

## Foreword

Scientific discovery delivers a multitude of societal benefits; from tackling global challenges such as shortages of energy, water and strategic materials, to deepening our understanding of the universe, to developing new technologies that make our lives more comfortable and connected to each other.

As a multi-disciplinary membership organisation connecting professional bodies from across the scientific disciplines, the Science Council has a vital role to play in promoting the profession. Remaining true to its core purpose, I am certain that the Science Council, in partnership with its Member Bodies, can play a leading role in championing the value of the science profession to government, employers, scientists and science technicians, and to the wider public. Together we can work as a cohesive body and I believe now more than ever that the profession must work collectively to deliver economic growth and societal progress.

*Sir Keith Burnett, Science Council President*

## Background

There is a long and venerable history of learned societies, membership associations and professional bodies in science. As a membership organisation, the Science Council draws together professional bodies and learned societies from across the full range of science-based disciplines. Several member bodies were founded over 300 years ago, while others developed recently to serve new communities of scientists. Together they represent a community of over 500,000 individual scientists working across the globe.

The Science Council's membership embraces the breadth of science, and represents most sectors of the economy; a broad range of scientific disciplines and multi-disciplinary scientific activity; and encompasses scientists in all roles and settings. All contribute to the progress of science and the harnessing of its potential for the benefit of society.

The Science Council itself was established under Royal Charter in 2003 and oversees the registers for four professional designations: Chartered Scientist (CSci), Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach), Registered Scientist (RSci) and Registered Science Technician (RSciTech). These registers are maintained through a peer-review process whereby registration standards are developed jointly by members and employers, and the designations awarded through licensed professional bodies.

The role of professional bodies in relation to the Science Council is to maintain oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of scientists. When taking the step of becoming professionally registered, scientists are publicly committing to undertaking the requirements of professional membership, abiding to a code of conduct, staying abreast of advances in science and continuously improving their knowledge and skills. Professional bodies provide the development opportunities, information and community connections to support this. Through the Science Council, our members can share best practice in these areas.

The science workforce includes a vitally important and frequently overlooked group of professionals, the science technicians. They underpin advances in science and support the

fundamental scientific practice that is used to turn scientific advances into innovations and products. Technicians also play a vital role in training the scientists of the future.

In 2012, the Science Council launched two new professional registers, Registered Scientist and Registered Science Technician. Chartered status for scientists is well established and these registers provide, for the first time, a clear and understandable framework for career progression for both aspirational early-career scientists and science technicians. The Science Council is grateful to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation for the funding that has supported the development and promotion of these registers to date.

Embracing technicians as part of the professional science community is a recent development and part of a broader shift towards a more collaborative and team orientated culture. Many employers have responded positively to the opportunity to recognise their science technicians and nearly 1,700 individuals have registered so far. However, further efforts are needed to establish the Science Council's new professional designations.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees has decided to place additional emphasis on promoting the Registered Scientist and Registered Science Technician registers in partnership with the relevant licensed bodies. The Science Council remains committed to recognising all professional scientists and science teachers, and will continue to support licensed bodies in their activities to promote professionals working in science.

## Our purpose

The Science Council's charitable purpose as stated in its Royal Charter is "to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of and education in science, pure and applied, for the public benefit."

To fulfill this purpose, the Science Council advances professionalism in science through the professional registration of scientists and technicians who meet a high professional standard and competence and follow an established code of conduct.

The Science Council's Royal Charter also defines its role as an umbrella organisation, providing a forum to connect members for discussion and information exchange. This supports our members in furthering their own commitment to advance science for the public's benefit.

The Science Council provides member bodies with a forum to raise standards through sharing practice and knowledge, and to hold each other to account through a peer-review approach. A successful example of this approach is the recent Diversity, Equality and Inclusion programme of work.

## Our values and guiding principles

- We will be **Inclusive** of all disciplines of science and all types of scientist and science technicians through our Members.
- We will be **Informed** by evidence and research and by our Members and Registrants.
- At all times, we will be **Positive** and balanced in our promotion of the contribution of scientists and technicians to society and of our Members, our registrants and the science workforce as a whole.
- We will be **Collaborative** in our approach to debate and discussion and in our attitude to conversation in general.

## Core roles and activities

In developing this strategy, the Board identified three core strands to the Science Council's role:

- the Registers and Licences,
- Community and Membership,
- Policy and Influence.

Professional registration is central to the Science Council's aim of promoting professionalism in science. By bringing together professional bodies and learned societies, the Science Council connects the science community, creating opportunities to share learning around registration and professional development. Working with members, the Science Council will encourage a culture of professionalism, promoting the value of continuing professional development.

In the past, all members, including learned societies, have gained insight and guidance from benchmarking exercises and other projects, such as the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion programme. These past projects were shaped with guidance from members and the Science Council will continue this approach of facilitation and leadership. Through co-creation and then championing of high standards, we help our community of membership organisations to best serve the community of scientists.

An informed policy environment is necessary to fulfil the potential of science; to this end, the Science Council is well placed to facilitate discussion and encourage cooperation between members. This role will be particularly important in the context of the UK's changing relationship with the European Union as the implications for science are wide-ranging.

Each of the three strands are mutually reliant. For example, building a diverse and inclusive science workforce requires: registers to be accessible to all individuals and free from bias; a culture of inclusion to exist within member bodies; and an external landscape that is free from barriers with positive drivers in place. The strategic priorities for each of the core roles and activities are set out below; the projects through which the Science Council will deliver these priorities are outlined in the Operations Plan.

### 1. Registers and Licences

The Science Council acts as guardian of the registration standards, managing the registers on behalf of members and licensing them to award professional registration. In order to promote high standards of professionalism across all areas of science, the Science Council works with members to make the registers available as widely as possible.

**Aims:** Administer the professional registers in a manner in keeping with the culture of peer-review, maintaining standards and supporting accessibility. Promote the value of professional registration and grow the number of registrants, with a particular focus on technicians and increasing awareness of professional registration options for technicians.

The Science Council will:

- Ensure the standards for achieving and retaining registration are rigorously maintained;
- Ensure that the registers are inclusive, continue to recognise and articulate competence, encourage continuous improvement, and support progression.

- Provide licensing models that are sufficiently flexible and appropriately priced to enable professional recognition to be made available to the maximum number of scientists, science teachers and science technicians. .
- Collaborate with members to articulate and promote the value to the individual scientist, the employer and the licensed body of professional registration and continuing professional development;
- Work with licensed bodies to develop recognition, and where appropriate, accreditation of education and training pathways to registration, including T-Levels, apprenticeships, experiential routes and degrees.
- Raise the profile of technicians and positively promote the benefits of professional registration for all scientists.

## 2. Community and Membership

The Science Council's strength comes from its broad membership across disciplines and professions and an ability to be multi- and inter-disciplinary in its approach. We take an inclusive approach to membership and welcome all qualifying organisations committed to high professional standards in science.

**Aim:** Support the collective work of members for the benefit of science and the profession.

The Science Council will:

- Expand its understanding of members' interests and review the membership offer;
- Facilitate sharing of learning and good practice amongst members;
- With members, work towards a science community that reflects the diversity of society and is inclusive;
- Work with members to ensure science technicians are recognised and appropriately supported as part of the professional science community.

## 3. Policy and Influence

Collectively the Science Council's members connect to a broad community of scientists, technicians, science teachers, students and trainees. Many member bodies actively engage with policy makers, lending their expertise to maximise the value of science to society. The Science Council can coordinate, showcase and amplify these voices to increase impact.

**Aim:** Maximise the influence of all members and create an inclusive and professional culture in science.

The Science Council will:

- Facilitate discussion and coordination of messages in relation to key policy issues, to maximise the impact of all members;
- Advocate a culture of continuing professional development in science to key stakeholder bodies and employers;
- Advocate for positive actions and the removal of barriers to create a diverse and inclusive science workforce;

- Raise the profile of science technicians and champion their recognition;
- Collaborate with members to gather evidence and provide thought leadership on areas of mutual and strategic interest, for example: membership services for technicians, the changing nature of work, Tier 2 visas or science funding;
- Apply a targeted approach, recognising the expertise of other organisations and working in partnership where there is commonality.

## Delivering the strategy

To enable the Science Council to achieve its aims in the strategic priority areas, it will establish a business model that defines its stakeholder interactions and value proposition. This will comprise:

- The business plan and supporting financial model governing the Science Council's activities in the three strategic priority areas;
- The operating model to enable delivery of the business plan;
- The operational plan that sets out a timeline for projects and activities that enable delivery of the business plan.

The Science Council's strategy will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees over the course of the three year period in order to respond to changing circumstance and opportunities that arise.