

# Terms of Reference

Type of Group	Committee
Title	Conferences Committee
Last Reviewed	Approved by the Board 17 September 2020
Next Review due	September 2022 (every two years)

## Terms of Reference: Conferences Committee

### PURPOSE

Reporting to the Board, the Conferences Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of The Society's strategic priority on advancing physiology through our meetings: excellent science, wide and active participation, lasting impact.

The goal of the Conferences strand (formerly Meetings) of the strategy is to provide opportunities for researchers to present new work and get feedback from their peers; to make connections with other scientists; to learn about new research, techniques and ideas and to catch up with friends and colleagues. Conferences also have a role in setting the direction of research, particularly by highlighting hot topics.

Through its programme of conferences, The Society aims to showcase physiological research, spotlight new areas of discovery, deliver training for Early Career Researchers and provide an opportunity for physiologists to interact.

Conferences Committee will help The Society to achieve its Vision of *Physiology Flourishing* through working with staff to deliver the implementation plans set out in the strategic framework. It will increase The Society's efficiency and effectiveness in the area of Conferences through joined-up thinking, collaboration and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

There is a minimum expectation of 33% female representation and ideally 50% across all Society activities. All Society meetings should be conducted in a manner that is supportive of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that the entire talent pool be considered in all discussions regarding Society activities. The Conferences Committee will ensure that this is the case for all Society scientific conferences.

### REMIT

- To develop, support delivery and review the Conferences strand of The Society's Strategy
  - Consider and interpret the external environment so that changes that could impact on the strategic direction and/or activities are identified and acted upon. Where appropriate, these should be highlighted to the Board;
  - Generate proposals for new initiatives that can be taken to the Board;
  - Provide scientific input/expertise;
  - Assist and advise the Board on the smooth running and strategic development of The Society's scientific conferences calendar, currently including Main Meetings and its satellites, Topic Meetings, Theme Meetings and all related grant and support schemes;

- Maintain strategic oversight of the Main Meeting and its satellites, Topic Meetings and Theme Meetings with respect to scientific content and schedule. This also applies to all relevant Society funded Research Symposia (including overseas exchange symposia and Early-Career symposia), ensuring the delivery of high quality, internationally competitive scientific events that attract international participation;
- Develop schemes to recognise excellence in physiology at Society scientific conferences;
- Work with SMT to prioritise, develop and review the impact of key activities;
- Champion opportunities for Members to contribute to Conferences;
- Work with the relevant member of the SMT to identify projects or areas of work for which a Task and Finish group or Expert Panel would be appropriate;
- Through the Chair's presence on the Scientific Activities Forum, contribute to joined-up working across The Society;
- Receive written or oral reports from Senior Management Team (SMT), Task Forces, Task and Finish Groups and Expert Panels - these reports will follow the principle of reporting by exception;
- Maintain oversight of the annual budgets, drawn up by SMT, reviewed by Conferences Committee, recommended to Finance Committee and approved by the Board;
- Receive and review budgetary updates from SMT and ensure appropriate recommendations and corrective action are taken when significant changes are detected;
- Under the concept of reporting by exception, ensuring that relevant advice and recommendations are properly reported to the Board.

## GOVERNANCE

### Membership

- The membership requires a balanced portfolio of skills knowledge and experience to be able to fully support and engage with the remit of the Committee. The maximum size of the Committee shall be less than the maximum size of the Board.  
The Committee will comprise:
- The Chair of the Committee, who will be a Trustee. . In the absence of the Committee Chair, due to for example, illness the remaining members present can elect one of themselves to chair that meeting;
- Chair of Publications Committee as an *ex officio* member
- A Membership Champion at senior/established level, who shall be a Member of The Society;
- An early career Membership Champion who shall be a Member of The Society;
- A *Journal of Physiology* and an *Experimental Physiology* representative;
- Appropriate theme lead representatives;
- Other members, of whom up to three do not have to be Members of The Society.

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be 50% of the membership of the Committee, plus one.

External members should be chosen to include an appropriate range of skills and expertise not found among the membership. The Chair of the Committee will serve for four years; further details are provided in the subsidiary regulations. Other members of the Committee will normally serve a term of three years.

The Chair will appoint an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion from the members of the Committee who are also Members of The Society. This person may also be one of the two Membership Champions. This person should serve at least one year in this role.

The Committee may co-opt additional temporary members for particular tasks or projects. It is expected that wherever possible, a new Task and Finish group or Expert Panel would be created for significant projects or to investigate new areas of work.

## Staff Attendance

The SMT lead for the Meetings strand of the strategy – the Director of Scientific Programmes – will provide the conduit between the staff and Conferences Committee. The Director of Scientific Programmes and the Events and Marketing Manager shall be required to attend Conferences Committee. Other staff may, at the SMT lead's discretion and by agreement of the Chair, attend meetings as required.

## Recruitment of Members

- New Committee members and Task Force members will be recruited through the following process:
  - Identify need for skills and experience;
  - Open call to Membership, complemented by targeted search where appropriate;
  - Potential new members provide CV and statement of interest and suitability;
  - Committee Chair, one member of SMT, one of the Membership Champions, the EDI Champion and one other member of the Committee discuss applications, assess and record demonstration of skills and experience against requirement, where required undertake interviews and appoint positions;
  - Successful candidates invited to join the Committee.
- Members of Task and Finish Groups, and Expert Panels will be sourced by the Committee and by relevant members of SMT.

## Subsidiary Groups

A range of Task and Finish groups, Task Forces, and Expert Panels will support the delivery of the relevant implementation plans. Committee members can serve on any of the above.

## Delegated authority

In carrying out its business, the Committee will refer to its both its Terms of Reference and the Delegation Framework.

## Frequency and duration

The Committee will meet in person twice a year and up to twice via tele-conference if necessary.

Consideration should be given to the timing of the other Advisory Committee meetings. In addition it may transact its business between meetings by email and other communications to ensure sufficient reporting mechanisms to the Board.

Members are expected to miss no more than two meetings throughout their term of office. Where absence is unavoidable, apologies should be sent to the Chair as soon as possible and comments on the agenda items and papers submitted prior to the meeting. Reasonable adjustments in the form of remote access to meetings and allowances for absence in exceptional circumstances may be made. Members, who miss more than two meetings without extenuating circumstances, will be required to stand down.

## Finance and legal

A Committee may not authorise expenditure and must observe any budget set for it and follow the financial controls and accounting procedures and requirements set by the Board for The Society in general and for Committees specifically. A Committee must not enter into any legal commitments or incur any financial or other liabilities on behalf of The Society.

## Conflicts of interest and loyalty

A Committee member who has a clear and substantial interest in a matter described above should declare that interest before, or at the beginning of any Committee meeting where the matter is to be discussed, whether or

not that interest is already recorded in the Register of Interests. Ideally, a notice should be sent to the Chair before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting should ask, at the beginning of each meeting, whether anyone has or may have a conflict, where this might be relevant. As new conflicts are discovered they should be added to the Register of Interests. Further details are provided in The Society's Policy on Conflicts.

#### Reporting procedure

Agendas and associated documentation will be distributed seven days before the meeting, via email.

All meetings of the Committee are carried out through reporting by exception where upon staff, with input from the Committee lead, provide the relevant information on areas of activity where input is required.

The Committee must have formal minutes of its meetings and record all proceedings, decisions and recommendations. Minutes, approved by the Chair, should be written within two weeks of the meeting and circulated to Committee members. The "Chair's minutes" will be submitted to the next Board meeting.