

The Honorary Graduate: John Pullinger

The Orator: Felix Ritchie

John Pullinger is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science

John Pullinger has been the National Statistician, Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority since July 2014.

His role is to safeguard the production and publication of high quality official statistics by all departments, agencies and institutions in the UK. On appointment he described his role as to mobilise the power of data to help Britain make better decisions. His priorities are to improve measurement of the economy, to bring better evidence to public policy debates and to enhance data capability.

John's career began in 1980 when he joined the civil service after graduating in geography and statistics from Exeter University. After several statistical, research and policy roles in different departments, John joined the Central Statistical Office as a senior civil servant in 1992. He was the project manager for the creation of the Office for National Statistics and was the policy lead on the development of the GSS. He worked on diverse projects and subject areas, including responsibility for flagship publications like 'Social Trends', leading the neighbourhood statistics programme as well as being actively involved in the creation of the Statistics Commission and National Statistics in 2000.

In 2004, John became the 14th Librarian to the House of Commons a post he held until taking up his current role.

John is a Chartered Statistician and was President of the Royal Statistical Society (2013-14). He has represented the UK internationally in EU, UN, OECD and other forums, was Chair (2015) and Vice-Chair (2016) of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and is a member of the Board of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.

John is married with three adult children. He was appointed as a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in 2014 for services to Parliament and to the community, is a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and holds honorary degrees from the universities of Exeter and Essex.

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of John Pullinger's contribution to the communication of statistics and economics, particularly the advice support for the engagement of the Civil Service with the higher education system.