Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Vice-President for Cultural Development at the British Science Association. 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, and 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.

We are seeking to appoint a new Vice-President for Cultural Development to the BSA’s Council who will build on the work of the outgoing post-holder, Deborah Bull. Deborah is a creative leader, cultural commentator and Crossbench Member of the House of Lords, and is stepping down from the Vice-President role having completed her three-year term. This is an exciting time for the BSA – a new Chair will also be announced in early 2019, taking over from Lord David Willetts – we are one year into our three year business plan, and have recently been awarded a significant ‘Sustaining Excellence’ grant from the Wellcome Trust to undertake a transformational programme of work to transform the diversity and inclusion of the organisation and the wider science engagement sector.

We want to create a world where science is seen as a cultural activity alongside areas such as sport, politics and the arts. 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, education and culture. 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). Another challenge is the lack of diversity within science, and those who traditionally engage with it.

The role of Vice-President for Cultural Development aims to support the organisation’s work to diversify the pool of leaders within science and society – and bring in voices from policy, business, the media and underrepresented groups. This role sits alongside the Vice-Presidents of our Engagement and Education programmes and fellow Council members.

We are looking for someone who is excited by our vision and would like to apply the energy, experience and their influential networks to leverage change across science and society. If you would value an informal, confidential discussion about the role, please contact our Chief Executive Katherine Mathieson or myself for an informal chat. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Matt Locke
Deputy-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.

The BSA’s Cultural Development, Education and Engagement teams 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 £3.1 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 (until Dec 2018). 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.

Cultural Development at the BSA

The Cultural Development team is responsible for working with stakeholder groups and influencers to make science a more fundamental part of society and culture and to help transform the diversity and inclusivity of science in the UK. The team currently delivers projects including:

- **APPG on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM** – The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM aims to promote the inclusion and progression of people from diverse backgrounds in STEM, and to encourage government, parliamentarians, academics, businesses and other stakeholders to work towards a STEM sector that is representative of the population. The BSA acts as the Secretariat.
• **Huxley Summit** – the annual Summit brings together over 300 business leaders, scientists, senior policy-makers and opinion-formers to discuss key challenges facing science and society.

• **Media Fellowships scheme** – placing researchers to complete placements at the heart of a media outlet to impact on media reporting of science and improve their research institutions’ relationships with the media in the future.

• **Sustaining Excellence** – A three-year project, funded by the Wellcome Trust, to challenge organisational and social inequalities to make science more representative, equitable and relevant. This includes developing the evidence, capability and networks to help the BSA and the science engagement sector change.

• Various other projects, including Future Debates, Future Forums, work with science engagement professionals and developing education policy positions.

**Your role**

As Vice-President for Cultural Development, your role is to provide strategic oversight of the BSA’s Cultural Development aims, and to represent the BSA to key stakeholder audiences.

Your responsibilities as the Vice-President for Cultural Development will be to:

- Represent the BSA externally and act as a spokesperson for the BSA, including with stakeholders, influencers, funders and the media
- Support the Cultural Development team’s strategy and direction
- Leverage your networks within areas such as policy, media, business and diversity and inclusion to raise the BSA’s profile
- Attend Council meetings
- Provide support and challenge to the Senior Management and Cultural Development teams
- Demonstrate leadership on the BSA’s commitment to improve diversity and inclusion
- Support the Chair to ensure Council operates effectively, complies with relevant legislation and adheres to guidance on good governance
- Approve the Trustees’ annual report to the UK’s charity regulators

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. 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 senior representatives, you will have extensive networks in policy with experience of working with key influencers in government and the civil service in areas such as science, technology, innovation, digital, the creative industries or education.

It would be helpful to have experience of supporting change management initiatives around equity, diversity and inclusion, but this is not essential. Leadership abilities, communication skills, good judgement, and personal gravitas will be very valuable.

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) trustee 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 Vice-President for Cultural Development is also expected to support the Cultural Development team, including having a few meetings/phone calls each year with the Head of Cultural Development and the senior management team, and attending key stakeholder events such as the Huxley Summit. Most ad-hoc meetings can be arranged to fit around your 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 5pm, Monday 14 January 2019. 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.

The selected candidate’s first Council meeting is likely to be Thursday 21 March 2019.

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

Katherine Mathieson, Chief Executive, British Science Association, Wellcome Wolfson Building, 165 Queen’s Gate, London, SW7 5HD
Katherine.mathieson@britishscienceassociation.org

Or Matt Locke, Deputy-Chair, British Science Association on matt@storythings.com.