

Terms of Reference

Policy Advisory Panel

The Biochemical Society champions the molecular biosciences by identifying and acting on key science policy issues.

We aim to engage our members with policy issues relating to the molecular biosciences and ensure that their views are channelled to the appropriate policy-makers. Our activities are informed by our Policy Advisory Panel, Policy Network and wider membership. Politicians, government departments and international policy organizations play a key role in the science sector. We work to ensure that key policymakers are aware of the views and concerns of our membership and wider molecular biosciences community.

We work closely with key partners in our policy activities, in particular the Royal Society of Biology and Campaign for Science & Engineering. These collaborations aim to provide a unified voice when advising Government and influencing policy.

1. Duties

- To be proactive in identifying scientific and educational policy matters of relevance to molecular bioscience, and to develop and drive the strategic objectives of the Society with respect to such matters and to related public affairs.
- To consult members of the Society where possible in order to reflect their views and to strengthen the authority of the Society in discussions with external agencies.
- To input into the policy work outputs from the Society (e.g. consultation responses).

2. Composition

i) Internal structure

The Policy Advisory Panel will be composed of 5-8 members and Chaired by the Honorary Policy Officer.

Further input into policy activities will be gained from the Policy Network (comprised of members who have expressed an interest in science and education policy) and wider membership.

ii) Composition

The Panel should be comprised of members with the following expertise:

- **Education policy** – at least one member should have expertise in higher education policy. Where possible, this member should also sit on the Education, Training & Public Engagement Committee, to facilitate links between these two Committees.
- **Industry** – at least one member should have expertise in science policy issues relating to industry.
- **Early career molecular bioscientist** – at least one member should be an early career molecular bioscientist (postgraduate or within 10 years of gaining an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification)
- **Devolved regions** – at least one member should have demonstrable interest in policy differences across the devolved regions (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) which may affect the molecular bioscience community.

- **UK research and innovation landscape** – at least one, but preferably all members to a certain extent, should have knowledge of the UK research and innovation landscape and research funding.

iii) **Election of Members**

- Members of this Panel will be elected from the Biochemical Society Membership, and from external parties if the skills and other requirements defined for this panel are met.
- Members will be elected in-line with standard Biochemical Society Election Procedures

iv) **Chair of Policy Advisory Panel**

- The document **Terms of Reference – Honorary Policy Officer** outlines the eligibility criteria and expectations of the Chair of this panel.
- The Chair of the Policy Advisory Panel will be elected in-line with standard Biochemical Society Election Procedures.

3. **Meetings**

i) **Frequency of meetings**

- The Policy Advisory Panel will meet twice a year, with additional business carried out electronically where possible.
- The Honorary Policy Officer may convene additional meetings as necessary and within budget.
- Members may join meetings by teleconference if required.
- Members who are absent from two meetings in a row may be asked by the Chair to reconsider their availability to serve on the Committee. Members who are absent from three meetings in a row may be asked by the Chair to resign their position.

ii) **Quorum**

- A quorum shall be 3 members

iii) **Agenda and papers**

- An agenda, along with documentation/information/reports supporting the items under discussion, will be circulated by email to members of the Policy Advisory Panel a minimum of seven (7) calendar days before a meeting.
- Final minutes will be circulated to all Panel members, and others in attendance, as close to three (3) calendar weeks after the meeting takes place as is practicable.

iv) **Decision making**

- Where possible, a general consensus identified by the Honorary Policy Officer (Chair) will be sufficient to consider a matter passed, rejected or deferred.
- Where consensus is not possible, all decisions will be made by a ballot, with each Panel member holding one (1) vote. Where an equity of votes occurs, the Chair may cast an additional vote to finalise the decision, or may defer the decision for later action.

4. **Reporting procedures**

i) **General**

- The Policy Advisory Panel reports to the Council of Trustees through its Chairperson (the Honorary Policy Officer).

ii) Annual General meeting

- The Honorary Policy Officer is to attend the Annual General Meeting, held in June/July of each year, to represent this Committee. If this is not possible, a further member of the committee may attend in their stead.

5. Ownership of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are owned by the Honorary Policy officer and Council of Trustees.

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