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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of the Science Council. This information pack provides you with the information you need to determine your suitability for the position and will assist you in mapping your core competencies with the requirements of the post and the Science Council. The pack also provides details on the application process and contact details should you have any further queries.

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 science profession for the benefit of society. Now more than ever, the profession must work collectively to tackle health and environmental challenges, deliver economic growth, and societal progress. This is an exciting time to join us as a trustee, as we continue to deliver our strategy and exciting range of programmes in partnership with our Members.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and experience, particularly those who are not afraid to challenge the status quo, who can provide new perspectives on the way we work and provide strategic leadership and direction to help us navigate the challenges facing the charity and the science community more broadly. Whether you are an experienced trustee or looking to take on your first trustee role and have the time and energy to commit to the role, we want to hear from you.
About us

Our Purpose

The Science Council is a membership organisation for professional bodies and learned societies in science. Its 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 research scientists, industrial scientists, and technical staff. Our charitable purpose as stated in our Royal Charter is “to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of and education in science, pure and applied, for the public benefit.”

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.

Our Value Proposition

Flowing from our Charter and values, and having listened to Members and registrants, the Science Council adopted a new Value Proposition in 2019.

For Member bodies: The Science Council promotes science and the science workforce, and enables the sharing of innovation and best practice, mutual help and support, and the ability to influence more widely as part of a community of professional bodies.

For registrants: Gain a widely recognised cross-disciplinary science registration that supports your personal and professional development, improves your prospects for progression and mobility across established and developing sectors in science.
Our commitment to delivering public benefit

As a charity, the Science Council is committed to delivering public benefit by advancing the profession of science and the science workforce in the following ways:

Registers and Licenses

We advance professionalism in science through the value of professional registration and by promoting high standards of professional competence, conduct and performance of the science workforce. Professionally registered members of the scientific workforce are required to demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional development and a Code of Conduct which includes the obligation to have regard for the public interest at all times. We also support science employers to enhance the competence, skills and knowledge of the science and science technician workforce, through the promulgation of the benefits of professional registration.

Community and Membership

We support the collective work of members for the benefit of science and the profession by providing professional bodies with fora to share learning and good practice on issues affecting science and the science workforce. We work in partnership with our Member Bodies and other professional bodies, science employers, academic institutions and national academies to achieve a science workforce that reflects the diversity of society and creates environments free from harassment and discrimination in which everyone feels included and valued.

Policy and Influence

We aim to maximise the influence and collective capacity of Member Bodies to raise the value of science to society by facilitating the discussion, development and coordination of messages on key policy issues that impact on society and the environment. We champion the recognition of the science workforce and the role they play in delivering societal benefit.
Key Science Council projects

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

The Science Council has set itself a strategic ambition to work towards a science workforce that reflects the diversity of society. To this end, in 2014, the Science Council launched its Declaration on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, which all Member organisations of the Science Council are expected to sign as a demonstration of their commitment to promoting diversity.

In collaboration with the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Science Council has also developed a tool for professional bodies to assess and monitor their progress on diversity and inclusion. The Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework is a key element of the support available for Science Council member organisations, as they seek to embed diversity in their strategies and planning. So that the Science Council can move towards being an anticipatory organisation and activist in our sector, the Board has established a working group to review our progress and goals, and agree and to oversee activities on an ongoing basis.

You can find out more about these projects on our website.

Technical Pathways project

This is a joint initiative, with grant funding from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, between the Science Council and its members to significantly raise the profile of and support for technicians over a four-year period. The initiative will seek to embed a culture of professional registration within the science community promoting parity of esteem for science technicians; enhance career development opportunities for those working at a technical level; and create a package of services for employers to aid development of the technician workforce.

Technician Commitment

Launched in 2017, the Technician Commitment is a university and research institution initiative, led by a steering group of sector bodies, with support from the Science Council and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation’s Technicians Make It Happen campaign. The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. Universities and research institutes are invited to become signatories of the Technician Commitment and pledge action against the key challenges affecting their technical staff.

Employer Champions

Our Employer Champion programme provides a package of support for employers that have made the commitment to support their scientific and technical staff to become professionally registered.
Plans for 2021 and beyond

In December, the Board approved an two-year investment package to enable us to increase the support we give to Members and registrants; to enhance the visibility and awareness of the Science Council, scientists and the benefits of professional registration; as well as raising our visibility and impact among employers, policy makers and other key stakeholders.

The investment plans include:

- Undertaking a comprehensive survey of registrants to inform the development of our services and marketing strategy.

- Increasing our brand and digital marketing activity to enhance support for promotional campaigns in collaboration with our Members and Employer Champions. This activity is aimed at increasing the visibility and profile of the Science Council and registration.

- Continuing to offer and enhance the programme of online networks for registrants and Members in service of the delivery of our value proposition.

- Escalating our policy and influence work, looking to increase our profile and influence at the national level, contributing positively to the science community’s policy voice, particularly around the science workforce or professional standards.

- Continuing to champion equality, diversity and inclusion across and beyond the science community. We will continue to promote the use of the D&I Progression Framework and undertake a second benchmarking exercise to support Members, as they continue to embed diversity into their strategies and planning.
Further information, including the Science Council’s Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and the most recent Trustees’ Report and Financial Statements are available on the Science Council’s website www.sciencencouncil.org.
Your role as a trustee

Key duties and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees set the direction for the charity so it operates within its objects and delivers public benefit. Collectively and individually, trustees have a legal, regulatory and moral obligations to enable accountable, effective and efficient and leadership of the Science Council. The role of the Board is to:

- ensure that the Science Council has a clear strategic focus;
- ensure that the Science Council fulfils its charitable objectives;
- ensure that the Science Council complies with its legal and regulatory requirements;
- act as guardian of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, and ensure the financial stability of the organisation;
- monitor and hold management to account; and,
- be accountable to members in the delivery of the charity’s strategy.

Term of office

The term of office is 3 years with the option to seek re-election for a further 3 years.

Time Commitment

Formal Board meetings are held quarterly and set around the charity's financial reporting cycle. Board meetings last approx. 3 hours. The Board also holds regular strategy development sessions throughout the year, in conjunction with Board meetings.

The Board has three subcommittees: Finance, Audit and Risk Committee; Nomination Committee; and the Registration Authority. Each of these meets approx. 4 times per year. Subcommittee meetings are approx. 2-3 hours long. Trustees are expected to serve on at least one of these committees.

The Science Council normally holds three General Meetings per year, one of which will be the Annual General Meeting. Trustees are encouraged to attend General Meetings so that they can meet with representatives from across the membership and with Science Council staff.

In addition to formal meetings, informal meetings between Board Members, the Chair and the Chief Executive may be held as required and may be in person or by electronic communication. There may also be additional time required for ad-hoc work to support the activities of the Science Council.

Payment

Trustee roles are voluntary. Trustees will be compensated for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their role.

Location

To ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers, we are planning to hold all Board and committee meetings in 2021 via teleconference. In line with government guidelines, and where it is safe to do so, meetings will be held in person in central London. We are also exploring options to hold hybrid
meetings, whereby people can participate in-person and virtually. Please do not exclude yourself from consideration by virtue of where you live and work.

There will also be opportunities to represent the Science Council at conferences and events, and therefore some UK travel may be necessary, again where it is deemed safe to do so. Trustees will be compensated for any costs incurred by them in respect to travel arrangements in accordance with our volunteer expenses policy.

Visit our website for information on the trustees’ role description, matters reserved to the Board, current Board membership, and to know more about the Science Council.

**Age requirement**

You must be at least 18 years old to be a charity trustee but we want younger people to apply because their experiences will bring a much needed diversity of perspective to the Board.
**Vacancies and skills needs**

The Board is looking to fill **FOUR** trustee vacancies this year. Two vacancies will be open to individuals from within our membership, so if you are an employee or a member of one of our Member Bodies and think that you have the skills and interest to contribute to the Science Council, we want to hear from you.

The Board firmly believes that a diversity of views and perspectives is vital to making informed decisions, and it places great value in the knowledge and insight that individuals from outside of our membership bring to Board-level discussions. To this end, two vacancies will be open this year to individuals from outside our membership.

If you are not sure whether you are an employee or a member of one of our Member Bodies you can find a list [here](#).

The Board is particularly keen to receive applications from people with skills and experience in the following areas (we don’t expect to find all of these skills in one person):

- Policy networks and influence; because we want to influence science and education policy, and raise the profile of professionalism in science.
- Employers of the scientific workforce; because we want to better understand what support the scientific workforce needs from the Science Council and professional bodies.
- PR / marketing; because we want to raise or visibility and profile so that we can connect better with the scientific workforce and support the career development of scientists and technicians of all disciplines.

It is not necessary to have previous board/trustee experience as support and development opportunities will be available. These positions could therefore suit individuals taking their first steps to develop wider board-level and governance experience.

If you do not have these skills but you believe that your background and expertise could be useful to us and you are interested in joining our Board, we still want to hear from you.

We want to ensure that our Board is as representative of the scientific workforce as possible. We would therefore particularly like to hear from women, ethnic minorities, younger people, disabled people and marginalised groups.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about the role you can contact the Chair, Dr Helen Pain ([painh@rsc.org](mailto:painh@rsc.org)) and/or the Governance Manager, Oliver O’Hanlon ([oohanlon@sciencecouncil.org](mailto:oohanlon@sciencecouncil.org) or 020 3434 2025). They will be happy to discuss the role with you.

**Key dates**

Applications will be accepted until **5pm Thursday 1st April**. Following your application, please contact the Governance Manager if you need further assistance. The Board will consider the applications on **12th May**. Candidates’ information and supporting statements will be circulated to Science Council members who will vote for candidates to fill the vacant positions. The results will be announced at our Annual General Meeting on **Tuesday 13th July**. Successful candidates will take office at the end of the meeting. The induction of new trustees will be arranged after the AGM.
Equality of opportunity

The Science Council is strongly committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of its recruitment, selection and employment procedures.

Monitoring is recommended by the Codes of Practice for the elimination of discrimination. In order to monitor this policy, we request that applicants complete an Equal Opportunities Form, which would be used for this purpose and will form no part of the selection and interview process. Applicants must also satisfy statutory requirements in order to become a trustee as detailed below:

Any person aged 16 or over can act as a trustee of a charitable company provided that they are not disqualified by law, although the Science Council requires trustees to be 18 or over.

The Charities Act 2011 disqualifies people who:

- have unspent convictions for offences involving deception or dishonesty
- are undischarged bankrupts
- have been at any time removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Charity Commission or the court in England, Wales or Scotland, because of misconduct
- are disqualified from being company directors under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
- have failed to make compositions (i.e. come to an arrangement) with their creditors and have not been discharged.

As soon as someone becomes disqualified, for example, the day they are convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, they are automatically barred from acting as a trustee. It is a criminal offence to act as a charity trustee while disqualified. However, the Charity Commission can grant a waiver either generally or in relation to a charity or a specific class of charities.

If you are convicted of a relevant offence or become bankrupt and you wish to remain eligible to be a trustee, you may apply to the Commission for a waiver. Any adult person who is not disqualified by law, or prohibited by law, or prohibited by the charity’s articles or association, may become a trustee (director) of a charitable company.

Under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 the court may disqualify people:

- Who have been convicted of criminal offences relating to the promotion, formation, management or liquidation of a company.
- Who have been persistently in default of a company legislation for filing accounts and other documents.
- Who have been found guilty of fraudulent trading or fraud.
- Whose conduct as a Director has made them unfit to be involved in the management of a company.

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE
Useful links for prospective trustees

The Charity Governance Code
https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en

The Essential Trustee, What you Need to Know. The Charity Commission

Conflicts of Interest: a Guide for Trustees

Science Council Royal Charter

Science Council Bylaws

Science Council Regulations