

# Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education



## Virtual Evidence Gathering Meeting: Priority 2 – Research and Innovation

**Date:** 24th March 2020 – 13:00 – 14:30 -

[https://www.eauc.org.uk/shop/mms\\_single\\_event.php?event\\_id=6913](https://www.eauc.org.uk/shop/mms_single_event.php?event_id=6913)

### Purpose of the Meeting

This is an initial evidence gathering meeting where we have invited some key stakeholders relating to this priority topic. We will be asking the expert witnesses to respond to the key questions as outlined below. We will then open the discussion to the wider audience for input. The aim is to provide guidance to the Climate Commission that we are asking the right questions and focussing on the correct areas that are needed. The recording and notes from the meeting will be publicly available.

This is the early stages for the Climate Commission and output, advice and support for the sector will emerge at a later stage based on the analysis of the evidence from this meeting and other inputs. Following this event further meetings and discussions will be held to help the Climate Commission develop the practical guidance and outputs for the sector for each priority.

**Lead Commissioners:** Chair: **Iain Patton**, CEO, EAUC and Steering Group for Climate Commission; **Marta Crispo**, PhD Researcher, Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures, University of Sheffield and Student Commissioner for Climate Commission

### Invited Expert Witnesses:

Name	Organisation
Alyssa Gilbert	Grantham Institute, Imperial College London & UK Research Group
Rob Gillies	Associate Director, UKRI Environmental Sustainability, UKRI
Vanessa O'Donnell	Policy Analyst, Russell Group
Emma Wilcox	CEO, Society for the Environment

### What is the need?

To review the funding and scope of research and innovation and maximising its impact.

### Key questions:

- Does the coordination of climate research in UK universities need to be enhanced to make best use of investment and drive impact? How might this be done?
- What more can UK universities and colleges do to have a coordinated voice and impact on policy, as well as drive knowledge exchange?
- How environmentally sustainable is the UK's wider research effort in universities and colleges? Is there more that can be done to drive and incentivise behaviours through regulation and policy, for example, through mechanisms such as grant applications and conditions of grant? What are the specific changes that could be proposed?
- Are we getting the most out of our international links and collaborations and having maximum global impact?

### Suggested solutions:

- Mapping of current research

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- Work with UKRI
- Engage with BEIS and Industrial Strategy
- Collect examples of innovation in both HE & FE
- Engage with professional bodies
- Gain wider buy-in through All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)

## Key Reading:

- Industrial Strategy - <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) - <https://www.ukri.org/>

## Key Expert Witness – Biographies:

### **Alyssa Gilbert, Director of Policy and Translation, Grantham Institute, Imperial College London & UK Research Group**

Alyssa Gilbert is the Director of Policy and Translation at the Grantham Institute - Climate change and the Environment at Imperial College London where she connects relevant research across the university with policy-makers and businesses to make an impact. She is also a member of the Natural Environment Research Council Advisory Network. Previously, she worked at a specialist energy and climate consultancy Ecofys. Alyssa has also worked as a journalist on environmental policy in Brussels.

### **Rob Gillies, Associate Director, UKRI Environmental Sustainability**

Rob leads a team of sustainability experts hosted within NERC to deliver the UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Working across the seven UKRI Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England, Rob is responsible for the development and co-ordination of initiatives to achieve UKRI's strategic ambitions to be 'net-zero' and have net-positive environmental impact in its own operations and using its influence as a funder to drive more sustainability in research and innovation. Prior to his current role, Rob has spent the last two years leading the Futures team in NERC to develop ambitious research programmes with industry and other partners, to solve critical real-world challenges through environmental science and innovation. As part of this role, he was responsible for engaging UKRI collective funding sources including the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), and analysing markets and supply chains to identify opportunities and requirements for environmental science solutions. Recent programmes Rob has developed include the ISCF Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge and the Climate and Environmental Risk Analytics for Resilient Finance programme. Rob has a background in environmental and sustainability consulting for a broad range of clients including UK government, European Commission, UK local authorities, NGOs and corporates. His work has encompassed resources and waste, renewable energy, circular economy, green procurement, and green finance. He is a full Member of IEMA and Chartered Environmentalist and Fellow of the RSA.

NERC - the Natural Environment Research Council - is the leading funder of environmental science in the UK. NERC advances the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs. NERC do this because understanding our changing planet is vital for our wellbeing and economic prosperity. NERC 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. NERC work closely with policymakers and industry to make sure our knowledge can support sustainable economic

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growth and wellbeing in the UK and around the world. NERC is part of UK Research & Innovation- (UKRI), 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 is supported by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), but our activities and funding decisions are independent of government.

## **Vanessa O'Donnell, Policy Analyst, Russell Group**

Vanessa is responsible for policy areas including regulation and teaching, skills and apprenticeships, and student satisfaction.

## **Emma Wilcox, CEO, Society for the Environment**

Emma joined the Society for the Environment as CEO in July 2015 and has successfully overseen growth in the number of registered environmental professionals whilst also ensuring the reputation of Chartered Environmentalists and Registered Environmental Technicians has been enhanced and maintained. Particular recent success includes ensuring registered environmental professional's collective voice has influenced policy.

Emma's strong academic and research background is supported by an in-depth knowledge of both public and private sector landscapes along with commercial experience. During her career to date Emma has successfully demonstrated the ability to combine creative and analytical thinking and lead multi-disciplinary projects, business activity and navigate complex challenges.

Emma is a Chartered Manager (CMgr) and a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute (FCMI) as well as a graduate of the Goldman Sachs 10k Small Business Programme.