

Microbiology Society Terms of Reference

Prokaryotic Division

1. General

1.1 Advisory Council and Committees

The Microbiology Society is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, first incorporated in 1972.

The business of Advisory Council is facilitated by several Committees. These Committees are chaired or co-chaired by Advisory Council members and include one or more elected members as well as respective members of Society staff. The current Committees are as follows:

- Building Communities
- Impact and Influence
- Sustainability
- Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive
- Finance
- Audit, Risk and Evaluation
- Members Panel

There is also a Scientific Conferences Panel (SCP) responsible for overseeing the delivery of the scientific conferences programme to support the Society's three main strategic objectives, ensuring the delivery of conferences that are appealing to the membership. SCP also coordinates the activities of the Microbiology Society Divisions covering Virology, Eukaryotic and Prokaryotic microbiology, and the Irish Division.

The Society is committed to creating an inclusive culture that supports equality and diversity and fully reflects both its membership and the global microbiology community across all protected characteristics. The Society seeks to actively encourage all practices that reflect a diverse society.

By participating in Division meetings, all Division members agree to respect other members' opinions and give all present a chance to contribute. The co-Chair/Chair is responsible for running the meeting, please support them to keep to time. Certain topics discussed will be confidential, therefore Division members are asked to be mindful not to repeat such information outside of the meeting.

1.2 Divisions

The Society's conference and events programme is planned by SCP and the Divisions, with input from the wider membership. The Divisions aim to promote microbiology in its widest context. They provide a scientific focus for a subject that has often been fragmented over a range of different subject areas, scientific groups and societies.

2. Prokaryotic Division

2.1 Background

The Prokaryotic Division is responsible for liaising between the Microbiology Society and members working on prokaryotic microbiology.

2.2 Composition

The Prokaryotic Division is typically comprised of:

- Chair
- Chair-Elect
- 18 Ordinary members with remits within nine broad areas of expertise in prokaryote microbiology
- One representative from the Federation for Infection Societies (FIS)
- One Early Career Forum Representative

2.3 Terms of Office

The term of office of Ordinary members will be three calendar years. This may be extended by one year on the recommendation of the Chair (typically to maintain diversity or balance). Members who miss two consecutive meetings/events without satisfactory explanation, or who are otherwise unable to commit to the activities of the Division, will be asked by the Chair to consider their position and may be asked to step down by the Chair.

The term of office of the Chair and Chair-Elect is two years from the time of appointment to that role.

2.4 Division meetings

The Prokaryotic Division meet in January each year when all Divisions meet to discuss the forthcoming Annual Conference arrangements/abstract selection and put forward ideas for the following year, plus any other business related to SCP.

Possible teleconference/email discussions take place in advance of Annual Conference and prior to the July and October SCP meetings.

2.5 Division roles

2.5.1 Chair

The role of the Chair is as follows, in addition to those of Ordinary members:

- Attend Scientific Conferences Panel to represent the Prokaryotic Division (propose symposia for Annual Conference in order of preference, consider Hot Topic lectures, read other paperwork and be organised, feedback and canvas opinion in advance)
- Communicate between SCP/Society staff and Division members
- Galvanise Division members into action for required deadlines

- Be prepared for Division meetings to lead discussion and draw out actions with specific people assigned
- Organise Division meetings (timeslot/agenda/minutes/action log)
- Oversee Division symposia at conferences and ensure smooth delivery
- Oversee Early Career Microbiologist of the Year judging
- Copy in Chair-Elect
- Liaise with the Early Career Forum
- Identify and canvas for new Division members, welcome them once appointed and outline role/expectations

2.5.2 Chair-Elect

The role of the Chair-Elect is as follows, in addition to those of Ordinary members:

- Shadow the Chair
- Attend the Scientific Conferences Panel (three one-day meetings per year, typically in January, July and October)
- Support the Chair and gradually take over

2.5.3 Ordinary members

The role of Ordinary members is as follows:

- Suggest ideas for symposia
- Take part in discussions to prioritise ideas on the table for Annual Conference
- Volunteer to organise symposia or fora
- Suggest speakers
- Agree time slots
- Informally invite speakers
- Organise speaker's meals
- Select abstracts for poster and oral presentations
- Host speakers at Annual Conference
- Potentially chair a session at Annual Conference
- Help in judging the Early Career Microbiologist of the Year competition
- Suggest prize nominees and submit nominations
- Suggest new Division members
- Comment on SCP relevant business
- Get involved with Microbiology Society events if possible
- Work with the Early Career Forum Executive Committee

- Canvas membership for ideas and new volunteers

2.6 Appointment of new Chair

The Chair-Elect, to become Chair, is sought via an open call to the Society membership and all applications considered by an appointments panel to include the Co-Chair and Chair-Elect of the Building Communities Committee who also Chairs the Scientific Conferences Panel, the current Chair and Chair-Elect of the recruiting Division and a fifth member drawn from the Editorial Boards. The appointment panel's recommendations, including reasoning and application materials, will be submitted to Advisory Council for approval of a single candidate, or for a decision if a selection of candidates have been put forward, and then to confirm appointment.

2.6.1 Qualifications of a Chair/Chair-Elect

- Sufficient understanding of the important role of the Prokaryotic Division within the Microbiology Society
- Demonstrated commitment to the function of the Microbiology Society (e.g. unbroken membership for a number of years, previous involvement in committees or panels within the Microbiology Society)
- Strong commitment to Microbiology Society journals and the need to feed content from Society conferences and events to the journals
- Sufficient management experience and interpersonal skills
- Capacity and willingness to serve in this role

2.7 Election of new members

Elections will be held annually by the Society to replace retiring members. The Chair and Chair-Elect will consult to ensure that vacancies are either open or restricted to areas that need to be filled to maintain the diversity of the Division. Where multiple nominations are received for vacancies, in the first instance the Division Chair and Chair-Elect will review nominations to redistribute among other areas if appropriate. This will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to vacant Division positions (e.g. candidates' work in the field and therefore can usefully contribute and represent that theme)
- Track record (must be independent i.e. beyond second post-doc placement but candidates are not required to be fully established researchers as sometimes such people do not have time to commit fully)
- Network within the microbiology community (to ensure Division members have sufficient contacts to be able to invite eminent speakers to participate in conferences and symposia and can canvas their networks for topical ideas)

In cases where a Division vacancy is not filled through the election process, the Chair and Chair-Elect may seek to co-opt a member to address that deficiency.

The EC Forum representative is elected by the EC Forum Executive Committee and appointed to the Division.

2.7.1 Desired qualification and experience of new Division members

- Possess a track record in relevant microbiology (as publications or with industrial activity in the sector)
- Prepared to commit time and motivated to do so
- Organisational ability
- Interpersonal skills to encourage participation from invited speakers and work productively with Society staff
- Capable to critically assess scientific contributions (abstracts and symposia topics, judge posters)

3. Review

These Terms of Reference of the Prokaryotic Division should be reviewed and renewed or updated at least every two years.