

RUNNING A
CHEMICAL SOCIETY

Student handbook



Starting a student chemical society (ChemSoc) has so many rewards, and shows real commitment to the chemical sciences. This handbook contains everything you need to run your own ChemSoc with the Royal Society of Chemistry.

What is the Student Chemical Society Network?

The Student Chemical Society (SCS) Network represents the views of young chemical scientists for the Royal Society of Chemistry, encouraging communication between all of our branches, in particular other student ChemSocs, our Early Career Network and the committees who run our 59 local sections around the world.

By registering your ChemSoc, you will become part of the SCS Network. We can provide you with resources and advice for running your ChemSoc, funding for lectures and larger events, and promotional materials.

This will:

- provide you with resources and advice for running your ChemSoc
- funding for lectures, events and promotional materials
- connect you to other ChemSocs, local sections and businesses

Your ChemSoc will play a vital role in our university visits, helping to recruit new members and promoting us and our activities. You can also share feedback with us that will help shape the support we offer.

Why have a ChemSoc?

The roles played by our ChemSocs are varied, but all have the basic idea of allowing members to network internally with other members and have fun. Some have a social focus within their department, whereas others have events that are scientific or career themed. Most societies combine the two and strike a balance.

How can we help you out?

We can provide:

- Grants of up to £100 or £250 to support lectures or other events
- Grants of up to £500 to support a series of events
- Help with advertising, and advice on running a successful ChemSoc
- A regular ChemSoc newsletter
- Visits from our team and links to events

How do I join the SCS Network?

To join, just email a completed registration form (you can download this at rsc.li/scs-network) to membership@rsc.org.

You should re-register your ChemSoc each year.

We'll keep your society up to date on Royal Society of Chemistry activities and you'll be eligible for funding and networking opportunities.

Don't forget to re-register your ChemSoc each year

Running your committee

The driving force behind any good ChemSoc is its committee. The people in it need to be enthusiastic about the ChemSoc and the Royal Society of Chemistry, and keen to join us as members.

Committee members

Committee members are either nominated and elected by ChemSoc members or chosen by the existing committee. We can provide guides to positions such as president and treasurer.

President or chair

Guides and motivates the committee, makes sure everyone contributes to discussions.

Secretary

Well organised, provides support when arranging meetings and events. Responsible for committee meeting agenda and minutes. They can appoint a Minutes Secretary for extra support.

Treasurer

Someone with a good head for figures. Responsible for the finances and accounts, and for securing potential ChemSoc sponsors for additional funding.

Year reps

A mix of well-known undergraduates and postgraduates. They will relay messages to and from the committee.

Royal Society of Chemistry contact

The link between your ChemSoc, the Royal Society of Chemistry and the SCS Network. They should be a good communicator, and:

- 1 keep in contact with other ChemSocs by requesting their contact details.
- 2 liaise with our local section committees through the Early Career Network rep.
- 3 promote the Royal Society of Chemistry's support, including membership and any visits we make to the uni.
- 4 share information and news from the Royal Society of Chemistry with their university department.
- 5 take charge of re-registering your ChemSoc with us each year.

The university staff member

Gives your committee credibility and provides a link between your ChemSoc and the staff in your department.

You may have a social rep, minutes secretary, sports rep, magazine editor, publicity rep and webmaster/designer.

How do I set up meetings?

Meetings give committees a chance to communicate ideas and share information. Typically, they happen once a week or on a fortnightly basis.

The agenda

This gives your meeting a structure and helps to make sure all items get covered. You should request items from your committee via email before each meeting.

A typical agenda includes:

- Meeting details (date, time, venue)
- Item 1 - read out apologies from those who can't attend
- Item 2 - run through and approve the minutes from previous meeting
- Item 3 - revisit anything not covered/actions raised at the last meeting
- Item 4 - work through points received for this meeting
- Any other business (AOB)
- Time to agree date and venue for the next meeting

Minutes

Your committee secretary should take notes (minutes) at each meeting, as both a record and to keep everyone informed.

They should:

- be brief, and written in the past tense
- include the meeting details (date, time, venue)
- list everyone present at the meeting, including their roles and any actions they need to complete
- list everyone who sent apologies

Minutes should be approved by the committee chair, then circulated to all committee members.

Annual general meetings (AGM)

During these, you should confirm a Royal Society of Chemistry Representative and register your new committee.



What funding is available to us?

The SCS Network can help you fund an event or lecture once your ChemSoc is registered with us. You can apply for funding online at [rsc.li/chemsoc-grants](https://www.rsc.li/chemsoc-grants).

Through our networks

To qualify for funding, your event should have 'Royal Society of Chemistry' in its name, and promote chemistry, our organisation and your ChemSoc. They should also help to recruit new members.

There are three tiers of funding, designed for different sized events. They each have specific criteria to meet.

ChemSoc membership fees

Most of your funding will come from your membership fees. Annual fees are typically £3-£5 but the final amount is up to you.

You might like to ask for £10 'life membership' that covers the duration of someone's course. This could be three or four years, so remember to allow for this in your annual budget to avoid a deficit later.

Tier 1: Up to £100

Promote the Royal Society of Chemistry and your ChemSoc at your university

A one-off event

There should be chance to network

It could focus on outreach

Tier 2: Up to £250

Promote the Royal Society of Chemistry and your ChemSoc at your university

A one-off event

There should be opportunity to network with other members or staff

Involve your local section or Early Career Network

It should focus on careers, professional development or knowledge expansion

Tier 3: Up to £500

Promote the Royal Society of Chemistry and your ChemSoc in your local area

Involve your local section/relevant Royal Society of Chemistry interest groups or divisions

A series of events

They should focus on careers, professional development or knowledge expansion

Offer networking opportunities with other universities in your region

ChemSoc events we have funded:

£100 for a department welcome

Funding contributed to a welcome event offering chemists joining the department a chance to meet their peers. The event was also an opportunity to attract new ChemSoc members.

£250 for a careers event

Funding covered catering for a student careers event that included CV and placement workshops, talks from recent alumni in the chemical sciences industry and networking with potential employers.

£500 for a public lecture with Professor Sir Martyn Poliakoff

Funding helped with room hire and transport costs for a talk from Professor Sir Martyn Poliakoff HonFRSC, aimed at students from multiple universities to inspire collaboration and ideas sharing.

What events can I put on?

Hosting events or activities is a great way for your members to network with each other while having some fun. They can be a mixture of social and scientific, or career-themed events. You may choose to host one once or smaller things twice a month, with one larger event per term.

Our funding would usually support:

- University Challenge against other ChemSocs
- Careers presentations from industry and academic representatives
- Industry visits
- A chemistry show for school students
- A fresher's fair stand

We can also help fund events that include guest speakers. Your local section can help you find and book a relevant expert, but don't forget to organise this well in advance as speakers book up fast. You'll also need to think about location, talk length, who to invite and speaker expenses.

As well as local sections, you can also ask other specialist branches of the Royal Society of Chemistry (such as our careers team) to come and speak at one of your events.

Plan a joint event with a nearby ChemSoc

To request a connection email membership@rsc.org. If you would like your event to feature in our ChemSoc newsletter, send photos and a short summary of the day to the same email address

Recruit at your freshers' fair

A ChemSoc stand at your freshers' fair is always a good way to sign up students when they are at their most keen to get involved. Sweets and freebies are always a good idea for attracting people! As a registered ChemSoc, you can also get a freebie box from us for your freshers' fair.

These won't get funding, but are good options:

- Summer ball
- Christmas meal
- Charity event
- Theme park trip
- Summer BBQ
- Chemistry bingo
- Fancy dress party

How do I publicise our ChemSoc and its events?

Raising awareness is vital part of a successful ChemSoc's activity. A good way to get your message out is by linking your website with your department's website. Then there are the ever-reliable social media channels of Facebook and Twitter, and you can also promote via The Student Room's website.

You could also create posters and flyers, send emails to your department, and even do lecture and lab shout outs.

How do I get ChemSoc and Royal Society of Chemistry sign ups?

Royal Society of Chemistry membership provides undergraduate and postgraduate students with support, opportunities and resources to enhance their time at university and find their path in chemistry.

By encouraging your members to sign up as Royal Society of Chemistry members, they will be supported at every step.

Year one

Get to know key topics through guides, videos, demos that act as knowledge refreshers and extra information for chemistry courses.

Track achievements using an Undergraduate Skills Record that makes it easy to see developing skills that can later be used in a CV.

Make great savings from £50 off course books to NUS Extra cards, gym membership & cinema tickets.

Year two & three

Gather more knowledge with access to the latest news and research via Chemistry World, information-packed journals and our ChemSpider molecule database.

Find new opportunities with help from our career resources, placement and internships board, and funding support for summer research placements.

Meet the right people through scientific divisions designed to help develop your interests and connect with experts who are ready to share their experience and help you get ahead.

Year four

Get expert help from specialist revision resources, thesis writing guides and viva advice from practising scientists.

Plan your future career by joining in with our ChemCareers webinars, which cover everything from CV tailoring to starting a company.

Make new connections by joining interest groups and attending events that open doors to potential career paths.

Feel supported with breathing space grants designed to help recent graduates while they look for their first job.

Support during recruitment visits

As you know, the Royal Society of Chemistry visits to recruit new members at various times of the year, and we rely on student members at each university to promote the value of membership when we're not around.

As a ChemSoc member, we can provide training, tips and advice about the benefits of membership for you and your peers.

We hold webinars and face-to-face training sessions, and we will also invite your ChemSoc to join us during our member recruitment visits.



How does the Student Chemical Society Network fit in with other RSC networks?

The SCS Network is part of a broad spectrum of Royal Society of Chemistry networks, divisions and groups, all working to keep our global community connected and reaching their potential.

Local sections

Our local sections are run by a committee of volunteers who help direct an annual programme of events for members based in specific regions. There are 35 local sections in the UK and Ireland and a further 24 around the world.

To find your closest local section, visit rsc.li/sections

Early Career Network

The Early Career Network provides opportunities for members in the early stages of their career to get involved with the Royal Society of Chemistry and network with experienced members

The network is member-led, and activities and events are organised by Early Career Network representatives. These reps work closely with local ChemSocs.

For information about your local contacts email networks@rsc.org

To get involved with the Early Career Network, visit rsc.li/ecn

Royal Society of Chemistry reps

Royal Society of Chemistry reps are in many organisations within the chemical science community and are our main point of contact for members. They ensure our information is sent out to all our members effectively.

To find out more visit rsc.org/rscreps

Don't forget
to re-register
your ChemSoc
each year



We're here to help you

As the UK's professional body for chemical scientists, we support and represent our members from all over the world. We invest in educating future generations of scientists, while raising and maintaining standards. Partnering with both industry and academia, we encourage collaboration and innovation. And we promote the talent, information and ideas that lead to great advances in science.

It's the passion and knowledge of members like you that makes us who we are – a vibrant and diverse community working to shape the future of the chemical sciences for the benefit of science and humanity.

Keep in touch

If you have any questions about the wide range of benefits you receive as a member please get in touch.

Call +44 (0) 1223 432141,
email membership@rsc.org
or visit rsc.li/members

Royal Society of Chemistry
www.rsc.org

Registered charity number: 207890
© Royal Society of Chemistry 2019

Thomas Graham House
Science Park, Milton Road
Cambridge, CB4 0WF, UK

T +44 (0) 1223 420066

Burlington House
Piccadilly, London
W1J 0BA, UK

T +44 (0) 20 7437 8656

International offices

Beijing, China
Shanghai, China
Berlin, Germany
Bangalore, India

Tokyo, Japan
Philadelphia, USA
Washington, USA