

Further Particulars

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Introduction

Lancaster University is seeking to appoint a **Chair/Reader in Political Ecology**. Lancaster is consistently in the top ten and have maintained our 6th place position in The Times and The Sunday University Guide 2019. Applications are invited from outstanding individuals with an international research reputation in the area of Political Ecology and nature/society relations. Applicants should have a proven ability to secure significant grant income, a demonstrated interest in mentoring and collaborating with junior colleagues, and an excellent track record in international publications. You should be interested in building cross-disciplinary collaborations with a range of academic, civil society and private-sector partners, across the North-West, nationally and internationally.

The Chair/Reader's expertise will help to further Lancaster Environment Centre's (LEC) growing international reputation as a centre of excellence in studying environmental issues globally. Successful applicants will be active contributors to some of the exciting opportunities across the Lancaster University, including the [Political Ecology Research Group](#); [Critical Geographies Research Group](#); [Political Ecology Network \(POLLEN\)](#); [Institute for Social Futures](#); [Cultural Political Economy Research Centre \(CPERC\)](#); [DEMAND Centre \(Dynamics of Energy, Mobility and Demand\)](#); British Geological Survey (BGS) Subsurface Research Group; and the ESRC [North-West Doctoral Training Centre](#).

The Chair/Reader in Political Ecology

The Chair/Reader will lead a dynamic group of critical social scientists that sits within the [Political Ecology Research Group](#) at Lancaster Environment Centre. The group has a strongly interdisciplinary profile; we focus on the critical investigation of global socio-environmental challenges, engaging in cutting-edge research, engagement/impact and [excellent teaching](#) in human and environmental geography. Reflecting political ecology's multi-dimensionality, relevant themes addressed at LEC include food security, environmental justice, conservation, resource extraction, bioeconomy, water, urban natures, climate politics, science and technology, and the Anthropocene. We understand political ecology (broadly defined) to coalesce around critiques of the relationship between culture, politics and nature. Lancaster Environment Centre is home to a growing and dynamic group of young scholars in political ecology. The Chair/Reader would provide the leadership needed to spearhead new global collaborations, building off the successful [2014 LEC Political Ecology Conference](#) and new international research network, [POLLEN](#). We collaborate frequently with other [research areas](#) within LEC and across departments at Lancaster University (e.g. Sociology, Engineering, Health & Medicine), as well as international partnerships (e.g., in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania, Zambia).

Possible collaborations

[Lancaster Environment Centre](#) is one of the world's largest and highest rated multi-disciplinary centres of environmental research; we bring together world class researchers

from a wide range of disciplines to help to find solutions to global environmental challenges. Our success in doing this was recognised in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, which placed us [third in the UK for the real world impact of our research](#). We have more than 75 academic staff (with an additional 5 Professors in Practice), 160 PhD students and 50 post-doctoral researchers spanning the social, physical and biological aspects of the environment. They include anthropologists, environmental chemists, atmospheric scientists, ecologists, geologists, physicists, hydrologists, soil and plant scientists and social scientists. They are clustered within ten research groups, engaged in both fundamental and applied research. These groups are: [Atmosphere, Climate and Pollution](#); [Critical Geographies](#); [Earth Science](#); [Ecology and Conservation](#); [Environmental and Biogeochemistry](#); [Geospatial Data Science](#); [Plant and Crop Science](#); [Political Ecology](#); [Soil, Plant and Land Systems](#); [Water Science](#). This diversity of expertise enables us to assemble cross disciplinary teams who work together on our three research challenges: [Agri-Food](#); [Eco-Innovation](#); [Sustainable Catchments](#); [Tropical Futures](#). We not only highlight the nature and scale of these challenges, but working with businesses, governments and non-governmental organisations internationally, we provide the underlying knowledge to help find effective solutions. We have a number of different cross-disciplinary Centres: [Centre for Ecology & Hydrology](#); [Data Science Institute](#); [Energy Lancaster](#); [The Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business](#). We are helped in this by colleagues from other disciplines within Lancaster University, and a network of [partners](#) from the UK, and around the world, including our partners in China and Brazil.

Lancaster University is a founding member and International Secretariat of [Political Ecology Network \(POLLEN\)](#), an umbrella organisation of political ecology researchers, groups, projects, networks and 'nodes' within Europe. As the name suggests, POLLEN seeks to provide a platform for the 'cross fertilization' of ideas and where Europe's many rich, diverse traditions can come together, discuss, and debate the latest developments in the field. Historically, the term 'political ecology' in Europe has not been confined only to an analytical approach and research program, but also to the theories and narratives that mobilize social and political movements with an ecological agenda. We, therefore, aim to function as a vehicle to promote, encourage and facilitate political ecological research with other academic fields and disciplines, as well as civil society.

[Cultural Political Economy Research Centre \(CPERC\)](#) promotes Cultural Political Economy as a trans- and post-disciplinary research paradigm and as a capacity-building resource for the wider academic community within and beyond Lancaster. Cultural Political Economy serves as a principal theoretical orientation and valuable adjunct to other theories and methods that together examine the interrelations among semiosis, imaginaries, political economy broadly conceived, and issues of governance, government, and governmentality. The idea of such a centre emerged from Lancaster's unique learning and researching environment, with its tradition of interdepartmental research collaborations. It was set up within the framework of the [Institute for Advanced Studies](#) and is now co-located in the Department of Sociology and the Politics, Philosophy, and Religion Department.

[Institute for Social Futures](#) aims to improve thinking, visioning, analysis and data relating to futures. It brings high-quality social science theory and research into productive relations with science, technology, health and management and through working with many external partners. Thinking futures is now widespread, fateful and problematic. Yet much futures research neglects the insights that social science, the arts and humanities, can offer. Lancaster's Institute for Social Futures works innovatively across disciplinary boundaries linking science, social science and humanities to examine what futures might develop within key domains of human/material activity.

[DEMAND Centre \(Dynamics of Energy, Mobility and Demand\)](#) takes a distinctive approach to end use energy demand, recognising that energy is not used for its own sake but as part of accomplishing social practices at home, at work and in moving around. In essence, the Centre focuses on what energy is for. This approach generates an ambitious research agenda that is crucial for organisations involved in demand management and in radically reconfiguring infrastructures, buildings and transport systems in line with greenhouse gas emissions targets. While greater efficiency is important, the trend is often towards more resource intensive standards of comfort, convenience and speed. The problem is that we lack a sophisticated understanding of how these trends take hold and of the underlying dynamics of demand itself. In focusing on how demand is made and met, the Centre will examine changing patterns in mobility and building-related energy use and take forward a wide-ranging agenda for future research and policy.

Lancaster University and the Universities of Manchester and Liverpool make up the ESRC funded [North West Doctoral Training Centre](#). The centre awards a minimum of 63 new postgraduate studentships per year to support research and training at master's and doctoral level. Studentships are available across the full range of social science disciplines and students have access to research expertise across the three constituent Universities.

The University

Lancaster is a world-class university with an international reputation for excellence in teaching, scholarship and research. Out of over 120 UK Universities, we are consistently in the top ten and have maintained our 6th place position in The Times and The Sunday University Guide 2019. Lancaster University has been awarded the highest possible score in the UK government's 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ratings. Our TEF Gold rating is based on high quality teaching, excellent teaching facilities and the good careers our graduates go into. Established in 1964 Lancaster currently has over 12,000 students. Over £170 million has been invested into the campus since 2013, and up to £250 million is planned over the next five years. The University boasts an idyllic campus that combines city, coast and countryside all into one. The campus setting conveys a tranquil ambience whilst offering such a range of facilities it can almost be called a small town in its own right. The main Bailrigg campus is home to a range of amenities, and even its own cultural hub including a theatre, art gallery and concert series. More recently, Lancaster University has developed a portfolio of teaching partnerships overseas, as part of its global outreach internationalisation strategy.

Lancaster and the Region

The main campus lies 3 miles outside the City of Lancaster and is easily accessible via road, rail and bicycle. The city centre is just 15 minutes away by bus, and was recently ranked one of the top 10 most vibrant cities in the UK thanks to its arts scene and student population. The City of Lancaster also enjoys a long and diverse history dating as far back as 1193, and has a well-maintained iconic city centre and medieval castle. The campus is just 30 miles south of the beautiful Lake District and about the same distance from the Yorkshire Dales. It is very well connected by road and rail, with Manchester (and its international airport) just over an hour distant, while the train journey to London takes just two and a half hours.

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