

President of the Microbiology Society

Role Description

Key facts:

Background: Microbiology Society is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. It is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The Board of Trustees operates in compliance with the Society's Articles of Association and Charity Commission guidance on good governance.

Time commitment: Council meets for formal meetings in person three times each year. In person meetings usually take place at the Microbiology Society offices in London and the President is expected to Chair these. Formal papers are circulated to all Council members one week before each meeting and Council members are expected to read the papers and come prepared to participate in discussion where relevant. There may be other ad hoc business that takes place between meetings. In total, the time commitment is approximately 30 days per year, including meetings.

Remuneration: The role of the President is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

Term and process: The President is appointed by Council by anonymous vote following a shortlisting process from the Appointments Panel. They serve as President for three years.

1. What is Council?

The Council is comprised from the Society membership, provides the strategic direction of the Society and is responsible for its governance and financial sustainability. Members of Council bear the legal responsibilities of Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company and take a variety of important strategic and legal decisions on how the Society deploys its assets and supports its membership.

2. Executive Officers

The overriding role of the Executive Officers (President, Treasurer and General Secretary) is to work together to monitor the affairs of the Microbiology Society so as to support Council in deliberations and decision-making.

The Executive Officers maintain close and regular contact with the Chief Executive. This approach allows the Chief Executive to oversee general operational and management affairs between Council meetings. The Executive Officers, in turn, maintain close and regular contact with other members of Council to keep them abreast of issues as and when appropriate.

The Executive Officers maintain an oversight of the roles of the relevant Council Chairs and senior staff members so as to ensure effective and appropriate communication with the Society.

3. Trustee duties

3.1 Statutory duties

Trustees and Directors of the Company are collectively responsible for:

- setting and overseeing delivery of the Society strategy in furtherance of our aims, vision and mission and in the best interest of our members,
- ensuring compliance with the Articles of Association, Charity and Company Law and governance best practice to effectively deploy their duties, and
- ensuring the Society's resources are managed responsibly and ensuring the financial sustainability of the Society.

3.2 Duties as the Chair of Council

In this influential role, the President will work with the Chief Executive, the Officers and Members of Council in leading the Society in pursuit of its objectives. The President acts as custodian for the Society's mission and objectives and is responsible for overall direction of the Council, ensuring that the Council takes an effective role in the governance of the Society. The Presidency is far more than a figurehead.

The President is the Chair of the Council of the Society (who are charity Trustees and company Directors), comprising the three Officers, the Chairs of standing Committees, the Chair of the Early Career Forum Executive and Elected Members. The President represents the Society externally and is responsible, with the Chief Executive and the Officers, for the effective and efficient running of the Society.

The President is the Chief Executive's line manager. In practice, management of the Chief Executive is usually accomplished collaboratively with the other Officers.

The President is accountable to the Council of the Society and to the Membership at the Annual General meeting.

The President:

- demonstrates leadership of the Society both internally and externally
 - represents the views and needs of the membership, including to senior staff of the Microbiology Society and through Council
 - works closely with the Executive Team (Treasurer, General Secretary, Chief Executive) and with Council to further the aims of the Society
 - ensures that the Society reflects the full breadth of the discipline of microbiology
 - represents the Society externally to other societies, to policy makers, to the media and the public
 - works to improve links with members, other societies, policy makers and the public to increase awareness of the Society's role and of the discipline of microbiology
 - chairs the Annual General Meeting of the Society
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- chairs meetings of the Council of the Society and ensures that they give adequate focus to delivering Council's agreed strategy
- attends meetings of Committees as appropriate

4. Qualities of a trustee and the Chair of Council

- Understanding of the range of different needs and challenges affecting members and the microbiology community.
- An ability to process a range of information, participate in discussion and a willingness to constructively challenge where necessary.
- A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time commitment, both to Committee and Council business and to respond to tight deadlines where necessary.
- Experience of participating in Committee or equivalent leadership meetings, this may be through membership of a Microbiology Society Committee or other similar body within an alternative organisation.
- Demonstrable commitment to the Microbiology Society activities, this may be through a number of years membership and/or involvement in other Society activities.
- An ability to act with impartiality, to make sound judgement and willingness to accept collective responsibility for Council decisions.
- Willingness to act in the overall best interest of the Society, without conflict of interest and conflict of loyalty.
- Ability to communicate with tact and diplomacy and foster a welcoming and collaborative environment.

5. Attributes for the role of President

5.1 Essential

1. Is a member of the Microbiology Society.
2. Has recognition among the community of microbiologists in the UK and Ireland.
3. Will promote and embed diversity and an inclusive and welcoming culture in the Society.
4. Has experience of scientific leadership in a professional capacity.
5. Has experience of chairing effective meetings, including those dealing with complex issues.
6. Has experience commensurate with representing the Society to external bodies.
7. Has time and commitment to the role (approx. 25 days per annum).
8. Shows ability to exercise judgement across a broad spectrum of management issues.

5.2 Desirable

1. Is appropriately networked to the scientific community, other societies, and/or policy-makers.
 2. Has taken a leading national or international role in the development of microbiology.
 3. Has an excellent track record in research, teaching or outreach.
 4. Has previous experience of working with the Society.
 5. Has enthusiasm to lead with others one or more of the Society's strategic aims.
 6. Has an understanding of the breadth of microbiology and its relationship to other disciplines.
 7. Shows understanding of the range of organisations in which members work.
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