

Appointed Member of Advisory Council and Building Communities co-Chair Role Description

Background:

The Advisory Council, reports directly to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for delivering active engagement and insights on behalf of the microbiology community. It includes the co-Chairs from the five strategic committees of the Society.

Time commitment: In total, the time commitment is approximately 12 days per year, including meetings. Advisory Council meets twice a year in July and December. Committees meet twice a year in May and October. Panels meet three times a year in March, June and November.

Meetings are typically a mix of remote and in person and approximately 2 – 3 hours in length. In person meetings are usually held at the Society offices in London. Papers are circulated a week before the meeting and members are expected to read them ahead of the meeting and come prepared to participate in discussions. There may be other ad hoc business that takes place between meetings.

Remuneration: The role of an Appointed Member of Council and co-Chair of a Committee is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although reasonable expenses for travel may be claimed.

Term and process: The co-Chair of the Building Communities Committee is appointed by the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Advisory Council on the recommendation of the Appointments Panel. They serve for two years as co-Chair-elect before taking office as co-Chair for a further two years, serving a total of four year.

The Society is committed to creating an inclusive culture, which requires a governance structure that fully reflects both its membership and the global microbiology community. We welcome nominations from across the full breadth of the membership and are particularly keen to receive nominations from members from historically marginalised backgrounds. We look forward to hearing from you.

1. What is Advisory Council?

Working with the Society's staff, the Advisory Council is responsible for delivering active engagement and insights on behalf of the microbiology community. The Advisory Council reports to the Board of Trustees who bear the legal responsibilities of Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company. The governing document for the Advisory Council is the Society's Bye-Laws. The Advisory Council of the Society consists of up to 20 members. Of these, seven representatives are elected by the membership of the Society, two are elected by the Early Career Forum, eight are appointed as co-Chairs of our Committees, and three are appointed as Executive Officers: the President, General Secretary and Treasurer, who also sit on the Society's Board of Trustees.

2. What is the Building Communities Committee?

Reporting to Advisory Council, the Building Communities Committee is responsible for driving content themes for events, journals, and other activities to support the Society's three main strategic objectives:

Through a better understanding of the diversity of our members, we will enable them to strengthen their existing relationships and gain access to new communities, unlocking the potential for international collaboration and global knowledge exchange.

By harnessing local knowledge for worldwide impact, we will advance understanding of microbiology and champion the contribution made by microbiology, our members and their work in addressing global challenges.

By recognising global differences in accessing opportunities at the Microbiology Society, we will build on existing strong financial and governance foundations to reinforce long-term sustainability and resilience through diversifying income streams, increasing efficiency and ensuring robust mechanisms for decision-making, monitoring and evaluation.

The Scientific Conferences Panel and Publishing Panel both report to the Building Communities Committee and are each chaired by one of the Committee co-Chairs.

3. What is Scientific Conferences Panel?

The Scientific Conferences Panel is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the scientific conference programme to support the Microbiology Society's strategy. It is chaired by one of the Building Communities co-Chairs and consists of the Chair and Chairs-elect of the four Divisions, the Infection Science Representatives and an Early Career Representative.

By convention, the chair rotates around the interests of the four Divisions. The current Chair works within prokaryotic microbiology and the current Chair-elect in virology so the Society is ostensibly keen to receive applications for this role from those within eukaryotic microbiology and/or located on the island of Ireland. However, Advisory Council is primarily concerned with ensuring the best candidate for the role based on the skills required to be successful so this should not be a barrier to application.

4. Co-Chair duties

The Chairs of Committees will maintain close and regular contact with the relevant staff of the Society and report to Advisory Council at meetings to keep them abreast of activities of the Committee as and when appropriate. As the Committees have wide remits, each will have two co-Chairs. Co-Chairing is designed to ensure that the work is spread fairly and realistically. Co-Chairing should also ensure that if there were a particularly inconvenient time for one co-Chair, it would not necessarily preclude the Committee from meeting.

4.1 Co-Chair duties

- The co-Chairs will be responsible for the leadership of the Committee; ensuring that the necessary business of the Committee is carried out effectively in pursuit of the Society's mission and strategic aims.

- The co-Chairs will ensure that the Committee acts in accordance with its own Terms of Reference, the Society's Articles of Association and Bye-laws, Equality and Diversity statement and all internal policies.
- The co-Chairs will ensure that all members are clear on the business to be transacted, encourage contribution and input from all utilising the relevant skills and expertise of members as appropriate, and guide towards clear decision making and action.
- The co-Chairs will actively listen and effectively summarise the views of the group, acting as a democratic mediator if required, build consensus and ensure collective responsibility.
- The co-Chairs will identify skills and knowledge needs/gaps within the Committee, to ensure it can meet its strategic responsibilities and to ensure representation across all microbiological communities.
- The co-Chairs will engage Advisory Council with the activities of the Committee.
- The co-Chairs will lead by example to draw together Committees, Divisions, Editorial Boards and relevant staff members to advance understanding of microbiology and champion the contribution made by microbiology, our members and their work in addressing global challenges.
- The co-Chairs will be a key representative for the Society to raise the profile of microbiology and our members and increase the influence of the Society with the public, policy-makers and other stakeholders.
- The co-Chairs will provide a key point of contact for other societies, industry, funders, educators, regulators and decision makers who may wish to engage with the Society.

5. Qualities of a co-Chair of a Committee and Panel

- Understanding of the range of different needs and challenges affecting members and the microbiology community.
- Ability to communicate with tact and diplomacy and foster a welcoming and collaborative environment.
- Be an active listener with ability to summarise discussions concisely.
- 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 Advisory 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 and to make sound judgement.