

Terms of Reference

Type of Group	Committee
Title	Scientific Conferences Committee
Last Reviewed	Approved by the Board CL25.01 (11 April 2025)
Next Review due	CL27.01 (March 2027)

Terms of Reference: Scientific Conferences Committee

PURPOSE

Reporting to the Board, the Scientific Conferences Committee is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the scientific conferences programme, as agreed by the Board, to support the delivery of The Society's strategy. These may include Annual Conference, two-day scientific meetings, and sandpit meetings.

The committee will assess all conference proposals received after the formal call to ensure The Society delivers a high-quality scientific programme, relevant to members and the wider physiology community.

Through its programme of conferences, The Society aims to showcase physiological research, spotlight new areas of discovery, deliver opportunities for Early Career Researchers to present and to bring together communities of physiologists to interact.

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 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that the entire talent pool be considered in all discussions regarding Society activities. The Scientific Conferences Committee will ensure that this is the case for all Society scientific conferences.

REMIT

- To oversee the delivery of a scientific conferences programme as agreed by the Board of Trustees. To assess the proposals for scientific meetings including the Annual Conference and the two-day scientific meetings to ensure the highest level of physiological science is covered by appropriate speakers through fair and transparent processes and in line with The Society's roadmap on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;
- To assess all relevant Society funded Meetings Schemes (including the International Development Support Fund, Non-Society Meetings funding and Early- Career symposia), ensuring the delivery of high quality, internationally competitive scientific events that attract the relevant communities' participation;
- Champion opportunities for members to contribute to The Society's Conferences portfolio;
- Receive written or oral reports from Senior Management Team (SMT), these reports will follow the principle of reporting by exception;

- Serve as an advocate for all The Society’s events, pro-actively promoting meetings and encouraging members to submit proposals, register and submit abstracts;
- Maintain oversight of the annual budgets, within the parameters approved by the Board, with SMT lead.
- Make timely decisions and act so as to not hold up the projects.
- To work with other societies, both nationally and internationally, to enhance the value of meetings of The Society as agreed by the Board.
- Under the concept of reporting by exception, ensuring that relevant advice and recommendations are properly reported to the Board.
- Society staff are responsible for operationalising the conferences within the agreed budget.

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;
- *A Journal of Physiology* and an *Experimental Physiology* representative;
- Other members, of whom up to three do not have to be members of The Society.

The Chair of Publications Committee can attend under a reciprocal agreement with that Committee. 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 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 – Head of Events and Marketing – will provide the conduit between the staff and Conferences Committee. The Head of Events and Marketing 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 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, and up to three additional members 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.

Delegated authority

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

Frequency and duration

The Committee will meet twice a year, online.

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. 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.

Confidentiality Clause

Committee members are expected to observe appropriate confidentiality and discretion in matters of the committee and handling/safe-keeping of information and documents, in particular in relation to any personal, proprietary, or commercial information.