

16 February 2016

Professor Dame Ann Dowling
President, CAETS

(Via email)

Dear Ann

It was a pleasure to meet you personally during our visit to the Royal Academy of Engineering in December 2015. We note that for the calendar year 2016 you will be the President of CAETS -- congratulations on that significant appointment.

We signalled when we were with you that as part of our strategy as a multi-disciplinary academy, which covers engineering and technological sciences as well as some other domains, the Royal Society of New Zealand believes it should be connected to all relevant peak bodies for academies, including CAETS. The multi-disciplinary nature of the Royal Society of New Zealand is accepted by the other major peak bodies: ICSU (science), ISSC (social science) and UAI (humanities).

We have read the CAETS Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, which state that members "shall be academies of engineering and technological sciences". There does not seem to be any explicit exclusion of academies that span these domains as well as others such as the sciences, social sciences and humanities.

The Act of Parliament under which the Royal Society of New Zealand operates states that Fellows are elected if they have "achieved distinction in research or the advancement of science, technology and the humanities".

In practice our Fellowship selection criteria differ to some extent between the four broad domains: science, social science, humanities and technology, the latter including applied science and technology. We operate twelve Fellowship evaluation panels, of which one is Engineering and another Technology and Applied Sciences. Hence we consider that we have the characteristics to be viewed as an academy of engineering and technological sciences, albeit not exclusively so.

In practice, the number of our Fellows we would characterise as being in engineering and technological sciences is lower than those in science, but is similar to the numbers we have in the humanities and social sciences. This reflects that our organisational roots are in science, but in my presidency we are seeking to actively capture the benefits of greater diversity. In this context, the fact that I am a social scientist and our chief executive is both an engineer and a Fellow of the Society in his own right can only assist in this regard. Two of our last four presidents have come from the technological sciences and engineering.



A place for knowledge and excellence Science · Technology · Humanities

Royal Society of New Zealand, 11 Turnbull Street, Thorndon, PO Box 598, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
Phone: +64 4 472 7421, Fax: +64 4 473 1841, www.royalsociety.org.nz

The purpose of this letter is therefore to seek an interpretation of the Article and Bylaws by the CAETS Board in regard to academies such as ours. If the Board takes the view that academies such as ours are eligible, then I also wish to signal our intention to apply for admission. We accept that a positive interpretation does not guarantee us admission, merely the right to apply. We also note that we do not believe our situation to be uncommon - multi-disciplinary academies exist in many other countries.

I look forward to hearing whether there is seen to be any constitutional impediment to multi-disciplinary academies joining CAETS.

Yours sincerely



Professor Richard Bedford FRSNZ
President

cc Dr Margaret Hartley, Chief Executive, ATSE
Professor Peter Gray