



**Natural
Environment
Research Council**

Application Pack for NERC Science Committee Member Appointments

April 2024

Closing date for all applications: Thursday 6 June 2024

**Interviews will take place via zoom:
21 October (pm) 2024
23 October (pm) 2024
24 October 2024**

Induction: January 2025

Date of first meeting: March 2025

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the Natural Environment Research Council's Science Committee. This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the development of current and future funding priorities and investments. As a committee member, you will be supporting an excellent and sustainable UK environmental science community, working collegiately to offer advice and recommendations to Council and NERC Head Office.

For example, over the past year, Science Committee have provided recommendations to maximise science excellence in strategic research programmes, offered advice on training investments and NERC's digital ambitions, and reviewed and ranked potential Highlight Topics for the scientific community.

Being a member of Science Committee will:

- allow you to bring broad strategic perspective and expertise to support the development and delivery of the UKRI-NERC strategic priorities, investments, and policies
- provide you with the opportunity to meet with NERC Council and Management Board members and input into future priorities and challenges at the Council retreat held annually.

We are looking for individuals who possess a range of expertise and experience in research and innovation relevant to the higher education sector. You do not need to be based in a research organisation but need to have a range of subject matter knowledge appropriate to NERC's areas of research, innovation, training and capital, or other lay experience of benefit to NERC's wider strategic ambitions.

We are seeking broad representation across our community reflecting different characteristics and professional backgrounds.

You will need to be committed to investing your time to this role; but, in return, you will gain important committee experience and have the opportunity to contribute to the future of environmental science.

This pack provides more detail about the Science Committee and the specific skills and experience we are looking for. Please consider applying.

"I have loved my time on NERC Science Committee, helping to shape policy and funding distributions through recommendations to Council over strategic and discovery environmental science, along with shaping the balance between capability and capacity funding has been a particular highlight. I have also had the privilege to interact with colleagues from across NERC Science and have been impressed by the breadth and depth of quality in the research NERC funds across the UK".

Professor Dan Parsons, Loughborough University (Science Committee Member)

"I have found my time on Science Committee to be very rewarding. I've valued the opportunity to contribute to discussions and decisions about NERC science and enjoyed the opportunity to network with other committee members. I've not found the role too onerous and have been very well-supported by NERC office and staff".

Professor Jane Hill,
University of York
(Science Committee Member)

“Acting on Science Committee has been a fascinating and inspiring experience. This role has provided an opportunity to better understand the functioning of NERC, including how this fits within UKRI. Building on this I consider that I have been able to actively inform the future of the UK natural science research agenda which is immensely rewarding. It has also been enjoyable to meet the NERC HQ team and to spend time with the other NERC SC members, all of whom have broadened my outlook on environmental science and life more generally. The meetings are consistently well organised and I have particularly enjoyed visiting a wide variety of UK institutes, with great tours and talks to provide insight to a wide range of research activities”.

Professor Nicola Beaumont, Plymouth Marine Laboratory (Science Committee Member)

“Being a member of NERC SC provides you with a great opportunity to understand the workings of NERC and UKRI and to have a voice in their decision-making processes as well as getting to meet a range of fantastic environmental scientists and NERC staff that you might not otherwise encounter”.

Professor Helen Williams, University of Cambridge (Science Committee Member)

INTRODUCTION

NERC - the Natural Environment Research Council - is the driving force for 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, 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 brings together 7 disciplinary research councils, Research England and Innovate UK.

Through these 9 Councils, UKRI maintains and champions the creativity and vibrancy of disciplines and sector-specific priorities and communities. We work together in innovative ways to deliver an ambitious agenda, drawing on our collective great depth and breadth of expertise and the enormous diversity of our portfolios.

If you would like to learn more about UKRI, you can read the [UKRI Strategy 2022-2027](#), and also see more about each of the nine Councils' current priorities in their [delivery plans](#).

For further information on NERC, please see: [NERC website](#).

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NERC SCIENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NERC is looking to appoint 5 members to its Science Committee with expertise as set out in the person specification section.

Science Committee will bring 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:
 - advance the frontiers of knowledge
 - address government, UKRI and NERC strategic priorities
 - 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 the above funding streams, and ambitions to increase diversity in environmental sciences.

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.

The Terms of Reference are available: [Science Committee Terms of Reference](#)

Actions of the Science Committee and its members are subject to the UKRI NERC governance framework and the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#). Members are expected to conduct themselves in a way that ensures that UKRI's business is carried out efficiently and effectively, and also to adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical practice, as outlined in the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Applications are sought from individuals who possess a range of expertise and experience in research and innovation relevant to the higher education sector. You do not need to be based in a research organisation but need to have a range of subject matter knowledge appropriate to NERC's areas of research, innovation, training and capital, or other lay experience of benefit to NERC's wider strategic ambitions.

NERC is seeking broad representation across our community reflecting different characteristics and professional backgrounds.

Candidates should have the enthusiasm and time to commit to advise us on how we can best achieve our [NERC Strategic Delivery Plan](#) objectives.

Career stage will be taken into consideration by the panel when reviewing applicants answers to the below essential skills.

Essential Skills

We are seeking 5 candidates across the breadth of NERC scientific disciplines that can communicate well and work collaboratively to support and challenge the Science Committee's debates and fellow members.

You must have:

- the ability to communicate, collaborate, support and challenge
- understanding of the environmental challenges confronting the world based on a deep understanding of environmental science with a whole-systems, solution-focused approach
- insights to support [NERC's responsible business statement](#) ambitions and ensure Science Committee considers equality, diversity and inclusion in its advice
- disciplinary/ professional expertise that you could bring to Science Committee
- experience in strategic planning and projections of large investment portfolios and programmes involving some or all of: research; innovation; training and skills; scientific infrastructures and services; international partnership.

The total time commitment for Science Committee members is expected to be up to 17 days pa, for which you will [be remunerated](#).

APPOINTMENTS

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

We want to welcome you. 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. We believe in an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

At NERC, as part of UKRI, we are proud to be users of the [disability confident scheme](#). We guarantee to interview all disabled applicants that meet the essential 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.

We 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](#)'

Members will be appointed for a period of 3 years, subject to annual performance review.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Availability

The successful candidates will be expected to participate in all formal Science Committee meetings (3 per year). Some meetings will be virtual, and some will be in person.

The successful candidates will be expected to participate in the Council Retreat (once a year)

Location

Meeting will be held in various UK locations and also via zoom.

HONORARIUM

An attendance allowance (for meetings) of £200 per day (if eligible) together with reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed in accordance with [UKRI's travel and subsistence policy](#)

HOW TO APPLY AND HOW MEMBERS WILL BE SELECTED

To apply, candidates should:

submit a CV (limited to two sides) to Gemma Davies (SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ukri.org) by Thursday **6 June 2024**.

and complete the online application form which can be found at the below page (in the 'how to apply' section) by Thursday **6 June 2024**

[NERC Science Committee vacancy page – UKRI](#)

If you have any questions about the recruitment process, please also contact Gemma Davies.

Reasonable adjustments

We want to make our recruitment processes as well as participation in our boards and panels accessible to all, such as making adjustment for people with a disability.

If you have any queries regarding the application process, if you would like this application in a different format (for example, accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille), or if you would like to discuss how we can support your application please email:

SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ukri.org

[Accessibility statement for our website – UKRI](#)

Should your application be successful, we will work to fulfil your requirements to enable you to fully participate in board and panel meetings.

Please let us know in advance if you would like to discuss in confidence how we can support you, or if you require an alternative way to submit your application:

SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ukri.org

Once the deadline has passed, all applications (CV and application forms) will be passed to the selection panel (see below). The panel will 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 (including geographical diversity), expertise, and experience.

Selection Panel and Timescales

The selection panel for these appointments will be:

- Professor David Hannah, Professor of Hydrology, University of Birmingham, and Director of Birmingham Institute for Sustainability & Climate Action and Science Committee Chair
- NERC Director, Research & Skills
- Dr Karen Hanghøj, Director of the British Geological Survey (BGS)
- Rashik Parmar, Group CEO of British Computer Society (BCS) and a NERC Council member

The anticipated timescale for selection and appointments are in the table below:

Activity	Timing
Role advertised	15 April – 6 June 2024
Deadline for applications	Thursday 6 June 2024
Shortlisting decisions sent to candidates	End of July 2024
Interviews (via zoom)	21 October (pm), 23 October (pm) & 24 October 2024
Appointments confirmed	2 - 3 weeks after interviews
First meeting	March 2025

Meeting dates are published [here](#)

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

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. We believe in an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

We 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.

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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.