# Elon Musk faces scrutiny from the Royal Society over misinformation allegations



Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX and Tesla, is facing increasing scrutiny from the Royal Society, the UK’s premier scientific institution, following allegations of spreading misinformation and undermining scientific credibility. The Society, founded in 1660 and home to many eminent scientists throughout history, held an extraordinary meeting on Monday evening to address these concerns after members expressed their dissatisfaction with Musk’s actions and statements.

Musk, who was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 2018, has come under fire for promoting what has been termed “unfounded conspiracy theories” related to Covid-19, vaccines, and health issues such as miscarriages and heart problems. In recent months, more than 3,000 individuals, including Nobel Prize winners, have signed an open letter calling for his expulsion from the Society, accusing him of violating its code of conduct.

During the recent meeting, which saw the participation of around 150 fellows—approximately 10 per cent of the total membership—participants expressed alarm over cuts to US research funding and the burgeoning spread of misinformation, which they believe poses a significant threat to the scientific community. The Society noted that the situation has been exacerbated by Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), which has enacted substantial reductions in spending at US health and research institutions.

In a statement following the confidential meeting, the Royal Society highlighted the necessity of advocating for science and scientists, stating that “concern was expressed, in particular, about the fate of colleagues in the US who are reportedly facing the prospect of losing their jobs amid threats of radical cutbacks in research funding.” Furthermore, they acknowledged the need to counteract growing misinformation and politically motivated attacks against the scientific community.

Prominent figures such as Geoffrey Hinton, known as the "Godfather of AI" and also a fellow of the Royal Society, have been vocal about Musk’s potential expulsion. Hinton stated on X, “Not because he peddles conspiracy theories and makes Nazi salutes, but because of the huge damage he is doing to scientific institutions in the US.” Musk responded to Hinton’s comments by dismissing concerns over awards and memberships as the province of “craven, insecure fools,” while labelling the allegations against him as “carelessly ignorant, cruel and false.” He added that he would be open to correction of specific actions but defended his overall conduct.

The Royal Society’s code of conduct mandates that fellows strive to uphold the institution's reputation and be mindful that their personal remarks can impact it. While the Society did not mention Musk by name in their official communications, the implications of the discussions surrounding his conduct were evident to attendees, many of whom echoed calls for the Society to take a more assertive stance in defending scientific integrity.

The potential for expulsion from the Royal Society is a rare occurrence, having not happened in 150 years, and would necessitate a formal investigation by the Society’s committee followed by a vote from fellows should the individual refuse to resign. Amidst the growing dissatisfaction, two fellows have already resigned over Musk’s continued affiliation, underscoring the contentious nature of his membership within this prestigious group.

The ongoing situation reflects broader tensions within the scientific community, particularly regarding the intersection of science and misinformation in an era characterised by rapid technological change and polarised political discourse. The Royal Society now faces the challenge of navigating this complex landscape as it seeks to reaffirm its commitment to science and support for those who face ongoing scrutiny.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://nation.cymru/news/royal-society-to-meet-after-fellow-elon-musk-accused-of-promoting-conspiracies/> - This article corroborates the allegations against Elon Musk for spreading misinformation and the Royal Society's response to these concerns. It highlights the open letter signed by over 2,400 people, including Nobel Prize winners, calling for Musk's expulsion.
* <https://phys.org/news/2025-03-uk-royal-society-scientists-debates.html> - This article supports the claim that Elon Musk has been accused of promoting conspiracy theories and that the Royal Society is addressing these concerns. It also mentions the significant number of individuals who have signed an open letter against Musk.
* <https://www.royalsociety.org/> - The Royal Society's official website provides background information on the institution, its history, and its role in the scientific community, which is relevant to understanding the context of Elon Musk's membership and the controversy surrounding it.
* <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/s.curry> - This page provides information about Professor Stephen Curry, who authored the open letter criticizing Elon Musk's actions and advocating for adherence to the Royal Society's code of conduct.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-64812359> - This article discusses the broader context of scientific integrity and the challenges faced by institutions like the Royal Society in maintaining credibility in the face of misinformation.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/mar/03/royal-society-meets-over-elon-musk-misinformation-claims> - This article provides additional details about the Royal Society's meeting and the discussions surrounding Elon Musk's actions, highlighting the concerns about scientific integrity and misinformation.