General information about Council

Trustee Duties
Council is the governing body of the Institute and, as a registered charity, Council members are trustees of the Institute.

Working collectively, trustees have three main responsibilities:
- to set a clear direction for the Institute;
- to make sure the Institute’s plans are being carried out appropriately; and
- to ensure the Institute meets its legal responsibilities.

The role and responsibilities of trustees are governed by law and information on the responsibilities and duties of Charity Trustees is available in the Charity Commission's Essential Trustee publication. All new Council members receive an induction session with the Chief Executive and the executive team, and are offered training and support throughout their term of office. Council also receives annual briefings and updates from the Institute’s professional advisors on relevant changes and updates on trustee responsibilities.

The Council and how it works
Council is chaired by the President and meets four times a year (full day meetings), normally in January, April/May, July and November each of which are preceded by an informal dinner discussion session. The first Council that newly elected trustees will be invited to attend is 28 November 2019.

The work of Council is supported by a number of committees and Council Members are normally invited to serve on at least one of these committees, most of which meet three times per year. This helps to maintain a strong connection between the Council and its governance committees. The majority of meetings take place at the Institute’s office in London, but once a year Council meets in one of the Nations and regions.

Council is committed to a diversity of membership and approach, and to creating an environment that bring challenge to the governance programme in a supportive and inclusive way. Currently the Council membership is 55% female and 45% male. The Institute offers financial support to help with carer responsibilities where such funding can help participation, and funding is also available to those from the teaching profession to help with providing supply cover.

Why stand for election?
As a trustee, membership of Council carries significant responsibility, but it is immensely rewarding as an opportunity to contribute to the health and development of physics, and more widely STEM, particularly in the UK and Ireland, and the role that the Institute plays in this. It provides an excellent opportunity to use the skills and experience gained in your career to make a valuable contribution to the governance and strategy of the Institute, and to develop board-level experience.

Hear from some of our existing Council members about their own experiences and why they think you should stand for election.
Eligibility
The 2011 Charities Act (in England and Wales) and the 2005 Charities and Trustee Investment Act (in Scotland), and the Institute’s Charter & Bylaws make restrictions on who may be a trustee of the Institute of Physics. In summary those standing for Council must:

- be a Member, Fellow or Honorary Fellow of the Institute;
- be 18 years or over at the date of appointment;
- not be a serving staff member of the Institute or have been employed (in all various forms) by the Institute for over 12 months;
- not be incapable of acting by reason of mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983;
- not have an unspent conviction relating to any offence involving deception or dishonesty;
- not be an undischarged bankrupt;
- not subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- not been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an Order made by the Charity Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement nor subject to an order under section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990, preventing management or control of any relevant organisation or body.