



## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of the British Science Association. We are looking for a new Chair to take the baton from me, as I'm stepping down on completion of my term of office. This is a volunteer (unpaid) role as a charity trustee.

The British Science Association (BSA) is a charity and Royal Charter Company founded in 1831. Our vision is of a world where science is at the heart of society and culture.

This is an exciting time for the BSA. During my time as Chair, we have developed a fresh and ambitious vision, and a new strategic plan that will guide our work to 2021. We have a talented and passionate staff team, a nationwide network of volunteers and collaborators, and a broad, vibrant range of partners, funders and stakeholders.

We want to create a world where science is seen as a cultural activity alongside areas such as sport, politics and the arts. One of our challenges is that science is still seen as the preserve of professional scientists, and 76% of the UK public identify themselves as not interested or inactive towards science (King's College London, 2016). To succeed, we need to extend our networks of partners, funders and stakeholders well beyond the science sector to reach influencers in business, policy, research and education.

We are looking for someone who is excited by our vision and able to leverage their business networks and commercial skills to help the BSA achieve its goals.

If you would value an informal, confidential discussion about the role, please contact our Chief Executive Katherine Mathieson for an informal chat. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Willetts". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lord David Willetts

Chair of Council, British Science Association

## About the British Science Association

The [British Science Association](#) (BSA) is a charity established under Royal Charter and governed by a Council which forms the Board of Trustees.

The BSA sees science is a mindset, a way to ask questions about the world and test them out. The British Science Association's definition of science spans the natural and social sciences as well as technology, engineering and mathematics.

Our mission is to transform the diversity and inclusivity of science; to reach under-served audiences, and increase the number of people who are actively engaged and involved in science. By unlocking the potential of a more diverse group of people, we increase our ability to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges and shape our future for the better.

We organise several major annual programmes including the [British Science Festival](#), [British Science Week](#), [CREST Awards for schools](#) and bespoke activities for science communicators, [the media](#), [policymakers and business](#). We have a network of over 30 volunteer branches across the UK. We seek to influence and collaborate with stakeholders from across science, business and policy.

The BSA has an annual income of approximately £2.7 million and is managed by a professional staff of around 30 people based in London. We are funded by a mix of grants, sponsorships, donations and earned income.

## Council

The BSA is governed by a [Council](#) which forms the board of trustees, chaired by Lord David Willetts. Up to four members of Council are elected from the BSA's General Committee (a strategic advisory body). Up to four Council members are appointed by Council, usually to meet a need for a particular skillset or experience. One of the appointed members acts as Deputy Chair and deals with day-to-day governance matters. Council also includes a Treasurer and up to three Vice-Presidents, one for each of our three programme teams: Engagement, Education and Cultural Development.

Council members typically serve one or two three-year terms. Our President (Professor Jim Al-Khalili), President-elect, and immediate past President (Professor Uta Frith) are entitled to attend Council meetings, though not to vote. Council meets for four afternoons each year, in March, June, September and December in central London.

## Your role

As Chair, your role is to provide strategic oversight of the BSA's vision and aims, and to represent the BSA to key external audiences.

Your responsibilities as Chair will be to:

- Represent the BSA externally and act as a spokesperson for the BSA, including with stakeholders, influencers, funders and the media
- Set the organisation's strategy and direction, working collectively with other Council members
- Leverage your networks to raise the BSA's profile and funding

- Chair Council meetings
- Ensure Council operates effectively, complies with relevant legislation and adheres to guidance on good governance
- Provide support and challenge to the chief executive and her colleagues
- Regularly review and improve the board's effectiveness
- Demonstrate leadership on the BSA's commitment to improve diversity and inclusion
- Approve the Trustees' annual report to the UK's charity regulators

You will not be required to oversee day-to-day governance or financial matters as they are dealt with by the Deputy Chair and Treasurer.

As a member of Council, you will be a charity trustee. Therefore, together with the other members of Council, you will focus on the key issues, opportunities and risks facing the BSA, and provide guidance on strategic direction to the BSA's staff. You should ensure that we define our goals, evaluate our performance and safeguard the reputation and values of the organisation. You will help us build our profile including with potential funders. Council is jointly responsible for the appointment, supervision and appraisal of the Chief Executive. You should be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of [effective governance](#) and [financial management](#) in charities, and to the BSA's [goal of improving diversity & inclusivity](#).

## What we are looking for

To get the most out of being on the BSA's Council, we suggest that you have a passion for our vision and goals, and can commit to the time and effort required. Our Council members need strategic vision, independent judgement, and an ability to work effectively as part of a team.

As one of the charity's most senior representatives, you will have extensive and senior networks in business and/or policy. It would be helpful to have commercial skills and experience of working on or with boards. Leadership abilities, communication skills, good judgement, and personal gravitas will be very valuable.

Experience of research or education would be useful but is not essential. We are especially keen to hear from people from communities who are currently under-represented on Council, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities.

## Terms and conditions

### *Salary*

This is a volunteer (pro bono) role and there is no salary. Reasonable out of pocket expenses may be claimed on submission of appropriate documentation.

### *Terms of appointment*

The initial term is three years. Council members are eligible for re-election at the expiry of that term, for one additional term.

### *Time commitment*

There are four Council meetings per year, lasting four hours each. The Chair is also expected to preside over three to five BSA stakeholder events per year and be available for media interviews or comments linked to these events or to other BSA activities. The Chair is expected to be available for ad hoc meetings or phone calls with key staff or other Council members, occasionally at short notice, though this is unlikely to happen more than a dozen times per year and can be arranged to fit around the Chair's other commitments.

### **How to apply**

To put yourself forward for this volunteer role, please send a CV and a brief covering letter outlining your suitability for the role to Katherine Mathieson (details below) by **9 November 2018**. We will prepare a shortlist for the BSA's Council to review and then invite one or more people for an informal interview with Council members.

Please highlight any potential conflicts of interest. References and other checks will be carried out before any invitation to join Council is issued.

For an informal conversation about the organisation or the role, please contact the Chief Executive, Katherine Mathieson:

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Chief Executive,  
British Science Association,  
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[Katherine.mathieson@britishscienceassociation.org](mailto:Katherine.mathieson@britishscienceassociation.org)