



# Science Council

## Strategy 2022-2025

**February 2022**

## FOREWORD



We live in a time of great environmental, societal, and economic change. For the longest time, the UK has led the way in many areas of scientific endeavour, benefiting countless people and communities across the world. As we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, I am passionate about the UK remaining a leading scientific nation and providing much needed global leadership to enable countries to collectively tackle the biggest global challenges facing humanity.

To maximise the benefits of science, the scientific community must continue to earn the respect of those it serves. Historically, scientists and science have been held in high esteem by the public, but we forget at our peril that this position can be lost very quickly. We must always remember that trust is very hard to build and very easy to lose.

Scientists work everywhere: in industry, the charity sector, education, finance, government, health and wellbeing, and beyond. They play a crucial role in guiding organisations to make decisions that affect the lives of many. Rightly therefore, people want to know that scientists are conducting their work to the highest professional standards. The science profession does itself and the public a disservice if it loses sight of the standards expected of it.

This is why the Science Council has such a unique and valuable role to play in ensuring public trust and confidence in the scientific workforce and transparency in the process of science. Tackling the most pressing global challenges will require a diverse science workforce and ever-deepening interdisciplinary collaboration between scientists and with society. The Science Council's registers provide independent peer-led recognition of achievement and evidence of the professionalism required to join the global community of professional scientists that will be so vital in finding solutions to today's and tomorrow's global challenges.

Having evolved 20 years ago from an informal network of professional science bodies, the Science Council's membership now stands at 36 organisations (with many more associated through the Employer Champion and Technician Commitment programmes), the range of which demonstrates a remarkable breadth and depth of scientific disciplines. It also demonstrates the Science Council's ability to bring the science community together to harness its collective expertise in the pursuit of professional excellence, and using that expertise to inform public policy.



Continuing on the theme of diversity, it is heartening to see Equity, Diversity and Inclusion added as a core strand of the strategy. The Science Council and its Members Bodies have worked tirelessly over the last few years to promote inclusion across the profession. But of course, there is so much more to be done, and I know that the Science Council will continue to be a leading proponent of EDI for the sector.

I am hugely optimistic about the future of the science profession and it is organisations like the Science Council that will play a prominent role in ensuring that the profession is attractive to everyone, is respected, and inspires the public to have confidence in and positively engage with science.

*Professor Carole Mundell*

*Science Council President*



## Our purpose

Our purpose is to strengthen the collective impact of the science community for public benefit. We do this by connecting the science professions to foster knowledge exchange and, through our professional registers, offer interdisciplinary recognition for scientists across the world.

Through our collective drive to uphold interdisciplinary standards we inspire and empower the science workforce to strive towards professional excellence. Our ambition is to see a diverse and growing science profession that is trusted, respected and is equipped to deliver national ambitions.

## Our values

Our values influence and align to all that we do, with and for, Members, registrants and the wider science community. By putting our values into practice, we foster trust and collaboration across our community that supports our collective aims and ambitions for the science workforce.

- We are **Inclusive** of all disciplines of science and all types of scientists, including science technicians and science teachers.
- We are **Informed** by evidence and research and by different perspectives.
- We are **Positive** and balanced in our promotion of the contribution of scientists and science technicians to society and of our Members, registrants and the science workforce as a whole.
- We are **Collaborative** in our approach to debate and discussion and in our attitude to conversation in general.



## CORE OBJECTIVES

During this strategic period, we will continue to drive impact through four core strands:

- Registers and Licencing,
- Community and Membership,
- Policy and Influence,
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

The three strands of Registers and Licensing, Community and Membership, Policy and Influence were present in the 2019-2022 strategy and were well-received by Members and stakeholders. During this new strategic period, we will continue with these three core strands as a demonstration of confidence in the work we do with and on behalf of our Members, our commitment to bringing together the scientific community to share knowledge and insight, and promoting the value of professional development and registration.

Towards the end of 2020, we renewed our commitment to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda, and we will continue to actively support and celebrate the diversity of the scientific community. To this end, the Board has adopted the term 'Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)' so that the Science Council's activities in this space reflect evolving social, political and economic challenges faced by individuals and groups. EDI will be a core area of work over this strategic period to clearly signify to our Members and key stakeholders the priority of this agenda over the next three years. The core strands of the strategy are inextricably linked: EDI is not a separate workstream, it is fundamental to everything that we do.

### Registers and Licences

We will continue to act as guardian of the registration and licensing standards, ensuring that we are leaders in peer-led regulation, meeting current and future needs of employers, registrants, the wider science community and the UK economy. To build a connected and inclusive workforce, we will continue to make our licensing models attractive and accessible and increase awareness of the routes into registration.

Our Members are the key drivers of registrant acquisition, and we will work with them to make registration more aspirational and meaningful. This, combined with a renewed marketing and communications approach, will achieve sustainable growth in registrant numbers.

We will:

- Ensure that our licensing models stay relevant, attractive and accessible.
- Articulate the value and benefits of registration so that current and aspiring registrants ascribe more meaning to being professionally registered.



- Showcase the breadth of the registrant workforce that reflects the diversity of science and its workforce to inspire those working in science to achieve registration.
- Work with our Members to provide the registrant community with interdisciplinary peer-to-peer networking opportunities.
- Engage with key stakeholders, through the Technical Pathways Project and the Technician Commitment programme, to support, develop and recognise technicians, and develop a clear and distinct pathway to professional registration for those progressing through T level and apprenticeship education routes.
- Grow our community of volunteers to promote a culture of continuing professional development in science.
- Continue to work with Members to improve registrant data accuracy to support the integrity of the registers.

## Community and Membership

Our strength comes from our broad membership. Encompassing the scientific workforce across disciplines and professions, and in all roles and settings, we have the ability to be inter-disciplinary in our approach. We will continue to promote best practice, facilitate knowledge exchange across our membership community, and collaborate with partners to strengthen the professional science community's collective impact. We work in partnership with our Members to advance the collective knowledge and expertise and to address topics of shared interest.

We will:

- Continue to provide value for money to current Members and make membership an attractive offer to qualifying organisations that are aligned with our values and strategic purpose.
- Expand our membership networks and events to catalyse stronger cross-community engagement and mutual benefit.
- Work with and on behalf of Members to develop closer links with employers and education providers to enhance the recognition and promotion of registration of the scientific workforce.
- Work with our community to help meet the challenges facing professional bodies and learned societies.
- Help Members engage with critical agendas, such as net zero and equity, diversity and inclusion.



## Policy and Influence

We are developing our role as the collective voice of our diverse membership on issues of pan-scientific concern. By becoming a more visible, supportive, and influential presence across the sector, we serve as a conduit between the membership as a whole and policymakers. Using our convening power, we bring together Members to identify policy positions on which there is broad interest and consensus and communicate these to policymakers as a common view of the science community. In policy areas where there is a divergence of opinion across the membership, we provide trusted fora for discussion and knowledge exchange.

We will:

- Optimise our convening power to enable Members to explore where there are areas of common consent and where there are differences.
- Strengthen links throughout the science ecosystem and with government to better facilitate information exchange and identify opportunities for influencing.
- Harness our internal expertise to contribute to policy developments, for example, on issues around professional standards and quality assurance.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Everyone can play a role in promoting inclusion at all levels and in all sections of society. Across the science profession, diverse and inclusive cultures have vital roles to play in identifying and addressing societal challenges and bringing about social change. To that end, we encourage, support and celebrate the different people that cultivate a diverse scientific community. Recognising the influence of systems of power, both conscious and unconscious, and the barriers imposed on minoritised groups, we will continue to include the widest possible range of experiences and perspectives to inform the evolution of the Science Council's work.

We will:

- Embed inclusive behaviours and practices in all our approaches, activities, and decisions.
- Establish a supportive Member and partner community which actively shares and learns from each other.
- Work with our Members and other suitable partners to increase the representation of under-represented groups on the Science Council's registers and across science more widely.
- Identify and actively address barriers which may prevent access to registration.



## STRATEGIC ENABLERS

The following strategic enablers are essential to helping us achieve our strategic ambitions over the next 3 years.

### Supporting our people

Our staff and volunteers are at the heart of our organisation. Their continued dedication to our purpose is key to our success. By working together more flexibly and dynamically, we will continue to foster a shared commitment to our purpose, be responsive to the needs of our Members and registrants, and increasingly, to the wider science community.

We will:

- Continue to develop a culture of wellbeing, trust and confidence.
- Support a flexible working environment, balancing job satisfaction and performance with business needs.
- Attract and retain more volunteers, ensuring that they are developed, supported and valued in their roles.

### Becoming more agile

The need to rapidly adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic has led us to review the way that we work and reflect on how we can be more effective in supporting our staff, volunteers, Members and registrants. Whilst COVID-19 required us to move all our operations into the virtual world, this way of working has proved effective. Flexible and remote working, the effective application of technology and tackling operational blockages and inefficiencies will continue through this strategic period.

We will continue to foster a working environment that increases understanding and rapport across the executive team, balancing remote working and in-person collaboration to support creativity, problem solving and idea generation. Resources will be used effectively to support Members to remain relevant as they evolve to meet the needs of registrants and the wider community.

We will:

- Continue to develop our internal systems and processes in line with best practice to support operational effectiveness.
- Continue to challenge inefficiencies and streamline our processes, being bold in trialling new ideas and ways of working.
- Respond to changes in the external environment and minimise the environmental impact of our activities.
- Explore the scope for developing relevant links with international organisations to deepen our understanding of different approaches and practices within the science and engineering professions.





## Optimising the use of our resources

### *Core resources*

We work to ensure that resources are effectively applied so that we deliver valued services for Members and registrants. During this strategic period, we will continue with the same business model based around Member, licensing and registrant fees.

Our priority is to increase the number of Members and registrants to ensure longer-term sustainability. Any future change to our business model will rely on a significant step-change in the registrant growth rate. Our ability to recruit new Members and registrants, or developing additional income streams will, in turn enable us to offer additional services to those that we serve.

We will:

- Ensure that our outsourced services provide best value and support us in achieving our strategic aims.
- Judiciously employ our free reserves to support strategic projects, innovation and build long-term sustainability.
- Regularly evaluate the sustainability and impact of strategic projects to ensure they continue to be aligned with our purpose and provide value to our Members and the wider science community.
- Seek to achieve a balanced budget before using reserves to fund one-off strategic projects.

### *Grant funded programmes*

Beyond the three main funding streams, the Science Council receives grant funding from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. The Technical Pathways Programme seeks to build the prestige of technical education in the sciences, embed professional registration into technical education pathways and increase support for those choosing a technical career in science, through and with Members. The current grant is planned to run to the end of 2023.

The Gatsby Foundation also support the Technician Commitment Project, funded to March 2024, which seeks to further increase the number of academic institutions and research establishments that commit to the development and recognition of the technician workforce. The Science Council is the home for secondees to this project and a key member of the Technician Commitment Steering Board.

Objectives for these two programmes are reflected within the core objectives stated above.

During this strategic period, we may explore further opportunities for grant funding that will help us further our ambitions for Members, registrants and the wider science community.



## Appendix

### A. Charitable purpose of the Science Council.

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." It exists to serve its Members, its registrants, the science community and wider society.

It does this by advancing professionalism in science through peer review and the professional registration of those in the science workforce who meet a high professional standard and competence and follow an established code of conduct.

Our Royal Charter also defines our role as a membership organisation, providing a forum to providing professional bodies in science with access to a unique network of like-minded organisations to share information and knowledge. This supports our Members in furthering their own commitment to advance science for the public's benefit.

