



Sir Patrick Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP  
Government Chief Scientific Adviser  
Government Office for Science  
10 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0NN

7 September 2021

Dear Patrick,


I write in my capacity as President of the Science Council, to offer our support and collaboration following the recent publication of the Government Science and Engineering Profession (GSEP) strategy.

The essential role played by scientists, technologists, technicians, and researchers in Government has never been more obvious than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring that Government has access to the best possible scientific and technical advice is crucial to addressing the biggest challenges facing the UK; from combatting climate change to harnessing emerging technologies.

I know of your personal commitment to better embed and network science advice mechanisms across Government, enhancing the career paths and recognition of science professionals in Government and building a professional function with coherence and influence analogous to economists. There has been demonstrable progress, such as with the impressive number of scientists engaged in providing advice directly to Government on COVID-19.

However, no matter how talented and well-resourced the science and engineering profession within Government becomes, links with the wider scientific community are essential. The GSEP strategy recognises this, placing an appropriate emphasis on increasing connections and interchange. There remains enormous potential from better mobilising the whole science and technology ecosystem.

The Science Council offers a broad reach into the UK science profession that complements that of learned academies such as the Royal Society, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the British Academy. The Science Council's 36 member organisations, including the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), represent a pool of thousands of scientists with expertise and insights that the Government could draw on in its decision making. The Science Council in its convening role can help facilitate these links, particularly on issues that are of interdisciplinary interest.

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The Science Council was established by Royal Charter in 2003 and is registered with the Charity Commission in England No: 1131661

A primary role of the Science Council is awarding professional registration, so we were delighted to see the aspiration for more members of the GSEP to attain registration. Professional registration alongside strong, transparent systems and protocols, can play an important role in building public trust in science and ensuring the quality of science advice within Government.

The GSEP strategy highlights the need for clear routes to registration, which has been a priority area for the Science Council over the last 18 months, considering how we can make our registers as accessible as possible by offering various options such as equivalency routes.

There is an aspiration in the strategy for a standardised language of skills and mapping of skills to competencies; work which has synergies with the Science Council's development of a mandatory set of unified criteria for registrants. We especially noted the plan to map "GSE technical skills across to competencies used by science and engineering professional bodies by September 2021". The Science Council would be pleased to assist with this, given our work to develop standards that support recognition of technicians on the science workforce.

We believe that the Science Council's Registered (RSci) and Chartered (CSci) Scientist pathways will be of particular relevance for the civil service, given the innately interdisciplinary nature of the work undertaken by science and technology professionals in Government. Applications for RSci and CSci are made via membership of one of our licensed bodies, providing registrants with valuable networks in discipline-specific and interdisciplinary communities. We also provide registration for technicians (RSciTech) and having been raising the profile of technicians through our hosting of the Technician Commitment.

The Science Council share's the Government's focus on continuous professional development (CPD), registrants are required to keep knowledge, skills, and competence up to date and undertake annual CPD activity. We offer a range of CPD support to our Licensed Bodies and have also developed our own set of CPD standards, and it may be helpful for our respective teams to compare notes on these.

In recent years, equality, diversity, and inclusion has been of ever-increasing importance to the Science Council and is a pillar of my Presidency. It is our belief that excellence in science is contingent on drawing on the full range of voices, perspectives, and talent available, and that by making science more inclusive we make it stronger. Creating inclusive, respectful working environments is vital to retain talent in the profession.

Furthermore, the Science Council considers successful science to be output of the whole team of researchers, technicians and supporting staff, rather than just the leading academic. For this reason, we have been working to increase awareness of technical

pathways into science through apprenticeships, T-levels, and higher technical qualifications (HTQs).

We are pleased to see that supporting the diverse GSEP membership is one of the key goals for the strategy. We would be happy to share our experiences and learning from our work across our membership community on equality, diversity, and inclusion activities.

Working with our member organisations and the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng), we have developed an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Progression Framework, providing a tool for professional bodies to assess and monitor their progress on diversity and inclusion. With our partners we have recently completed a second benchmarking exercise, the findings of which will be published in September 2021. Following these findings, we will be establishing 'communities of practice', to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange on challenges and solutions for diversity and inclusion.

Given our shared priorities, I would be keen to introduce you to our Chief Executive Helen Gordon, to explore how the Science Council can be a useful partner, both for the work we undertake directly and for the links we have with our 36 member organisations. Your team can contact us by emailing our Policy Officer Ryan Mercer ([r.mercer@sciencecouncil.org](mailto:r.mercer@sciencecouncil.org)).

The Science Council is also aware of and will be looking to engage with Government on the other recent science and research related publications by BEIS, such as the R&D People and Culture strategy, but we felt it worthwhile engaging with you on the GSEP now, while we and our community consider the implications of the broader strategies. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole G Mundell". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Professor Carole Mundell  
President of The Science Council



## **Introduction to the Science Council**

### **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 fulfil 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. The Science Council provides member bodies with a forum to raise standards through sharing practice and knowledge, to hold each other to account through a peer-review approach, and further their own commitment to advance science for the public's benefit.

### **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. We aim to administer the professional registers in a manner in keeping with the culture of peer-review, maintaining standards, and supporting accessibility.

The Science Council promotes the value of professional registration, with a particular focus on technicians and increasing awareness of technical pathways into science through apprenticeships, T-levels, and higher technical qualifications (HTQs).

### **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. We aim to support the collective work of members for the benefit of science and the profession.

### **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.

## Our Members and Licensed Bodies

Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (ACB)  
Association for Science Education (ASE)  
Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare (ASPiH)  
Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology (AAPT)  
Association of Neurophysiological Scientists (ANS)  
Biochemical Society  
British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES)  
British Society of Soil Science  
British Psychological Society  
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)  
College of Podiatry  
Geological Society of London  
Institute of Animal Technology  
Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)  
Institute of Corrosion (ICorr)  
Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST)  
Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST)  
Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)  
Institute of Mathematics and its Applications  
Institute of Physics (IOP)  
Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)  
Institute of Science and Technology  
Institute of Water  
Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE)  
Institution of Environmental Sciences  
The Nuclear Institute  
Oil and Colour Chemists' Association (OCCA)  
The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs (TOPRA)  
Operational Research Society  
Royal Astronomical Society  
Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS)  
Royal Society of Biology  
Royal Society of Chemistry  
Society for Cosmetic Scientists (SCS)  
Society for Natural Sciences (SNS)  
Society of Dyers and Colourists (SDC)



Government  
Office for Science

Sir Patrick Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP  
UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser  
National Technology Adviser  
Head of the Government Science and Engineering Profession

Professor Carole Mundell  
President of the Science Council

By email only

14 September 2021

Dear Carole,

### **Publication of the Government Science and Engineering Profession Strategy**

Thank you for your letter of 7 September offering your support and collaboration in delivering our Government Science and Engineering Profession (GSEP) strategy. Collaboration with the wider scientific community and their representative bodies is essential to the retention and development of scientists within the Civil Service. I am encouraged by how similar our ambitions are on development, talent, diversity and interchange.

We are engaging with Science Council bodies (including the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Royal Society of Biology, the Institute of Physics, the Institute of Chemical Engineering, and the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications) through our professional recognition offer<sup>1</sup>. We are also finalising the mapping of Government Science and Engineering (GSE) technical skills to RSci, RSciTech and CSci competencies. These competencies are just the first tranche, and we aim to eventually include all 36 member organisations of the Science Council in this offer.

Noting your comparison to government economists, my team are reviewing whether a long-term formal accreditation route for GSE members is possible. In previous conversations with the Science Council, we were told significant steps were required to accredit GSEP deep specialist or specialist job roles. I would welcome your thoughts on this, as accredited status would be beneficial to GSEP members. My GSEP team will reach out at working level, and will update us on their progress.

You also raised diversity of science talent pathways, which I fully support. We are currently expanding our talent workstream within the GSEP, and will work with you to explore existing resources, how best to promote your range of offers to the GSEP, and how we could effectively embed these offers in government.

Thank you again for your proactive support and engagement on these issues. I will get in touch with Helen Gordon as you suggest. This work is incredibly promising, and my team will keep us updated on their progress on GSEP accreditation, and wider GO-Science/Science Council engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://governmentscienceandengineering.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/31/gse-professional-recognition-offer/>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a trailing horizontal line.

**Patrick Vallance**  
**Head of the Government Science and Engineering Profession**