

Correspondence

In praise of policy initiatives at professional societies

I agree that academics have few incentives to engage with policymaking (see D. Murdick *Nature* **611**, 205; 2022). In my experience, one important way for research to inform policy is through policy initiatives at professional societies.

When I was head of science policy at London's Institute of Biology (now the Royal Society of Biology), we compiled reports for policymakers – for example, on the potential of biofuels and on concerns about antibiotic resistance. The former ultimately helped to change European biofuels policy. It came out of a workshop of specialist agricultural biologists and allied stakeholders. The results fed into several consultations with parliamentarians and government departments. The antibiotics initiative arose from a two-day symposium with biomedical learned societies and clinician stakeholders. The results went before parliamentarians and stakeholders in health and the pharmaceuticals industry.

Scientists can monitor what their disciplinary societies are doing and then submit evidence to policymakers and stakeholders. Better still, if at some stage in their career they have the time to serve on societies' policy committees, they can help to set the agendas for such work and obtain a deeper insight into the nuts and bolts of lobbying.

Jonathan Cowie E Midlands, UK.
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