

Steps towards a Royal Charter for BASES Member Q&A

General

Q: What is a Royal Charter?

The Royal Charter is an internationally recognised mark of quality which provides a profession, and those working within it, with a platform to raise awareness of skills improve standards and develop practice for the benefit of all. Granted by the monarch on the advice of the Privy Council, they may be awarded to professional organisations which operate in the public interest, and which demonstrate pre-eminence, stability, and permanence in the particular field.

This recognition helps to differentiate members of the Chartered Organisation compared to the members of other organisations, in that it gives:

- General external acknowledgement of the profession, and confidence in its professionalism.
- Greater recognition for members, enabling them to quickly and consistently demonstrate a high level of relevant qualification and competence in the field.
- Increased profile and reputation for the organisation, its members, and the profession, which helps to attract and retain new students and members both to the organisation and to the profession.
- Assurance to the public that the body is sound and well established; that its members have a high level of qualification and experience, which is kept up to date; and that their conduct and activities will be properly monitored.

Reflecting on the Association for Project Management (APM) securing a Royal Charter in 2017 in his end of year blog for Axelos, Robert Buttrick, APM Hon Fellow set out the APM justification for Chartered Status thus:

Nowadays, no one would think of promoting a major engineering development without chartered engineers leading the work or having a financial controller who isn't a chartered accountant; if the APM is successful, then we should see the same happening for project management.

Q: Why would BASES want to become chartered?

BASES' vision is to be recognised as the UK's leading professional body in sport and exercise sciences. We have made great progress towards achieving this vision, growing our membership, and continuing to develop our reputation among sport governing bodies, professional sport, academia and allied medical professions. One of the Strategic Objectives of the new Strategy is to develop our governance model and define our organisational status to support the effective delivery of the BASES mission. There is a work strand to explore and assess options for BASES future organisational status, considering any tangible benefits of becoming a chartered institute. The BASES Board of Directors feel

that it is now a good time to prepare to seek a Royal Charter, which will provide formal and permanent recognition of our quality and pre-eminence:

- While there are significant links to other areas, the science of sport and exercise is an important and distinct discipline which cuts across a range of professional roles, and BASES is the pre-eminent organisation working in this field.
- There is significant public investment into sport and exercise, from elite athletes and governing body high-performance programmes to public health intervention, and it is therefore inherently in the public interest that the science underpinning it is extensive and robust.
- There are more than 50 universities offering undergraduate degrees, and more than 20 offering postgraduate study, in sport and exercise science. There is therefore also a strong public interest in a Chartered body that can support newly qualified sport and exercise scientists during the early periods of their careers and through the development of professional experience.

A Royal Charter for BASES would significantly increase, nationally and internationally, our standing as an organisation within the wider range of professions we currently work. It could also significantly increase the opportunities available to future Chartered members of BASES.

Q: How does BASES meet the criteria for a Royal Charter?

BASES' Memorandum of Association clearly sets out how the organisation works in the **public interest** by promoting research, developing practice, distributing knowledge and development of high professional standards in sport and exercise sciences.

BASES is the **pre-eminent** professional body working in the field of sport and exercise science in the UK. While there are other bodies with small areas of overlap, there are no other bodies with the breadth and depth of focus of BASES.

BASES has over 30 years of **stable** operation, as the British Association of Sport Science from 1984 to 1993, and then as BASES from 1993 to the current day. BASES accounts and annual reports demonstrate a stable financial position, an active membership, and an organisation that is responsive to the needs of its members and the field in which it works.

Finally, although 'young' in the context of professional and learned organisations, BASES membership and robust organisation demonstrates a sufficient degree of **permanence** to justify the award of a Royal Charter.

Q: What is the process?

The formal process of securing a Royal Charter is via a petition to the Privy Council, which is subject to an eight-week consultation period. However, the preparation of a petition can take several years. The Directors of BASES have agreed as part of the Strategic Plan for 2021-25 to take steps towards securing Chartered status over the next two to three years.

The first stage of the process is to undertake informal engagement with both members and partners. As a member-led organisation it is essential that members are engaged with and supportive of the proposals, and this briefing and FAQ is part of a process of open engagement with you as members about what Chartered status might mean. The directors

also intend to begin having informal discussions about how BASES as a Chartered organisation might effectively meet the needs of sport governing bodies, employers, universities, their staff and students. Finally, the directors also plan to discuss with partners such as the Science Council and other professional bodies to ensure that the proposals would not create areas of conflict. This activity is expected to continue throughout the rest of 2021, and at the end of the year the directors intend to bring to the Annual General Meeting an update on discussion with stakeholders and a resolution for members to support progression to a formal petition.

The next stage of the process will be to develop a detailed proposal for approval by members, partners, and other external bodies, considering what has been learned in the earlier informal engagement phase. This will include new byelaws, articles of association, and membership processes, along with plans for transition to Chartered Status for existing fellows and professional or accredited members as appropriate. There will then be one or more rounds of formal consultation on the proposals with both members and partners to ensure the proposal reflects as far as possible the views and requirements of everyone involved. This process is likely to take at least a year.

Once a detailed proposal has been prepared, a formal petition alongside the new byelaws and articles of association will be submitted to the Privy Council. On receipt, this will be published in the London Gazette and supporters or objectors will have eight weeks to respond, after which it will be considered by a committee of the Privy Council, and either approved or rejected.

Once approved, BASES would be reincorporated, the new byelaws and articles of association would be formally adopted, and the process of transitioning existing membership to new membership categories and admitting new Chartered members would begin.

Q: Wouldn't BASES need to be a charity to be Chartered?

A: No. While many professional bodies with a Royal Charter are charities or have charitable arms, there is no link between charitable status and a Royal Charter. The question of whether to become a charity or remain as a not-for-profit organisation as currently is distinct; this has recently been considered by the BASES Board of Directors who agreed that charitable status would currently offer no tangible benefit to BASES members.

Member considerations

Q: What are the benefits of Chartered status for me as a member?

Chartered status is an internationally recognised mark of quality. When you become chartered, it demonstrates to your employers, clients, and colleagues that your competence has been independently assessed and your credentials verified; that you have made a commitment to maintain, and act in accordance with, the required standards of professional behaviour and practice; to maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance; and to undertake continuous professional development.

Chartered professionals:

- Are able to use an internationally recognised and respected title.
- Are recognised nationally and internationally as a professional in the field.

- Have improved career prospects, including greater opportunities for working internationally and potential to secure higher pay and benefits.
- Exercise greater influence both within organisations, and within the broader field in which they work.

Q: Do I have to become Chartered to be a member of BASES? Will there be membership grades other than Chartered member and Chartered fellow?

A: Membership grades will be developed and incorporated into the byelaws that would be adopted. Typically, most Chartered Organisations have several membership grades, for example:

- Chartered member/fellow
- Student member
- Licentiate member (typically for a limited period post qualification prior to application for Chartered membership)
- Associate member (for those working in the field but not seeking or otherwise meeting the requirement for Chartered membership)
- Affiliate member.

Additionally, this process provides an opportunity to broaden BASES membership options. For example, BASES could introduce specific accreditation routes below Chartered level for those in relevant roles such the Registered Scientist (RSCi) or Registered Science Technician (RSciTech), increasing the scope for those members to be more involved in the profession and broadening their routes to professional development.

Where it is the appropriate route for them, BASES would expect to encourage and support members to develop towards Chartered status and this is likely to be reflected in the articles and byelaws.

Q: How does Chartered status relate to BASES current membership grades?

A: BASES currently offers a range of membership categories and accreditations. Chartered status is broadly analogous to BASES accreditation via any of the current routes (Accreditation, Certified Exercise Practitioner or High Performance Sport Accreditation) or Chartered Scientist status.

Associate membership as described above would be similar to the current Professional membership grade.

Q: How much would it cost?

A: It is too early to say, as the costs of membership will be determined based on the requirements of the organisation based on the articles and byelaws that are adopted.

Typically, annual renewal fees for chartered membership of professional bodies in the UK range from approximately £100 up to £350, dependent on the size of the organisation and range of activities it undertakes on behalf of its members. Professional membership of

BASES is currently £99pa (2020/21) and reflects that the BASES is currently a lean organisation with relatively low overheads.

For those seeking to achieve Chartered Status, most bodies charge an assessment fee. This fee is typically in a similar range of £100 to £350. BASES currently charges a fee of £100 for accreditation (2020/21).

Fees for other membership grades/categories would be determined based on the requirements of the organisation based on the articles and bylaws adopted as they apply to those grades/categories.

Q: Would I have to do more to attain or maintain Chartered status?

A: Similar to the requirements for current BASES accreditations, Chartered membership would place an onus on members to uphold high standards of practice and professional behaviour. BASES already has robust criteria which must be met by any members seeking accreditation or reaccreditation, and it is likely that the process for attaining or maintaining Chartered Status would be developed from the existing requirements to maintain continuity as far as possible. However, it is too early to specify exactly how this would affect the requirements for future accreditation or reaccreditation.

Rules for achieving and maintaining Chartered status and other membership categories will be set out in the rules and bylaws. Specific training programmes, such as the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route (SEPAR) which supports candidates through to HCPC Registration, will be considered as part of the wider work around membership categories.

Many professional bodies require their Chartered members to maintain records that demonstrate their high standards of practice and professional behaviour which can be subject to periodic audit or inspection. This could include, for example, details of continuing professional development and appropriate professional indemnity insurance. Any such rule, along with any sanctions for members who fail to adhere to the high standards of practice and professional behaviour required of them, would be reflected in the proposed bylaws which would be subject to consultation with members prior to any change.

Q: Will there be a process for converting existing accreditations or fellowships to Chartered status? How will it affect my existing accreditation?

A: Yes. The aim of these proposals is to enhance and develop opportunities for all current and future members of BASES, and this includes ensuring that any current accredited member or BASES fellow that meets the requirement of membership can be 'mapped across' into the equivalent new membership category. Existing accreditation routes will be taken into account, both when establishing future membership categories and determining the process for mapping existing members into new categories.

BASES current professional membership category does not place a requirement on members to demonstrate knowledge, skills and experience. Therefore, it is anticipated that these members would be converted to something similar to the 'Associate' membership

described above, with a clear process for progression to Chartered status where appropriate.

Accreditations and membership categories will form a key part of both informal and formal engagement with members.

Q: How does it affect membership for those with or seeking Chartered Scientist?

A: Chartered status for BASES should not affect existing or potential future Chartered Scientists (CSci), whose Chartered status is awarded by the Science Council. There are a number of Chartered bodies which also offer CSci alongside their own Chartered membership routes.

Q: I am already a Chartered member of another professional body. Could I be a Chartered member of BASES too?

A: Assuming you meet the requirements for Chartered membership, there should be no reason why membership of another professional body should prevent you from becoming a Chartered member of BASES. Indeed, members who are also affiliated with another professional body (whether Chartered or not) should be welcomed as they help broaden the expertise and knowledge of all members. Depending on the rules that are adopted, there may be scope for a streamlined accreditation process for Chartered members of complementary bodies.

Q: Will there be membership grades other than Chartered member and Chartered fellow?

A: Membership grades will be developed and incorporated into the byelaws that would be adopted. Typically, most Chartered Organisations have several membership grades, for example:

- Chartered member/fellow
- Student member
- Licentiate member (typically for a limited period post qualification prior to application for Chartered membership)
- Affiliate member (for those working in the field but not otherwise meeting the requirement for Chartered membership)

Additionally, this process provides an opportunity to broaden BASES membership options. For example, BASES could introduce specific accreditation routes below Chartered level for those in relevant roles such the Registered Scientist (RSCi) or Registered Science Technician (RSciTech), increasing the scope for those members to be more involved in the profession and broadening their routes to professional development.

Q: What does it mean for the organisation I work for?

A: This depends on the rules and byelaws that are adopted. However, BASES' directors intend to engage on an ongoing basis to ensure that any proposals work in the interests of employers as well as members.

For existing accredited laboratories, a Royal Charter for BASES is likely to add significant value as accreditation by a chartered body would be likely to carry greater weight and status than currently.

Q: Next steps

A short survey, including some broad, open questions will be developed to solicit direct feedback from members and wider networks. This will be shared with BASES members in due course.

BASES Board
19 April 2021