



Professional development with the Microbiology Society



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1. Introduction

The Society provides several opportunities to support the professional development of members. It is important to be proactive with your professional development as it can provide several benefits to your professional life.

These include:



Skill development

Engaging in these activities can help to improve your existing skills and or learn new skills.



Networking

Some professional development opportunities will allow you to expand your professional network.



Employability

Professional development activities can be used to illustrate your competency for a skill in job applications.



Fundability

If you are applying for fellowships or individual grants, evidence of professional development can convince funders that you are the right candidate.



Career resilience

Professional development can build your transferable skills which can help you prepare for a career transition if you meet unexpected circumstances in your professional life.



Job satisfaction

Professional development achievements can motivate you in your professional life and help you to understand more about your values, interests and strengths.

This guide aims to inform you about the development opportunities you can explore with your Society membership and how these can help to advance your career.



2. Funding

The Society has several grants which are available to Society members to support professional development activities. Receiving funding can allow you to access professional development opportunities including conferences, research visits and organising education or outreach activities.

If you are pursuing a career in academia, you should aim to start a track record funding as early as possible as this can increase the chances you are successful with fellowship applications. Furthermore, receiving funding is an excellent way to evidence your competency via writing grant proposals, managing budgets and communication skills to future employers.

When applying for funding, make sure you are aware of the eligibility criteria for the grant, eligible costs which are covered, assessment criteria and application process to make sure the funding opportunity is right for you. To find out more about the grants available, you can read our [Guide to Microbiology Society grants](#).

3. Training

Attending a training session can advance your professional development by improving your skillset and confidence. The Society provides several training opportunities to its membership with the aim of supporting our members at several stages in their career journey.

3.1 Training at Society events

[Annual Conference](#) includes a diverse range of professional development sessions, mainly aimed at supporting early career members. Previous sessions have included 'managing a research laboratory' which explained how to manage funding, team building activities and maintaining work-life balance. Resources from these sessions can be accessed on our [Event presentations for members](#) page.

The Education and Outreach Symposium also supports those interested in teaching and engaging a wider audience with microbiology as this session includes talks about novel approaches and best practices in teaching microbiology.

The [Early Career \(EC\) Forum Summer Conference](#) takes place annually and is dedicated to showcasing early career research, career development and networking. The conference always includes professional development sessions, focused on preparing attendees for the next steps in their career.

3.2 Publishing Fundamentals

Publishing Fundamentals are a series of resources and workshops to help our members confidently navigate the publishing process. These are aimed at our early career members and run by our editors and peer reviewers, giving our members the chance to learn from people actively involved in the publishing process. To find out more, visit our [Publishing Fundamentals](#) page.





4. Leadership

Evidence of leadership is important for employers as it can demonstrate your potential for career advancement in their company and that you can motivate and inspire others. It is also important you have a track record of leadership if you want to apply for fellowships, as most fellowships are designed to fund future leaders in research and will be looking for applicants with leadership experience. The Society offers the opportunity to develop your leadership skills by getting involved with our [governance structure](#) or with our publishing process.

4.1 Governance

There are several positions within the Society governance structure which are open to involvement from members. This is an excellent opportunity to develop leadership skills.

◦ Council

At the highest level, [Council](#) provides strategic direction for the Society and is responsible for financial sustainability. Council is comprised of Chairs of the Committees and elected members.

◦ Committees

There are also strategic [Committees](#) which report to Council and are responsible for designing specific programmes and activities to fulfil the strategic plan of the Society.

The Committees are:

Finance Committee	Oversees the conduct of the Society's finances in order to support the Society's three main strategic objectives.
Building Communities Committee	Primarily responsible for driving forward the key strategic aim to 'enable our members to strengthen their existing relationships and gain access to new communities, unlocking the potential for knowledge exchange'.
Impact and Influence Committee	Primarily responsible for driving forward the key strategic aim to 'advance understanding of microbiology and champion the contribution made by microbiology, our members and their work in addressing global challenges'.
Sustainability Committee	Primarily responsible for driving forward the key strategic aim to 'reinforce the Society's long-term sustainability and resilience by diversifying income streams, increasing efficiency and ensuring robust governance'.
EC Forum Executive Committee	Ensures that early career members and their views are included across all Society activities.



◦ **Standing Panels**

Members of the [Standing Panels](#) oversee specific Society activities and bring their knowledge and expertise, to ensure the delivery of publishing and events programmes that are appealing to the membership.

Our Standing Panels are:

Publishing Panel	Responsible for overseeing the delivery of the operational aspects of the journals programme in contribution to the Microbiology Society's strategy.
Scientific Conferences Panel	Responsible for overseeing the delivery of the scientific conferences programme to support the Microbiology Society's strategy.
Members Panel	A group of members from historically marginalised communities who convene to bring their perspectives to our efforts to ensure the Society is welcoming across all its activities.

◦ **Divisions**

The four [Divisions](#) plan the scientific content for the Society's conference and events programme and ensure that we are representing microbiology in its widest context. Each Division is comprised of members with expertise in specific areas of discipline and regional representation to ensure our content is attractive to, and supports the specialisms within, our membership.

Our Divisions are:

Eukaryotic Division	Aims to promote eukaryotic microbiology in its widest context in fundamental, medical, applied and environmental aspects.
Prokaryotic Division	Comprises scientists working in the major areas of bacterial and archaeal microbiology.
Virus Division	Promotes fundamental studies of the natural history, cellular and molecular biology, immunology and molecular pathogenesis of viruses of all kinds.
Irish Division	Seeks to promote all aspects of microbiology in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

◦ **Council and Committees Shadowing Scheme**

We offer the opportunity to apply to shadow Council or Committees to any member who would like to find out more about how our governing bodies work. If you are considering applying for a position, the [Shadowing Scheme](#) can provide



valuable insight and the opportunity to widen your personal network.

4.2 Publishing

The Society publishes a wide [portfolio of journals](#) related to microbiology and there are several opportunities for members to get involved with the publishing process for these journals.

◦ Editor positions

Content for our journals and the peer review process is overseen by Editors-in-Chiefs and Editors. This is an excellent way to demonstrate your leadership by deciding on which content fits the remit of the journal and communicating with authors and reviewers. To find out more about becoming an editor, please contact journals@microbiologysociety.org.

◦ Peer reviewing

The Society's journal articles are peer reviewed and reviewers are always required to ensure the rigor of the process. Being a reviewer offers the opportunity to further develop critical thinking skills and contribute to the publishing process. To find out more about becoming a reviewer, please contact journals@microbiologysociety.org.

5. Networking, influence and impact

Networking is an important skill; it can develop connections for collaboration in your work, mentoring and support a career transition. The Society supports several groups where researchers can network with likeminded individuals. Furthermore, the Society supports these groups in making influence and impact in the microbiology community.

5.1 The EC Forum

The [EC Forum](#) was established to give early career members of the Society a way to influence our work. As a guide, we consider you an early career member if you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student, or within five years of appointment to your first position after your highest qualification earned. However, if this does not fit your situation and you consider yourself an early career scientist working in a microbiology, you are welcome to [join](#).

Being a member of the EC Forum is an excellent opportunity to network with other EC members. Furthermore, you can join the EC Forum Executive Committee which represents the views of early career members to Committees and Council and can influence and impact the strategic direction of the Society.

5.2 Society Champions

The [Champions Scheme](#) is essential in helping to raise awareness of the Microbiology Society and microbiology. Champions do this in their local area by initiating activities and events of their own or participating in Society-led activities.

Funding, guidance and promotion is provided by the Society to support Champions to organise activities and an online community of other Champions allows them to network with microbiologists all over the world.

6. Support for Carers

The Society believes in creating a welcoming community for all those interested in microbes and provides additional support for members with caring responsibilities to assist them in their career development.

6.1 Attending events

Members can apply for funding to support their caring costs associated with attending Annual Conference. Applications can be made through the [Society Events Grant](#) for Annual Conference or by contacting grants@microbiologysociety.org.

All registered delegates can make use of a fully accredited free crèche service provided by the Society at Annual Conference.



The Microbiology Society is a membership charity for scientists interested in microbes, their effects and their practical uses. It has a worldwide membership based in universities, industry, hospitals, research institutes, schools, and other organisations. Our members have a unique depth and breadth of knowledge about the discipline. The Society's role is to help unlock and harness the potential of that knowledge.

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