

Newcastle upon Tyne and Durham, United Kingdom
Tuesday 6 – Friday 9 May 2025

CALL FOR PARTICIPATING RESEARCHERS

Version 20250207

<https://www.britishcouncil.jp/en/programmes/higher-education/university-industry-partnership/renkei>

1 WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Title: RENKEI Just Transitions Week, May 2025

Dates: Tuesday 6 – Friday 9 May 2025

Venues: **Newcastle University** (6 May 2025)

(Address: Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, United Kingdom)

Durham University (7-9 May 2025)

(Address: Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE United Kingdom)

Hosts: **Newcastle University** (6 May 2025), **Durham University** (7-9 May)

Funder: RENKEI (administered by British Council, the RENKEI Secretariat)

1.1 BACKGROUND

RENKEI

RENKEI is a partnership of eleven leading universities in the UK and Japan, with the British Council acting as its secretariat. The UK members are Durham University, University of Edinburgh, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, Newcastle University, University of Southampton. The Japan members are Keio University, Kyushu University, Ritsumeikan University, Sophia University, Tohoku University.

The consortium was established in March 2012 and April 2025 will mark the beginning of a new chapter, RENKEI 3. Building on the learnings gained and relationships strengthened over the last decade, RENKEI has clearer and bigger ambitions for promoting knowledge exchange and research collaboration between the UK and Japan.

Since 2018, RENKEI has been focusing on ‘climate change’ and ‘health’ as its themes for research collaboration. Both were included in the ‘Japan-UK Joint Declaration on Prosperity Cooperation’ released jointly by the Japanese and UK Prime Ministers in September 2017 as part of the key framework of cooperation. RENKEI continues to develop these themes and align them ever more closely with national and international priorities.

RENKEI WORKSHOPS

RENKEI provides a unique opportunity to bring together researchers from leading universities in the UK and Japan. RENKEI workshops have been a vehicle for bringing researchers together, especially those still within the early stages of their career (ECRs). Previous workshops addressing climate change and health have been held in a range of face-to-face and online formats and have sparked new collaborations, some of which have been awarded RENKEI seed funding.

1.2 AIMS

- Provide an international peer networking opportunity for ECRs from the UK and Japan.
- Stimulate UK-Japan bilateral partnership working.
- Support interdisciplinary research activity.
- Strengthen ties between RENKEI members.
- Create links with stakeholders in the UK-Japan relationship.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

We hope participation in the workshop will spark ideas for potential future collaborations in the long-term. Participants will:

- Meet, connect, and exchange views with diverse delegates.
- Have the opportunity to share their work and interests with international peers.
- Gain understanding of diverse research interests that RENKEI member universities have.

1.4 THE RENKEI JUST TRANSITIONS WEEK

Transitions in Northeast England day (hosted by Newcastle University)

With so many RENKEI colleagues making the journey to northeast England, Newcastle University is pleased to be able to take the opportunity to welcome everyone to the area prior to the start of the workshops hosted in Durham. This will be an opportunity to understand the context in which both Durham and Newcastle universities have developed since the 1830s, and hear from Newcastle university researchers on the research partnerships they have developed over the years. The day will also be an opportunity for researchers to get to know each other and introduce their research interests, starting conversations which can continue throughout the week.

RENKEI workshop: Just Transitions to a Net Zero World (hosted by Durham University)

Durham University is delighted to invite ECRs from RENKEI universities to take part in the RENKEI Just Transition to a Net Zero World inter-disciplinary workshop on 7-9 May 2025. We look forward to building on the Kyushu RENKEI workshop to strengthen further RENKEI research collaborations in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The workshop will provide a platform for early career researchers, including post-docs, PhDs students and advanced post-graduate research students who work on sustainability challenges and/or themes pertaining to just transitions. The workshop will have a strong emphasis on (1) building on existing collaborations; (2) partnership-building and developing new collaborations between early career researchers (ECRs) and more senior academic colleagues to help develop research partnerships (e.g. co-publications, joint research projects); and (3) providing continuity for the work undertaken during the December 2024 Kyushu RENKEI climate/ energy workshop to help secure external research funding.

The workshop is intended to provide an informal and constructive setting for early-career researchers to:

- Develop and shape the existing RENKEI network further to advance the theme of just transitions, with an intergenerational focus.
- Take stock of progress and showcase research proposals from the Kyushu RENKEI climate/ energy workshop.
- Identify and present joint research projects for external research funding, which will be pitched at the end of the workshop and developed further by RENKEI teams.
- Share Durham, the UK and Japan's approach and strategic vision for sustainability and just transition research.

The overall goal is to develop inter-disciplinary co-publications and research proposals, building on the Kyushu workshop, including from external research funding sources.

During the workshop, RENKEI researchers will be put into groups to prepare a research proposal on Just Transitions, which will be pitched to a mock grant panel on Friday 9 May 2025.

1.5 THEMES

RENKEI workshop: Just Transitions to a Net Zero World (hosted by Durham University)

The workshop will be led by Durham's JusTNOW (<https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/csdlp/justn0w/>) initiative, which aims to develop a world-leading interdisciplinary work

programme, to research sustainable and just solutions for accelerated decarbonisation of economies and to achieve lasting societal well-being for the present and future generations.

To help shape the workshop and organise the researchers into groups, researchers will be asked, when registering, to confirm, which one of the following five themes matches their research interests:

- **Theme One:** Just transitions in urban environments Cities and urban areas are particularly relevant in achieving just transitions in response to climate change, as the critical sites of greenhouse gas emissions that drive global climate change and as areas that will feel many of the most severe impacts of climate change.
- **Theme Two:** Just transitions within industries and sectors Ensuring just transitions whilst tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is key to supporting inclusive economies and societies in the future.
- **Theme Three:** Just transitions and policy impacts We need to tackle climate change and biodiversity; identify the potential disruption and opportunity of decarbonising economies and societies, and recommend options and pathways for communities, workers, businesses, policymakers and the wider public.
- **Theme Four:** Climate Justice: Unequal access to clean and affordable energy and green finance.
- **Theme Five:** Managing just transitions to improve public health and address public health inequalities relative to climate change injustices.

1.6 PARTICIPANT PROFILE / ELIGIBILITY

- RENKEI member university academics:
(ideally) a balanced mix of ECRs, mid-career and senior with an interest in developing (new) international collaborations and interdisciplinary working.
- **UK member institutions** are expected to nominate:
in total 4 researchers (e.g. 3 ECRs and 1 senior/mid-career researcher).
- **JP member institutions** are expected to nominate:
around 3 researchers (e.g. 2 ECRs and 1 senior/mid-career researcher).

The interdisciplinary nature of Just Transitions means that the scope of the week is deliberately broad and inclusive. We invite researchers working on sustainability challenges from a range of disciplinary angles, including, but not limited to:

- Law
- Health
- Political Science
- International Relations
- Geography
- Business
- Engineering
- Environmental Science
- Computer Science
- Humanities

RENKEI researcher career stage definitions

Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

The current **RENKEI definition for 'Early Career Researcher'** is:

An Early Career Researcher (ECR) is an individual in the early stages of building their academic identity through research, teaching, publication, and professional development. The designation of ECR often includes those transitioning from doctoral studies to independent academic roles, such as postdoctoral fellows, early-stage lecturers, or assistant professors. ECRs face unique challenges, including securing funding, establishing collaborations, and balancing research with teaching and service responsibilities, all while striving to create a sustainable and impactful

academic trajectory. These challenges are particularly pronounced for those seeking to develop international linkages, underscoring the importance of programmes like ours.

This will include:

- PhD students or post-docs
- Affiliated with RENKEI member institutions.
- Highly motivated to communicate with other participants to expand their network and eager to contribute further to RENKEI activities.

Senior or mid-career researchers

During the Just Transitions workshop, RENKEI researchers will be put into groups to prepare a research proposal on Just Transitions, which will be pitched to a mock grant panel on the morning of Friday 9 May. For some ECRs, this may be their first exposure to participating in an interdisciplinary research workshop. It is expected that participating mid and senior researchers will informally mentor and support the ECRs to help them develop interdisciplinary group research proposals during the course of the workshop.

1.7 WHAT TO EXPECT

Transitions in Northeast England day (hosted by Newcastle University)

- Visit to the “Steam to Green” exhibition, celebrating local industrial transition.
- Presentations from and discussions with researchers working with local partners for greater impact.
- Opportunity to get to know colleagues before group work in Durham.
- Dinner, and group transport to Durham in the evening.

RENKEI workshop: Just Transitions to a Net Zero World (hosted by Durham University)

- The workshop will be led by academics from Durham’s JusTN0W initiative (<https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/csdlp/justn0w/>) – a £5m Durham Strategic Research Fund.
- The JusTN0W initiative aims to develop a world-leading interdisciplinary work programme, to research sustainable and just solutions for accelerated decarbonisation of economies, and to achieve lasting societal well-being for the present and future generations.
- This workshop builds on the Southampton, Keio and Kyushu workshops; RENKEI priority themes; and UK-Japan joint research and political priorities.
- The workshop aims to provide a platform for early career researchers who work on sustainability challenges and/or themes relating to just transitions to develop networks and establish new collaborations.
- During the workshop, RENKEI researchers will be put into groups to prepare a research proposal on Just Transitions, which will be pitched to a mock grant panel on Friday 9 May.
- The workshop will include presentations from ECRs who have secured research funding to undertake research relating to Just Transitions; a guest lecture on the role of academia in Just Transitions; and research funders.

1.8 SUPPORT FOR TRAVELLING TO THE WORKSHOP

RENKEI will provide the following travel grants to support researchers participating in the RENKEI Just Transitions Week.

Travel grant for researchers of RENKEI JAPAN member institutions

A travel grant of 3,000 GBP (lump sum) will be made available to each Japan RENKEI member institution (NOT individual researchers) that sends at least two ECRs. Coordinators of Japan RENKEI member institutions wishing to apply for this Travel Grant should contact the RENKEI Secretariat by **Monday 24 March 2025** for details on the application process.

Travel support for researchers of RENKEI UK member institutions

A total of 3,000 GBP has been set aside as travel support for each UK RENKEI member institution that sends at least two ECRs. This will be allocated as follows:

The University of **Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool and Southampton** will be eligible to receive paid for accommodation (single rooms) at the Radisson Blu Hotel Durham) for two participating ECRs per institution, (up to a value equivalent to 810 GBP per institution), between the nights of 6-8 May (check-in 6 May, check-out 9 May). Each institution will need to make the hotel booking using the discount code as set out in section 3.2.

To benefit from this travel support, the RENKEI Coordinators from the eligible institutions must notify the Secretariat of the dates and number of rooms they require by **midnight on Thursday 20 March 2025**.

Newcastle University will be allocated a nominal sum to cover the local transport (train/bus) for participating ECRs.

No travel support will be available for ECRs of **Durham** University (host university).

1.9 REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Registration for researchers and RENKEI Steering Committee Members, RENKEI Coordinators wishing to participate in the RENKEI Just Transitions Week programme (including for the RENKEI reception and Steering Committee Meeting) is now open. Please register from the online form or contact the Secretariat to request an alternative method of signing up.

Registration form URL: <https://forms.office.com/e/4nq2QnZAKA>

Given the funding available to cover travel costs to take part in the Just Transitions Week as set out in paragraph 1.8, we ask that all RENKEI Coordinators engage with researchers from their institutions to coordinate researcher participation and registration.

As part of the registration form, we ask that all researchers provide a paragraph setting out their biography and research interests to help ensure that they are put in suitable research groups for the workshop.

Registration deadline:

12:00 (noon) UK time / 21:00 Japan time on **Friday 28 February 2025**

Registration acceptance:

Acceptance of registration will be communicated to RENKEI Coordinators and researchers by early March 2025.

Participant confirmation:

To confirm participation, accepted researchers will be required to register further details and complete a pre-participation online questionnaire. They will also be asked to provide an abstract (no more than 300 words) setting out their research interests and initial themes for Just Transition Research Proposals they would like to pursue with fellow RENKEI ECRs during the workshop.

Ahead of the Just Transitions week, we will hold pre-departure briefings for the UK and Japanese RENKEI researchers.

2 PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

Tuesday 6 May 2025 hosted by Newcastle University

	Tue 6 May
AM	Registration from 10:00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided tour of the Steam to Green Exhibition. Time to explore some of the Discovery Museum To have time to view the museum and join a tour, please arrive by 10:30 Session 1 (approx. 11:30-13:00) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Researcher introductions round 1 Partnerships at Newcastle Helix – presentation and discussion
Lunch	Networking Lunch
PM	Session 2 (approx. 14:30-17:00) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher introductions round 2 Partnerships at Newcastle – presentation and discussion Break, opportunity for a short campus tour
Dinner	Welcome dinner (18:00-20:00)
	Group transport to Durham (Radisson Blu Hotel)

Please note that the above is subject to change, and a confirmed schedule will be shared in April. Participants whose attendance is limited by travel arrangements should contact nicola.brooks@newcastle.ac.uk to make arrangements.

Wednesday 7 – Friday 9 May 2025 hosted by Durham University

	Day 1: Wed 7 May	Day 2: Thu 8 May	Day 3: Fri 9 May
AM	08.10 Depart Radisson Blu Hotel 08.45-09.00 Registration 09.00-10.30 <Session 1> Opening session and ice breakers on research interests 10.30-12.00 <Session 2> Just transitions and the RENKEI context	08.30 Depart Radisson Blu Hotel 09.00-10.00 <Session 5> The role of academia in Just Transitions <Short break> 10.15-11.15 <Session 6> Site visit 11.15-12.45 <Tour of Durham>	08.30 Depart Radisson Blu Hotel 09.00-10.00 <Session 8> Preparations for the mock panel 10.00-12.00 <Session 9> Group pitches to the mock panel 12.00-12.15 <Session 10> Workshop conclusions
Lunch	12.00-13.00 <Welcome lunch> (on campus)	13.00-14.00 <Lunch> (on campus)	12.15-13.30 <Lunch> (on campus)

PM	13.15-14.15 <Session 3> Examples of existing Just Transitions research 14.30-17.30 <Session 4> Group session to develop research proposals	14.00-17.00 <Session 7> Group session to develop research proposals ===== Parallel programme: 14.00-16.00 RENKEI Steering Committee Meeting (SCM)	13.45-15.00 <Tour of Durham research institutes> Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience 15.30-16.30 <Farewell Tea>
Dinner	18.00-20.00 Reception at Oriental Museum (Canapes provided)	18.30-20.30 Dinner	--

We will provide a finalised programme in April, which will be sent to all participants.

3 TRAVEL INFORMATION

3.1 VENUE DETAILS

Newcastle University:

Address: King's Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, United Kingdom

Webpage: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/>

Durham University: Lower Mountjoy Campus

Address: Stockton Road, Durham, Durham City DH1 3UP United Kingdom

Webpage: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/>

3.2 ACCOMMODATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Accommodation must be arranged and paid for by participants or their institutions.

The University of **Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool and Southampton** will be eligible to receive paid for accommodation (single rooms) at the Radisson Blu Hotel Durham) for two participating ECRs per institution, (up to a value equivalent to 810 GBP per institution), between the nights of 6-8 May (check-in 6 May, check-out 9 May). This will be paid for by Durham University through the RENKEI domestic travel support fund. Each institution will need to make the hotel booking using the discount code as set out in section 3.2.

Accommodation in Newcastle for the night of Monday 5 May (and before)

For participants arriving in Newcastle before the morning of Tuesday 6 May, there are many hotels in and around Newcastle. Prices below are for a standard double room with breakfast, flexible rates are more expensive. Prices may increase, and any university discount is subject to availability.

Hotel	Approx. price	Notes
Sandman Signature Hotel W: https://www.sandmansignature.co.uk/newcastle A: Gallowgate, NE1 4SD T: +44 191 229 2600	£93 pp/pn	Membership discounts available
Hampton by Hilton W: https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/nclhxhx-hampton-newcastle/ A: Baron House, Neville Street, NE1 5EN T: +44 191 500 5001	£106 pp/pn	Discounted rate: £92 Please mention Newcastle University when booking
Maldron Hotel W: https://www.maldronhotels.com/newcastle/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5YmVs9CViwMV-ZZQBh14WzOPEAAYASAAEgJsxfD_BwE&qclsrc=aw.ds	£75 pp/pn	

A: 17 Newgate Street, NE1 5RE T: +44 191 640 9500		
MotelOne W: https://www.motel-one.com/en/hotels/newcastle A: 15-25 High Bridge, NE1 1EW T: +44 191 2111090	£73 pp/pn	

NOTE: It is also feasible to extend your stay in Durham at the Radisson Blue Hotel (see below), and travel to Newcastle by train or bus on the morning of Tuesday 6 May.

Accommodation in Durham for the nights of Wednesday 6-8 May

A special corporate rate for RENKEI participants for the evenings of 6-8 May 2025 at Radisson Blu Hotel Durham.

Hotel: Radisson Blu Hotel Durham

W: <https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-durham>

A: Frankland Lane, Durham

T: + 44 191 3727200

The special corporate rate for RENKEI participants:

- Is £135 per night for a single room (or £145 per night for a double room).
- Is a special rate available for the nights of **6-8 May 2025 only** (does not apply for nights of 5 or 9 May 2025).
- Includes breakfast and use of the leisure facilities.
- Is a flexible rate, which allows **payment on arrival** and free cancellation up to 21 days before arrival.
- Is available for **bookings made by 25 March 2025**.

How to book with the special rate:

1. Access the hotel website from the following URL link: <https://bit.ly/3COL448>
2. Under the 'Special Rates' tab select 'Promotional Code' and enter 'RENKEI'

Each institution will need to make their own hotel booking.

After 25 March 2025, bookings made through the hotel website will be priced at the standard rate quoted/available at the time of booking.

3.3 Getting to the venue

6 May in Newcastle

A meeting point (and alternative options) in central Newcastle for the morning of 6 May will be communicated to participants in advance. Colleagues from Newcastle University will escort participants from the meeting point to the programme venue.

7-9 May in Durham

Workshop participants will be met by colleagues from Durham University at the Radisson Blu Hotel Durham each morning, to travel as a group to the workshop venue.

Colleagues who do not stay at the Hotel Radisson Blu will need to make their own way to the workshop venue.