

20. Science Council

20.1 Aims and policies

The Science Council “provides the quality assurance system for those working in science.” [1] As such, it provides support and grants licenses to scientific institutions^a to award professional status to practising scientists and science technicians. Hence it receives income from professional bodies rather than directly from individuals.

Statement of purpose and values

The Science Council’s purpose, values and guiding principles are stated in its strategy for 2019-22. [2] These are as follows.

The organisation’s purpose is “to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of and education in science, pure and applied, for the public benefit.” In support of this, it “advances professionalism in science through the professional registration of scientists and technicians who meet a high professional standard and competence and follow an established code of conduct.” It is an umbrella organisation, which provides a forum for its members and member organisations to exchange information.

The council’s values and guiding principles are as follows.

- *“We will be Inclusive of all disciplines of science and all types of scientist and science technicians through our Members.*
- *We will be Informed by evidence and research and by our Members and Registrants.*
- *At all times, we will be Positive and balanced in our promotion of the contribution of scientists and technicians to society and of our Members, our registrants and the science workforce as a whole.*
- *We will be Collaborative in our approach to debate and discussion and in our attitude to conversation in general.”*

Environmental policy

We were unable to find any evidence that the Science Council has published an environmental policy.

20.2 Investments

Size and location of funds

The Science Council did not hold any investments of relevance to this study, according to a recent annual report. [3]

^a Many of these organisations are covered in this report. These are: Association for Science Education; BCS - The Chartered Institute for IT; British Psychological Society; Energy Institute; Geological Society; Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining; Institute of Physics; Institution of Environmental Sciences; Royal Meteorological Society; and the Royal Statistical Society. [7]

Investment policies

From reviewing the Science Council's public accounts, we were unable to find either a general investment policy or an ethical investment policy. [3] The Science Council did not respond to our request for more information on their investment policies.

20.3 School education programmes

The Science Council does not appear to run any school education programmes.

20.4 Events and sponsorship

The Science Council only organises a small number of events each year, the main one being its Annual General Meeting. [4] Sponsorship of these events appears to be rare, and not involving arms or fossil fuel corporations.

20.5 Corporate membership

The Science Council runs an 'Employer Champion' programme through which organisations, including corporations, support their scientific staff to become professionally registered. [5] The council provides the following support as part of this programme:

- *"Publicly promoting the relationship on our website and in other materials, including PR opportunities and social media engagement.*
- *Providing resources and templates to support activities linked to professional registration.*
- *Actively supporting staff that are registered to maximise the value of their professional body membership, meet the Registrant CPD requirements and adhere to their codes of professional conduct."*

The council lists current Employer Champions on its website. [6] At the time of writing, these are: Affinity Water; Anglian Water; **Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) [A]^b**; Clinical Professionals; Exova; John Innes Centre; King's College, London; Medical Research Council; Newcastle University; Open University; Radioactive Waste Management; University of Exeter; University of Liverpool; University of Manchester; University of Nottingham; University of Reading; University of Sheffield; University of Strathclyde, Glasgow; Welsh Water; and Wessex Water.

Of 20 organisations, one (5%) is part of the arms industry and none part of the fossil fuel industry.

We could find no publicly available information on the financial relationship between the council and its Employer Champions.

^b [A] indicates companies which, in this report, are categorised as being part of the arms industry. [F] indicates companies which, in this report, are categorised as being part of the fossil fuel industry.

20.6 Other corporate links

The Science Council does not appear to offer any advertising schemes to corporations or other external organisations.

20.7 Overall assessment

Reviewing the information in this case study, we have given the Science Council the assessment as shown in tables 20.1a and b.

	<i>Investments</i>	<i>School education programmes</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Other</i>
Involvement with arms corporations	None	-	None	Low
Involvement with fossil fuel corporations	None	-	None	None

Table 20.1a – Corporate involvement ratings for the Science Council

	<i>Ethical issues covered in this study</i>
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial links with fossil fuel industry • No investments
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial links with the Atomic Weapons Establishment • No environmental policy

Table 20.1b – Positives and negatives for the Science Council

The Science Council was generally open about the activities of interest to this study. However, the lack of information on the financial relationship with its Employer Champions was a concern.

The council did not appear to have an environmental policy. It also lacked an ethical investment policy. However, since it also did not have any investments, such a policy was arguably unnecessary.

In most of the council’s activities, it had no financial links with the arms sector. However, one of its Employer Champions was the Atomic Weapons Establishment, one of the most controversial corporations in the arms sector due to its research, development and manufacture of the UK’s nuclear warheads. It could be argued that external certification of the scientific competency of nuclear weapons staff has important health and safety benefits. Or it could be argued that such a relationship, especially with its public relations component, promotes the continued deployment of weapons of mass destruction and the serious risks that such deployment creates.

We could find no evidence of financial links between the Science Council and the fossil fuel industry.

References

- [1] Science Council, "About us," 2017. [Online]. Available: <http://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/>. [Accessed 18 07 2017].
- [2] Science Council, "Strategy 2019-22," 10 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/strategy/>. [Accessed 27 11 2018].
- [3] "The Science Council Annual Report and Financial Statements," 2016. [Online]. Available: http://sciencecouncil.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Final_AnnualReportFinancialStatementsYearto31122015.pdf. [Accessed 18 07 2017].
- [4] Science Council, "News, Blog & Events - Event," 2017. [Online]. Available: <http://sciencecouncil.org/category/event/>. [Accessed 18 07 2017].
- [5] Science Council, "What is the Employer Champion programme?," 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://sciencecouncil.org/employers/what-is-the-employer-champion-programme/>. [Accessed 07 10 2018].
- [6] Science Council, "Our Employer Champions," 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://sciencecouncil.org/employers/our-employer-champions/>. [Accessed 07 10 2018].
- [7] Science Council, "Our members and licensed bodies," 2018. [Online]. Available: <http://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/our-members-and-licensed-bodies/>. [Accessed 05 10 2018].