



# PAUL YOUNG

*Industry: Climate Risk*

## CURRENT ROLE

- Head of Science, JBA Risk Management (2.5 years)
- Visiting Professor, Newcastle University (0.5 years)

## EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **MSci Chemistry with Environmental Science** – University of Bristol (4 years)
- **PhD Atmospheric Chemistry** – University of Cambridge (~4 years)
- **Postdoctoral Researcher** – University of Cambridge (1 year)
- **Postdoctoral Researcher/Research Scientist** – NOAA/University of Colorado (4 years)
- **Lecturer** – Lancaster University (5 years)
- **Senior Lecturer** – Lancaster University (5 years)
- **Transition to Industry** – JBA Risk Management

## HOW HIS PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- I never expected to leave academia. Despite knowing how competitive it is to secure a permanent academic job, often relying on luck, I became increasingly frustrated with the bureaucracy and the declining conditions in the sector. Looking back, I wish I had received more support with grant applications early in my career, especially in handling rejections. Having mentorship in grant writing would have been incredibly beneficial for me as a new researcher.

## CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- I enjoy my current role, which lets me play to my strengths, contribute to scientific strategy, and bridge the gap between academia, industry, and regulatory bodies. I value the freedom to shape my work and engage in areas like staff training, marketing, and product development. My career took an unexpected turn from academia to industry, driven by frustrations with increasing managerialism, research funding challenges, and deteriorating working conditions in academia. However, my skills transferred well, making the transition smooth.

## FUTURE PLANS

- Yes. My current job was a good “soft landing” from academia, and it is one that I have been fortunate enough to largely shape myself. I have been pleased to find that the bits I like from academia (see Q1) are also very transferable into this industry.

## ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Explore opportunities – Attend seminars and events; you never know what might lead to your next job or inspire new research.
- ☒ Network – Speaking to professionals in various roles helps map out career possibilities.
- ☒ Consider alternatives to academia – Industry also offers fulfilling research careers.
- ☒ Recognise trade-offs – Academia provides intellectual freedom but comes with grant struggles, while industry can have a more direct impact but may limit research focus.
- ☒ Seek mentorship – Pairing new academics with experienced researchers for grant writing could improve success rates.
- ☒ Remember – Your job doesn't define your entire identity!