Science Council Application Requirements for professional registration

Science Council Application requirements

This document has been produced to set out Licensed Bodies' responsibilities in carrying out application processes for Science Council registration.

Licensed Bodies are required to comply fully with the *mandatory* parts of the application requirements, which apply to Registrants on each of the four Science Council registers (Chartered Scientist (CSci), Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach), Registered Scientist (RSci) and Registered Science Technician (RSciTech).

The *guidance* sections of this document are designed to help support Licensed Bodies but are not a mandatory requirement for the licence.

1) Application documents for professional registration

Mandatory

Licensed Bodies are required to:

- Produce application documents, templates and guidance for applicants, supporters and assessors. The application documents should provide sufficient information so that assessors can make a judgement in line with the requirements for professional registration.
- Produce membership application documents including regulations and guidance for candidates.
- Ensure that applicants demonstrate how they meet each of the competencies and their subsections in applications. The Science Council competencies need to be written in full in both the application forms and assessor forms and the competencies will be kept up-to-date.
- Have in place application guidance/documents for applicants that are applying via an equivalence route.
- Ensure that applications have one supporter for each application. The supporter will be familiar with the applicant's work and verify each competency and confirm that they have seen copies of the applicant's qualifications.
- Ensure that the application requires a declaration from the applicant confirming:

1) The accurate completion of the application.
2) That if admitted to the Register, they will submit evidence as prescribed of continuing professional development when required to do so.
3) That the applicant is adhering to a code of conduct.

2) The competencies

Mandatory

Licensed Bodies are required to:

- Use the correct up-to-date competencies for each Register.

3) Eligibility criteria for each register

Academic requirements

Mandatory

The following academic criteria is required for each register:

1. RSciTech applicants **must** have a level 3 qualification or equivalent* learning and achievement.
2. RSci applicants **must** have a level 5 qualification or equivalent* learning and achievement.
3. CSci and CSciTeach applicants **must** have a level 7 qualification or equivalent* learning and achievement.

*Although the RA mandates that all Licensed Bodies have an equivalency route, it is up to the Licensed Body what this equivalency route is.

Qualifications need to be within a scientific discipline or relevant practice. In the case where a relevant qualification in science is not held by an applicant, the Licensed Body may approve an equivalent programme of study that clearly demonstrates the correct level of knowledge and practice of science.

International qualifications

International qualifications and institutions will need to be recognised by UK NARIC–the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom. If a Licensed Body has any concerns over the academic qualification of international applicants, then they are advised to check the applicant's qualifications on the list of recognised HEIs on the UK NARIC website. If they cannot find the applicant's University listed then they are advised to ask the applicant to provide a Statement of Comparability, which they can obtain from NARIC.

The Licensed Body will need to ensure that the applicant meets the academic requirements for registration indicated above. Copies of certificates submitted as evidence in application for professional registration must be validated.

Guidance on Equivalency routes

The RA mandate that all Licensed Bodies need to have an equivalency route for each register that they hold if the applicant does not have the academic requirements. However, it is up to the Licensed Body which equivalency route they choose to use. Examples of this could be:

1) Via a technical report.

2) Using the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Education) descriptors.

3) An extended version of the competency report.

Guidance on qualification checks

Validation could be via:

- A signed supporting statement from the awarding body.
- A copy of the certificate signed by an appropriate person (e.g. employer or supporter) in declaration that it is a true copy of the original certificate.
- A statement of comparability from UK NARIC or equivalent (mandatory when an international qualification is not accredited/ recognised by your professional body).

If the applicant is unable to provide originals of certificates or notarised copies, the Licensed Body will require an appropriate written statement from the awarding body.

Work experience

Guidance on work experience

Applicants need to meet the level of competence for the level of professional registration they are applying for. To develop this level of competence, we find that it normally takes around:

- 5 years of work experience for CSci/CSciTeach
- 2 years of work experience for RSci
- 1 years of work experience for RSciTech

---

4) Assessor and supporter requirements

<u>Mandatory</u>

Supporter:

- All applicants need **one supporter** to verify their application.
- CSci applications only now need one supporter rather than two.
- The criteria for a supporter is:

"The supporter for an application should ideally be professionally registered by the Science Council at either the same level of professional registration or above. Where this is not possible, it is up to the Licensed Body to make a judgment as to whether the supporter is appropriate. The supporter should be familiar with the applicants work."

An assessor who assesses applications:

- All applications need to be assessed by at least two assessors and where there is disagreement between the assessors, another assessor should be used.
- The criteria for the application assessors are:

"Ideally both assessors should be the same level of professional registration or above and be on the Science Council register. Where this is not possible, at least one of the two assessors that assess an application should be the same level of professional registration or above and be on The Science Council register. The other assessor can be of an appropriate Chartership or an equivalent level of professional registration within an appropriate discipline on another Professional Register that is not by The Science Council, however they must have been trained against the Science Council competencies."

An assessor who assesses CPD submissions:

- All CPD submissions need to be assessed by two assessors and where there is disagreement a third assessor should be used.
- The criteria for the CPD assessors is:

"Ideally both assessors should be the same level of professional registration or above and be on the Science Council register. Where this is not possible, at least one of the two assessors that assess CPD submissions should be the same level of professional registration or above and be on the Science Council register. The second assessor does not need to be Chartered or hold an equivalent level of professional registration but does need to have been trained against the Science Council CPD requirements and guidelines."

5) Guidance documents

<u>*Mandatory*</u>

As well as application documents, Licensed Bodies are required to produce guidance documents for:

1. Applicants
2. Assessors
3. Supporters

- The Licensed Body will provide support and guidance to **applicants** to assist them with completing their application. This may consist of examples of each competency, guidance documents, exemplar applications and access to a mentor.
- The Licensed Body will provide support and guidance to **assessors** to assist them with completing their assessor forms. This will consist of guidance on how to use the assessor forms as well as a robust training programme for assessors.
- Guidance will be clear and easily accessible to applicants, assessors and supporters (e.g. on the website/via email/phone).

6) The assessment process

There are two ways that applications for registration can be processed:
1. Licensed Body processes their own applications
2. Licensed Body uses The Common Application Process where applications are processed via The Science Council.

Mandatory – for Licensed Body processing their own applications:

Assessment and scrutiny of applications needs to be a peer review process.

Once the application is ready to be assessed, the Licensed Body will need to have a robust assessment process in place:

- All assessment processes will need to be documented and there will be oversight of these.
- There will be two experienced assessors per application with appropriate registration and experience.
- Assessors need to assess every single competency and their subsections.
- The criteria for an assessor is explained in section 4 of this document.
- Assessors will assess the application *independently* from each other.
- Assessors will assess professional experience and competence through inspection of completed applications and consideration of reports from supporter/s.
- Where there is disagreement between assessors, a further assessor should be used.
- The Licensed Body will have a process for resubmissions.
- There will be processes and procedures to deal with nonstandard applications:

1. Licensed Bodies need to be committed to the fair and equal treatment of all applicants [irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ex-offending background or any other potentially unlawfully discriminating factor]. The application process will need to be accessible to candidates from all backgrounds. If an applicant requires adjustments during the application process, or has any particular access or other requirements, there will be a point of contact at the Licensed Body who can assist with this.
2. Equivalency - one of the main reasons for a non-standard application may be the lack of appropriate academic qualifications for the level of registration sought.

- The Licensed Body is responsible for issuing certificates to successful registrants.

Guidance

The option of an Interview

Interviews are not mandated for Science Council registration, however the Licensed Body may choose to interview if their procedures require. Interviews can also be used to assist applicants that may have special requirements. Interviews will be conducted in English and interviewees should bring an appropriate form of identification.

---

7) Training of assessors

Mandatory – for Licensed Body using the CAP

Where a Licensed Body uses the CAP, the Licensed Body will need to:

- Provide the Science Council with at least two volunteer assessors for each register that they hold.
- Be clear on the CAP processes and procedures and the "CAP manual for Licensed Bodies" document.
- Provide regular refresher training for CAP assessors. The Science Council is responsible for training CAP assessors in the first instance via the centralised Science Council assessor training. Once trained, Licensed Bodies will need to ensure that they regularly train their assessors.
- Ensure that they have a process for ratifying any applications that are sent to them via the CAP. (Remember: any application decision that is sent to a Licensed Body via the CAP is sent as a recommendation and the final decision lies with the Licensed Body.)
- Issue the registrant with a certificate and welcome them to registration (and membership if not already a member).
- Find out from the registrant whether they would like to appear on the online register.
- Ensure that they use the correct unique registrant number (Science Council ID) for the registrant and that this is provided at the next quarter data return. Licensed Bodies will receive the Science Council ID for applicants once the application has been passed over to them.
- Help to provide the applicant with a mentor if needed.

Where a Licensed Body uses the CAP, The Science Council will do the following on behalf of the Licensed Body:
- Complete the initial application checks and qualification checks for the application.
- The Science Council is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all applicants [irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ex-offending background or any other potentially unlawfully discriminating factor]. The application process will need to be accessible to candidates from all backgrounds. If an applicant requires adjustments during the application process, or has any particular access or other requirements, there will be a point of contact at the Science Council who can assist with this.
- Contact the applicant's supporter to verify their application.
- Assign two experienced assessors to each application. Assessments may happen online or face to face. The Science Council will administer this process.
- Provide training for CAP assessors in the first instance via the centralised Science Council assessor training. The Licensed Body is then responsible for providing assessors with regular refresher training.
- Contact the Licensed Body once the application has been recommended as being successful and pass the application over to the Licensed Body.
- Provide feedback to the applicant.
- Upon request, send a monthly report to Licensed Bodies to make them aware of how many applicants are in the system for them and what stage they are in.
- The Registration Assessment Committee (RAC) will meet regularly to quality assure applications and deal with non-standard applications.

Mandatory

Licensed Bodies are required to:

1. Train their assessors to assess Science Council applications for professional registration.
2. Provide refresher training to assessors (normally every 3 years).
3. Quality assure their assessors.
4. Ensure that there are enough active trained assessors to cover the target number of registrants.

Licensed Bodies will need to provide sufficient information, guidance and training so that assessors are fully informed of their role. In particular, guidance should be given to assessors on:

- level of commitment required by the assessor;
- clarity on how to assess each individual competency and their subsections;
- the criteria the applicant must satisfy for admission, including the level and extent of professional competence required by the applicant for the award of professional registration;
- training on equivalency routes
- training to raise awareness of and limit any potential unconscious bias and/or discrimination and conflict of interest.

The assessor will need to be given sufficient information on the applicant to prepare fully for the review process. Examples of what the assessor should have available are:

- application form;
- supporting evidence from the applicant on appropriate professional experience, which may include copies of educational awards; and
- any other information (e.g. reports) that the applicant has submitted as part of the application process.

The Science Council holds regular centralized assessor training that is available to:

1) CAP assessors (for the initial training)
2) New and existing Licensed Bodies who may attend the assessor training and then use this learning to deliver their own training within their Licensed Body (i.e. via a train the trainer model).

---

8) Producing an audit trail

<div style="border:2px solid orange; padding:1em;">

Mandatory

- Licensed Bodies need to ensure a suitable route and audit trail exists for application decisions, demonstrating rigorous and consistent assessments.
- There shall be a clear audit trail that demonstrates how application decisions are made and assessors should complete their assessments with full comments. This will include completed applications from the applicant along with the corresponding completed assessor forms.
- If an interview is used, there will be a clear written audit trail to document the outcome of the interview and the reason the decision was taken.
- Licensed Bodies will be able to provide evidence of feedback that is given to the applicant (e.g. emails or written correspondence) if applicants have not been successful in order to support them enable them to apply again.
- Where a Licensed Body uses the CAP, they will still need to keep a record of the audit trail for applications that are handed over to them

</div>

9) Process for ratifying decisions

<div style="border:2px solid orange; padding:1em;">

Mandatory

The Licensed Body will need processes in place to quality assure the registration processes.

</div>

10) Process to handle appeals against decisions not to award registration

<div style="border:2px solid orange; padding:1em;">

Mandatory

   Licensed Bodies will have an effective independent appeals procedure. They will advise individuals on access to an appeals process upon refusal of admission and will have in place processes to handle appeals against decisions not to award registration. The process should include a stage at which the appeal is heard by a different panel to that which declined the application.   The appeals procedure will also be regularly reviewed. Where the CAP is used, the appeals procedure highlighted within the "CAP Manual for Licensed Bodies" will be used.

</div>