

SARAH NOLES

BA, MA

Sarah Noles is a social scientist who draws on her interdisciplinary background in media, communications, and sociology to advance evidence-based engagement and impact research.

She holds an MA (Distinction) in Media, Campaigning and Social Change from the University of Westminster and a first-class BA (Hons) in Sociology from the University of Warwick. Her work focuses on harnessing research for social change, specializing in civic engagement, impact evaluation, stakeholder research, strategic communications, and responsible research and innovation (RRI).

Sarah's expertise spans a range of research methodologies and public engagement practices. She has designed and implemented qualitative and quantitative research instruments to evaluate programs and communication campaigns, including surveys, in-depth interviews, and content analyses. She regularly works with diverse stakeholders through focus groups and participatory workshops, ensuring that evaluation processes remain inclusive and grounded in real-world perspectives. In her role with IMI, Sarah develops theories of change and evidence-based communication strategies that help translate research findings into practice. Her approach is informed by Responsible Research and Innovation principles, emphasizing ethics, stakeholder involvement, and societal relevance in every project.

CAREER HISTORY

2022 - Present

Research Assistant (part-time) | Scotland's Rural College

Research Assistant contributing to the successful execution of work packages focused on natural capital governance in European peatlands and broader natural capital research initiatives throughout Scotland within SRUC's Thriving Natural Capital Challenge Centre. Currently, her primary responsibilities involve crafting theories of change for Scottish Government policy initiatives aimed at accelerating the scope and pace of nature restoration efforts. Additionally, she is actively developing research impact plans, rooted in comprehensive stakeholder analyses, for an EU-funded project dedicated to creating tools and guidelines for wetland restoration across Europe.

She has coordinated and developed communications to engage policy, public sector, civil society, and academic stakeholders for impact planning work. She leads research instrument design, including surveys, interview guides, qualitative coding guides, implements data collection methods, interviews, and participatory workshops. She has also scoped and designed project management plans and tools for two multi-year research projects.

2020 - Present

Research and Training Officer | Institute for Methods Innovation

Involved in research instrument design, data collection, data analysis, reporting, and project management across several projects.

2019

Research Intern | *Institute for Methods Innovation*

Provided research support on two European Commission-funded research projects:

- **RRING** (Responsible Research and Innovation Networking Globally): Conducted secondary qualitative data analysis of interviews with researchers involved in existing RRI networks and produced the report.
- **QUEST** (Quality and Effectiveness in Science and Technology communication): Conducted interviews with leading international science communicators in museums to investigate quality in science communication. Was involved in the analysis of the resulting qualitative data and the production of data analysis reports.

2018

Research and Engagement Intern | *Colchester Borough Council*

- Produced a customer insight research report commissioned by Colchester Events Company, leading to direct actionable marketing recommendations.
- Utilized a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including analysis of quantitative website analytics, social media analytics, survey data, and customer segmentation software Mosaic.
- Shadowed the Customer Change Manager at meetings regarding improvement programs and presented a research report to senior staff.

EDUCATION

2020 - 2022

MA Media, Campaigning and Social Change – *Distinction*

University of Westminster | United Kingdom

Modules include: Critical Issues in Campaigning, Strategic Campaign Communications, Media Activism and Politics, Social Media, Media Audiences in the Digital Age, Media and Content Strategy.

Conducting thesis action research/professional project based on a live brief co-developed with Green New Deal Rising (Green New Deal UK) to develop a digital canvassing communication strategy and volunteer training resources.

2016 – 2019

BA Sociology – *First Class Honours*

University of Warwick | United Kingdom

Dissertation: Perceptions of Sustainable Lifestyles on Instagram: The Governmentalities of Nature 2.0

Modules include: How Sociology Can Save the Environment, Political Sociology, Designing and Conducting Social Research, Multivariate Secondary Analysis of Social Data, Sociology of Gender, Modern Social Theory, Transnational Media Ecologies, Sociology of Health and Illness, Crime and Society.

Paper published in *Warwick Sociology Journal* Vol. 2 Issue 2: Technology and Markets pp. 42-53

Presented dissertation research at the *International Conference of Undergraduate Research 2019*

2014 – 2016	Colchester Sixth Form College A Levels English Literature (A*), Psychology (A), Sociology (A*), Philosophy (A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received The Gilbert School Award for Academic Achievement • Various student ambassador roles
2009 – 2014	The Gilbert School Received awards in History and French for academic excellence GCSEs 5 A*s 6 As, including English and Mathematics

GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS

Since 2018, Sarah has contributed to numerous research and innovation projects across Europe and globally. She has helped deliver multi-year initiatives with international consortia and multi-million Euro budgets, in projects funded by agencies such as the European Commission, national research councils, and international organizations like the European Space Agency.

EU CIEMBLY: Creating an Inclusive European Citizens' Assembly

European Commission Horizon Research and Innovation Action (2024-)

Budget: €2,106,591.25

Hypop: HYdrOgen Public OPiniOn and acceptance

European Commission Horizon2020 Innovation Action (2023-)

Budget: €1,062,755

Theory of Change Capacity Building for the University of Glasgow

NERC (Natural Environment Research Council) (2023)

PrePARED Stakeholder Network Analysis and Communication Strategy

Offshore Wind Crown Estate (2023)

Wet Horizons: upgrading knowledge and solutions to fast-track wetland restoration across Europe

European Commission Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action (2022-2026)

Budget: €5,561,610 | www.wethorizons.eu

Galvanising Change in Natural Capital: Exploring if and how the concept of 'Natural Capital' can influence decision-making in support of sustainability and a Just Transition.

Scottish Government RESAS Strategic Research Programme (SRP) 2022-27

GlobalSCAPE: Global Science Communication and Perception

European Commission Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Action (2021-2023)

Budget: €1,199,937 | www.rring.eu

Project Ô: Demonstration of planning and technology tools for a circular, integrated, and symbiotic use of water

European Commission Horizon 2020 Innovation (2018-2022)

Budget: €10,569,305 | www.eu-project-o.eu

RRING: Responsible Research and Innovation Networking Globally

European Commission Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation (2018–2021)

Budget: ~€3 million | www.rring.eu

TeRRIFICA: Territorial Responsible Research and Innovation Fostering Innovative Climate Action

European Commission Horizon 2020 Coordination and Support Action (2018-2022)

Budget: €1,999,953 | www.terrifica.eu

European Researchers' Nights

European Commission Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action

Impact Capability at the University of Sussex: a demand and gap analysis

University of Sussex

CREW Strategic Impact Review (enhancing information flow and maximising impact)

Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW)

Sustainable Palm Oil Campaign Evaluation

Chester Zoo

Australian Research Data Commons: Investigating the Link Between Research Data and Impact

Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC)

SFI Science in Ireland Barometer 2020/2021

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)

Cosmic Vision Public Consultation

European Space Agency (ESA)

PUBLICATIONS

Sarah has co-authored peer-reviewed research focused on advancing research methods and impact. For example, she was a contributing author on a 2022 Open Research Europe study that piloted an innovative diary-based survey design for science communicators, improving methods for longitudinal engagement research. Additionally, she co-authored a 2025 Journal of Environmental Management article that introduced the 3i framework, analyzing stakeholder relevance in environmental decision-making processes by interests, influence, and impact. Sarah is also collaborating on forthcoming publications examining how research data and stakeholder engagement translate into positive policy impacts in areas such as environmental management, including an evaluation of how research programs influence public policy using an evidence-based theory of change.

Articles in International Peer-reviewed Journals

Jensen, E. A., Noles, S., Reed, M. S., & Lang, P. (*under development*). How can a research program influence public policy? Evaluating a decade of research impact using an evidence-based theory of change.

Reed, M. S., Jensen, E. A., Noles, S., Conneely, D., Kendall, H., Raley, M., Tarrant, A., Oakley, N., Hinson, C., Hoare, V., Marshall, K. & Pugliese, L. (2025). Analyzing who is relevant to engage in environmental decision-making processes by interests, influence and impact: The 3i framework. *Journal of Environmental Management*. Volume 373. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2024.123437

Jensen, E. A., Jensen, A. M., & Noles, S. & Pflieger, A. (2022). Developing and testing the GlobalSCAPE science communicator diary survey: Methodological pilot research findings to improve a repeated-measures survey design. *Open Research Europe*. DOI: 10.12688/openreseurope.14246.1