



RECRUITMENT GUIDE

British Council, Pakistan

CONTENTS

A. Introduction.....	2
B. Stages of Recruitment and Selection.....	2
1. Advertisement.....	2
<i>What is a Role Profile?</i>	2
2. Shortlisting.....	3
3. Interview.....	3
4. Intimation of Selection/ Rejection.....	3
C. The Application Form.....	3
Filling the Application Form.....	4
Common Mistakes.....	5
Submitting the Application Form.....	5
D. The Interview.....	5
STAR Structure of Answering.....	6
<i>Situation and Target</i>	6
<i>Action</i>	6
<i>Result</i>	6
<i>Additional Tips for Answering</i>	6
E. Recruitment Policies.....	7

A. Introduction

This guide has been developed to facilitate external applicants in the recruitment process at the British Council.

The objective of this guide is to enable you to:

- Do personal research that helps you to identify and review the knowledge, skill and experience you use to produce results in the work you are doing now or have done
- Understand how to interpret the British Council Behaviours
- To prepare examples that provide the strongest possible evidence of your ability to fulfil the requirements set out in a Person Specification
- Know how to create a well-researched, well-written Job Application for the British Council
- Know what to expect of the interview and so be able to make thorough preparations.

B. Stages of Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection policy process comprises the following key stages:

1. Advertisement

External vacancies at the British Council are generally advertised on the Job Opportunities section of its website. In addition, these vacancies may also be advertised in print media such as newspapers, online on professional networking groups and sites or be outsourced to head hunting agencies.

Job advertisements will generally mention the ***Job Title, Job Location, Application Deadline, and the Application Address.***

It will also provide a ***Role Profile*** and an ***External Application Form.***

What is a Role Profile?

The Role Profile has two sections; the Job Description and the Person Specification.

The *Job Description* gives details about the job and what you will be expected to do in the role. It also outlines the context of the position, key relationships you will be maintaining and other important requirements of the job e.g. extensive travelling, visa requirements. This should give you a general idea of what you will be doing in your job if you are selected.

The *Person Specification* sets out the requirements and selection criteria used for short listing and interview i.e. nature and level of the skill, knowledge and behaviour which will be assessed. These requirements are classed as either essential or desirable. Along with each requirement, the stage of assessment is also mentioned e.g. shortlisting, interview. The Behaviours Guide and Core Skills Guide are available on the British Council's website under the Job Opportunities Section-Guidance on completing your application form.

Checklist

- Read the Job Description to decide if it describes what you would enjoy doing everyday
- Read the person Specification to decide if you fulfil the essential and/or desirable requirements

2. Shortlisting

After the closing date for applications has passed, a Shortlisting Panel goes through each application form.

It first looks at each of the *Essential requirements*. If you fail to provide evidence against any one Essential requirement you will not be shortlisted for interview. So it is absolutely vital to provide strong evidence of your ability to fulfil each one of these.

Desirable requirements are not quite as important as Essential but, even so, they are significant. Give thought and time to producing good evidence of how you satisfy each one of them. If there are a lot of candidates who satisfy the Essential criteria, the Shortlisting panel will use the published Desirable requirements as their second level of screening to select applicants. This is so as to produce a manageable number of good candidates to interview.

Only requirements that have “shortlisting” mentioned in the assessment stage will be considered at this stage.

Details on how to use the requirements in the Person Specification section to fill the application form, is given in the **Filling the Application Form** section.

Due to administrative costs, all applications will not receive an acknowledgement. Only shortlisted candidates will be intimated. Successful candidates may expect an interview call within a month of the application deadline.

3. Interview

Shortlisted candidates will generally be given a minimum of four business days notice for the interview.

Interview sessions will usually be held in one of the British Council offices. These interview sessions last 30-45 minutes and may also be held via video or telephone conferencing at the discretion of the British Council.

Special assistance will be provided to candidates with a disability who request for it in the application form.

Details on the interview format are provided in the **Giving the Interview** section.

4. Intimation of Selection/ Rejection

Within three weeks of the interview, successful and unsuccessful candidates will be intimated of the interview outcome.

Successful candidates will be made a conditional offer and the process of reference checks and security clearance will be started before confirming the offer.

C. The Application Form

The application form is the **only** mode of application that The British Council uses to recruit staff. This applies to internal and external staff. We, therefore, discourage applications in the form of CVs and emails when the mode of application is specified as the External Application Form.

Filling the Application Form

The Application form comprises four parts, three are mandatory to fill, while the last section is not.

Part One: Personal Information

This section is used by The British Council to gain basic personal information about you. This section is not shown to the recruiting team so that your personal details do not influence the recruitment outcome.

Remember to double check your personal contact information for mistakes. This is the only way The British Council can contact you if you are successful!

Part Two: Job Related Information

This is the only section that the recruiting team will be able to see and use for decision making- so it pays to spend time and effort into this section!

When filling out the **employment and relevant work experience section**, make sure you mention both the employer organization and the position(s) you held in the same. Dates should always be in the form of Month/ Year to Month/ Year. This helps us determine if you have the required years of work experience. A brief summary of roles and achievements for each work experience means exactly that! It helps if you use bulleted points to jot down the responsibilities you think are relevant to the job. Refer to the Role Profile to see which responsibilities are more relevant.

You can mention any community or volunteer work that you think is relevant to the position in the **other relevant experience section**.

It is important that you mention the qualification degree, specialization, year and institution when listing your **educational qualifications**. A mention of your specialization can be especially critical if it is mentioned in the Person Specification section of the Role Profile.

The **supporting statement** is probably the most important part of your application. Think of it as a marketing exercise. What you are aiming to do is position yourself in the mind of a recruiting manager as a person who can fulfil the need they have described in their advertisement and Role Profile: Person Specification.

Give evidence **only** against requirements that have mentioned "shortlisting" in the assessment stage e.g. giving evidence of the British Council Behaviours mentioned in the Role Profile is **not required**.

A fool proof way to write the supporting statement is to address all the essential criteria, one by one, by explaining how you meet each criterion using a good example. Then move on to the desirable criteria and do the same for as many criteria as you can. Once you are done, you can always decide to restructure the supporting statement according to your taste!

Try to give real life examples as evidence, rather than general claims of being sound in a competency.

Checklist

- Double check your contact information
- Work Experience: Employer, position held mentioned and time worked in the format M/Y- M/Y
- Education: Qualification, specialization and institute mentioned
- All criteria mentioned in the Person Specification that is to be assessed in shortlisting is addressed in supporting statement

Common Mistakes While Filling the Application Form

It is important that you send us a complete application form. Below are some common mistakes candidates tend to make in the application form, and tips on how to avoid them:

- Frequently, applicants colour table cells, insert symbols or write additional text to indicate choice of option. **To select a check box, double click on the check box and choose “checked” as the default value.**
- Applicants forget to mention their area of academic specialization/ majors for a degree. This can be a source of confusion especially if the Role Profile indicates a particular specialization/ majors as essential or desirable criteria. **When providing information on educational qualifications, mention your specialization/ majors.**
- In the Employment section, applicants have a tendency to explain their job descriptions in detail. **Please keep the description of your roles and responsibilities brief and succinct. You will have an opportunity to explain your suitability for the post in the next section.**
- Occasionally, applicants give references they are no longer in touch with. This makes it difficult to contact references in case the applicant is selected. **When providing details of references, please make sure the referee knows you have provided their name and that their phone numbers/ email addresses are current.**
- Completing your application form in a rush never helps. You will generally have two weeks to turn in your application form. **Think through your application form before writing it and make sure it is free of spelling and grammatical mistakes before submission. You may find it helpful to have your application proofread by friends or family.**

Submitting the Application Form

You will generally be required to email the Application form to an email address provided. When emailing the application form, make sure you mention:

- The job title/ job reference number and your full name in the subject of the email
- The job title and your full name in the name of the application form file

D. The Interview

The interview session will last 30- 45 minutes and generally comprise of a number of open ended questions.

In general, the interview questions will aim to evaluate your suitability for the position against the requirements provided in the Person Specification section of the Role Profile, particularly those that have “Interview” mentioned in the assessment stage.

The questions will therefore revolve around the skills, knowledge, experience and Behaviours required for the position. You will need to go through the Document, Definition of British Council Behaviours, in order to help you understand what each level of behaviour means.

STAR Structure of Answering

For questions asking for a past experience or example, organise your example for following the STAR structure:

Situation	a brief sentence or two to set the scene and give the context
Target	the specific aspects you focussed on and why
Action	what you did, how, and when, and the rationale for your choices
Result	what the outcome was and the difference it made

Situation and Target

Describe what you did and what was achieved. Briefly set out the facts of the situation and the obstacles you met. Convey the significance of what you did and how it affected the outcome, together with brief details of what was involved.

For example, *'I had to develop and implement a new process for promoting local education opportunities but was constrained by budget cuts throughout the department. As a result of working with local authorities I achieved these objectives within budget and within the 3 month timescale'*.

Action

Here you need to set out what you actually did and how you did it. The best way to approach this is to ask yourself:

What were the particular things I did that had most impact upon the final result?

If you are drawing on one situation to provide evidence of several requirements, ensure that you focus on aspects of the situation relevant to the requirement in question.

For example, to bring out evidence of the behaviour Working Together: *'I gained agreement to my proposed course of action by building positive relationships with local authorities. I chaired meetings, developed a network of contacts with whom I lobbied actively, and gave presentations to stake-holding groups.'*

Result

To conclude your example, you need to focus on the impact of your actions. These may be quantitative results (e.g. sales increase of 30%) or qualitative ones (e.g. appreciation, automation of a process).

Additional Tips for Answering

Be specific about the situation, the actual results achieved and the part you played in achieving them. If you were acting as part of a team highlight the role you played in achieving the outcome rather than focusing too much on the team activities.

When choosing the examples you give in your application, bear in mind that those assessing your evidence will be considering the following factors when examining your examples:

- **Risks** involved (i.e. what risks did you take into account or run to complete a task)
- **Impact** (i.e. did your actions make a significant difference or leave a lasting mark e.g. improved long standing underperformance, increased revenue, secured contracts/projects etc)
- **Scale** (i.e. size of example given e.g. local, regional, interdepartmental etc) and
- **Complexity** (i.e. was the task simple or complicated to solve, implement; what were the challenges that needed to be overcome etc)

E. Recruitment Policies

- Appointment is subject to satisfactory medical and background checks
- Applicants who do not have the required qualification & experience should kindly abstain from applying, as their applications will not be considered. Please note that educational and work related documents of the successful candidate are verified through background checks before placing the final offer.
- Applicants must abstain from contacting the BC for information on the selection process. Any applicant who in any way tries to influence the recruitment panel will be disqualified immediately.
- Your Application Form is treated as a confidential document and will be shredded one year after an appointment is made.
- The British Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community. We work to ensure that people are not unjustifiably discriminated. We guarantee an interview to disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria.