4 per year) and Council meetings (4 per year). Some meetings will be virtual, and some will be face to face. It is expected that up to 30 days pa be dedicated to this role.

## For meetings to be quorate there must be at least half the Committee members in attendance.

## Location

## Meeting will be held in various UK locations

# HONORARIUM

An attendance allowance (for meetings) of £230 per day (if eligible) together with reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed in accordance with [**UKRI’s travel and subsistence policy (PDF, 162KB)**](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-081020-TravelAndSubsistencePolicy.pdf).

# HOW TO APPLY AND HOW MEMBERS WILL BE SELECTED

To apply, candidates should **submit a CV (limited to two sides) and a completed application form** to Gemma Davies (SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ukri.org) by **29 July 2022.** If you have any questions about the recruitment process, please also contact Gemma Davies.

Once the deadline has passed, all applications (CV and application form) will be acknowledged and then passed to the selection panel (see below) to review the applications against the person specification. The panel will agree which applicants will be selected for interview. Further particulars will be provided to candidates selected for interview.

At the final appointment stages, where applicants are as qualified on merit, the selection panel will seek to achieve a balanced membership in terms of, for example, diversity, expertise and experience.

The selection panel for the Science Committee Chair appointment will be:

* Professor Sir Duncan Wingham, NERC Executive Chair
* Professor Susan Waldron, NERC Director, Research and Skills
* Dr Karen Hanghøj, Director, British Geological Survey
* Mr. Gordon McGregor, NERC Council member
* TBC

The timescale for selection and appointments are in the tables below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timing** |
| Role advertised | 13 June 2022 |
| Deadline for applications | 29 July 2022 |
| Shortlisting decisions sent to candidates | Early September 2022 |
| Interviews | 26 September 2022 |
| Appointments confirmed | October 2022 |
| First meeting (to observe) | 19 & 20 October 2022 |

**Please send the completed application, stating clearly the appointment you are applying for, to:**

By email: [SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ac.uk) Attention of: Gemma Davies

By post:

Attention of: Gemma Davies

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Polaris House,

North Star Avenue, Swindon

SN2 1EU

# The Seven Principles of Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Commissioner’s Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates for public appointment will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life. These will be tested as part of the selection process and the selection Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointments can meet these standards; which are:

# Selflessness

Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

# Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

# Objectivity

Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

# Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

# Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

# Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

# Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.