



Confidential Position Specification

British Council

Chief Executive

February 2020



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



This is a unique opportunity to make a difference; to the UK, and around the world.

The Chief Executive of the British Council is a high-profile role for an individual who wants to lead a global organisation with a strong purpose and a £1bn+ revenue from grant-in-aid and our multi-country commercial arm, which contributes to funding our arts and culture, and educational programmes, the foundation of our soft power.

Our new Chief Executive will be someone with a global perspective who is passionate about building bridges and giving people around the world access to networks which would otherwise be out of their reach.

Person-to-person connections and making friends around the world are at the heart of the British Council's activities and they've never been more important than in this time of increasing tensions between and within nations.

The new Chief Executive will provide direction, motivation and inspiration to 11,000 British Council colleagues across the world; and build relations and partnerships with the British Council's domestic and international stakeholders in governments, the arts and education.

If you think you can make the type of impact we're looking for, if you can make friends for the UK, and if you can be our 'story-teller-in-chief'; please apply.

Thank you for your interest so far. I look forward to meeting you.

Stevie Spring CBE
Chairman, British Council



Role Title	British Council Chief Executive
Location	London (in September 2020, the British Council will relocate its new global headquarters to: International Quarter, Stratford, London E20)
Reporting Relationship	Reports to the Board
Website	www.britishcouncil.org

ABOUT US

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work with more than 100 countries across the world. Each year we reach 80 million people directly and more than 750 million people overall, including online, through broadcasts and via publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. We are also a UK public body and an arms-length body (ALB) of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO).

We are funded in a blended manner. Revenues over £1bn are generated from a mix of public funding, including significant Grant-in-Aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, commercial activity in education, English language teaching and examinations, and partnership funds.

The global reach of the organisation increasingly requires subsidiary entities to support trading in a range of different jurisdictions and engaging in significant conversations with national governments overseas. At the same time, the British Council's Non-Departmental Public Body status requires strong stakeholder management with UK Governments and the FCO, the British Council's sponsoring Department. These factors bring challenges and complexity to the governance and management of the British Council, which require intellectual flexibility of the highest order.

We are very diverse, highly motivated and strongly committed, interfacing with a huge variety of individuals, partner organisations and government departments. Our offer is unique, and we are remarkably successful in achieving our aims despite a constantly changing geopolitical backdrop.

GEOPOLITICAL/ SBU/ FUNCTION OVERVIEW

The Chief Executive will assume office at a time of unprecedented external change. The political landscape in Europe and around the globe is altering with increasing pace and less predictability. The British Council is also in constant transformation to deliver within funding constraints in a demanding, more client and customer-facing world. The aims and goals of the British Council are more necessary than ever. Delivering them in the complex world of 2020 is more difficult than at any time since 1945. The resulting demands on the Chief Executive in terms of vision, agility, ability to simplify and lead with clarity and purpose are substantial.

The Chief Executive will be instrumental in redefining both 'soft power' and 'cultural relations' at this pivotal moment and will help define the place of the United Kingdom, for the better, in a 'disrupted' and uncertain geopolitical world.



OUR IMPACT

Operating at scale⁴



We reached
791 million
people in total



We engaged with
80 million
people directly



We engaged with over
100 million
learners and teachers of
English through our online
English digital products

Highlights

Connecting the UK with the world through education

In partnership with the Ministry of Education in Ukraine and drawing on UK expertise we are helping to bring transformational benefits to higher education in Ukraine.

We launched Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning – a £38 million, three-year joint programme between the British Council and the Department for International Development (DFID) – to inspire young people to develop their core skills and become active global citizens.

Transforming lives through English

With the support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), we launched English Connects, using English language learning to connect the UK to African youth, creating opportunities for young people.

Our work addressing the needs of English language learners in China through technology led the Financial Times, supported by Google, to include the British Council as one of Europe's 100 digital champions in the Corporate Digital Transformation category.

Addressing social issues through culture

Five Films For Freedom – the world's widest-reaching digital celebration of LGBTQ+ film – received 3.9 million views across an 11-day period in March 2019.

We supported the first significant arts and disability festival in Indonesia, providing opportunities for both UK and Indonesian artists.

Further information on the scale of our work, the quality of our services and financial performance, including comparisons to the previous year, can be found in the Our Performance and Financial Review sections of this report.

 English	 Education	 Culture
<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">In 2018–19 we taught English to nearly</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">420,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">students</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">and supported the professional development of</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">77,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">teachers of English</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">We worked with</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">5,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">researchers in the UK and</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">21,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">researchers worldwide</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">We partnered with</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">8,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">UK-based artists and arts organisations and</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">39,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">artists and arts organisations around the world</p>
<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">We enabled</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">3.9 million</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">people to take an exam with us</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">We supported</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">168,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">teachers worldwide with training</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">We built the capacity of</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">2,000</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">civil society organisations around the world</p>



MAIN OPPORTUNITIES/ CHALLENGES FOR THIS ROLE

The British Council is seeking to appoint a truly motivated individual to succeed Sir Ciarán Devane, who has served as Chief Executive with success and distinction for the last five years. Working with the Chairman, Trustees and Senior Leadership Team, the Chief Executive provides the British Council with the leadership, challenge and inspiration to meet its ambitious targets.

The successful candidate will be driven by a sense of social mission and purpose. They will gain international recognition as an expert in cultural relations and will be at the forefront of the global relationship-building which enhances the British Council's authority and presence and, through that, the profile of the whole of the UK.

This is an incredibly exciting, stimulating and challenging post, requiring real vision, energy, imagination and cultural sensitivity. The British Council is entrepreneurial and public service oriented, with a strong purpose-driven ethos in all it does. Whilst operationally independent, it works in close alignment with government and a range of other stakeholders, to ensure that it brings maximum value to the UK and clients/partners.

The Chief Executive will manage the complexities of aligning with government objectives in the four nations of the UK and simultaneously growing British Council income to optimise available resources. They will also manage the organisation's relationships with partners and competitors in a transparent way, ensuring that other UK bodies are not unfairly disadvantaged. To continue to grow opportunities for the UK, the British Council will need to be fast-paced, ambitious and responsive to the needs of stakeholders including UK government departments, the UK's cultural and educational institutions, businesses and the public sector across the UK, managing the constant need to get greater impact from every pound spent.

This is a general management role that demands commercial experience at the highest level in an organisation of comparable scale. In a time of growing competition, increasing substitute product offerings and vastly altering global commercial landscapes, combined with our changing funding blend, we need a gifted and experienced business leader with extensive experience of working in, and providing senior leadership to, international organisations.

The Chief Executive will need to understand the demands of the various constituencies and be comfortable in weaving them together and helping the whole organisation to understand how to best address them. They will be able to further the current strategy by understanding and balancing global and local needs. They will be able to balance geographical priorities with core business functions, working across the three main pillars of English Language, Arts and Culture and Education, whilst driving organisational change.

The Chief Executive is responsible for leading over 11,000 British Council staff around the world and must be a visible champion of their interests. It is an essential part of the role to exemplify through personal leadership the values of the organisation; valuing people, creativity, integrity, professionalism and mutuality. The Chief Executive will be passionate about their guardianship of those values and of the organisation's role as an exemplar of best practice in equal opportunities and diversity.

The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer for the British Council.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-are-run/board-trustees>



MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

Working closely with the Board of Trustees and the Global Leadership Team, the Chief Executive will have the following specific responsibilities:

Vision and Strategy

- Lead the setting of strategies and policies which further the British Council's aims, create a unique contribution to the UK's wider international objectives, increase the standing of the organisation, bring maximum value to the UK, and reflect the organisation's values.
- Realise the vision through leadership and the ability to hold accountable those responsible for implementing innovative strategies, plans, major initiatives and services.
- Work with the senior leadership of the organisation to inspire, develop and motivate all staff, enabling the delivery of high performance for the organisation, and recognition, internally and externally, of top employer status.

External Relationships

- Secure the reputation, effectiveness and resourcing of the organisation through leading on the strengthening of relationships with the FCO, as the Foreign Secretary is accountable to Parliament for the performance of the British Council, and approves the Grant-in-Aid.
- Strengthen relationships and alignment with other relevant government departments across the UK and with other major UK players in the arts, English language, education and skill sectors.
- Ensure the contribution of the British Council to the UK's global presence is well understood by key domestic stakeholders.

Delivery

- Ensure that agreed corporate performance is delivered to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Ensure performance is measured and meets the targets set internally and externally and that impact is manifest whilst also meeting strategic goals.
- Specifically focus on all aspects of commercial strategy and performance ensuring the optimal mix of funding and financing options are in place, that the business model maximises commercial opportunities, controls cost, increases sustainable surplus and that it meets agreed expectations of partners, clients, customers and stakeholders.

Governance

- Work with the Chairman to harness the energy and experience of the Board, enabling it to fulfil its role of direction, support, challenge and oversight.

Finance

- As accounting officer, ensure that the British Council manages its financial affairs efficiently and, in particular, to ensure regularity and propriety in the use of public funds; lead on good practice and transparency in the governance, processes and controls to meet legislative requirements to the UK and overseas, including charity law, National Audit Office, Parliamentary, Treasury and FCO requirements; and deliver the agreed corporate, business and financial performance.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Chairman and Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership Team, all British Council colleagues, senior stakeholders across government and partner organisations.



ROLE REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge & Experience

Candidates, who may come from a wide range of different backgrounds, will be able to demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- A very strong affiliation with the core mission of the British Council, driven by a strong sense of social purpose and the desire to make impact. This will include a passion for international cultural relations and the proven ability to work across cultures.
- A strong track record in senior leadership and management of a substantial and complex international organisation with a strong customer focus and a proven capacity to inspire and innovate.
- Direct experience of working internationally and a very strong geopolitical awareness.
- Experience of working with government and knowledge of how to build effective relationships with senior officials and Ministers in Whitehall, Westminster and the devolved nations.
- Personal presence and authority.
- Excellent communication skills, with a proven ability to influence and negotiate both internally and externally. To be at ease in addressing major gatherings and more intimate events alike and working effectively with the media.
- Strongly engaged with digital innovation and its potential for transformation.
- A high level of intellect, including honed emotional intelligence and the ability to master complex issues quickly and to relish the challenges thrown up by a fast moving and constantly shifting agenda.
- An inspirational leader and team builder, forging a high performing team. A mentor, coach and team player.
- Entrepreneurial flair and a strong focus on income generation together with well-developed financial and business acumen. A commercially adept, business professional with general management skills.
- Able to adapt organisational approaches and to grasp opportunities quickly.
- An ability to build and lead an entrepreneurial public body.
- Ability to manage ambiguity and complexity, untroubled by pressure and a rapidly changing environment.
- Personal energy, dynamism and drive. Able to impart positivity, 'a can-do mentality' and enthusiasm.

Candidate Qualities

- The successful candidate must be a strategic thinker, aware of the geopolitical landscape and future developments and scenarios.
- The successful candidate must be a strong communicator internally and externally and be a visionary leader, motivator and relationship builder.
- Successful candidate will take a visionary approach, delivering a truly transformational change programme and steering the organisation through new global challenges.
- Innovative, dynamic, both commercially astute and value-led public service ethos.
- Sensitivity, subtlety and resilience.

REMUNERATION & PACKAGE

The remuneration package for this full-time role will be a base salary up to £150,000 per annum, with bonus to 8% and Civil Service Pension Scheme.



APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for this position, you must have the right to work in the UK. Please supply the following to BritishCouncilCEO@KornFerry.com by the closing date of Friday 27th March at 12 noon.

- A **comprehensive CV** setting out your career history.
- A **short supporting statement/cover letter** (maximum two sides A4, minimum 11 font) giving evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for the role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet the role requirements.
- The **Supporting Documentation form** relating to referees, diversity, nationality, political activity and conflicts of interest.

TIMETABLE

Interviews will take place in central London.

CV and cover letter submitted:	Friday 27 th March 2020, at 12 noon
Long List Meeting	Monday 6 th April 2020
Korn Ferry Interviews	Between 6 th – 14 th April 2020
Short List Meeting	Monday 20 th April 2020
British Council Panel Interview	Wednesday 13 th May 2020

Please let us know in your application letter if you are unable to meet these timeframes.

OUR EQUALITY COMMITMENT

The British Council is committed to a policy of equality and to valuing diversity and is keen to reflect the diversity of the societies in which we work at every level within the organisation. We welcome applications from all sections of the community. We aim to abide by and promote equality legislation by following both the letter and the spirit of it to avoid unjustified discrimination, recognising discrimination as a barrier to equality of opportunity, inclusion and human rights. All staff worldwide are required to ensure their behaviour is consistent with our policies.

The British Council has Disability Confident Employer Status. We offer a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role. Applicants are encouraged to highlight any specific requirements or adjustments needed to enable participation in the recruitment process.

The British Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and expects all of its partners to share this commitment. In line with the British Council's safeguarding policies, any appointment is contingent on thorough checks. In the UK, and in other countries where appropriate systems exist, these include criminal records checks.





CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the role or about the selection process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the team at Korn Ferry - please email Mary Macleod and Tom Davies at BritishCouncilCEO@KornFerry.com

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