



# MARK NICHOLS

*Industry: Private Sector Consultancy*

## CURRENT ROLE

- Principal Consultant

## EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **BSc (Hons) Environmental Resource Management**, UWE Bristol
- **MSc Environmental Policy**, University of Bristol
- **Consultant**, Air Quality (2 years)
- **Senior Consultant** (5 years)
- **Associate** (1.5 years)
- **Principal Consultant** (2.5 years)
- **IAQM** Committee Member
- **Associate Research Fellow**, Centre of Earth Observation Science, University of Brighton (2020–2024)

## HOW HIS PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- I didn't have a clear career path early on—I was broadly interested in environmental issues and eager to explore different disciplines. Even during my MSc, I wasn't sure where I'd specialize. Over time, I found a balance between private-sector consultancy and academic contributions, preparing air quality impact assessments while engaging in research and presenting at conferences. My journey has reinforced that career paths don't have to be linear, and opportunities often emerge through experience.

## CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- Working in air quality consultancy is highly rewarding. There's a strong sense of purpose in contributing to environmental protection and sustainable development. I also enjoy the variety—balancing technical analysis, fieldwork, and strategic project planning keeps things engaging. The impact of my work, from policy influence to real-world environmental improvements, is incredibly fulfilling.

## FUTURE PLANS

- I plan to stay in private sector consultancy because of the diverse opportunities for collaboration. I work with professionals from a range of disciplines—transport planners, ecologists, engineers—creating endless opportunities for cross-sector learning. The variety and fast-paced nature of consultancy make it an exciting and fulfilling career choice.

## ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Stay in your own lane. Don't compare your progress to others—air quality is a broad field with space for different specialisms.
- ☒ Join a professional body early. Organizations like the IAQM offer networking, mentorship, and career development opportunities that become invaluable over time.
- ☒ Build connections. Attending early career events and engaging with professional networks can open unexpected doors.