

# FSA Science Advisory Committee Recruitment

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## Introduction to recruitment

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The [Food Standards Agency](#) (FSA) is an independent, non-ministerial department, established in 2000. Our job, set out in law, is to safeguard public health and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. We work closely with the UK Government and the governments in Wales and Northern Ireland, but we act independently and transparently, led by science and evidence. Our fundamental mission is food you can trust. By food you can trust, we mean a food system in which food is safe, food is what it says it is and food is healthier and more sustainable.

Our independent [Science Advisory Committees](#) (SAC), [Joint Expert Groups](#) (JEG) and [Science Council](#) are essential to the work of the FSA. They play a huge part in helping us to prioritise our work and ensure our advice to consumers is evidence-based and accurate.

In this recruitment campaign, we are encouraging applications from all backgrounds across a wide range of expertise to fill the following positions across

all our committees: 2 chairs, 29 full and associate members, and 1 lay member. You can find out more about each of our committees below.

- [Science Council](#)
- [Advisory Committee for Social Science](#) (ACSS)
- [The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment](#) (COT)
- [Joint Expert Group on Additives, Enzymes and other Regulated Products](#) (AEJEG)
- [Food Contact Material Joint Expert Group](#) (FCMJEG)
- [Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food](#) (ACMSF)
- [Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes](#) (ACNFP)
- [Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs](#) (ACAF)

To find out more about the positions we are filling and the application process, please see the panel on the left-hand side of this page.

The FSA SAC Recruitment Team would like to invite applicants to a virtual session on Tuesday 10th September at 14:00 (BST) with FSA Colleagues who work across our SAC. We welcome questions about any part of the recruitment process including the application form, interviews, appointment process or any queries you may have about our committees. To register for the virtual Q&A session, please use our online [form](#).

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# Timeline for appointments

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# Timeline for appointments

Timeline dates are only an estimate and can change:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>
Closing date	07 October 2024 23:59.
Interviews	Expected to take place between mid-November and December 2024.
Appointments	To be confirmed in February 2025.
Induction	March 2025.

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## Committee remits

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## Committee remit

**Science Council**

- Provides high-level, expert strategic insight, challenge, and advice to the FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser, Board, and executive on the FSA's use of science to deliver FSA objectives.
- Ensures the FSA identifies, sources, integrates, and utilizes the best scientific evidence and expertise from all relevant disciplines to inform and evaluate its work.

## **ACSS**

- Provides expert strategic advice to the FSA on its use of the social sciences including new and emerging methods, processes and systems to interrogate data, to deliver the FSA's objectives.
- Its purpose is to help FSA utilise these sciences and approaches to shape and deliver its strategic objectives and understand its impact.

## **SAC (COT; ACMSF; ACNFP; ACAF)**

- Gather scientific information and assess its relevance to provide independent advice and support, focusing on specific scientific areas relevant to the FSA's work.
- Ensure the FSA's advice is based on the most recent and robust scientific evidence.
- Members include specialist academics, experienced practitioners, and consumer representatives.

## **JEG (AEJEG; FCMJEG)**

- Offer specialised, independent advice and support.
- Gather and evaluate scientific information to ensure the FSA's advice is grounded in the best and most recent scientific evidence.
- Composed of experts from various disciplines.

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## Roles

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### Chairs

The chair is the main point of contact between the SAC and the FSA and plays a key role in SAC operations and outputs. The chair has a number of responsibilities including working with the FSA to ensure that there is sufficient diversity of skills, expertise and experience within the SAC's membership to offer suitable challenge; ensuring that every member of the SAC has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is ignored or overlooked; reporting the SAC's advice to the FSA including alerting them to new evidence likely to have an impact on current policy; and acting as an active advocate for diversity and inclusion. Chairs are given a standard first term appointment of three years.

## **Full members**

A full member has the specific technical expertise or experience required by their SAC and is expected to be a recognised expert in their subject. Full members should regard it as part of their role to examine and, if necessary, challenge the assumptions on which scientific advice is formulated. They should also consider whether the questions on which the SAC offers advice are of interest to the public and other interested parties outside the scientific community. Full members are given a standard first term appointment of three years.

## **Associate members**

All of our committees also welcome applications for associate members. Associate members are typically individuals at an earlier stage of their career who may not yet have the extensive track record expected of a full member, but whose area of expertise fits the scope of the SAC and who are keen to gain experience and participate in SAC discussions. Associate members are appointed for an initial term of two years. If this term is successfully completed, associate members can then become full members.

## **Lay members**

A lay member is a full member who is not a technical expert on the SAC, but who is there to represent the interests of consumers. Their precise role may vary depending on the remit of the committee to which they have been appointed. They may act as a critical friend, contribute experience from outside the professional membership, or provide an external non-expert perspective to the decision-making process. They may also help to quality assure the committee's outputs or to support clear communication of the committee's work. Lay Members are given a standard first term appointment of three years.

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# **Expertise needed by the Committees**

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## Expertise

In this round of recruitment, we are seeking a specific range of expertise for the Science Council, SAC, and JEG listed below.

### **Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment**

In the **Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment** we are recruiting **1 chair and full/associate members** in the following areas of expertise:

- General Toxicology,
- Clinical Toxicology,
- Reproductive Toxicology,
- Pathology,
- Allergy,
- Modelling,
- Statistics,
- Metabolism and Toxicokinetic,
- Dietary Exposure Assessment.

### **Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food:**

In the **Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food** we are recruiting **1 chair and full/associate members** in the areas of expertise outlined below. We are also recruiting **1 lay member** for this committee.

- Foodborne Virology,



- Food Industry (fresh produce, composite foods, foods with complex, international supply chains and quality requirements, major retailers e.g., supermarket),
- Meat Parasitology,
- Antimicrobial Resistance in Food.

**In the committees below we are recruiting full/associate members in the following areas of expertise:**

**Science Council:**

- [Social Scientist \(with a background in food\)](#)

**Advisory Committee for Social Science:**

- [Economics,](#)
- [Statistics,](#)
- [Organisational/business behaviours.](#)

**Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes:**

- GM/molecular biology (animal),
- Veterinary,

- Toxicology,
- Bioinformatics.

### **Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs:**

- Toxicology,
- Safety in the Workplace (workplace exposure assessment, irritancy & sensitisation studies, feed mill & farm context),
- Microbiology or molecular biology, specifically with expertise in genomics.

### **Joint Expert Group on Additives, Enzymes and other Regulated Products:**

- Toxicology,
- Analytical chemistry.

### **Joint Expert Group for Food Contact Materials:**

- Toxicology.
- Analytical chemistry.
- Food packaging.

# Application and selection process

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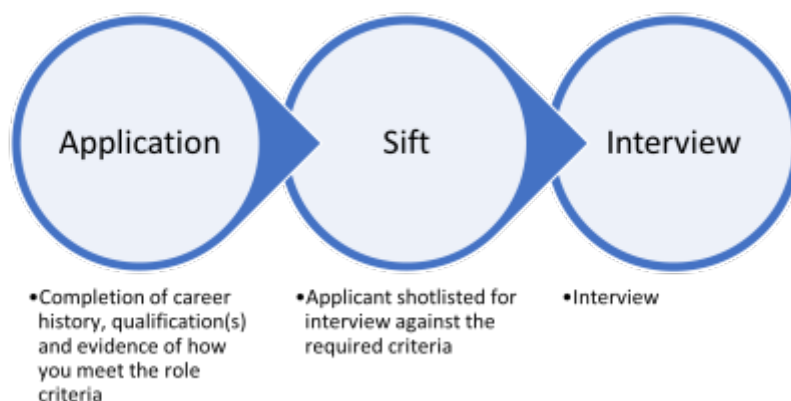
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You will be required to complete an application form. The information entered on this form will be used to determine if you have the expertise, skills and knowledge at the level required by the committee and role you are applying for. If you demonstrate you meet the role criteria, you will be invited to interview.

## How to apply

Please use the 'Apply Now' button below to complete the application form to apply for membership of the FSA's Science Council, SAC and JEG and follow the on-screen instructions. You will be invited to select the committee and role (e.g. chair; full member; associate member; lay person) you wish to apply for and to demonstrate how you meet the role criteria. You will also be required to make declarations related to standards in public life and ensuring public confidence.



[Apply Now](#)

**Please note - the CV section incorporated into the application form will not be scored.**

## **Criteria**

You will be asked to demonstrate how you meet the role criteria ((you can provide a maximum of 2500-characters (approximately 500 words) per criteria). This is your opportunity to give evidenced examples of how you meet the criteria.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request and/or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The application form submission deadline is 23:59 (BST/GMT+1) on Monday, October 7, 2024. Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

We will acknowledge receipt of your application by email within 72 hours of your submission. If you have not received an acknowledgment, please contact the [SAC Recruitment Team](#).

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

You must ensure that any evidence submitted as part of your application or used during interview, including your CV and any statements or examples, are truthful and factually accurate. Please note that plagiarism can include presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own.

If you have any further questions and require clarification on using the form and how to submit an application, please contact the [SAC Recruitment Team](#). If you require help with your application, please contact the team as soon as you are able to and if possible, before 12 noon on the advert closing date to allow sufficient time to support you with your query.

## **Sift**

Your application will be sifted and assessed against the role-specific selection criteria. All of your information will be processed in line with the [FSA Data Protection Policy](#) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will inform you by email whether or not you have been shortlisted for an interview. If there is a high volume of applications, we may be unable to provide individual feedback at this stage.

## **Interview**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the interview stage. The interview will be your opportunity to elaborate on the information provided in the application form. A range of questions will be asked to allow you to demonstrate to the recruitment panel that you have the qualities and experience required.

Each candidate will be considered very carefully, and the reasons for decisions will be noted. Records are kept in line with the [FSA Data Protection Policy](#) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the interview stage. The interview will be your opportunity to elaborate on the information provided in the application form. A range of questions will be asked to allow you to demonstrate to the recruitment panel that you have the skills and experience required.

Interviews will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams. Information on how to join will be sent to you prior to the interview. If you do not have the Microsoft Teams application installed on your computer, you can join on the web without installing the application.

## **Sifting and interviewing selection criteria**

Please ensure you address the criteria associated with the role you are applying for.

Applicants are required to meet the following to progress to interview:

- Two scores of 4 or higher, one of which must be in criteria 1.
- At least a score of 3 in all of the other criteria.

Please see the scoring guide below for further details.

Lay members will be scored using a similar scoring system as other committee members. However, consideration will be taken that lay members can be non-

experts, who may contribute to the work of the SAC through their understanding of the broader context of the SAC work, or by representing the broader community potentially affected by the SAC advice.

## **Selection criteria**

### **Chair**

1. A high-level of expertise in an area specific to the committee applied to, evidenced by a strong record of achievement at a national or international level, with strong networks in the field.
2. Leadership abilities, sound judgement, and an excellent track record in the assessment and interpretation of scientific data.
3. The ability to contribute to the formulation and delivery of advice to the Board of the FSA.
4. Evidence of strong communication skills and awareness of relevant food safety issues.

### **Full/associate member**

1. Evidence of expert knowledge and experience in one or more of the of the required expertise areas for the committee(s) you are applying for, evidenced by a good record of achievement at a national or international level, with good networks in the field.
2. Experience of, and contribution to, multi-disciplinary groups advising on complex scientific or technical questions.
3. Strong analytical and judgement skills – evidence of being able to integrate information, think independently and be open to challenge.
4. Evidence of well-developed interpersonal and communication skills with a collaborative style and an ability to engage and communicate with non-expert audiences.

### **Science Council full/associate member**

For Science Council applications an additional two criteria must be met.

1. Evidence of expert knowledge and experience in one or more of the of the required expertise areas for the committee(s) you are applying for, evidenced by a good record of achievement at a national or international level, with good networks in the field.
2. Experience of, and contribution to, multi-disciplinary groups advising on complex scientific or technical questions.
3. Strong analytical and judgement skills – evidence of being able to integrate information, think independently and be open to challenge.
4. Evidence of well-developed interpersonal and communication skills with a collaborative style and an ability to engage and communicate with non-expert audiences.
5. A breadth of expertise and networks with experience spanning disciplines relevant to the FSA.
6. Informed perspective on the interests of consumers and citizens and experience of how these interests can be reflected in the work of the Council.

### **Lay member**

1. Understanding of and interest in the work of SAC/JEG you are applying for, substantiated by relevant knowledge, networks and experience at a national or international level.
2. Experience of contributing to the work of multi-disciplinary groups advising on complex scientific and technical questions from lay public perspectives.
3. Strong analytical and judgement skills – evidence of being able to integrate information, think independently and be open to challenge.
4. Evidence of well-developed interpersonal and communication skills with a collaborative style and an ability to engage and communicate with a wide range of audiences, including renowned scientists.

### **Scoring guide**

Score	Description	Definition
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The candidate has provided insufficient evidence that relates to the issues being explored.

- 1 Criterion not demonstrated. The evidence does not clearly explain their understanding of the points associated with the issues.

The candidate has provided some evidence that relates to some of the issues being explored.

- 2 Minimal demonstration of criterion. In the main, the evidence explains their understanding of some of the points associated with these issues.

The candidate has provided evidence that directly relates to the issues/area being explored.

- 3 Acceptable demonstration of criterion - meets criterion. The evidence clearly indicates their understanding of some of the points in this area.

The candidate has provided strong evidence that directly relates to the issues/area being explored.

- 4 Strong demonstration of criterion. The evidence clearly indicates their understanding of the many points in this area.



5	Outstanding demonstration of criterion – exceeds criterion.	The candidate has provided very strong evidence that directly relates to the issues/area being explored.  The evidence clearly indicates a high level of understanding of the many points in this area.
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## **Interview outcome**

The recruitment panel will be made up of relevant committee members and include an independent panel member. For chair roles and for Science Council the panel will be chaired by the FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser. Prior to interview all candidates will be required to submit a Declaration of Interests form.

Once all candidates have been interviewed, the panel will make recommendations for appointments for those judged to demonstrate the closest match with the published criteria.

When agreement is reached regarding the candidates recommended for appointment, letters are sent out inviting the candidates to accept the appointment. Candidates will be requested to accept, in writing, their appointment to the committee.

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# **Additional information for candidates**

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## **Additional information for candidates**

### **FSA Register of Specialists**

Applicants, whether selected or not, may separately be invited to join the FSA's Register of Specialists. This is a list of experts that the FSA can use to source expert input to inform the work of the FSA.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We welcome applications from all sections of the community. All appointments are based on merit and the principles of independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

The completion of the monitoring questionnaire is voluntary. Please note the information will be used for monitoring purposes only and it will be presented in the form of totals from which individuals cannot be separately identified.

The purpose of this part of the application is to ensure we do not create any barriers in our selection process and to help us implement our equal opportunities policy effectively.

### **Disability Confident Interview Scheme**

We want to encourage disabled people to apply for roles and give them an opportunity to show their skills, talent and abilities at the interview stage. The Civil Service runs a [Disability Confident Scheme](#), offering an interview to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum selection criteria for the role.

To be considered for an interview under this scheme you must have:

- a physical or mental impairment, or a long-term health condition which has a substantial and long term (over 12 months) adverse effect on your ability to

carry out normal day to day activities;

- demonstrated in your application and testing stages that you meet the minimum role criteria asset out in the advert or person specification for the post.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

We want to support you if you need an adjustment in the recruitment process, even if you do not feel you qualify for the Disability Confident Scheme.

We consider visible and non-visible disabilities, neurodiversity or learning differences, chronic medical conditions or mental ill health. Examples include dyslexia, epilepsy, autism, chronic fatigue, diabetes, or schizophrenia.

We provide various adjustments, including but not limited to application and interview assistance, extra time, and sign language interpretation. For further details, refer to the [government guidance](#).

Please contact the [SAC Recruitment Team](#) if you would like to discuss any reasonable adjustments you require.

## **Eligibility**

Members cannot hold any paid or high-profile unpaid posts in a political party and cannot engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Science Council, SAC and JEG.

We welcome applications from existing members of government SAC; however, applicants must list relevant current appointments in the application to identify any cross-membership and assess any potential conflicts of interest.

## **Principles of public life**

Holders of public office are expected to adhere to and uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#). These are:

- Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

- Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.
- Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## **Code of practice**

FSA's Science Council, SACs and JEGs adhere to the [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils](#). It expects that all members work to the highest personal and professional standards.

## **Management of outside interests and consideration of reputational issues**

Before you apply you should consider carefully:

- any outside interests that you may have, such as shares you may hold in a company providing services to government;
- any possible reputational issues arising from your past actions or public statements that you have made;
- and/or - any political roles you hold or political campaigns you have supported; which may call into question your ability to do the role you are applying for.

Many conflicts of interest can be satisfactorily resolved and declaring a potential conflict does not prevent you from being interviewed. If you are shortlisted for an interview, we will ask you to provide a declaration of interests and the panel will discuss any potential conflicts with you during that interview, including any proposals you may have to mitigate them and record that in their advice to ministers. Alongside your own declaration, we will conduct appropriate checks, as part of which we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This may include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. If your application is successful, you will be asked to declare all relevant interests to the Board of the FSA. as per the [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils](#). The information provided will be published with the announcement of your appointment.

## **Appointment and tenure**

Chairs, full and lay members are given a standard first term appointment of three years with the possibility of re-appointment for a further term. Any re-appointment is subject to satisfactory annual appraisals of performance during the first term in post.

Associate members are appointed for an initial term of two years. If this term is successfully completed, associate members can then become full members.

## **Ways of working**

The Science Council, SACs and JEGs use Microsoft Teams and SharePoint as a platform to share documents and information and to hold virtual meetings. Members will be required to access and use Microsoft Teams and SharePoint effectively as part of their roles, so will need access to a computer with a stable internet connection and a webcam.

## **Time Commitment**

The SAC and JEG hold up to eight one-day meetings a year, either virtually or in person in London, with occasional travel outside London. Members may also be required to provide additional input between meetings, and on occasion form subgroups focusing on specific short-term topics. The FSA may also request advice from committees on an ad hoc basis or in emergencies.

The overall time commitment will vary by SAC and depend on the extent of members' participation in the groups' meetings and FSA's strategic needs, but a minimum commitment is expected to be approximately 20 days per year. The exception to this is Science Council where the minimum commitment expected is 10 days per year including attendance at four meetings.

## **Fees and expenses**

SAC and JEG

SAC and JEG positions are not salaried. Members may claim fees and reasonable travel and other expenses, in line with the [Guidance on Committees Fees and Expenses](#).

Science Council

Science Council members receive an honorarium per financial year as well as reasonable expenses, in line with the [Guidance on Science Council Honorarium and Expenses](#).

## **Raising Concerns**

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy. If you feel your application has not been treated fairly, and you wish to make a complaint, you should email [SACrecruitment@food.gov.uk](mailto:SACrecruitment@food.gov.uk) in the first instance.

If you are still dissatisfied and would like to take your complaint further, please follow our [complaints procedure](#).

## **Data protection**

The FSA will use your data in line with the [FSA's privacy policy](#).

The application form is hosted on [www.eu.surveymonkey.com](http://www.eu.surveymonkey.com), a third-party website commissioned by the FSA. Details about how your personal information will be used and stored by Survey Monkey are available in [their privacy notice](#).

## **Contact details**

For any queries with regards to the application form or overall process, [please email the SAC Recruitment Team](#).

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