

Microbiology Society Terms of Reference

Prokaryotic Division

1. General

1.1 Council and Committees

The Microbiology Society is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, first incorporated in 1972. Members of Council bear the legal responsibilities of Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company.

The business of Council is facilitated by several Committees. These Committees are chaired or co-chaired by 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

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 panel meetings, all panel 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 panel 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 9 broad areas of expertise in prokaryote microbiology
- 1 representative from the Federation for Infection Societies (FIS)
- 1 Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Representative

All efforts should be made to ensure equal gender balance on the Division in line with Society policies.

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 explanations, 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 stepped 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 person 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 including proposals for Focused Meetings and Society-Supported Conference Grants.

Possible teleconference/email discussions take place in advance of the Annual Conference, and prior to the July SCP 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 and represent the Prokaryotic Division there (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, judge member ideas for Focused Meetings, Society-Supported Conference Grants, prize nominations)
- 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 Young Microbiologist of the Year judging
- Copy in Chair-Elect
- Liaise with the Early Career Microbiologists' 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 x 1-day meetings in London per year, typically 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 meal
- Select abstracts for poster and oral
- Host speakers at Annual Conference
- Potentially Chair a session
- Help in judging the Young Microbiologist of the Year competition
- Suggest prize nominees and submit nomination
- Suggest new Division members
- Comment on SCP relevant business e.g. Focused Meeting proposals

- Get involved with Microbiology Society events if possible
- Work with Early Career Microbiologists' Forum as Co-Chairs
- Canvas membership for ideas and new volunteers

2.6 Appointment of new Chair

The Chair-Elect is appointed by the Scientific Conferences Panel, ordinarily acting on the recommendation of a nominations committee comprising the current Chair and Chair-Elect. This nomination is typically ratified at the July Scientific Conferences Panel meeting in the year preceding appointment. At Division meetings, the Chair will keep members informed of the terms of the current Chair/Chair-Elect and invite members to suggest names of possible successors to the nominations committee. Members, at meetings or privately, may also indicate a personal interest in the position to the nominations committee. The nominations committee may also canvas prospective candidates more broadly. Following these consultations, the nominations committee will consider the following criteria prior to making a recommendation to SCP.

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)
- 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 position (work in the field so can usefully contribute and represent that theme)
- Track record (must be independent i.e. beyond 2nd post-doc when can contribute via ECM, but not required to be fully established as sometimes such people do not have time to commit fully)
- Network within microbiology (so that know and can invite eminent speakers on a personal level and canvas for topical ideas)

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

The ECM Forum representative is elected by the ECM 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.