

Funded (fees only) MSci-R position on Climate Citizens project

Supervisors

Dr Jacob Ainscough, Senior Research Associate, Lancaster University

Professor Rebecca Willis, Professor of Energy and Climate Governance, Lancaster University

Degree

Master's by Research (MSc-R)

Duration

1-year full-time. Part-time applications will be considered but will require approval from the funder which is not guaranteed.

Overview

[Climate Citizens](#) is a policy-focused research project based out of Lancaster University and led by Professor Rebecca Willis. Researchers on the project work on a number of issues at the intersection of climate policy and democratic politics, including; the uses of deliberative-mini publics in climate policy making; the representation of citizens in climate policy discourse; the role of place attachment, culture, and political worldview in shaping engagement in climate politics; the attitudes of elected representatives towards climate policy; and the implications of the climate crisis for democratic theory.

We have funding to cover the tuition fees for **one** Masters of Science by Research (MSc-R) at Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University.

The successful applicant will join the Climate Citizens project team to conduct a piece of original research on **one of the two** topics below. The funding **covers tuition fees only**, there is no stipend (living expenses) included in the funding.

When applying, please indicate which if the two topics below you are interested in pursuing and tailor your application accordingly. If you wish to apply for both topics, please send a separate cover letter for each topic along with your CV, references and writing sample. The award will be made to the strongest applicant regardless of the topic chosen.

Topic 1: Green financial reform and the prospect of democratisation

Greening the financial system is a major part of driving the energy transition and insulating economies against shocks caused by escalating climate breakdown. Ensuring a just transition means such changes to the financial system must reverse, or at least not exacerbate, existing inequalities of wealth and power. Greening and democratising the financial system must therefore go hand in hand.

Many proposals for greening the financial system are currently being debated and trialled, including: green bonds and novel financial instruments; revisions to macroprudential frameworks; revisions of central bank mandates; credit guidance councils; national/ regional investment banks etc. (Bank for International Settlements, 2020; Gabor, 2021; Kedward, Gabor, & Ryan-Collins, 2022; Monnet, 2023; van Lerven, Barmes, & Krebel, 2021).

This project will collate existing proposals and examples and review their potential to contribute to the democratisation the financial system in a UK context. The student will be responsible for developing a framework for reviewing the democratising potential of green financial reforms in collaboration with the supervisory teams. Such a framework will build upon accounts of

democratisation that place the distribution of power at their centre (e.g. Bagg, 2022, *In Press*; McCarthy, 2019; Rahman, 2016a; Rahman, 2016b).

This project would suit students interested in the intersection of political economy and democratic theory.

Topic 2: What climate policies do the public want to see?

Since 2019 there has been a significant growth in the number of deliberative mini-publics (DMPs) such as citizens assemblies and juries focused on climate change (Willis, Curato, & Smith, 2022). Much work on the impact of climate deliberation has focused on the decision making of commissioning bodies. However, recent work in deliberative democracy suggests that DMPs also have a role to play in signalling to the wider public gaps between public opinion and government policy (Lafont, 2019). The large quantity of completed climate DMPs in the UK, along with the uptick in public polling on specific climate policies, presents an opportunity to develop a detailed picture of public attitudes towards different areas of climate policy. In turn this will enable the identification of key gaps between public priorities and current government policy.

This project would develop a methodology for synthesising the findings of UK climate DMPs held in different contexts to identify areas where public attitudes converge on issues of climate policy. This synthesis will then be compared with other available sources of data (such as surveys and polls) to create the most comprehensive picture to date of public attitudes to climate policy. The findings will then be systematically compared with existing government policy and stated policy ambitions.

The project will suite students with an interest in the intersection of climate policy and democratic theory.

What's in it for the candidate?

The successful student will be embedded in the supportive Climate Citizens research group, a multi-disciplinary and policy focused team within the Lancaster Environment Centre (LEC) working to foster citizen engagement with climate policy challenges. You will also have the chance to engage with the wider LEC community, providing access to a wide range of training opportunities, facilities, and networks. Skills and knowledge developed through the course of the research will leave you well placed to continue to further research, or to pursue opportunities in policy organisations, think tanks and NGOs working on issues of climate change and democracy.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants would normally be expected to hold a minimum of a UK Honours degree at 2:1 level or equivalent in a relevant subject. However, applicants who have gained experience in relevant fields through non-traditional routes are strongly encouraged to apply. We also expect applicants to be able to demonstrate a familiarity with contemporary debates around climate policy.

We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates, candidates who are in the first generation of their family to go to university, candidates who have been in care or who have been a young carer, and candidates from a low-income background.

English language requirements for overseas students can be found [here](#).

Application requirements

1. **CV** of no more than two A4 pages (excluding lists of any publications)
2. A **cover letter** of no more than one A4 page detailing:
 - a. The topic you wish to pursue and the reasons you are interested in this area of research
 - b. A description of how your current experience and knowledge equip you to pursue the chosen topic
3. One short, recent **writing sample** (one to two pages). This can be part of an undergraduate assignment, a blog, or any other short piece you have written in the last year.
4. Two references, one of which must be an academic reference. These can be emailed directly from the referee to j.ainscough@lancaster.ac.uk

Application process

1. Send your **CV, cover letter, 2 references** and **writing sample** to j.ainscough@lancaster.ac.uk by 23:59 (GMT) on the closing date.
2. Invites to interview will be sent within two weeks of the closing date. We will also let unsuccessful applicants know the outcome within this time.
3. If you are offered the funding, you will then need to apply for a place on the Masters programme. Details on how to do this will be sent to you.
4. Please note that, if English is not your first language, you will be required to provide evidence of your proficiency in [English](#). This evidence is only required if you are offered the position.

Deadline for applications:

16/05/2023

Provisional interview date

01/06/2023

Start date

01/07/2023

Enquiries

Interested applicants are advised to get in touch to discuss the chosen topic prior to application. Please contact Dr Jacob Ainscough (j.ainscough@lancaster.ac.uk) or Prof. Rebecca Willis (r.willis@lancaster.ac.uk)

References

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