

Science Council Trustee Role Description

Introduction

The Science Council is membership organisation for professional bodies and learned societies across the disciplines of science. It promotes the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of and education in science, pure and applied, for the public benefit. It sets the standards for professional registration for the scientific workforce. The Science Council is a Royal Chartered, registered charity.

This role description should be read in conjunction with the Science Council's Trustee Code of Conduct.

Trustees' six main duties

The Charity Commission has established six main duties that trustees are required to fulfil.

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law.
- Act in your charity's best interests.
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensure your charity is accountable.

Further information is available on the [Charity Commission's website](#).

Your role as a trustee

Trustees are not involved in the day-to-day running of the Science Council. This responsibility is delegated to the Chief Executive who is answerable to the Board of Trustees. As part of the Board of Trustees, to 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. Trustees are expected to act in an independent capacity but take collective responsibility for Board decisions in all public fora.

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 guardians 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.

Time Commitment

Trustees are expected to attend and actively participate during Board meetings and are expected to be familiar with all documents relevant to the meeting.

Formal Board meetings are generally scheduled quarterly and are set around the charity's financial reporting cycle. Board meetings are usually held in central London and last approx. 3 hours. The Board also holds an annual strategy 'away day' which takes place in the middle of the year.

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. There may also be additional time required for ad-hoc work to support the activities of the Science Council.

The Science Council normally holds three General Meetings per year, one of which will be the Annual General Meeting. Trustees are encouraged to attend all 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 and the Chief Executive may be held as required and may be in person or by electronic communication. These meetings are intended to be for general discussion/briefing on issues and are not formally minuted although action points will be noted, and a note of the discussion taken where appropriate.

Trustees' key Responsibilities:

Legal

- To ensure that the charity complies with its governing documents, charity, company and employment law, data protection and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the charity pursues its objects, as defined in its governing documents.
- To ensure that the charity uses its resources solely in pursuance of its public benefit objects.

Strategic

- To contribute actively to the Board, ensuring the charity has a clear vision, mission, goal and strategy.
- To take an active role in achieving the overall strategy and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To keep under review the long-term development of the charity in light of the political, economic and social environment in which it operates.

To ensure appropriate advice is taken from professional advisers on matters where there may be material risk to the charity or where trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Financial

- To ensure the solvency and effective running of the charity.
- To ensure that the charity has effective financial control systems and procedures, and to review the level of risk regularly as required.

- To protect the physical and intellectual property and resources including all intellectual property belonging to the charity and to ensure the proper investment of its funds.
- To ensure that the operational plan and budget reflect the charity's charitable objective and agreed strategy.
- To approve the annual budget and monitor performance against it.
- To ensure appropriate records relating to accounts and financial matters are maintained and audited in line with regulatory requirements.

Reputational

- To act in the best interests of the charity, its public benefit obligations, and its current and future beneficiaries at all times.
- To safeguard the charity's reputation, and other intangible assets.
- To maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive / confidential information received in the course of a trustee's responsibilities.

Governance

- To ensure the governance framework and structures of the charity are fit for purpose and are reviewed regularly.
- To ensure the integrity of board decisions and uphold the process of decision-making.
- To set the values and ethos of the charity
- To appoint the Chair of the Board.
- To recommend a suitable candidate for election to the position of President.
- To ensure that proper minutes are kept, recording the deliberations and decisions of the Board and its committees.

Management oversight

- To appoint the Chief Executive, to set their terms and conditions and to ensure that the charity and the appointee invests in ongoing professional development and considers succession planning.
- To hold the Chief Executive accountable for the achievement of the charity's goals, and provide them with regular, constructive feedback on both management and overall achievement.

General tasks and responsibilities

- To attend Board, committee and General meetings, read relevant papers, and otherwise prepare in order to make an informed and constructive contribution to effective decision making.
- To participate in the Board's annual strategy meeting/away day.
- To maintain up-to-date knowledge of the charity's activities.
- To hold fellow Board members and the Chief Executive accountable for fulfilling their role(s).

- To support the staff when requested, sharing expertise, as members of a working groups, committees or in other appropriate ways.
- To build and maintain relationships with Board members, existing and potential member organisations and attend events as an ambassador for Science Council to network and promote the work of the Science Council.
- To champion the charity, including assisting with income generation, speaking, networking, sharing professional connections and otherwise seeking support and funding for the charity's activities in conjunction with staff and volunteers as appropriate.
- To be prepared to act as a spokesperson for the Science Council when asked by the Chief Executive or Chair, working within an agreed brief.

Person Specification

- Demonstrable interest in the science professions from a personal or professional perspective.
- The ability to work at a strategic level. The ability to probe facts, challenge assumptions and identify the advantages and disadvantages of proposals.
- Understanding & acceptance of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship.
- Willingness to devote necessary time and effort to trusteeship.
- Understanding of the Science Council, its purpose and its work.
- Understanding of systems of control and risk management
- Understanding of financial issues so far as they impact the Science Council.
- Willingness to take and stand by decisions, putting personal interests aside.
- Good, independent judgement and a willingness to speak up, and constructively criticise and debate proposals.
- The ability to think creatively and facilitate development of solutions.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and contribute skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Acceptance of the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life; selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.