UK Research and Innovation
Appointment of Council Members - Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

Applicant Pack – June 2021
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Welcome Message

Dear candidate,

We are delighted that you are interested in becoming a member of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Councils.

UKRI was established three years ago, bringing together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England and Innovate UK. This reach across all disciplines and all sectors, coupled with an annual budget of £8bn, makes UKRI a key hub in the research and innovation system. Our vision is to steward an outstanding research and innovation system for the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit, enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally. We aim to convene, catalyse and invest in close collaboration with others to build a thriving inclusive system that connects discovery with prosperity and public good.

Each of the nine Councils have Council members who play a critical role in UKRI’s strategy development and governance. UKRI’s strength comes from deep engagement with the community. Council members are tasked to provide input, intelligence and feedback from their communities and stakeholder groups. They work closely with their Executive Chair to develop and deliver their council's aims and objectives and to shape and support UKRI's overall mission.

We are seeking candidates from a variety of backgrounds, including those with fresh perspectives from business, civil society, academia and government. We place equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of UKRI’s vision, and know that it is only when we support and foster the widest possible range of talent that we are nurturing the best possible research and innovation, harnessed in the service of society. It is therefore critical for our Councils to encompass and benefit from a diversity of perspectives, expertise and experiences.

Once again thank you for your interest.

Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser, Chief Executive Officer
The Organisation

The creation of UKRI represents the largest reform of the research and innovation funding landscape in the last 50 years. UKRI has a vital and strategically important role at the heart of the UK’s economy and Industrial Strategy.

Our aim is to maximise value from the UK Government’s investment. In the last two years this has included nearly £2bn per annum of new investment delivered through innovative cross cutting initiatives. Through leading the overall strategic direction of research and innovation funding in the UK our organisation is pushing the frontiers of human knowledge. It is delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research and business-led innovation.

The UKRI Corporate Plan for 2020-21 sets out our vision. It guides our work with our partners and communities to bring about an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit. Thereby enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally. It sets out our mission in stewarding that system: to convene, catalyse and invest in close collaboration with others to build a thriving, inclusive research and innovation system that connects discovery to prosperity and public good.
The nine Councils of UKRI fund ground-breaking research and new enterprise growth. Each has developed a Delivery Plan which captures key priorities as well as longer-term ambitions. These are based on the foundations of productivity set out within the Industrial Strategy, but with international focus in recognition of the global nature of research and innovation.

| Business Environment | • Partnering with the government, businesses, charities and other stakeholders to address the Industrial Grand Strategy Challenges.  
|                      | • Supporting businesses across all sectors to develop their most innovative ideas.  
|                      | • Translating ideas emerging from the research base and scaling up resulting business for economic and wider benefit. |
| Places –            | • Supporting all parts of the UK to build on their research and innovation strengths so that they contribute to and benefit from the Government’s 2.4% R&D target.  
| Supporting growth across the UK by: | • Understanding how every region and nation in the UK can benefit from investment in research and innovation, working closely with government departments. |
| Ideas               | • Advancing the frontiers of discovery research.  
| Pushing the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding by: | • Seeking and supporting new, emerging and disruptive technologies and exploring their impact on the world and society.  
|                     | • Helping to understand today’s greatest challenges that span society and cross disciplinary boundaries. |
| People              | • Growing, developing and retaining the talented workforce the UK needs.  
| Building the skills and environment for research and innovation to thrive by: | • Nurturing a supportive and responsible research and innovation culture.  
|                     | • Inspiring the public and involving them in research and innovation. |
| Infrastructure      | • Developing an infrastructure roadmap to inform future investment decisions in research and innovation infrastructure and provide a framework for the development of new projects from concept to design to implementation. |

**Business Environment**

**Delivering social and cultural economic impact by:**

- Partnering with the government, businesses, charities and other stakeholders to address the Industrial Grand Strategy Challenges.
- Supporting businesses across all sectors to develop their most innovative ideas.
- Translating ideas emerging from the research base and scaling up resulting business for economic and wider benefit.

**Places –**

**Supporting growth across the UK by:**

- Supporting all parts of the UK to build on their research and innovation strengths so that they contribute to and benefit from the Government’s 2.4% R&D target.
- Understanding how every region and nation in the UK can benefit from investment in research and innovation, working closely with government departments.

**Ideas**

**Pushing the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding by:**

- Advancing the frontiers of discovery research.
- Seeking and supporting new, emerging and disruptive technologies and exploring their impact on the world and society.
- Helping to understand today’s greatest challenges that span society and cross disciplinary boundaries.

**People**

**Building the skills and environment for research and innovation to thrive by:**

- Growing, developing and retaining the talented workforce the UK needs.
- Nurturing a supportive and responsible research and innovation culture.
- Inspiring the public and involving them in research and innovation.

**Infrastructure**

**Enabling access to, and investment in, world-leading research and innovation infrastructure by:**

- Developing an infrastructure roadmap to inform future investment decisions in research and innovation infrastructure and provide a framework for the development of new projects from concept to design to implementation.
• Offering a coherent long-term vision to maximise the value of government investment in national and national infrastructure.
• Identifying common themes, which could benefit from a cross-sectoral approach.

International
Building global partnerships and addressing global challenges by:
• Continuing to support cutting-edge research and innovation addressing global issues
• Deepening international collaborations and relationships.

Delivering these ambitions requires strong and empowered leadership within UKRI. The organisation employs 7,200 staff who support some of the world’s most exciting and challenging research projects. UKRI develops and operates some of the most remarkable scientific and innovation facilities in the world - with key activities in London, Swindon, Harwell, Daresbury and Bristol.

Since its creation, UKRI has retained many of the key elements that ensured the success of its predecessors such as discipline, leadership and autonomy, and subsidiarity in decision making. However, the organisation now seeks to become demonstrably more than the sum of its parts, catalysing changes within and across the Councils, acting with a strong voice for research and innovation, both to government and industry.

UKRI is supported and challenged by an independent Chair and Board who are critical to ensuring the success of the organisation and currently comprises:

- Sir John Kingman – Chair
- Dame Ottoline Leyser – Chief Executive Officer
- Siobhan Peters - Chief Finance Officer
- Professor Julia Black – Senior Independent Member
- Sir Leszek Borysiewicz
- Professor Sir Ian Diamond (observer)
- Professor Dame Sally Davies (observer)

- Lord John Browne
- Fiona Driscoll
- Sir Harpal Kumar
- Lord David Willetts
Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

Council Introduction

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is the UK's main agency for funding and managing research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. Our work covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic science, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere and from the poles to the equator. We coordinate some of the world's most exciting research projects, tackling major environmental issues such as climate change, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on Earth, and much more.

The NERC Terms of Reference can be found here.
Governance

The Higher Education and Research Act [HERA 2017] sets out the functions and roles of councils within UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). As required by HERA, the UKRI Board delegates responsibility to councils for making decisions and advising on scientific, research and innovation matters in their domain specific area. In delegating functions, the Board adopts a principle of subsidiarity so that functions are delegated to councils in line with maximum overall effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

Council Responsibilities

The following key responsibilities are delegated to councils by the UKRI Board:

- Providing leadership in the development, delivery and implementation of the Strategic Delivery Plans, which set out the long-term strategy for each council;
- Providing support and challenge to the Executive Chair to ensure the effective delivery of the council’s mission, including the effective use of peer review, ensuring the correct balance of the portfolio and delivery of outputs and outcomes;
- Prioritising the distribution of funding between areas within a council’s field of activity and expertise;
- Oversight, development, and management of institutes, facilities and major investments within their area of activity and expertise;
- Supporting the Executive Chair in managing risk and providing assurance in relation to large investments, and where applicable Institutes. Reporting to the UKRI Audit, Risk, Assurance & Performance Committee (ARAPC) via their Executive Chair, as the risk requires;
- Advising the Executive Chair on the appointment of senior management staff, and where applicable, of Institute Directors and on staff terms and conditions within Institutes;
- Contributing to the development and implementation of overall UKRI strategy, including through encouraging collaborative working across councils and the wider research and innovation communities, and as required, providing advice to the UKRI Board.
Council Member Vacancies

Council Member Role Descriptor

Within these over-arching responsibilities, individual council members:

- Support and challenge the Executive Chair to ensure the effective delivery of the council's mission and implementation of their Strategic Delivery Plan;
- Support the council Executive Team in managing risk and providing assurance, in relation to large investments, and where applicable institutes;
- Actively participate in council business, providing robust scrutiny, advice and challenge;
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in all activities undertaken and challenge any lack of regard for this;
- Champion environmental sustainability in all activities undertaken and challenge any lack of regard for this;
- Take on ad hoc assignments where appropriate, such as membership or chairing of subgroups, and task and finish groups;
- Act as an ambassador/advocate, supporting UKRI's vision and their domain area's importance to society;
- Operate across the remit of the council rather than as an advocate for specific domains or sub-domains;
- Engage with their community to develop ideas, raise awareness and disseminate strategic outputs;
- Encourage and facilitate collaborative work across the councils to foster strategic relationships;
- Participate in the council's evaluation and planning activities;
- Highlight opportunities for UKRI;
- If necessary, raise concerns about the operation of the council or, where policies and programmes do not appear to align with the Strategic Delivery Plan, with the Executive Chair and the Senior Independent Member;
- Provide other ad-hoc advice and support to the council and Executive Team in the development of policy and practice;
- Declare conflicts of interest and, subject to the Executive Chair's judgement, withdraw from discussions where a potential conflict arises.
Person Specification (which applies to all UKRI Council Members)

Essential Criteria

Candidates should meet all of the following essential criteria:

- An understanding of the research & innovation environment: how it can best produce knowledge and economic and societal benefit, and the systems and approaches best used to affect this.
- A strategic and objective mindset with the ability to develop, communicate and deliver the strategic vision for the relevant council.
- The ability to tackle and reach conclusions on complex issues (e.g. in commercial contexts or in relation to policy).
- The ability to critically evaluate and/or advise on new research and innovation opportunities within the remit of the respective council.
- An understanding of public engagement within research, innovation or commercial fields.
- Demonstrable experience of successfully operating within a highly complex landscape of stakeholders.
- Demonstrable high levels of intellectual capacity, insight and inquisitiveness.
- Demonstrable behaviours that encourage inclusive and collegial operation.
- Excellent listening, influencing and communication skills.

Desirable Criteria

Candidates should meet a minimum of one (or more) of the following sought after attributes detailing which one(s) they meet:

- Understanding of how to deliver significant cultural change and organisational development within a large organisation that has both national and international visibility.
- Experience leading and influencing at a senior level within a commercial environment.
- Experience in balancing competing priorities in a complex organisation.
- Experience working within academia, industry, business and innovation, user community, Governmental or third-sector organisations in Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland.
- Experience of policy-making in academia, industry, business, innovation, user community, Governmental, or third sector organisations.
- Experience of working across international boundaries.
NERC Council Specific Criteria

- NERC seek to appoint 2-3 new members.
- Their council-specific criteria is to appoint 1-2 new members who are exceptional scientists with experience of research leadership from any area within the environmental sciences, with expertise in geochemistry, solid earth/geophysics, terrestrial ecology and biodiversity and international experience (preferably in one of these fields); and 1 new member from the wider society including business, industry, media and third sector organisations who possess a commitment to the importance of environmental science and the role of NERC with experience of Corporate Governance.
Selection Details

Terms of Appointment

Members will normally be appointed for a period of three years.

An annual honorarium payment of £6,850 will be paid to eligible Council members. This is premised on an expected 20 days contribution per year, to include regular meeting attendance. Government officials, civil or public, are not permitted to receive an honoraria payment.

UKRI’s registered address is Polaris House, Swindon, SN2 1FL. However, Council members will be expected to attend meetings in various locations across the UK.

Timescales and selection

Please note that these dates are only indicative at this stage and could be subject to change.

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<th>Stage</th>
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<td>Application closing date</td>
<td>Friday 23rd July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longlisting</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary Interviews with Perrett Laver</td>
<td>September-October 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortlisting</td>
<td>Mid-late October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel Interviews</td>
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Executive Chairs of Councils will recommend new appointments to be endorsed by the CEO. Members will then be appointed by the UKRI Nominations and Remuneration Committee on behalf of the UKRI Board.
How to Apply

If you have any other questions about this position, or for an informal, confidential discussion please contact Perrett Laver, our retained executive search partner at ukri@perrettlaver.com.

More information and further reading can be found here.

If you wish to apply for this position, you will need to supply the following for consideration:

▪ A comprehensive CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements. Please provide details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of the capacity and over what period of time they have known you. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.

▪ A supporting statement (maximum two sides A4) highlighting your suitability and setting out, with clear examples, how you meet the essential criteria as highlighted in The Person. Please note that the supporting statement is an important part of your application, it is an evidence-based document and is as much the means by which you will be assessed as your CV. Please include where you heard about this role.

You will also be asked to complete a Diversity Monitoring Form as part of your application.

UKRI believe that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities 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 them.

UKRI also values diversity of thought and experience and is committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured.

For further information, please visit UKRI's web page ‘How we support EDI in the workforce’

Please email your completed application to ukri@perrettlaver.com with the reference 4692 – UKRI – NERC Council Member in the subject line of your email.

We welcome your interest and look forward to receiving your application. Please specify in your covering note the Council you wish to apply to; this is to ensure your interest is captured correctly.

The closing date for applications is 5pm BST, Friday 23rd July.
If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please contact chantal.blazquez@perrettlaver.com

Thank you for taking the time and effort to apply for this role. All data is processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

If you require this recruitment pack in an alternative format, please contact Perrett Laver via e-mail on the above email address or by phone at +44 207 340 6200.
Annex 1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UKRI is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. Applications from women, those with a disability, and members of minority ethnic groups, who are currently under-represented at senior levels in some sectors of the research and innovation community, are therefore especially encouraged. You can read more about our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion here.

Key Principles

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is a critical aspect of a healthy research culture – from how it's designed, how it's carried out and who is involved.
- Research and innovation should be ‘for everyone, by everyone’ – a dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system in the UK is an integral part of society and should give everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit.
- We need to be diverse to accommodate that research and innovation is unpredictable, is often created through new and unanticipated combinations, and can take many forms.
- By recognising and nurturing all people in the system and diversifying interactions, we will enrich our lives by creating knowledge, enabling us to understand the world around us and empowering us to tackle the many challenges we face as individuals and as communities, nationally and globally.
- The whole workforce are key contributors in the research and innovation system – from the lead researcher or innovator to those who keep the lights on or maintain the large infrastructure and equipment in our laboratories, small businesses or on our research vessels.
- By valuing all, we recognise that a diversity of ideas, opinions, knowledge and people enriches our work and enlarges our knowledge economy.
Annex 2: The seven principles of Public Life

The seven principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- local government
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- health, education, social and care services

1. Selflessness
Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity
Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity
Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability
Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness
Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty
Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership
Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.