Dr SJ Beard

AI Risk Research & Policy * Developing People and Ideas * Building Existential Hope
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Qualifications

I hold 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)
PGCE 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 Management, Policy, and Consulting

I leverage my research and policy experience to create impact by creative ideation, informing and persuading decision makers, and partnering to co-create effective solutions. I have worked in policy organizations and run for political office

Research Manager: **Safe AI Forum** (2026 –)

- Helping SAIF produce effective outputs by providing feedback on research, **red-teaming theories of change**, advising on venue selection and submission processes, and flagging escalations to senior leaders.

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

- **Line managed 11 researchers** at a variety of career stages, **recruited 16 new members of staff**, and developed the centre's policies and procedures on visitors, events, fundraising, sickness absence, & disability
- Drove projects to enhance the centre's policy impact, including **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, & retreats
- Raised and **managed over £2.5m** funding from Templeton and Grantham Foundations, Isaac Newton Trust, & others
- Developed and managed key p**artnerships 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, & contributing to the *Dasgupta Review of the Economics of Biodiversity Loss* for HM Treasury

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

- Provided political advice and parliamentary introductions to establish the group and developed an event series and report on Technological Risk. Worked with *Today for Tomorrow* to draft a ***Welfare of Future Generations Bill***

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

- Ran a parliamentary campaign, managing a team of 6**0+ volunteers** and being a public face in frontline politics

Political Researcher and Strategy Consultant: **Freelance** (2008 – 2012)

- Worked with parliamentarians across party lines to **amend primary legislation**, including the *Equality Act* (paving the way for marriage equality) and *Climate Change Act* (enhancing the system of feed in tariffs)
- **Think tank** researcher for *ResPublica* (on social capital & political strategy), *Ekklesia* (spiritual capital & marriage equality), *CentreForum* (migration & education), & the *Social Market Foundation* (health & 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*, via *Policy Connect*, to **improve the national debate** around vocational education

Research

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

PIBBSS Fellow: P**rinciples of Intelligence** (2026)

- Developing **sociotechnical** approaches to AI Safety and Alignment including a novel taxonomy of agency and tools for Unsupervised Value Discovery to help us understand how humans and AI systems might interact and collaborate

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

- Horizon Scanning Transformative AI in 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 to enhance the productivity of our team, combining systems thinking, foresight, philosophy, & policy analysis
- Built a comprehensive **methodological toolkit** for the x-risk community, covering participatory foresight, horizon scanning, risk assessment, & 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* interdisciplinary research programmes
- **Expert** on transformative AI, global governance, systemic risk, extreme climate change, & ethics
- Lead the establishment of the **world's first Master's degree** programme, the *MPhil in Global Risk and Resilience*

Postdoctoral Researcher: **Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge** (2016 – 19) & **Future of Humanity Institute, University of Oxford** (2015 – 2016)

- Co-authored *The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence* & lead evidence submissions to Parliamentary inquiries on AI
- Devised frameworks for evaluating extreme technological risk including **new approaches** to ethics and foresight
- Integrated demographic, social, and environmental research for Hilary Greaves's early work on global priorities

Developing Talent

> *I use my expertise and judgement to advise, mentor, and teach people to excel across a wide range of contexts and fields. Students I have mentored have gone on to high impact careers with* UK AISI, ALLFED, *the* Federal Communications Commission, *&* Bedrock Philanthropy *and research positions at the* University of Oxford, LSE, and *S*chmidt Sciences.

Facilitator for the AGI Strategy and Frontier AI Governance Courses and career advisor with **BlueDot Impact**

I mentor students and professionals pursuing high impact careers through ***M*agnify Mentoring**, **The Effective Thesis Project**, and the **ERA**, **CHIRP**, **Non Trivial**, & **CHERI** fellowships, and assess applications to the **MATS** programme

University Teaching (2012 – 25)

- Lectured for the BA in Philosophy, MPhil in Biotechnology, & 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), & the BSc in *Philosophy* (LSE)

I produced and delivered a curriculum for **Insight Education** to support disadvantaged Oxbridge applicants and gave 1 to 1 tuition for A-level students and adult learners in Economics & Philosophy (2009 – 15)

Communications and Media

> *I am a versatile creator working to short deadlines to provide thoughtful commentary on topical issues as well as in-depth and long-form perspectives and explainers. I also advise producers and journalists on my areas of expertise.*

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, WIRED***, and other global media outlets

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***, ***Quilette***, & ***The Sun***
- Published three **academic books**: *An Anthology of Global Risk* (Open Book 2024), *The Era of Global Risk* (Open Book 2023), & *Double Debt Disaster* (Iudicium 2021)
- Authored 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*, & *Utilitas*

New Generation Thinker: **AHRC/BBC** (2017 –)

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

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

- Promoting high standards of **rigour and impact** for transdisciplinary and speculative papers on AI and existential risk

Selected Papers, Reports, and Popular Articles

2026 Agency is not a natural kind (and why that might matter for alignment) – LessWrong

2026 Guiding Principles for Modelling-based Papers Published in Futures (With J. Derbyshire et al) – *Futures*

2026 How Can Higher Education Survive Transformative AI? (with M. Connelly) in 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 S. Bridle et al.) – *Sustainability*

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 Financing our Final Hour (With L. Kemp et al) in Beard & Hobson (ed) An Anthology of Global Risk – *Open Book*

2024 ParEvo: A methodology for the exploration and evaluation of alternative futures (with R. Davis, T. Hobson, & L. Mani) – *Evaluation*

2024 Diversity and Inclusion in Existential Risk Studies (with S. Levy) – *CSER*

2024 Existential Risk, Astronomical Waste, and the Reasonableness of a Pure Time Preference for Wellbeing (with P. Kaczmarek) – *The Monist*

2023 Managing the Contribution of Solar Radiation Modification and Climate Change to Global Catastrophic Risk (with G. Futerman) – *CSER*

2022 On Theory X and What Matters Most (with P. Kaczmarek) in J. McMahan et al. (ed) *Ethics and Existence – OUP*

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) – *CSER*

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.) – *CSER*

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*

2019 Deep Ethics: the long-term quest to decide right from wrong – *BBC Future*

2019 Accumulating Evidence Using Crowdsourcing and Machine Learning: a living bibliography about existential risk and global catastrophic risk (With G. Shackelford et al.) – *Futures*

2019 Humans Could Be Wiped Out in a Dinosaur-style Mass Extinction (with L. Holt & P Upchurch) – *The Sun*

2019 What are the Biggest Threats to Humanity? (with L. Holt) – *BBC News On-line*

2018 The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence: Forecasting, Prevention, and Mitigation (with M. Brundage, S. Avin, et al.) – *FHI, CSER, 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.) – *CSER*

2017 Climate Change and the Worst-Case Scenario – *Institute for Public Policy Research*

2017 Will AI Help Build a Fairer World? the answer is in our hands – *Huffington Post*

2017 Why Philosophers Fail to Influence Public Debate: and how they can do better (with M. Plant) – *Quillette*

2016 Scientists Aren't Always the Best People to Evaluate the Risks of Scientific Research – *Practical Ethics in the News*

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