

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

3 August 2016

News

Top story: Stern Review

[Research Excellence Framework review](#) [28 July 2016]

An independent review of university research funding by Lord Nicholas Stern.

[Stern review: submit all researchers to next REF](#)

Landmark review of the research excellence framework also recommends that university where research is done should be able to reap rewards.

[The Stern Review – Publications, Portability, and Panic](#)

[Being Stern about Portability](#)

Most people seem to think the Stern Review of the REF (Building on Success and Learning from Experience), published today, has done a fine job, with (if my Twitter stream is to be believed) the exception of the issue of the portability of outputs.

[The road to REF 2021: why I welcome Lord Stern's blueprint for research assessment](#)

The Stern Review, published yesterday, has the potential to create a more diverse, patient and outward-facing research culture in Britain's universities.

[Lord Stern's review of REF: 'stress will be eased'](#)

Investing more in research 'must be central to our nation's strategy', writes Lord Stern on the day his review of the REF is published.

[A kinder, gentler REF? Reflections on Stern](#)

Wonkhe has collected the views and insights of leaders and scholars across the higher education sector on the Review of the Research Excellence Framework by Lord Stern.

[Major review calls time on 'gaming' in UK research assessment](#)

Report tries to curb bad behaviours incentivized by academic audit system.

[The future of the Research Excellence Framework: Building on Success and Learning from Experience](#)

Last Thursday, Lord Nicolas Stern, published his independent review of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the system that is used to assess the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and informs how quality related research funding is allocated.

Health and biomedicine

[The nose knows how to kill MRSA](#)

Bacteria from the human body produce an antibiotic that seems to kill resistant bacteria.

[Antibiotics funding splurge gets mixed reception](#)

Multimillion dollar initiative prioritizes drug development over discovery of new molecules.

Food and drink

[Bread with added tuna – that doesn't taste like fish. How nanotechnology could transform food](#)

Every mouthful of food we eat is teeming with chemical reactions.

[Grow your own by all means, but don't dream that self-sufficiency is the answer](#)

Last week, Monty Don mocked The Good Life. He was right – we should both cultivate and buy our food.

Agriculture and fishery

[How would we cope with a post-pesticide world?](#)

What technologies could sustainably replace pesticides, without compromising on yield or quality?

Environment and ecology

[Drop in little terns numbers concerns RSPB](#)

[Leading insecticide cuts bee sperm by almost 40%, study shows](#)

Discovery provides possible explanation for increasing deaths of honeybees in recent years, according to scientists.

[Britons urged to help chart spread of thriving butterfly species](#)

Campaign asks wildlife enthusiasts to visit local woodland to record number of speckled woods and other butterflies.

Climate and energy

[Debate needed on 1.5C temperature target](#)

[Britain's energy dilemma: if not nuclear power, then what?](#)

The delay to the construction of the controversial Hinkley point plant raises a question: what else can provide baseload power without polluting?

[Climate Science for Service Partnership \(CSSP\) between the UK and China](#)

From floods and droughts to rising seas, humanity faces some serious challenges related to climate change, which vary on timescales from seasons to decades.

Water and air

[Breathtaking](#)

Government and parliament

[New ministerial portfolios confirmed at Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#)

The full list of ministerial responsibilities in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has now been confirmed.

[Department of Health ministerial responsibilities](#)

Following the change in government, 3 new ministers have joined the Department of Health, which has meant a change in responsibilities.

[New blog for government scientists and engineers](#)

A new blog will give 10,000 government scientists and engineers a place to connect.

University policy and research funding policy

[ERC to invest record budget in 2017](#)

[Agencies must show that basic research is worth the investment](#)

The European Research Council has begun to evaluate the impact of its grants; others should do the same.

[One in five ERC-funded projects 'makes scientific breakthrough'](#)

Further 50 per cent of EU-backed schemes result in 'major scientific advance'.

Science after Brexit

[Stephen Hawking warns human race will perish if pre-Brexit attitudes towards money are not challenged](#)

'Just like children, we will have to learn to share'.

[PM wants positive outcome for science in Brexit talks](#)

[Resilient British science will withstand Brexit](#)

UK scientists have had to fight to stay international before, and they must not stop now, says Ehsan Masood.

[Academics feel blight of Brexit – from cancer research to peat projects](#)

'For me it was personal, the culmination of 12 years' work.' Academics tell us how the EU referendum has already damaged or delayed their work.

[Research head urges UK to seize Brexit opportunity](#)

[Scientists seek influence on 'Brexit ministry'](#)

They hope for an active role in the UK department for exiting the EU.

Open access and publication policy

[RSB Research Communication Newsletter - July issue](#)

Business and industry

[GSK: UK still 'attractive' post Brexit as it invests £275m](#)

[GSK and Google's Verily create \\$715M joint venture in bioelectronics](#)

GlaxoSmithKline (\$GSK) has announced a major new joint venture with Verily--once Google Life Sciences--as the two join forces with the hope of creating the first generation of bioelectronic medicines for chronic diseases.

Other news

[Freedom to range](#)

Gina Maffey explains how she learned to overcome the hurdles of an interdisciplinary PhD.

People

[Meet Europe's new science advice brigade](#)

[Innovate UK appoints first director of Health and Life Sciences](#)

Ian Campbell has been named by Innovate UK as its first director for Health and Life Sciences.

Opportunities

[Education Policy Officer at the Royal Society of Biology](#)

Closes 12 August

Consultations

[Industrial strategy inquiry](#)

The Committee will consider what the Government means by industrial strategy and questions how interventionist in the free market it should be, such as whether it should prevent foreign takeover of UK companies.

Closes 27 September

Events

[Making Brexit work for ecology and conservation science](#) (£)

7 September, London

This high profile scientific evening will highlight the key role UK science plays in helping our society address current and upcoming environmental challenges.

Talk Biology forum

Current discussion topics on *Talk Biology*:

- [Higher Education](#)
- [The macro-problem of microplastics](#)
- [Supporting people with disabilities in STEMM](#)
- [Planning a career break and returning to work](#)

If you didn't find the topic you were looking for, feel free to start one yourself!

And finally...

[Civic pride 'can help sustain urban biodiversity'](#)

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