

This list of frequently asked questions with answers has been created to help you talk both generically about what the Society does, and more specifically about what membership can offer.

This document is for your reference only, and should not be distributed.

If you have any questions, please contact toolkit@rsb.org.uk

Before you start telling people about the specifics of membership...

I would recommend you find out a bit more about them – are they studying? Are they working? Where in the country are they based? What are they interested in? When you know a bit more about them, then you can tell them the parts of membership you think they would be most interested in – this turns a ‘feature’ of membership into an actual ‘benefit’, as it’s something that’s relevant to them!

Some people won’t know what a professional association is

Don’t assume! It may be that a lot of people aren’t aware of what a professional association is, or why they even exist, so sometimes that’s a good place to start to provide some context for the Royal Society of Biology. “A professional association is usually a non-profit organisation that represents and raises the profile of either a particular profession or academic discipline. The RSB exists to represent, promote and further biosciences.”

If you don’t know the answer

Don’t worry! Make sure you take down their full details and question, and send it through to toolkit@rsb.org.uk and the question will be passed through to the most relevant member of staff.

Q: “What does the Royal Society of Biology do?”

The Royal Society of Biology is the UK’s leading professional association for the life sciences and a single unified voice for biology in the UK. As an organisation, our vision is of a world that understands the true value of biology and how it can contribute to improving life for all. The four key areas we work in are:

- Advising government and influencing policy.
- Advancing education and professional development.
- Supporting people working in the life sciences.
- Engaging and encouraging public interest in the life sciences.

We have 17,500+ members, from 14 year old school students, all the way up to Nobel Laureates, and more than 100 organisational members, who represent and work in specific areas of the biosciences.

Membership FAQs

Information is correct at April 2020 and may be subject to change

Q: “I’m not sure if I’m eligible to be a member as I’m not a biologist...”

Members of the RSB are united by their **appreciation of biology** – This image shows all the different disciplines we promote and our members work in, and as you can see, the applications are wide and varied! So if any words there relates to what you do, or what you’re interested in, then you’re absolutely welcome to become a member of the Royal Society



Q: “What’s included in my membership?”

The RSB is here to support you throughout your career. In addition to supporting the future of biology in the UK, your membership will make you a part of a significant (and growing) network of bioscience professionals from many different fields, help you stay up to date with biology-related developments and provide you with additional recognition for your skills and experience. Features of membership include:

Keep informed

- Variety of electronic bulletins to help keep you up to date with developments in science policy, biology education, upcoming events and available grants.
- Free subscription to the bi-monthly, award-winning *The Biologist* magazine.

Enhance your career

- Access to join the RSB and Science Council professional registers, including chartered status.
- Exclusive post-nominal letters, once you have applied and signed our code of conduct.

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- Apply for a travel grant to support overseas travel in connection with biological teaching, study and research.
- Participate in our straightforward CPD scheme and receive a discount on our training courses, increasingly available online.
- Enter a competition, apply for an award or a grant.

Network

- Attend RSB or one of our Special Interest Group's events to meet other professional members and Member Organisations.
- Join a regional branch to network with local members.

Engage the public

- Volunteer at one of our public events, or apply for a grant to run your own.
- Pitch to write for our blog or *The Biologist*.
- Apply for one of our public engagements grants to support you in organising a science outreach event/activity.

Support the future of biology

- Engage with policy and government legislation by having your input in our consultation responses – contact consultation@rsb.org.uk.
- Support our work in primary, secondary and higher education – contact education@rsb.org.uk.

**For more in-depth information, please see the membership benefits grid.*

“I’m an undergrad student, what do I get?”

For just £15 per year, features of membership are:

Strengthen your CV

- Join a Science Council professional register. Become a Registered Science Technician (RSciTech) after gaining at least 12 months of hands on experience, perhaps from your placement year.
- Enter a competition or apply for an award.
- Volunteer at one of our public events.
- Write for the RSB blog or *The Biologist*.

Funding and discounts

- Apply for a regional grant to run a public engagement event.
- Apply for a travel grant for overseas travel.
- Receive a 20% discount on life science titles from Wiley-Blackwell and Oxford University Press.

Network

- Join your regional branch and attend one of their upcoming events, to network with local members.

Discover

- Free subscription to the award-winning *The Biologist* magazine.
- Subscribe to a variety of electronic bulletins to help keep you up to date with developments in science policy, biology education, upcoming events and available grants.
- Attend an RSB event to meet other professional members and member organisations.

Life after your degree

- Attend the Bioscience Careers Festival to find out about your careers options after you graduate.
- Discover our online careers resources, comprehensive list of undergraduate studentships, Member Organisation's grants and jobs board.

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Q: “How much does membership cost?”

The price of membership depends on what grade you apply for, your level of experience, and what discounts you are eligible for. **Please refer to the membership benefits grid for further information.*

Q: “How do I become a member?”

Fill out an **interest form** (which can be downloaded and printed 2 per page at www.rsb.org.uk/toolkit for you to use at your event), this form will be sent back to head office who will contact you with more information. To apply, we will definitely require a CV; however certificates and references may also be requested, depending on the grade of membership you're applying for. Once you have completed the application through your mySociety page, and paid in full, then you will be elected to join the membership. People are elected into the RSB membership every quarter on 1st January, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October.

Q: “How do I upgrade or renew my membership?”

Upgrade: Providing your subscription is up to date, current members only need to pay a £15 administration fee to apply to transfer their membership to a higher grade. Your new subscription rate will become due on the renewal date following your election. The £15 transfer fee is waived for students wishing to transfer to the associate (AMRSB) grade.

Renew: When you wish to renew, please log into your mySociety page and your renewal transaction will appear under myOrders.

Q: “Can I join if I'm from, or returning overseas?”

Yes absolutely, if you fulfil the membership criteria then you're more than welcome to apply/maintain your membership. However, as the majority of our membership is currently in the UK, the majority of events and training will be held in the UK.

Q: “Is my school a member?”

Maybe! Get the person to fill in a membership interest form, write on the back that they're interested in SCAS membership, and we'll get back to them. The benefits of SCAS membership can be found on the grid.

Q: “How do I get involved with my regional branch?”

There are 19 regional branches across the UK, with one in Hong Kong and one in the Australasia region. Once you have applied for membership, included your address, and been elected as a member, you will receive email notification of events the regional branch committee (local to your mailing address) are organising.

If you wish to join your regional branch committee, you can email your local branch via the email addresses shown on each branch's webpage. To become an official committee member, you will have to be voted in at the Annual General Meeting. However if you want to get involved sooner, you can be co-opted on a branch's committee member before the branch's next AGM, and contribute to the branch committee's activities straight away.

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Q: “Can you help fund me?”

We offer two grants for individual members of the RSB:

Travel grants

The aim of these grants is to help fund overseas travel in connection with biological study, teaching or research to those who would otherwise be unlikely to have it. Grants of £500 are available every year for the following grades of member to apply for:

- Travel grant for a student affiliate or associate member of the Royal Society of Biology (AMRSB)
- Travel grant for an early career member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB)

Outreach and Engagement grants

If you have an idea for a local public engagement event and are looking for some additional funds to help make it a success, you can apply for up to £500 towards event costs. We look to fund a wide range of events and activities, supporting both those that are experienced in event delivery, people hoping to organise their first event, and everyone in between.

- Small Grant of £50 - £200
- Full Grant of £201 - £500

Please contact outreach@rsb.org.uk if you have any questions.

Big Biology Day grants

Big Biology Days are a one-day science festival, bringing together a variety of biological organisations under one roof to celebrate the life sciences by engaging the general public with an array of hands-on activities, displays and talks. Anyone can apply for up to £500 each to run their own Big Biology Day in their local area during .

Please contact outreach@rsb.org.uk if you have any questions.

Q: “Can you help with careers advice?”

We provide free downloadable careers resources on our website for teachers and careers advisers in schools and universities through the UK: www.rsb.org.uk/careers

Q: “How do I contact head office?”

Head office address: Royal Society of Biology, 1 Naoroji Street, London WC1X 0GB

For membership enquiries: 01233 504 804

Email enquiries:

General: info@rsb.org.uk

Membership: membership@rsb.org.uk

Education: education@rsb.org.uk

Training: training@rsb.org.uk

Science Policy: policy@rsb.org.uk

Regional Branch Coordinators: regions@rsb.org.uk

Public engagement: outreach@rsb.org.uk

Media and press: philippa.skett@rsb.org.uk

The Biologist: biologist@rsb.org.uk

Events: events@rsb.org.uk