

Dr SJ Beard

Technology and Risk Foresight * Interdisciplinary Ethics * Existential Hope
sjbeard@runbox.com * +44 (0) 7983 676970 * www.sjbeard.com

Education

I have advanced degrees in interdisciplinary and applied philosophy and am a fully qualified higher education teacher

PhD in Philosophy, Logic, and Scientific Method: **London School of Economics** (2011 – 2016)

PGCert in Higher Education (*Full award*): **London School of Economics** (2012 – 2014)

MSc in Philosophy and Public Policy (*Distinction*): **London School of Economics** (2009 – 2011)

BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (*1st Class*): **University of Oxford** (2003 – 2007)

Research

I combine foresight and risk analysis with interdisciplinary ethics and philosophy to explore and interpret large-scale social, technological, and environmental transformations, such as AI and climate change, and their associated risks.

Senior Fellow: **Microsoft AI Economy Institute** (2025 - 26)

- Investigating Transformative AI in Higher Education to develop **proactive strategies** for the sector and its students

Senior Research Associate: **Institute for Technology and Humanity, University of Cambridge** (2019 – 25)

- Developed innovative **transdisciplinary** approaches to the study of Existential and Global Catastrophic Risk
- Built a comprehensive **methodological toolkit** covering participatory foresight, horizon scanning, risk assessment, and policy dialogue: including TERRA, an early AI literature review tool, in 2019
- Researched complex and systemic risk drivers; intergenerational, environmental, and technological ethics; and policy leverage points for managing risk across government, industry, finance, and civil society, as **lead researcher** on the *Science of Global Risk* and *Global Justice and Global Catastrophic Risk* programmes
- **Expert** on transformative AI, extreme climate change, global governance, systems collapse, and global justice
- Established the **world's first Masters degree** programme in *Global Risk and Resilience*

Postdoctoral Research Associate: **Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge** (2016 – 19)

- Devised frameworks for evaluating extreme technological risk including **new approaches** to ethics and foresight

Postdoctoral Fellow: **Future of Humanity Institute, University of Oxford** (2015 – 2016)

- Integrated demographic, social, and environmental research for the project Population Ethics: Theory and Practise

Policy, Management, and Consultancy

I have worked in policy organizations and run for political office. I leverage my experience to create impact for my research and others by informing and persuading policymakers and partnering with them to co-create solutions.

Advisor: **Fairness Foundation** (2024 -)

- Advised on their Wealth Gap Risk Register, inequality induced societal collapse, and technological fairness

Academic Programme Manager: **Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge** (2019 – 23)

- Secured over £1.7m in funding for **projects I managed** on methodological innovation and global ethics
- Enhanced the centre's policy impact by **producing 11 reports and evidence submissions** to UK and US governments and appearing before the House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning
- Organized three editions of the **international Cambridge Conference on Catastrophic Risk** and many other events, including academic workshops, public lectures, policy roundtables, and retreats
- Managed key **partnerships with external stakeholders**, including developing a Science-Policy Interface for Global Catastrophic Risk with UN organizations, training UK Civil Service Reform Champions on foresight and risk, and contributing to the *Dasgupta Review of the Economics of Biodiversity Loss* for HM Treasury
- Responsible for **line managing 11 researchers, recruiting 16 new members of staff**, and developing the centre's internal policies on visitors, events, fundraising, sickness absence, and disability

Advisor: **All Party Parliamentary Group for Future Generations** (2017 - 23)

- Secured the **establishment** of the group by providing political advice and introductions to parliamentarians

- Helped draft a *Welfare of Future Generations Bill* and developed an event series and report on Technological Risk

Parliamentary Candidate: **Dartford Liberal Democrats** (2015 and 2017)

- Ran a parliamentary campaign, managing a team of 60+ **volunteers** and being a public face in frontline politics

Political Researcher and Consultant: **Freelance** (2008 – 2011)

- Worked with parliamentarians across party lines to **amend primary legislation**, including Lord Ali (the *Equality Act*), Lord Redesdale (the *Climate Change Act*) and Barry Sheerman MP (on environmental justice)
- Produced research for the **think tanks** ResPublica (on political strategy), Ekklesia (on marriage equality and spiritual capital), CentreForum (on migration policy and education), and the Social Market Foundation (on health reform and behavioural economics)
- Advised the Campaign for Dignity in Dying on **policy development** and parliamentary strategy
- **Co-created policy** with stakeholders for the charity SCOPE on disability rights and Independent Advocacy
- Organized events and wrote policy briefings for the All-Party Parliamentary Skills Group and National Skills Commission to **improve the national debate** around vocational education

Communications and Media

I am a versatile content creator who works to short deadlines to provide thoughtful commentary on topical issues as well as in-depth and long-form perspectives and explainers. My media profile spans AI, climate change, international security, futures, and philosophy. I also advise producers and journalists on my areas of expertise.

New Generation Thinker: **AHRC/BBC Radio 3** (2017 -)

- Received advanced media training leading to collaboration with the BBC. **Developed and presented programmes** on population ethics and AI safety and appeared on *NewsNight*, *Sideways*, *Free Thinking*, and *Analysis*
- My work has been **featured** in *The Times's* Pick of the Day and *BBC Radio 4's* Pick of the Week

Author

- My first **trade book**, *Existential Hope*, was published by **Polity** in September 2025
- Published 16 popular articles in venues such as **Quartz**, **BBC Future**, **Quillette**, and **The Sun**
- Published three **academic books**: *An Anthology of Global Risk* (Open Book 2024), *The Era of Global Risk: An Introduction to Existential Risk Studies* (Open Book 2023), and *Double Debt Disaster: Law, Policy, and Social Justice in the wake of Japan's 2011 Tsunami* (Iudicium 2021)
- Published **31 academic papers and book chapters** on ethics, transdisciplinary Existential Risk Studies, foresight, and global systemic transitions in journals such as *Global Sustainability*, *Evaluation*, *Futures*, and *Utilitas*

I have appeared in over 20 TV, Radio, and Podcast and my work has been featured by the **Daily Mail**, **Telegraph**, **Washington Post**, **Grist**, **Vice**, **Quartz**, and other global media outlets

Editorial Board Member: **Futures** (2019 -)

- I promote high standards of **rigour and impact** for transdisciplinary and speculative research papers

Developing Talent

I am not just an expert but a versatile teacher who helps people excel across a wide range of contexts and fields.

I facilitate the AGI Strategy Course run by **BlueDot Impact**.

I mentor students and professionals pursuing high impact careers through **Magnify Mentoring**, **The Effective Thesis Project**, and the **ERA**, **CHIRP**, **Non Trivial**, and **CHERI** fellowships and help to administer the **MATS** programme.

University Teaching (2012 – 25)

- Lectured for the BA in Philosophy, MPhil in Biotechnology, and PhD in AI for Environmental risk (University of Cambridge) and the BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (VU Amsterdam)
- Taught classes/supervisions, marked, and assessed applications for MPhils in *Politics and International Relations* and the *Ethics of AI, Data, and Algorithms* and MSts in *AI, Ethics, and Society* and *Sustainability Leadership* (Cambridge), the MA in *Philosophy* (Groningen), the BA in *Philosophy* (New Hampshire), and the BSc in *Philosophy* (LSE).

Individual tutoring for secondary school students and adult learners (2009 – 15)

- Educational Development Advisor for Insight Education, producing and delivering a tutor training curriculum
- Tutor in Economics and Philosophy for Greater London Tutors, Holland Park Tuition, and Insight Education.

Bibliography of Selected Books, Papers, and Media Articles

- 2026 – How Can Higher Education Survive Transformative AI? (with M. Connelly) in J. Lavista Ferres (ed) *Degrees of Change: What AI Means for Education and the Next Generation* - Wiley
- 2026 – Potential Pathways and Solutions to Acute Food System Crisis in the UK (With Bridle, S et al.) - *Sustainability*
- 2025 – Existential Hope: Facing Our Future When the Signs Look Bad - *Polity Books*
- 2025 – Fairness and Hope - *Fairness Foundation*
- 2025 – Systemic Contributions to Global Catastrophic Risk (with C. Arnscheidt, et al) - *Global Sustainability*
- 2025 – Exploring Futures for the Science of Global Risk (with N. Cooke, et al.) - *Futures*
- 2024 – Evaluating Extreme Technological Risk: a social contract based approach (with P. Kaczmarek) in C Rhodes (ed) *Managing Extreme Technological Risk* - *World Scientific*
- 2024 – ParEvo: A methodology for the exploration and evaluation of alternative futures.(with R. Davis, T. Hobson, & L. Mani) *Evaluation*
- 2024 – Existential Risk, Astronomical Waste, and the Reasonableness of a Pure Time Preference for Wellbeing (with P. Kaczmarek) - *The Monist*
- 2023 – The Era of Global Risk (ed, with M. Rees, C. Richards, & C. Rios Rojas) - *Open Book*
- 2022 – Submission of Evidence to the White House Office of Science and Technology Request for Input to a Five-Year Plan for Research on Climate Intervention (with G. Futerman & G. Gibbons) - *CSEER*
- 2022 – How to Read the Doomsday Clock - *BBC Future, January 20th*
- 2021 – Foresight for unknown, long-term and emerging risks, Approaches and Recommendations: Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning. (with C. Rios Rojas et al.) - *CSEER*
- 2020 – Intrinsic Values of Ecosystems, essay contributed to the Dasgupta Review of the Economics of Biodiversity
- 2020 – AI and Data Governance Issues in Responding to COVID-19 (with J. Bellchamber) - *ALDES*
- 2020 – An Analysis and Evaluation of Methods Currently Used to Quantify Existential Hazards (with T. Rowe & J. Fox) - *Futures*
- 2019 – The Problem with the Trolley Problem - *Quartz, September 27th*
- 2019 – Deep Ethics: the long-term quest to decide right from wrong - *BBC Future, June 18th*
- 2019 – Accumulating Evidence Using Crowdsourcing and Machine Learning: a living bibliography about existential risk and global catastrophic risk (With G. Shackelford, L. et al.) - *Futures*
- 2018 – Humans could be wiped out in dinosaur-style mass extinction (with L. Holt & P Upchurch) - *The Sun, April 2nd*
- 2019 – What are the Biggest Threats to Humanity? (with L. Holt) - *BBC News On-line, February 15th*
- 2018 – The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence: Forecasting, Prevention, and Mitigation (with M. Brundage, S. Avin, et al.) - *FHI, CSEER, Centre for a New American Security, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and OpenAI*
- 2017 – Written Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence (with S. Avin, et al.) - *CSEER*
- 2017 – Climate Change and the Worst-Case Scenario - *IPPR*
- 2017 – Will AI Help Build a Fairer World? the answer is in our hands - *Huffington Post, November 21st*
- 2017 – Why Philosophers Fail to Influence Public Debate: and how they can do better - *Quillette, August 2nd*
- 2009 – Examining, Evaluating, and Exploring Spiritual Capital - *Ekklesia*
- 2009 – A Law Out of Step - *Dignity in Dying*

Referees

Professor Martin Rees – Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge mjr36@cam.ac.uk

Professor Matthew Connelly – Vice Dean of AI Initiatives, University of Columbia mjc96@columbia.edu

Professor Gustaf Arrhenius – Institute for Futures Studies, Stockholm gustaf.arrhenius@iffs.su.se