

SCOTTISH SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

This application pack contains the following sections:

- **Application Process**
- **Remit and Work Programme**
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- **Copy of Advertisement**

SSAC Secretariat
Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland
The Scottish Government
2026

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications for Members and Associate Members of the Scottish Science Advisory Council (SSAC) are invited to be made on the relevant SSAC application form. The application forms and this application pack are also available on the SSAC website: [SSAC Recruitment - 2026 | The Scottish Science Advisory Council](#)
- Applicants should return their completed application forms by email to the SSAC Secretariat at: scottishscience@gov.scot
- After reviewing this application pack, further information about the roles can be provided if required, by contacting the SSAC Secretariat.
- **Completed application forms, including the Diversity Monitoring form, must be received by 23:59 on Friday 20 March.** The Diversity Monitoring form will be kept separate from your application, will not be seen by the appointments panel, and will be used for diversity monitoring purposes only.
- Please include an electronic signature on your application form.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.
- Please ensure that you read the role and person specification before completing the application form for the relevant membership category.
- When completing the application form, candidates should seek to demonstrate how their experience matches the **experience and background criteria** and **essential and desirable qualities**. Applications will be assessed on the strength of the information provided. Candidates who appear to the appointments panel to match the criteria and qualities for appointment most closely will be invited to interview. It is therefore essential that your completed application form gives **full but concise** information relevant to the appointment.
- CVs will not be accepted as part of your application.
- All application forms will be acknowledged on receipt. If you have not received an acknowledgement within five working days of submitting your application, please contact the SSAC Secretariat at scottishscience@gov.scot.
- The appointment process will be overseen and evaluated by a selection panel comprising Professor Julian Jones, Chair of the SSAC; Professor Calum Semple, Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland (CSA); and Professor Catherine Ross, Chief Scientific Officer.
- Applications will be assessed and short-listed applicants will then be invited for interview. Those not short-listed will be notified they have been unsuccessful by no later than Tuesday 14 April 2026.

- Interviews for short-listed candidates will be held in late April/early May. Interviews will be held in person in St Andrew's House (with possible opportunities to attend online), central Edinburgh – full details will be included in the invitation to interview letter.
- All interviewees will be advised of the outcome of their interview as soon as possible once a decision has been reached. Feedback for short-listed candidates will be provided on request.
- The appointed candidates will be invited to take up their appointment from Tuesday 1 September 2026, and to attend an induction event prior to their first SSAC meeting on **Tuesday 8 September 2026**.
- A media notice will be issued to announce the appointment of the successful candidates, including brief biographies of new Members and Associate Members. Brief biographical information will also be included on the SSAC website.

REMIT AND WORK PROGRAMME

Remit

1. The SSAC is Scotland's highest level science advisory body, providing independent advice, through its Chair, to the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland and to Scottish Ministers.
2. The SSAC has a purely advisory role and does not direct any research expenditure. The Scottish Government may ask the SSAC to provide or recommend sources of scientific advice on specific scientific matters, or for assistance in organising relevant events, responding to Government consultations, or in commissioning advice. The SSAC may develop projects to provide scientific advice relevant to specific areas of government strategy or policy and may publish reports on this work.
3. The Terms of Reference of the SSAC are: to support the Scottish Government to obtain and make effective use of science advice, knowledge and techniques when formulating and implementing policies, further enhancing Scotland's status as a science and innovation nation, and supporting the Scottish Government's priorities. The SSAC is expected to align its advice with the priorities of the current Programme for Government¹ and relevant Scottish Government strategies, including the National Strategy for Economic Transformation² and the Green Industrial Strategy³.
4. The SSAC carries out its role by:
 - Providing scientific advice to inform Scottish Government (SG) policy and priorities;
 - Providing advice on developments in science and technology and implications for policy areas that are underpinned by or affected by science; and
 - Developing advice based on a medium to long term, horizon-scanning, strategic view to identify and harness future opportunities and mitigate future threats.
5. Distinctive features of the SSAC (relative to many other advisory bodies) include:
 - An interdisciplinary remit that embraces all sectors and policy areas;
 - Providing independent science advice at arm's length from SG;
 - Having no particular preferences in terms of science-related discipline or sector;
 - Operating as a collective (i.e. Members have a responsibility to provide checks and balances within the Council);

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2024-25-serving-scotland/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/green-industrial-strategy/>

- A combined knowledge of Scottish science skills and circumstances that enables the SSAC to ensure that advice commissioned from outside Scotland is appropriate to the Scottish context.

Principles of engagement:

- The SSAC's focus is on science advice in the broadest sense, including engineering and technology, and extending to social and economic disciplines;
- Identifying future needs and highlighting the potential need for science advice;
- Being both reactive (responding to requests from within the Scottish Government) and proactive (identifying topics that SSAC members believe represent opportunities or risks for Scotland);
- Co-opting additional Council members for 6-12 month periods to provide additional specialist experience when required;
- Forming working groups of SSAC members to engage in each piece of work;
- In developing Terms of Reference for specific pieces of work the SSAC will take into account the broader landscape of advice available (e.g. Centres of Expertise, other advisory committees and organisations such as the Royal Society of Edinburgh etc.)
- Where roundtables or workshops are convened by the SSAC, members will actively use their networks to engage with the wider scientific community and stakeholders, particularly from the private sector. Retiring SSAC members can continue to serve on SSAC project working groups.

Members

6. The Council membership comprises respected and leading figures extending across the academic and business communities, therefore applications from individuals with experience gained in e.g. business, industry, universities, research institutes etc., and in any discipline, will be considered, provided they can demonstrate how their experience and expertise would contribute to informing government policy in the context of the SSAC's role. The membership also aims to provide an effective conduit between the SSAC and the wider science base in Scotland and further afield.

7. Member appointments to the SSAC, which do not receive any remuneration, are made for a **three** year period with the possibility of a one year extension. The appointments are made following a public advertisement and a selection process. All appointments are made on merit and to achieve a balance across the scientific community consistent with the SSAC's purpose.

Associate Members

8. Associate Member appointments to the SSAC, which do not receive any remuneration, are made for a **one** year period with the possibility of an annual extension for up to two further years. The appointments are made following a public advertisement and selection process. All appointments are made on merit and in order to achieve a balance across the scientific community consistent with the SSAC's purpose. Associate Members are expected to have less experience than

Members, but to have a clear career plan demonstrating an interest in the evidence/policy interface. As an example, Associate Members from an academic background may be 'early career researchers' e.g. within 10 years of having achieved their PhD.

Recruitment Process

9. The SSAC is not a statutory public advisory body and there are no legal requirements in connection with the manner by which appointments are made or the way it conducts its business. However, the arrangements for appointments to the SSAC draw strongly on the original Nolan recommendations in connection with appointments to public bodies.

Council Support

10. The Council membership is supported by the SSAC Secretariat. The SSAC Secretariat is located within the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland, in the Directorate for Economic Development of the Scottish Government. The primary function of the Secretariat is to support SSAC in producing its advice, including by organising meetings, assembling and analysing information, and recording conclusions. It advises SSAC on science advice processes and procedures as well as the wider operation and priorities of the Scottish Government, and brings emerging issues of concerns to the attention of the SSAC to inform its deliberations.

SSAC Work Programme

11. The SSAC is expected to play a key role in linking current capabilities and new developments in science with Scottish Government objectives. This includes identifying ways in which science and science advice (including the social sciences) can support the priorities in the Programme for Government⁴ as well as in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation⁵, covering investment in skills and infrastructure, fostering a culture of innovation, promoting inclusive growth and tackling inequality, and promoting Scotland internationally.

12. In particular, the SSAC will focus its interests on areas it identifies where science advice may add value, and requests from policy teams, through its agreed work programme.

13. At the same time, the SSAC will be expected to be well-connected to, and to reflect the views of, the wider knowledge base, and to identify new science opportunities and challenges.

14. The SSAC will agree priorities in developing its work programme in the context of – but not limited to – the Scottish Government priorities and broader horizon-scanning activity.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2024-25-serving-scotland/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/>

15. The SSAC will decide on a case-by-case basis how to approach each area of work, and how it will deliver its advice. This could include short papers, letters and statements, as well as longer reports and discussions with relevant parties.

16. The SSAC may convene working groups as appropriate to draw in a wider range of knowledge and expertise, and to provide a focus for work activity. These groups would generally be chaired by an SSAC member with support from other SSAC members. If required, external experts may be appointed to the working group on a temporary basis for a set period. The SSAC members of the group would be responsible for reporting to the SSAC.

17. Updates on current activity, including published reports, are available on the SSAC website: [Scottish Science Advisory Council](#)

Reporting Lines

18. The SSAC principally advises and reports, through its Chair, to the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland and to Scottish Ministers, including the First Minister.

19. The SSAC operates in an open and transparent manner, with a presumption that advice and recommendations provided to the Scottish Government will be published.

Scottish Government Policy Engagement

21. All new SSAC Members and Associate Members will be expected to take part in an induction process to introduce them to their role. This will be the initial element of a longer-term programme of activity to enhance engagement, interaction and mutual understanding between SSAC, Ministers and senior policy officials in the Scottish Government. This will include regular presentations from policy officials at SSAC meetings and periodic engagement with Ministers.

ROLE, PERSON SPECIFICATION AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

Role Specification – SSAC Members and Associate Members

22. The role of SSAC members and associate members is to bring a balance of perspectives and views to the CSA and the Scottish Government on science issues and new developments that may have an impact on policy areas or where future opportunities are underpinned by science and technology (including social science). The primary aim is to support the Scottish Government by providing science advice, knowledge and techniques to develop and deliver policies that will contribute to priorities which include growing the Scottish economy, raising the quality of life of the people of Scotland and enhancing Scotland's position as a science nation.

23. To address its wide remit, the Council as a whole will be expected to possess or access the expertise and experience to ensure a broad coverage of scientific interests including research, development and exploitation within science, engineering and technology, in areas relevant to Scottish Government policies and opportunities for Scotland.

24. In addition, the professional networks of Council Members and Associate Members should extend within Scotland, the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond.

25. In developing their advice, Members and Associate Members are required to take a medium-to-long term strategic view of issues which fall within the Council's terms of reference.

26. Under the leadership of the Chair, Members and Associate Members will be expected to contribute to SSAC activities, bringing specific knowledge and experience to identify issues for discussion and consideration by the SSAC and then to contribute actively to the overall work programme.

27. Members and Associate Members will be required to six meetings per year – four online (approximately two hours each) and two in person in Edinburgh or Glasgow (approximately four hours each), and with the option for virtual attendance if necessary.

28. All members will be expected to lead or support specific SSAC projects with at least two Members involved in each project. Typically, this will involve setting up a working group for the duration of the project (usually around six months or more). Attendance at online working group meetings will be expected (usually held fortnightly over the course of a 6 month project) with planning and participation in online project roundtables (approximately 2-3 hours each), and contributing or leading the drafting of the final report. The typical workload would not generally be expected to exceed 12 days per year for most Members and Associate Members, averaged over the period of membership.

29. The term of SSAC membership is three years, with the possibility of a one year extension. The term of SSAC associate membership is one year, with the possibility of up to two annual extensions. Neither membership category is remunerated; however reasonable standard class travel, subsistence and other

expenses, including child and adult care costs, incurred whilst undertaking authorised SSAC business, will be reimbursed, in accordance with the Scottish Government's Travel & Subsistence Guidelines.

30. Members and Associate Members will be expected to abide by an SSAC Code of Practice which is available on the SSAC website. [SSAC Code of Practice 2015](#)

Person Specification – SSAC Members and Associate Members

31. Since the remit of SSAC covers all devolved policy areas, new members from a wide range of disciplines and experiences are sought, with the prime criterion being a strong interest in, and commitment to, the application of science to inform policy development and implementation. New members may come from backgrounds including business, industry and academia, with understanding of the context of the application of scientific advice and science more generally in society.

We seek applications from individuals with experience relevant to Scottish Government priorities, for example in Net Zero and the achievement of economic growth. We would wish to broaden our membership by encouraging applications from individuals with relevant experience in engineering and technology, and from industry and business.

32. Applicants should have a strong interest in understanding the 'big picture' perspective on a range of policy areas underpinned by science (in the broadest sense), and have an appreciation of how decisions made in the context of one area can have significant consequences in others.

33. When appointing Council Members, the selection panel will seek to achieve a representative balance in terms of characteristics including gender, age, disability and ethnicity in addition to the wider criteria for membership.

34. Members and Associate Members must be willing to make the commitment to the SSAC as described, of generally up to 12 working days on SSAC business each year. It is expected that a proportion of the time commitment will be working in subgroups and in preparing reports on behalf of SSAC.

Experience and Background – SSAC Members and Associate Members

34. Appointment of individuals will be based on merit. Applicants **for both Members and Associate Members** are likely to be people who demonstrate the following criteria:

- Have an appreciation and interest in the importance of scientific advice in informing policy, and in the wider role of science in society, with associated experience and professional networks;
- enjoy working as part of an interdisciplinary team;
- would be willing to act as an ambassador for the SSAC and more generally to be committed to developing and enhancing Scotland as a science and innovation nation.

35. **Applicants for Members must also** meet the following criteria:

- hold, or have recently held, a leading position of responsibility in academia, a research organisation, education, commerce, industry, business or public service;

36. **Applicants for Associate Members must also** meet the following criteria:

- early career researchers – or individuals with an appropriate science-related employment background – who are generally within ten years of the award of their PhD.

Key Qualities Sought of Members

37. Applicants are asked to provide evidence in their application form to demonstrate how they meet **each of these key essential and desirable qualities** listed below.

Essential

- A broad understanding of the ecosystem of science, engineering, technological and industrial organisations in Scotland, with expertise in a specific area (or areas);
- Ability to take a strategic long-term vision and see the bigger picture, while recognising the technological, innovative and economic potential spanning fundamental and applied sciences;
- Effective communication and influencing skills, with the ability and confidence to deliver clear and impartial advice;
- Proven track record of building and enhancing relationships, making good use of science networks and connections across Scotland and further afield;
- Ability to work effectively within similar advisory or committee bodies;
- An appreciation of the relevance and priorities of scientific advice to inform the development of government policies;
- Available time to commit to the work of the SSAC.

Desirable

- Ability to translate and communicate research concepts regarding technological advances and related opportunities in commercialisation and policy;
- Some experience and / or understanding of working in a policy-making environment.

Key Qualities Sought of Associate Members

38. Applicants are asked to provide evidence in their application form to demonstrate how they meet **each of these key essential and desirable qualities** listed below

Essential:

- Evidence of building networks across disciplinary and institutional boundaries;
- Experience of cross-disciplinary working;
- Effective communication skills, including explaining science topics to a non-specialist/non-academic audience.

Desirable:

- Some understanding of the policy-making environment.

Applications for Members and Associate Members

39. Applications for SSAC Members and Associate Members should be made using the relevant application form on the SSAC website: [Members](#) / [Associate Members](#)

40. The SSAC has a data protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

41. Short-listed applicants will be invited for interview which will be held in person. The selection panel will be as flexible as is possible to ensure that no candidates are disadvantaged by any alternative arrangements. If candidates have any concerns or restrictions with regards to interviews, in terms of these being carried out remotely by video link/tele-conference please contact SSAC Secretariat at scottishscience@gov.scot

Interviews will be held in late April/early May 2026.

42. Further information can be found on the SSAC website: [SSAC Recruitment - 2026 | The Scottish Science Advisory Council](#)

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Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland
The Scottish Government
2026

COPY OF ADVERTISEMENT

Scottish Science Advisory Council

Recruitment of New Members and Associate Members



The SSAC provides independent advice, through its Chair, to the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland, to inform policy development and delivery across all areas of the Scottish Government's work.

We are looking to appoint up to eight Members and up to three Associate Members to work alongside the existing Chair and members. Neither membership category is remunerated but reasonable expenses involved in attending meetings will be paid.

Member applications are sought from suitably qualified individuals who are experts and leaders in their own area, able to demonstrate a broad understanding of how science (including engineering and technology) can inform policy and/or practice. All applicants should be able to demonstrate connectivity to relevant networks in Scotland and further afield. Members are expected to be leaders in their fields of expertise, most likely in academia, business or industry. Experience in a similar advisory or policy environment is desirable. Member appointments will be for three years initially, with the possibility of a one year extension.

Associate Member applications are sought from early career researchers with relevant expertise and experience of cross-disciplinary working. Associate Member appointments will be for one year initially, with the possibility of up to two one-year extensions.

We particularly seek applications from individuals with experience relevant to Scottish Government priorities, for example in the transition to Net Zero and economic growth, and to broaden our membership by encouraging applications from individuals with relevant experience in engineering and technology, and from industry and business. Applications would be particularly welcome from those with a background in social sciences, biotechnologies and the life sciences, in climate change and the environment, and in marine sciences, to complement the strong academic backgrounds of the remaining current members

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can be used to support your application, but all statements and examples provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience.

Successful candidates must complete the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#) (BPSS), before they can be appointed.

For an application pack please visit: [SSAC Recruitment - 2026 | The Scottish Science Advisory Council](#)

For any further enquiries please email scottishscience@gov.scot

For more information about the SSAC please visit <https://scottishscience.org.uk/>

Closing date: Friday 20 March, 23:59

Interviews will be held in person in St Andrew's House, Edinburgh in late April/early May 2026

SSAC welcomes applications from eligible candidates from diverse backgrounds and actively encourages applications from disabled people.
Appointed on merit; committed to diversity and equality.