

## Topic 1: Breadth of Chemistry

### Comments from the Royal Society of Chemistry

1. The RSC broadened its criteria for membership in 2001 to include the full range of the chemical sciences. RSC defines chemical science as any field of practice, application or teaching that depends upon an understanding of processes at the molecular level.

Since 2001 the RSC has broadened its traditional divisional structure to include materials, chemical biology, and energy, environment and sustainability.

2. At the last meeting of C6 it was noted that specialist societies in sub-branches of chemistry – boutique societies – were becoming a source of concern to the major more broadly based chemical societies. Boutique societies continue to exist in the UK, offering specialist conferencing and other services. They have, however, not become more significant over the past two years and are not having a serious impact upon the RSC.

3. In the UK professional societies have a significant role in representing the views of professional groups to government. This has increased in importance in recent years, particularly in science and engineering.

The subdivision of science and engineering into a number of specialisms eg chemistry, physics, electrical engineering leads to a large number of professional societies each trying to influence government. Government, would rather deal with a smaller number of more broadly based organisations.

This has led to the formation of federations of societies notably for each of science, environment and engineering. These federations call into question the relationship between individual scientists and the federation. Are they simply members of their own society or are they also members of the federation? How will the federations develop and what will be the effects on individual subject societies?