

THE SCIENCE COUNCIL

WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO ADVANCE UK SCIENCE



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The Science Council

the
SCIENCE
council

When launching the Science Council in 2000, Sir Gareth Roberts, the founding President, said: *“There are many challenging issues facing the world in the 21st Century and the science community will need to work both collectively and collaboratively to tackle these: I believe the Science Council will play a central role in enabling this to happen.”*

The Science Council, which received its Royal Charter in 2003, has the twin aims of bringing together the learned societies and professional bodies in science and advancing professionalism. There are now more than 30 member organisations from across the spectrum of science – learned societies including chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics, psychology and professional bodies from nuclear physics to soil science. The Science Council is funded collectively by these organisations and by individual professional scientists through the Chartered Scientist scheme.

COLLABORATION AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY

It is important that the Science Council adds value to the work of its individual member bodies and does not get in the way of the valuable contribution they already make. Through its work on special projects, on science communication and outreach, careers and skills, science policy and advice and input to Government, the Science Council is now demonstrating the value of its role as an umbrella organisation in a sector that previously was often described as fragmented. This commitment to collaboration is illustrated by the understanding of science as a methodology rather than a discipline: the Science Council’s definition of science is that it is the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence. This also underpins the Science Council’s key strengths in its breadth across science and the application of science, and multi-disciplinarity.

As well as providing a forum in which member organisations can share information on their own activities, the Science Council can and does seek to establish shared positions on policy issues. While there are obviously challenges in trying to achieve a single position on all key issues, the organisation has developed ways of working through special interest groups and issue specific round table discussions that have enabled the identification of consensus issues and shared priorities for policy. The Science Council now has a broadly based policy statement that sets out its key areas of concern and policy priorities for science – from investment in research through to science education, careers advice, public engagement and science in government.¹

ADVANCING PROFESSIONALISM IN SCIENCE



scientists can often practise or specialise in different areas of science during their careers. CSci benchmarks standards and codes of practice across science disciplines and professions and recognises high levels of professionalism and competence in science; it also

In addition to its role as an umbrella organisation the Science Council promotes professionalism in science. In 2004 the designation of Chartered Scientist was introduced, modelled initially on the well established register of Chartered Engineers. Chartered Scientist – CSci – encapsulates the multi-disciplinary nature of 21st Century science in which



offers recognition and portability across employment sectors. The designation is awarded to individuals through 21 Licensed Bodies who are also members of the Science Council. To remain on the register, Chartered Scientists must undertake Continuous Professional Development and an annual monitoring process ensures that Chartered Scientists operate to a high level of current competence.

The register of Chartered Scientists has grown to 15,000 practising across all fields of science. CSci is gaining recognition as the 'gold standard' across government, academia, industry and professional bodies. It has also been described as a badge: "CSci is a way of saying to the world 'I am a professional scientist and proud of it'".

CHARTERED SCIENCE TEACHER

Chartered Science Teacher – CSciTeach – is a specialist section of the Chartered Scientist register developed in partnership with the Association for Science Education. CSciTeach is set at the same high level as CSci and recognises the combination of skills, knowledge, understanding and expertise required by individuals involved in the practice and advancement of science teaching and learning.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TRUST

Through a number of different projects and activities the Science Council is increasing the visibility of professionals in science and is also raising awareness of the contribution they make to science and society. These aims are important if we are to encourage people to enter the profession and to achieve both the level of knowledge, and the high standards of practice that will serve to underpin public trust and confidence in science and the application of science.

The Science Council is now moving forward with the development of a professional register for science technicians and for graduate scientists, establishing at long last a progressive professional pathway appropriate for the practice of science in today's world.

UK SCIENCE EDUCATION AND SKILLS – CAREERS FROM SCIENCE



The Science Council believes it is essential that the UK invests in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and skills at all levels to

create the highly skilled workforce that will be essential to a high added value economy and UK competitiveness. The science community itself has long recognised the need to attract young people into science and to raise awareness of the career opportunities arising from the study of STEM subjects. One of the leading projects for the Science Council works towards providing better STEM careers information for school students, science teachers, careers advisers and parents. *Careers from Science* is a collaborative project led by the Science Council which is addressing this need and now works with more than 65 partner organisations across STEM including learned societies and professional organisations, government departments, charities, industry sectors and individual businesses.

FUTURE MORPH



As part of the *Careers from Science* project the www.futuremorph.org web site was launched in November 2008. Rather than the more usual specific employment sector, qualification, or occupation

approaches, Future Morph brings all these together developing content around themes such as climate change, the environment and health. The aim is to engage with young people and encourage them to appreciate why they study science and maths in school. Content is informed by audience need, and a wide range of stories, case studies, games and multi-media all show the breadth of career opportunities that are available from studying STEM. Working as a portal, the web site links across to a variety of existing content and information providers (for example by qualification, occupation, profession, discipline and employment sector) and makes it possible for young people, and those who advise them, to access information more easily. Alongside this, the Science Council, working with Engineering UK, is developing greater awareness of good practice in careers IAG by providing advice and support for science and engineering institutions that produce more sector specific careers information.

SCIENCE IN HEALTH



The Science in Health Group is one of the Science Council's special interest groups and comprises a panel of experts from within and beyond the Science Council member bodies, extending outside beyond

biological and medical sciences. In January 2008 the Group published a report – *Integration and Implementation of Diagnostic Technologies in Healthcare*, which explored the opportunities for improving diagnostics – from the point of testing to the interpretation of results – taking account of the molecular revolution, automation and the application of informatics. For the past 18 months the group has been working on a report looking into the future careers opportunities in health science which it hopes to publish by the end of the year.

¹ The Science Council's Priorities for UK Science and Innovation Policy 2010 – 2015 can be found on the web site at <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/sites/default/files/WebfinalSciencePolicy.pdf>

For more information about the Science Council and the work of its member bodies go to www.sciencecouncil.org and for Chartered Scientist to <http://www.charteredscientist.org/about/index.html>

