

Organisation: British Council

Role: Chair of the Board of Trustees

Advert Reference Number: 2605-088L

Lead One of the UK's Most Influential Global Institutions

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, building connections, understanding and trust between the UK and countries worldwide. Operating in more than 100 countries and reaching over 600 million people annually, it is a vital part of the UK's global influence and soft power.

The British Council is now seeking an exceptional individual to serve as Chair of its Board of Trustees at a pivotal moment for the organisation.

This role requires a leader capable of guiding the Board through a period of significant financial, organisational and strategic challenge, while supporting the British Council's long-term mission and global impact. Operating at the intersection of public service, international engagement and commercial activity, the organisation demands strong governance, sound judgement and strategic clarity.

The Chair will provide leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring robust governance, effective decision-making and clear strategic direction. Working closely with the Chief Executive, Trustees and senior stakeholders, the Chair will oversee delivery of a major transformation programme focused on long-term financial sustainability, organisational modernisation and evolving the British Council's operating model in an increasingly competitive and digitally driven environment.

The role also carries significant ambassadorial responsibility. The Chair will engage with Ministers, senior officials, international stakeholders and partners, acting as a credible and influential representative of the organisation while safeguarding its independence and reputation.

We are seeking an individual with significant Board or Chair-level leadership experience in large, complex and international organisations. Candidates will bring a strong track record of organisational transformation and financial oversight, alongside the ability to build trusted relationships with government, regulators and global stakeholders. An international outlook, strong strategic judgement and a genuine commitment to cultural relations, education and the UK's international role are essential.

This is a rare opportunity to help shape the future of one of the world's leading cultural and educational institutions and to support its mission of building peace and prosperity through international connection and understanding.

The appointment is for a three-year term, with the possibility of extension. The expected commitment is approximately three to four days per month. While the role is unremunerated, reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

The British Council has retained Russell Reynolds Associates to advise on this appointment. For further information about the position and additional details on how to apply, please visit: www.rraresponses.com. The closing date for applications is 23:55 BST on Sunday 12th July 2026.