

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

24 May 2019

News

Royal Society of Biology news

[Ten biologists to travel the world through RSB funding](#)

Ten biologists have received travel grants from the Royal Society of Biology to help support them in overseas research projects and attend conferences abroad.

[More than 100 members attend this year's AGM](#)

The 2019 Annual General Meeting took place on 15th May at The Law Society in London.

[House of Commons Speakers' residence hosts inaugural RSB science lecture](#)

Former RSB president Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell gave the first ever science lecture to be held in the state apartments of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Health and biomedicine

[World's first living organism with fully redesigned DNA created](#)

Researchers create altered synthetic genome, in move with potential medical benefits

[Lords debates mental health of children and young adults](#)

On Thursday 16 May, members of the House of Lords debated the mental health of children and young adults in the UK.

[Farmers and mental health](#)

[Chemical mixtures pose 'underestimated' risk to human health say scientists](#)

Each of us harbours hundreds of man-made chemicals inside our bodies because we are exposed to them in our daily lives. While individual chemicals may not be of immediate concern to public health, scientists now worry that certain mixtures of them may pose previously underestimated risks to health.

Food and drink

[Schools should have one meat-free day a week, says charity](#)

Soil Association calls for pupils in England to get 'healthier and more climate-friendly' meals

[Crickets have hit the high street - can they save the planet?](#)

[Supermarket tomatoes could be about to get much tastier after new gene research reveals how to boost flavour](#)

Scientists think they can make cultivated fruits taste like their wild relatives again

Agriculture and fisheries

[Lords Committee continues inquiry into EU fish discard legislation](#)

The EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee takes evidence from the bodies responsible for enforcing fisheries legislation in England and Scotland.

[UK's approach to antimicrobial resistance gets UN recognition](#)

UK global approach to tackling the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) gets UN recognition.

Forestry

[130,000 trees to be planted in English cities and towns](#)

As part of efforts to tackle global heating, grants will be available for planting and three years' care

Environment and ecology

[Dozens of bee species extinct or on verge of disappearing across UK, study finds](#)

'Many are battling to keep up with the changing face of their landscape and increasingly hot weather'

[First review of 25 Year Environment Plan published](#)

The first progress report of the landmark 25 Year Environment Plan is published during the Year of Green Action.

[Invasive Species Week: UK Invasions in a Changing Climate](#)

In an Invasives Species Week special, Jane Catford and Regan Early discuss the possible synergies between climate change and the spread of invasive species.

Water and air

[Scientists fear impact of deep-sea mining on search for new medicines](#)

Bacteria from the ocean floor can beat superbugs and cancer. But habitats are at risk from the hunger for marine minerals

[How you and your government can tackle air pollution](#)

From walking more to reducing waste, here's what you can do to make a difference

Waste

[Revealed: air pollution may be damaging 'every organ in the body'](#)

Exclusive: Comprehensive analysis finds harm from head to toe, including dementia, heart and lung disease, fertility problems and reduced intelligence

[Single-use plastics a serious climate change hazard, study warns](#)

Production must end now, says first ever estimate of plastic's cradle-to-grave impact

Animal Research

[Scientists discover DNA mutation linked to dogs' breathing problems](#)

Researchers hope to help prevent breeders from producing affected puppies

Government and Parliament

[UK progress on research spending goal '26 years behind schedule'](#)

CBI warns country will not spend 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product on research and development until 2053

[More than rhetoric needed to reach 2.4% R&D goal, says Lamb](#)

The UK government must come up with a concrete plan to increase total R&D spending to 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027, the chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has said.

Exiting the EU

[Scottish science minister fears Brexit blow](#)

Richard Lochhead calls for clarity on research funding after EU exit

Research funding and higher education policy

[Committee discusses the impact of science research funding in universities](#)

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee holds the first evidence sessions for its new inquiry to assess the impact of potential changes in funding on the ability of UK universities to conduct high-quality scientific research.

[Minister restates opposition to student loan grade threshold](#)

Chris Skidmore tells MPs he is yet to see a copy of the Augar review's report

[No place like home – new fund to boost local graduate opportunities](#)

Today the Office for Students has awarded £5.6 million to projects based in universities and colleges across England to boost opportunities for graduates who seek work close to home.

Open access and publication policy

[Universities' journal costs still outstripping inflation](#)

Despite attempts to renegotiate contracts, European institutions face an annual price hike of 3.6 per cent

Diversity and inclusion

[Measuring Inequality – Creating an indicator to assess gender bias in universities](#)

[Female authors listed on just 30% of recent UK academic research](#)

Progress rate 'disheartening', says expert as 2014-17 figure is small improvement on 2006-09

Outreach and engagement

[Netherlands and Germany 'most supportive' of internationalisation](#)

British Council research warns that Brexit 'may affect future international engagement' of the UK

Measuring impact

[Knowledge exchange or research impact – what is the difference between REF and KEF?](#)

International news

[Collaborative projects to advance understanding of biodiversity in Latin America](#)

NERC-funded researchers have begun a series of collaborative projects with partners in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru to develop understanding of the social and economic role of biodiversity in Latin America, and how it can be managed more sustainably.

[China set to tighten gene-editing laws following CRISPR-baby furore](#)

The draft rules mean that anyone who manipulates human genes in adults or embryos is responsible for adverse outcomes.

Opinion

[Ideas Foundation](#)

Matthew Gibbard from the British Society for Immunology outlines details how supporting immunology can propel UK R&D

[Wonkhe 360: what's it like to be a woman in higher education policy?](#)

A perennial issue for Wonkhe is that we find that while there is no shortage of women working in and thinking about higher education policy, we find that male voices tend to feature more strongly in the policy debate.

[Time for universities to declare a climate emergency](#)

Greta Thunberg, the inspiration behind the global “school strike for climate” movement, will be thinking about applying for university in a year’s time. Except that she probably won’t. She and one million other young protestors in well over 100 countries around the world share a common message: “Why should we study when we have no future?”

[We need to recognise prior learning](#)

Despite the country’s expanding skills crisis, there is a failure to harness the huge pool of talent that potential mature learners could offer. That’s because, for all of its benefits, the current funding system, has been disastrous for part-time and mature learners, causing significant and continuing declines in both groups since 2012.

People

[Mauro Ferrari to lead European Research Council from 2020](#)

Nanomedicine pioneer will replace Jean-Pierre Bourguignon

Opportunities

Vacancy: Events Officer

Royal Society of Biology (RSB)

£25,000-£27,000 (dependent on experience)

Location: Central London

Interviews: Tuesday 4 June

An exciting, varied role working with all teams at Royal Society of Biology. The Events Officer will be responsible for leading and supporting the delivery of key RSB events, including parliamentary receptions, policy debates, award ceremonies and careers days. Along with day-to-day event logistics, they will contribute to the events sponsorship strategy and generate event income. They will enhance the regional reputation of the RSB by supporting local activity delivered by the RSB's 17,500 members. [Click here to apply and for further information.](#)

Closes: 29 May 2019

Future Leaders Fellowships

The UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) will grow the strong supply of talented individuals needed to ensure that UK research and innovation continues to be world class.

Closes: 30 May 2019

NC3Rs Board member recruitment 2019

NC3Rs is now recruiting for up to four members to join its Board from 1 January 2020. Applications are sought from accomplished senior scientists based in leading research organisations, and from within the pharmaceutical and chemicals industries. Applications are also welcome from senior managers and veterinarians from laboratory animal facilities.

Further information regarding the level of experience required, and an application form, can be found on the [NC3Rs website](#). Any interested party, with queries regarding the vacancies, is welcome to contact us at recruit@nc3rs.org.uk

Closes: 12 June 2019

[Next Generation Networks for Neuroscience \(NeuroNex\)](#)

The MRC in collaboration with the National Science Foundation of the United States, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) of Canada, Fonds de Recherche en Santé (FRQ) of Quebec, and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) of Germany are pleased to invite proposals for the NeuroNex Phase 2 call 2019. This initiative will provide funding for high-quality UK-based research projects focused on addressing grand challenges in neuroscience as part of larger networks with international groups.

Closes: 14 June 2019

[RSB Outreach and Engagement Award 2019](#)

Are you a bioscience researcher involved in science communication? If you work in any sector of UK biosciences, apply for the Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2019 and win up to £1500.

Closes: 28 June 2019

[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019](#)

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is now open for submissions. Prizes include an experience day at the [Royal Veterinary College](#) for students, and their school can also win £100. Visit the Royal Society of Biology [website](#) for more information.

Closes: 30 July 2019

[Royal Society of Biology, Outreach and Engagement Volunteering Opportunities 2019](#)

RSB are looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science plant growing activities at [Glasgow Science Festival 2019](#) at Glasgow Botanic Gardens on **8th June 2019**, and [Lambeth Country Show](#) at Brockwell Park, London on: **20th - 21st July 2019**. Please email Dr Amanda Hardy outreach@rsb.org.uk to volunteer.

[Pre-announcement of Opportunity: Understanding and countering bacterial plant disease](#)

Consultations

[UK-Malaysia Joint Partnership on Non-Communicable Diseases](#)

Closes: 29 May 2019

[BBSRC asks for community input on data intensive bioscience](#)

BBSRC is conducting a review of data-intensive bioscience research in 2019.

Closes: 10 June 2019

[Updating the UK marine strategy part one \(2019\)](#)

Closes: 20 June 2019

[Safeguarding the environment in British Overseas Territories: call for evidence](#)

Closes: 19 July 2019

Events

Science policy skills workshop and networking reception

30 May 2019

University College London, London

Science Policy Exchange Network ([SciPEN](#)) is hosting a one-day hands-on workshop exploring how to: collaborate with policy institutions as an academic, communicate research effectively to policy makers and transition from academia to a policy career. The workshop will be followed by a networking reception with a keynote from Prof Sir Peter Gluckman. Graduate students and early career researchers from all universities are welcome. [Further details and registration here.](#)

Report Launch, Technicians: Vital front-line support for student wellbeing & mental health

20 June 2019

Burlington House, London

A collaborative team from the Technician Commitment, Science Council, Royal Society of Biology, Institute of Physics, Royal Society of Chemistry, University of Liverpool and University of Nottingham recently undertook a national survey in order to shed light on the important roles technicians play in student mental health and well-being. The resultant report offers an unprecedented insight into the ways in which technical staff in higher education support student mental health and well-being.

Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation

9 - 10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

Scientists: Why we should appreciate wasps

Royal Society of Biology

Science Policy Team

Charles Darwin House

12 Roger Street

London

WC1N 2JU

policy@rsb.org.uk

Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Royal Society of Biology.

[Click here to unsubscribe from this publication](#)

Or, manage your subscription to this and to other RSB publications by logging into [mySociety](#) and choosing 'My Subscriptions' under 'Me and the RSB'.