

Core skills

1. Introduction

This is a summary of the core skills which are required most often in roles throughout the British Council. These update and replace the Generic Skills and are intended to be used in the same way. Recruiting managers will use them to capture key skills in role profiles and individuals will be able to use them to assess their current skills and see how they can develop to a different and/or bigger job later.

These core skills should be seen alongside:

- The British Council values which underpin the skills and behaviours.
- Skills which are specific to a function, unit or job. These specialist skills are also under development, by professional groups and Strategic Business Units.
- The cultural relations context of the British Council, which requires skills (including language skills) and behaviors to be combined to create intercultural awareness.
- The British Council Behaviours. Even those who have the relevant skills might not show the right behaviours to be successful. Behaviours are important for all roles, but are a particularly significant differentiator for people in the most senior jobs.

The skills described in more detail below are:

1. Managing people
2. Managing projects
3. Communicating & influencing
4. Planning & organising
5. Analysing data and problems
6. Managing Finance and Resources
7. Using technology
8. Managing risk
9. Commercial and business development
10. Accounts and partnership development

Each skill has four or five levels beginning with level one and progressing through to level four or five. These refer to having the ability to do something, the experience of having done it or a track record of doing it at more and more complex levels. Whatever the wording, the intention is to indicate an attribute which can be evidenced: others have seen the skill in action.

There is no set formula for applying a skill level to a particular grade or pay band. Every role profile should highlight those skills which are most relevant for the job and the appropriate level for each skill. Not every job requires all the skills.

The skills

Managing people

Level	Definition
1	Supports others Provides support to less experienced members of the team, is aware of individual differences and helps colleagues perform tasks and use systems and processes
2	Supervises a small team Supervises a small team of people doing similar jobs to deliver short term tasks to agreed quality and time standards.
3	Manages a team Provides full line management to a team where all members are working in a similar area of expertise or business. Scope includes planning, setting objectives, role modeling an inclusive culture, recruitment, development and performance management
4	Leads a large and varied team Manages a substantial group to deliver annual business objectives. The team includes different professions, cultures and/or areas of business, and may cover multiple locations
5	Leads a major unit Leads a major business unit or function, setting its structure and processes, defining future workforce requirements, promoting diversity in the workplace and reshaping the workforce to meet need

Managing projects

Level	Definition
1	Follows project management disciplines Works with project management systems and procedures, and has a track record of compliance with them as a project team member
2	Analyses project data Examines project data and performance, reporting on progress and recommending corrective action as needed
3	Leads smaller projects Analyses requirements with the sponsor/stakeholders, defining the specification, planning, revising, implementing and evaluating on small-to-medium scale and/or low risk projects
4	Leads larger projects As above leading medium-to-large and/or high risk projects, coordinating a diverse team with awareness of equality and diversity impact as part of the project specifications and handling changes in specification or plan to meet unexpected circumstances
5	Assures project standards Develops and ensures the implementation of high quality projects management disciplines across functions and units

Communicating & influencing

Level	Definition
1	Communicates clearly & effectively Able to listen to others and to express self clearly, with grammatical accuracy and awareness of a diverse audience in speaking and writing.
2	Relates communications to circumstances Displays good listening, writing and speaking skills, setting out logical arguments clearly and adapting language and form of communication to meet the needs of different people/audiences.
3	Is creative and adaptable in communications Able to use a range of non-standard and creative approaches to inform, and persuade others, extending beyond logical argument to influence decisions and actions in a way which is inclusive and engaging.
4	Uses influencing techniques Able to employ formal and informal negotiating and motivation techniques to influence others' behaviour and persuade them to think and act differently, while respecting difference of view and culture.
5	Influences at the highest level Able to influence and manage relationships at the highest levels to build mutual understanding, shape perceptions of the British Council and create positive change over the medium term

Planning & organising

Level	Definition
1	Is methodical Able to plan own work over short timescales for routine or familiar tasks and processes
2	Plans ahead Able to organise own work over weeks and months, or to plan ahead for others, taking account of priorities and the impact on other people.
3	Develops annual plans Able to develop and review the implementation of annual plans for a work group or function, taking account of business and customer requirements and reconciling competing demands
4	Plans for the longer term Able to shape forward plans for 3-5 years ahead for a major unit or multiple units, taking account of British Council strategy and the need to manage contingencies, risks and impact.

Analysing data and problems

Level	Definition
1	Is systematic Able to break down problems into a list of tasks to be done and decide on appropriate action
2	Uses data Able to review available data and identify cause and effect, and then to choose the right solution from a range of known alternatives
3	Analyses patterns Able to seek out and examine a range of information to identify patterns, trends and options, to solve multifaceted and complex problems
4	Solves complex problems Able to apply or devise specialised concepts and methods of analysis – or commission them from others. Understands the output and uses the results to make clear and / or solve complex business, market or policy problems

Managing Finance and Resources

Level	Definition
1	Uses resources efficiently Uses resources efficiently in own role and of complying with financial rules and procedures
2	Uses financial systems and processes Uses corporate financial systems and processes appropriately as part of the job and on behalf of a team
3	Supports budget management Monitors and controls an agreed budget within a defined area, producing reports and analyses and contributing to planning
4	Plans and deploys resources Negotiates and agrees the resources for a defined area as part of forward planning, monitoring progress and adjusting resources or priorities to meet goals
5	Evaluates performance Evaluates resource allocation and use over time, to understand business and service performance and assess future opportunities and constraints

Using technology

Level	Definition
1	Operates as a basic user of information systems, digital and office technology Able, with adjustments if necessary, to use office software and British Council systems to do the job and manage documents or processes.
2	Operates as an advanced user Able to work as an advanced practitioner in the use of office software and/or British Council standard and social media platforms, and train or coach others in their use
3	Identifies improvements Able to identify where new or improved technology could benefit business efficiency, the customer experience or market opportunities and make evidence-based recommendations

4	Manages programmes Able to commission and successfully implement specialist technological or digital support to meet defined business or programme objectives
5	Shapes investment Able to define future technology/digital system needs for a major area of business activity and translate them into design and implementation

Managing risk

Level	Definition
1	Follows good practices Demonstrated understanding of risk management policies and procedures and record of following them
2	Supports a risk management culture Has track record of identifying and highlighting risks and suggesting mitigating actions
3	Develops the culture Has track record of analysing potential risks, promoting risk awareness, and holding others to account for their practices
4	Exemplifies strategic risk management Has track record of balancing and mitigating risks in strategic and business plans and of providing a clear model of best practice to the business area/function

Commercial & business development

Level	Definition
1	Reviews data Able to apply a range of standard analytical techniques to support business development – e.g. pricing tools, revenue tracking, monitoring sales prospects, audience figures or profit margin
2	Analyses trends Able to research markets and conduct cost/benefit analyses to identify new opportunities or recommend improvements to current initiatives
3	Develops commercially viable business Able to define and develop products/programmes/services which deliver British Council goals on impact, income and surplus within a defined area of business that responds to market opportunities and aligns to wider corporate strategies.
4	Leads business development Able to plan and deliver business development activities for a major and/or new market category which is significant for the Council
5	Shapes business and market development Able to use a range of market analysis, research and business intelligence to develop and implement across a group of diverse products/programmes/services and markets to meet Council objectives

Account & partnership development

Level	Definition
1	<p>Supports account management</p> <p>Able to research business issues and contacts in stakeholder and potential partner organisations to support account management and business development</p>
2	<p>Works with stakeholders and partners</p> <p>Communicates regularly with diverse stakeholders, customers and/or partners to build mutual understanding and trust</p>
3	<p>Builds account teams</p> <p>Identifies and deploys teams of Council staff whose attributes match the stakeholder/customer/partner's needs, and adapting proposals to accommodate the needs of the other party</p>
4	<p>Plans and leads on accounts and partnerships</p> <p>Develops and leads on the delivery of account management and development plans across a range of stakeholders/customers/partners to deliver medium term business and/or reputational gains for both parties</p>
5	<p>Shapes strategic relationships</p> <p>Sets overall direction for the formation and management of strategic relationships, collaborations and contracts with stakeholder, customers and partners in a significant market</p>