

Communications Committee

1. Terms of Reference

Purpose: Reporting to Council, the Communications Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Communications plan to support the Society's three main strategic objectives:

1. *We will enable our members to strengthen their existing relationships and gain access to new communities, unlocking the potential for knowledge exchange.*
2. *We will advance understanding of microbiology and champion the contribution made by microbiology, our members and their work in addressing global challenges.*
3. *We will reinforce the Society's long-term sustainability and resilience by diversifying income streams, increasing efficiency and ensuring robust governance.*

The Communications Committee will provide advice and expertise on the development of this plan to the Council and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of activities. The Committee will work with staff to ensure that the activities delivered are in line with the agreed strategy and budget.

The Society is committed to ensuring that its activities reflect the make-up of the membership as a whole. In particular, as an organisation that operates in the UK and Ireland, it seeks wherever possible to ensure that its Committees include individuals from both territories.

The Society encourages the expectation of at least 33% female participation and ideally 50% female participation across all Society activities. All Society meetings should be conducted in a manner that is supportive of the Equality and Diversity (E&D) policy statement to ensure that the entire talent pool be considered in all discussions regarding Society activities.

2. Duties:

The Communications Committee will advise, oversee and/or ensure the implementation of the following objectives:

1. The Society has effective communications with members, potential members, the wider microbiology community, and other key stakeholders including students, teachers, journalists the wider public and relevant bodies and organisations through a comprehensive framework of communications channels including social media, websites, e-newsletters, promotional material and the Society's quarterly magazine *Microbiology Today*.
2. The Society's profile and microbiology are raised to relevant stakeholders groups.
3. The communications team monitors and reviews the overall quality, consistency and effectiveness of complex and diverse publications, including web based and social media communications and relevant data is reported to the Committee.
4. The Society's activities and resources are scientifically accurate and targeted to reach the appropriate audience.
5. The Society supports its members to offer a broad range of education and outreach activities aligned with the Society's strategy.

6. There is close collaboration with other committees and organisations on areas of common interest.
7. The external environment is effectively monitored by staff and reported to the Committee so that changes which could impact on the strategic direction and/or activities are identified and acted on.
8. To ensure relevant advice and recommendations are properly reported to Council.

3. Meeting schedule

The Committee will meet at least twice a year in person, at the Society's Annual Conference in spring (March/April) and around the AGM in September. A further meeting may be held at the Committee's discretion either in late January/early February or late November/early December. In addition, it will transact its business between meetings by email, teleconference and other communications to ensure sufficient reporting mechanisms to Council.

4. Membership

The membership requires a balanced portfolio of skills and knowledge to be able to fully support and engage with the remit of the Committee. The Committee comprises of:

- A Chair; ex officio a member of Council
- A Chair-Elect; nominated by the Committee and approved by Council at least a year before the end of the current Chair's term (the Chair-Elect does not have to be a current member of the Committee)
- A Council representative; this may reshuffle among the Elected Members of Council each year
- Up to four Elected Members; nominations and elections are sought from the membership annually
- Up to four co-opted members who do not have to be Members of the Society but who should be chosen to include an appropriate range of skills and expertise not found among the membership; an important role of co-opted members is to provide constructive challenge
- One member of the Committee will act as the Equality and Diversity Champion for communications at the Society
- Editor-in-Chief of *Microbiology Today*, nominations are sought from the membership, recommendation from the Committee and approved by Council
- The relevant representative from the Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee is invited to be in attendance

- Up to four, ad hoc advisors can be requested to attend certain meetings to address specific knowledge requirements or assist in certain projects or alternatively be co-opted on to the Committee if required.

The term of office for all positions is three years. If a current member of the Committee is nominated as Chair-Elect, their term will extend accordingly.

The following report in to the Communications Committee:

***Microbiology Today* Editorial Board:** will be a sub-committee of the Communications Committee and will be chaired by the Editor-in-Chief of *Microbiology Today*. All members of the Communications Committee will be members of *Microbiology Today* Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board is supported by the Managing Editor of *Microbiology Today* (r.paget@microbiologysociety.org).

However, additional members can be co-opted to address specific knowledge requirements or assist with certain projects.

The Communications Committee is supported by:

Head of Communications (c.mitchell@microbiologysociety.org)

Other members of staff attend meetings as appropriate.