

# The RSC in the 21st Century

**C**hemical science is the central science. Advances in the health and life sciences, in the environmental sciences and in materials science, among many others, rely upon the strength of chemical science.

The Royal Society of Chemistry continues to be influential across the breadth of chemical science and professional practice. However, as the science develops, the Society must evolve to meet competing demands and must be proactive in engaging young people in a more vibrant organisation.

A major consultative exercise has been undertaken to determine the best way forward and the membership has expressed widespread support for a new direction and image for the Society. The new arrangements will open opportunities for the Society and, in view of the positive response from the membership, Council is now inviting the membership to support the changes.

The present membership structure is constraining what the Society is trying to achieve. Decoupling the award of the Chartered Chemist (CChem) designation from admission to the categories of Member or Fellow will allow changes to the membership structure that will in turn enable the Society to recognise practitioners from a broader range of science.

The CChem designation is becoming increasingly significant to employers and individuals, as the need to designate high-quality practising chemists with a range of professional attributes becomes ever more important.

The CChem designation will be available to those members who are practising chemists. The value of the designation will increase through enhancement of the chemical and professional skills required and through a commitment to Continuing Professional Development.

In order that Council can bring about the necessary changes, it needs the support of the membership. The Society is governed in accordance with its Charter and By-laws and these need to be amended. In putting the Resolution to the EGM, Council asks members to vote FOR the necessary alterations to the Charter and By-laws. The Council intends that the number of membership categories should be reduced to four (plus Honorary Fellow) and that the CChem designation will be awarded to members by a process separate from admission to membership. Following advice from the Privy Council, the Society is proposing to transfer some powers in the Charter to the By-laws and others from the By-laws to the Council's Standing Orders. The main impact of the changes is to enable the Society's Council to create new groupings for chemical scientists, by building upon the current structure of Divisions and Subject Groups. The Council also wishes to take this opportunity to update other provisions in the Charter and By-laws. Notes on all of the material changes are attached to the Resolution.

The proposals have found widespread support during the consultation period and the Society's Council is recommending a vote FOR the motion. A number of questions and answers about the changes are set out in the following pages. The Society needs to keep moving forward. The Society's Council asks for your support.

This is your chance to  
influence your  
**Society's future**

**Why is the Society seeking to change?**

**What changes are being proposed?**

**How will they affect me?**

**The Royal Society of Chemistry's EGM  
will be held on  
Thursday 16 November 2000  
at 4pm in  
Burlington House**

Royal Society of Chemistry  
Burlington House  
Piccadilly  
London W1J 0BA  
[www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org)  
Reg Charity No. 207890

## 1 Why is the Society seeking to change its Charter and By-laws?

The present Royal Society of Chemistry emerged from amalgamation agreements between the Chemical Society, the Faraday Society and the Society for Analytical Chemistry in 1971, and the award of a new Royal Charter following unification with the Royal Institute of Chemistry (RIC) in 1980.

Article 3 of the Society's Royal Charter states that:

**The object for which the Society is constituted is the general advancement of chemical science and its application and for that purpose:**

- (i) **to foster and encourage the growth and application of such science by the dissemination of chemical knowledge;**
- (ii) **to establish, uphold and advance the standards of qualification, competence and conduct of those who practise chemistry as a profession;**
- (iii) **to serve the public interest by acting in an advisory, consultative or representative capacity in matters relating to the science and practice of chemistry; and**
- (iv) **to advance the aims and objectives of members of the Society so far as they relate to the advancement of the science or practice of chemistry.**

Although first drafted 20 years ago, the Society's object is as relevant today as when it was first written.

The reference to chemical science challenges the Society to adopt an outward looking view of chemistry. To reflect how chemistry is developing, the scientific and professional basis of the Society should be broadened to encompass a wider range of scientists who draw upon chemical science.

The Society needs to adjust its approach to professional qualifications so that it can recognise the professionalism of this broader group whilst enhancing the level of demand and rigour associated with the award of the Chartered Chemist (CChem) designation.

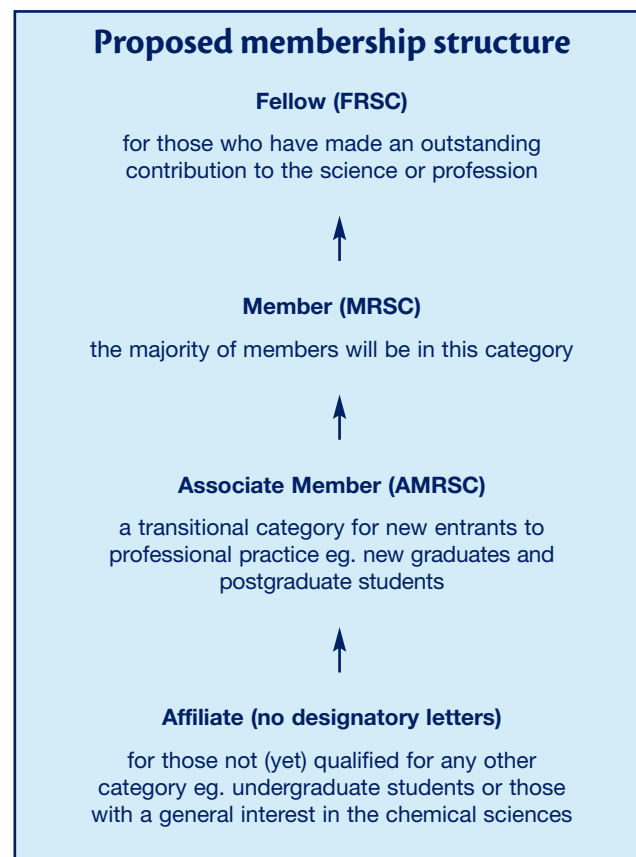
In order to do so, the award of the CChem designation needs to be considered separately from consideration of admission to a category of membership. At present Members and Fellows are entitled to use the letters CChem as a consequence of admission to those categories.

## 2 What is the current situation?

There are six categories of membership (excluding Honorary Fellow (HonFRSC)) four of which permit the use of designatory letters. These are Associate Member, Student Member, Graduate (GRSC), Licentiate (LRSC), Member (MRSC) and Fellow (FRSC). At present, those in the categories of Member and Fellow are automatically entitled to use the CChem designation.

## 3 What changes to the membership structure are being proposed?

There will be four categories of membership (plus Honorary Fellow), three of which will carry designatory letters.



### Affiliate

Affiliate will be the category for those not (yet) qualified for any other category. In the main they will be aspiring professionals studying in higher education or undertaking work-based training in the chemical sciences.

Non-graduates, not yet working at a professional level, graduates from other disciplines, and the very small number of "interested amateurs" will be accommodated in this category. There will be no entitlement to designatory letters.

### Associate Member (AMRSC)

The new category of Associate Member (AMRSC) will be for recently qualified holders of recognised chemical science based degrees or of suitable National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications at level 4, or those with an equivalent level of attainment. This is intended to be an intermediate category between graduation (or reaching an equivalent level of attainment) and being eligible for the category of Member. It will enable the Society to provide specific assistance with professional development and recognise this early stage of career development with the award of designatory letters.

## Member (MRSC)

Members (MRSC) will have satisfied the requirements for admission as an Associate Member and have a minimum of three years experience during which they would have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written communication, personal organisation, working with others, self evaluation and ability to improve their own performance. This experience can be gained in employment, or as a postgraduate in education or training.

## Fellow (FRSC)

Fellows (FRSC) will have satisfied the requirements for admission as a Member and, additionally, have made outstanding achievements or contributions.

## The Chartered Chemist (CChem) designation

The Chartered Chemist designation will be reserved for those Members and Fellows who can demonstrate a high level of competence and professionalism in the practice of chemistry and who are committed to maintaining their expertise.

The award of the CChem designation will continue to recognise an experienced practising chemist who can demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of chemistry, significant personal achievements based upon chemistry, professionalism in the workplace and a commitment to maintaining technical expertise through Continuing Professional Development.

Members and Fellows will be eligible for the award of the CChem designation if they hold an accredited degree at the level of a good enhanced first degree or can demonstrate an equivalent level of attainment. They will need to have at least five years of professional experience, during which they must have successfully completed two years of a monitored development programme while in a post in which the knowledge and skills acquired in an accredited degree are critical to job competence.

## 4 What will be the criteria for admission to the new membership categories and for the award of CChem?

The following chart sets out the minimum requirements for admission to categories carrying designatory letters and for the award of the Chartered Chemist designation. As now, the Society's admissions policy will be flexible to recognise equivalent experience and qualifications on a case-by-case basis.

| AMRSC  | MRSC  | FRSC  | CChem   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>A new entrant to the profession</b> who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adheres to the Society's code of conduct</li><li>• has a graduate level of education or training based on the chemical sciences</li></ul> | <p><b>A professional</b> who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adheres to the Society's code of conduct</li><li>• has a graduate level of education or training based on the chemical sciences</li><li>• has acquired and practised key skills through professional activity</li></ul> | <p><b>A mature, senior person</b> who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adheres to the Society's code of conduct</li><li>• has a graduate level of education or training based on the chemical sciences</li><li>• has acquired and practised key skills through professional activity</li></ul> <p>and who has made outstanding contributions in one or more of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to the promotion, advancement or application of the chemical sciences</li><li>• to the profession</li><li>• to the management or direction of organisations in which the chemical sciences are important</li></ul> | <p><b>An experienced practising chemist, Member or Fellow</b>, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• has specialist chemical skills relevant to their practice</li><li>• has an in-depth knowledge of specialist areas of chemistry</li><li>• has responsibilities based upon chemistry and has made a significant personal contribution</li><li>• demonstrates professionalism in the workplace</li><li>• has maintained chemical expertise through Continuing Professional Development</li></ul> |

**A suitably qualified and experienced person can enter at any point**

## 5 How will the new membership structure affect current members?

- Current Members (CChem MRSC), and Fellows (CChem FRSC), will be unaffected by changes to membership categories. These members will still be entitled to use the CChem designation.
- Graduates (GRSC) with three or more years in that category will become Members (MRSC). Others will move into the category of Associate Member (AMRSC).
- Licentiates (LRSC) with three or more years in that category will become Members (MRSC). Others will move into the category of Associate Member (AMRSC).
- Student Members will become Affiliates.
- Associate Members with three or more years in that category will become Members (MRSC). Others will remain Associate Members and be entitled to use the designatory letters AMRSC.
- Those undergoing structured assessment will continue working towards CChem.

## 6 What about students on, or about to begin, courses accredited by the Society?

Transitional arrangements will be made to safeguard their position. However, the accreditation of undergraduate courses will be refined to ensure suitability as a platform for the CChem designation. A wider range of courses that contain significant elements of chemistry will be recognised for membership purposes.

## 7 Will there be any change to the annual membership subscription?

For the vast majority of members there will be no change to the annual subscription. The range of discounts offered to students, retired members, those at the start of their career and those taking career breaks will continue as now and in some cases be extended slightly.

In the future it is proposed that there will be no extra annual fee for members who obtain the newly-defined CChem designation. However, there will be an assessment fee of £50 to cover administration and other costs. This is the same as the current fee for applications for admission to Fellow.

The overall financial impact of the proposed changes is intended to be financially neutral to the Society. The new membership arrangements are being driven by the changing nature of the chemical sciences and professional practice, not financial considerations.

## 8 How were the consultations conducted and what was the feedback?

The Society has consulted the membership through Local Section meetings, Subject Group meetings and more general Society meetings. There have been a number of regular items and a special insert in *Chemistry in Britain*, and a formal consultation with members in 1999.

The proposals have been refined as a result of the many helpful comments received from members. The overwhelming majority of members have indicated their initial support for the changes.

At the same time, an extensive consultation exercise has been carried out with large, medium and small employers, trade bodies, Government and other professional bodies. These groups have supported the proposals.

## 9 What will happen next?

A 2:1 majority of those voting at the EGM in favour of the proposals (in person or by proxy) is required for the changes to be approved by the membership. If this happens, the Society will petition the Privy Council for the changes. The Society has already received informal favourable comment from the Privy Council on the nature of the changes being proposed. An announcement of the outcome of the EGM will be published in *Chemistry in Britain* as soon as possible.

## 10 If all this happens when will the proposed changes take effect?

If approval from the Privy Council is received, the Society hopes to implement the changes on 1 August 2001. The precise date will, however, depend on the Privy Council.