

**The 129th GIST Seminar**

*Are we all metascientists now?*

*The changing landscape for evidence, analysis and strategic intelligence in  
research policy and funding*

**Speaker**

**Prof. James Wilsdon**

**Executive Director, Research on Research Institute (RoRI)**

**Professor of Research Policy, Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy  
(STeAPP), University College London**



- ◆ **Date:** 16:30-18:00, October 9<sup>th</sup> Wed, 2024 (Doors open at 16:00)
- ◆ **Venue:** 4th Floor, Lecture Room A, GRIPS and Online  
<http://www.grips.ac.jp/en/about/access/>
- ◆ **Organizer:** GRIPS Innovation, Science and Technology Policy Program (GIST)
- ◆ **Language:** English
- ◆ **Registration;**

Please register via this registration form (<https://forms.gle/jJFFuFjgb74eYvBF6>) by 16:00, October 9<sup>th</sup>, Wed. If you cannot open the form, please send email to GIST Secretariat, [gist-ml@grips.ac.jp](mailto:gist-ml@grips.ac.jp). Registration email must include: 1) your name, 2) institution, 3) position, and 4) e-mail address.

## ◆ Outline

Since 2000, global investment in R&D has risen to over US \$2.5 trillion a year. This has been accompanied by heightened aspirations and sharper accountabilities for the R&D system. And it has spurred an expansion of research on research—also known as [meta-research](#), [metascience](#) or the [science of science](#)—which has grown in volume and visibility. Such work aims to better understand research systems; to ensure that R&D resources are invested strategically; and to underpin improvements to the ways that outcomes are disseminated, measured and evaluated.

These agendas are not new: metascience builds on a rich history of research into R&D systems. But there is also a growing cadre of researchers deploying new tools and data-driven methodologies to investigate the scientific process. And several governments have launched new programs for metascience, including:

- UK, where the government has established an in-house [Metascience Unit](#) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has set up a [metascience grants scheme](#).
- Canada, which will soon launch a [new cross-agency funding call for meta-research](#);
- Norway which recently ran an [expanded call for "research on research & innovation policy"](#);
- Germany, where the [Volkswagen Foundation has a programme for "Researching Research"](#);
- USA, where the NSF is running its ["Science of Science" funding program](#) and working with others [to experiment with new methods](#);
- China, where a recent [Shanghai Declaration for the Science of Science](#) called for more investment in these fields;
- Ireland, where there is a drive [to embed metascience in the new combined funding agency, Research Ireland](#).

New approaches are being trialled; and new institutions are being created. One such initiative is the [Research on Research Institute \(RoRI\)](#), founded in 2019, with a mission to accelerate transformative research on research systems, cultures and decision-making.

In this talk, RoRI's James Wilsdon will explore the changing landscape for metascience. He will argue that metascience is less a discipline, and more an orientation or mode of engaging with questions that most researchers encounter at some point in the networks and institutions they inhabit. Finally, he will ask what insights metascience might bring to R&D policies in Japan, and what strategic intelligence the Japanese system could offer to the advance of metascience globally.



◆ **Speaker's Short bio**

JAMES WILSDON is a transdisciplinary metascientist who works on the governance of science and research, and the relationship between evidence and decision-making. In 2023, James joined University College London (UCL) as Professor of Research Policy. From UCL, he directs the [Research on Research Institute \(RoRI\)](#), which he co-founded in 2019 with a mission to accelerate transformative research on research systems, cultures and decision-making. RoRI's consortium now includes research funders from 15 countries, who between them invest over US\$25 billion a year in R&D.

Since the late-1990s, James has worked at the heart of science and research policy in the UK, Europe and internationally. In addition to academic posts at the universities of Sheffield, Sussex and Lancaster, he has worked in think tanks, NGOs and as Director of Science Policy and International Affairs for the Royal Society, the UK's national academy of sciences.

As a researcher, writer and policy adviser, he has advanced concepts such as [upstream public engagement](#), [science diplomacy](#), [responsible metrics](#) and [responsible research assessment](#). James co-founded the [International Network for Governmental Science Advice \(INGSA\)](#), and until 2021, served as its inaugural vice-chair. He also chaired the UK's Campaign for Social Science until 2018, and in 2014-15 chaired an independent review of research metrics, published as [The Metric Tide](#)—recently revisited in [Harnessing the Metric Tide](#). In 2015, he was elected a Fellow of the UK's Academy of Social Sciences, and in 2022, of the International Science Council).