

The British Council

Generic Skills Dictionary

Contents

1. Introduction and explanation of generic skills	3
2. Generic skills	5
(a) Business management and development	6
(b) Financial planning and management	9
(c) Project and contract management	12

1. Introduction and explanation of generic skills

Introduction

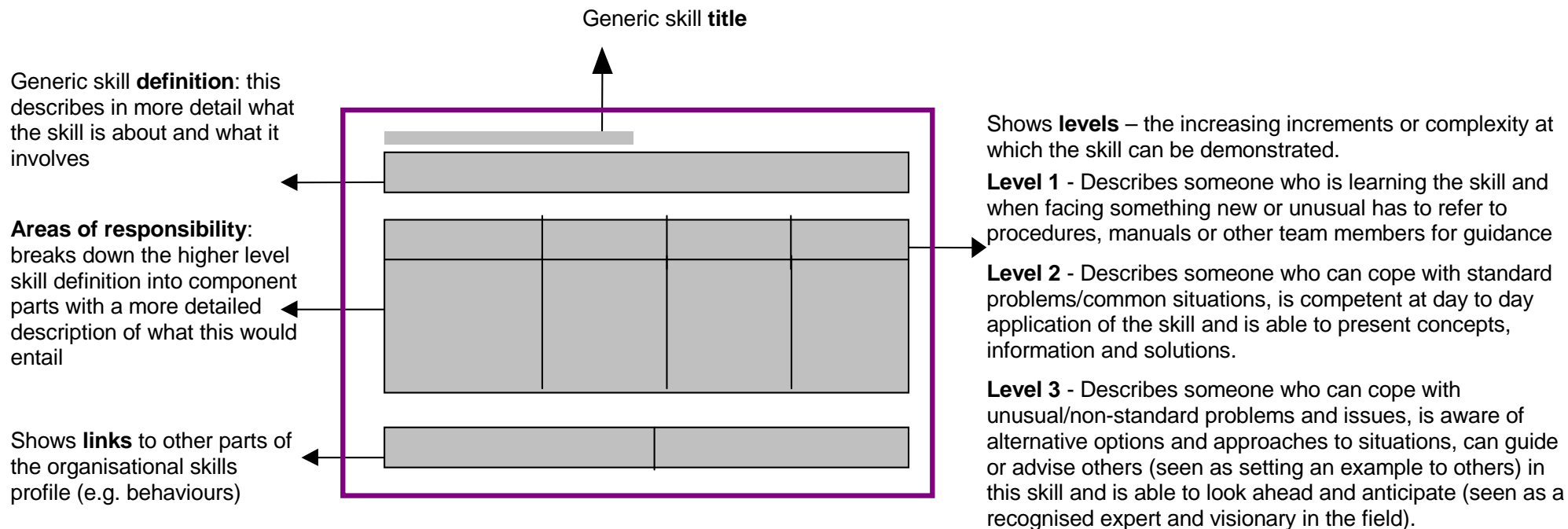
The purpose of the British Council is to build mutually beneficial relationships between people in the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's ideas and achievements.

Everything we do must contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Improved perception of the UK in other countries
- Greater mutual understanding between the UK and other countries
- Stronger ties between the UK and other countries

The work of every British Council member of staff contributes in some way to the achievement of these outcomes, and it is therefore important that we all have a clear understanding of what our role is and what is expected of us.

To do this we use Job Descriptions which describe the aims and objectives of jobs and the organisational skills profile, which describes the important skills and competencies needed to do a specific job. One of the components we use is a standard set of generic skills which are described in further detail in this dictionary. They are listed in alphabetical order in Section 2 of this document and displayed across the page in following format:



The British Council’s recruitment policy requires candidates applying for jobs to provide evidence against those components of the organisational skills profile required for the job advertised. This dictionary provides guidance on the meaning of each of the generic skills and their levels.

2. Generic Skills

1. Business management and development
2. Financial planning and management
3. Project and contract management

Business Management & Development

Definition

The ability to develop, sustain and grow the business in line with corporate strategic priorities for income and impact: to formulate business strategy, to understand crucial business drivers, both internal and external, and assess various business development options and interrogate management information. Effective management of resources across the business.

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Market analysis and business intelligence	<p>Understands the importance of market analysis and is aware of market trends, including competitor activity.</p> <p>Collects and uses relevant quantitative and qualitative data on the target audience or market.</p> <p>Contributes to the identification and analysis of needs for existing and new markets, clients, partners and customers.</p>	<p>Establishes and implements systems to collect, analyse and disseminate market information.</p> <p>Identifies and understands market segments, applies this knowledge in anticipating and meeting client/customer/partner needs and generates a creative and successful offer in response.</p> <p>Monitors market trends and potential opportunities.</p>	<p>Recognises the need for market intelligence and is responsible for the design of market research.</p> <p>Understands and uses market intelligence e.g. market gaps and competitor position in the development of new sources of income generation and commissioning of new products and services which achieve the income and impact required.</p> <p>Assesses and makes judgements on market intelligence either to expand business opportunities, commission new products/services or to decommission existing work.</p>
Business strategy	<p>Understands how new activities support achievement of corporate outputs.</p> <p>Ensures that activity is in line with technical and financial business objectives.</p>	<p>Makes a measurable contribution to the development of business strategy and value for money indicators.</p> <p>Positions the business for now and the future by identifying innovative solutions to achieve impact and revenue targets.</p> <p>Understands negotiation tools and techniques and can apply these to support the achievement of business objectives.</p>	<p>Establishes business strategy and leads the realisation of dual-key plans.</p> <p>Leads on the design of innovative business development approaches and the assessment of delivery mix to achieve maximum impact and income for the organisation and clients / customers / stakeholders / partners.</p> <p>Leads on the development and implementation of negotiation strategies and partnership agreements that lead to enhanced business achievements.</p>

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Product and service development /commissioning	Understands the need to develop and/or commission new products, services and solutions that support the delivery of corporate objectives and meet stakeholder needs.	<p>Develops, through recognised planning processes, new projects and services with an understanding of which approaches will work in local context and of how it will facilitate achievement of corporate outputs.</p> <p>Understanding of and the ability to manage commissioning and tendering processes.</p>	<p>Takes the lead for product and service development across a portfolio of services.</p> <p>Recognises and manages either gaps in the product/service portfolio or opportunities for new products and services.</p> <p>Responsible for identifying, designing and securing appropriate competitively tendered projects.</p>
Managing Risk	Demonstrates an understanding of business risk and can identify where risks may originate from.	Undertakes business risk identification and analysis for specific initiatives in line with business risk management frameworks. Uses this to inform approach and manage risk.	<p>Responsible for risk and opportunity identification across the business and understands when a level of risk is acceptable.</p> <p>Complies with Business Risk Management Framework responsibilities (if identified as a BMRF Process Owner).</p>
Managing relationships with customers, clients and stakeholders	<p>Collects and analyses client / stakeholder / partner feedback and perceptions and identifies needs within specific area of work. Identifies barriers to service delivery and contributes to their resolution.</p> <p>Communicates consistently and effectively with stakeholders and responds to changing circumstances in order to enhance brand and reputation.</p>	<p>Takes the lead role in managing the client and stakeholders for a specific activity.</p> <p>Keeps abreast of operating context. Uses stakeholder analysis, facilitation and problem solving approaches to resolve issues and remove barriers to effective service delivery.</p> <p>Identifies important relationships and develops strategies to strengthen these within specific area of work.</p>	<p>Manages complex or strategically important client/stakeholder/partner relationships, which achieve significant impact for the organisation.</p> <p>Anticipates changing circumstances and barriers to stakeholder engagement and takes action to minimise these.</p>
Resource management for business development and implementation.	<p>Understands and uses human, financial, IT and knowledge resources efficiently and effectively in order to achieve results.</p> <p>Has strong sense of value for money and understands the importance of delivering within expenditure and income budgets.</p> <p>Supports procurement and negotiation processes.</p>	<p>Negotiates and manages the deployment of resources in efficient manner and in the context of a clear understanding of overall strategy.</p> <p>Identifies and actively manages the development of staff skills that are needed when building new strategies and business.</p> <p>Understands how to use and communicate management information.</p> <p>Identification and management of resource risks including anticipating changing circumstances and mediating between conflicting needs and expectations.</p>	<p>Takes the lead and is responsible for the efficient use of all resources in order to achieve corporate outputs.</p> <p>Uses the commissioning process to align resources with priorities.</p> <p>Develops effective resource management strategies and policies for a portfolio of work and monitors their implementation.</p>

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Understands the importance of evaluation. Is thorough in the collection and communication of evaluation data.</p> <p>Supports the achievement of targets and monitors own contribution towards these.</p>	<p>Builds monitoring and evaluation into the business strategy.</p> <p>Grounds evaluation in external market context and adjusts measurement to provide clear evidence of effectiveness.</p> <p>Studies evaluation data to see if new approaches have had the desired impact, reflects on lessons learned and communicates the results of valuation.</p>	<p>Identifies best practice, learning, new processes or ways of working that lead to cost savings/improved delivery beyond team level.</p> <p>Agrees measurable and challenging targets for individual initiatives and manages progress towards these.</p> <p>Ability to understand and interpret the results and leads on the discussion and dissemination of the results.</p>

<p>Links to behavioural competencies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achievement. 2. Analytical thinking. 3. Entrepreneurship. 4. Leading and developing others. 5. Relationship building for influence. 6. Working strategically. 7. Customer service orientation. 	<p>Links to job families:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English 2. Information systems and technology (IST) 3. Marketing and communications 	<p>Links to other generic skills.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human resource management. 2. Financial planning and management. 3. Project and contract management. 4. Marketing and customer service.
---	---	--

Financial Planning & Management

Definition

Financial Planning and Management is the ability to cost activity and manage the budgets set. It involves the planning and delivery of agreed results/outputs within established criteria for budget and timescale, using the appropriate policy and process.

Area of Responsibility	Level 1 This level - will be expected to seek guidance from L2 and L3	Level 2	Level 3 Although not specifically stated L3 will provide guidance to L1 and L2
Risk Management	Awareness of corporate/global policies and processes in relation to risk management including business risk management framework tools (BRMF) and know where to locate this information	Knowledge and experience of corporate/global policies and processes in relation to risk (including BRMF) and how these link to departmental/country/regional level risk management Ability to identify and manage these risks Communicates exceptions at departmental/country/regional level	Lead on the management of risk, by assigning roles and responsibilities, ensuring reviews take place and risks are managed at a departmental/country/ regional level Ability to identify opportunities and manage any financial risks associated with them Takes responsibility for reporting exceptions to the appropriate senior management forum
Planning and Forecasting	Awareness of financial planning cycle and deadlines and where to locate this information Understanding of process to set up and maximise benefits of an effective management reporting structure (WBS + cost codes) including budgets and commitments Has basic knowledge of the concept of cashflow (movement of money in and out of the organisation) and provides the relevant financial information to budget holder as part of the cash flow forecasting exercise	Knowledge and application of British Council planning cycle plus policies, processes (FPS) and timetables Contributes to departmental/ country/regional financial plan Uses systems to accurately cost a project/activity Supervises the setting up of a financial management reporting structure (WBS +cost codes for SAP countries) including budgets and commitments Produces a cash flow forecast for project/activity	Ability to produce a financial plan to support programme of activity for dept/country/region Ability to cost activity, including cost benefit analysis where appropriate Ability to construct pricing structures (e.g. pricing exams, course fees) Use forecasting as a tool to identify patterns/trends in expenditure/income

Area of Responsibility	Level 1 This level - will be expected to seek guidance from L2 and L3	Level 2	Level 3 Although not specifically stated L3 will provide guidance to L1 and L2
Monitoring and Reporting	<p>Understand how to access reports and verify transactions posted to budgets, where financial role permits</p> <p>Knows how to create and maintain financial management information records for projects/activity (showing budget, actuals, commitments and forecast outturn)</p> <p>Understands how to review the status of creditors and debtors and know how to escalate problem items as appropriate</p> <p>Has basic knowledge of business risk management tools for monitoring and is aware of their own role in this process</p>	<p>Understand how to access and process reports, including income and expenditure statements and balance sheet</p> <p>Monitor financial performance against targets and takes action to manage exceptions (e.g. over/underspend on a particular budget)</p> <p>Monitor creditors and debtors and report exceptions at business risk management meetings as appropriate</p>	<p>Takes lead responsibility for monitoring and reporting at departmental/country/ regional level</p> <p>Able to analyse and interpret complex financial data in order to make appropriate recommendations/proposals to business plans/projects</p> <p>Reports directly and appropriately with internal and external stakeholders on financial matters</p>
Receipts Process: Invoiced and non-invoiced	<p>Knowledge of customer master data - process plus content and data standards</p> <p>Ability to run debtor reports or know where to access them and identify debtor position e.g. check if amounts are overdue</p> <p>Awareness of the concept of reconciliation and ability to prepare a statement of expected income where required</p>	<p>Knowledge plus application of bad debt policy and process</p> <p>Checks and approves reconciliation of receipts to cash banked (where required)</p>	<p>Lead on any bad debt applications for write off</p> <p>Takes responsibility for ensuring reconciliation of receipts to cash banked are completed where required</p>
Payment Process	<p>Knowledge of the procedures for setting up vendors on the corporate system (SAP)</p> <p>Awareness of payment system process and document standards, including travel and expenses, or where to locate the information</p>	<p>Knowledge of, and manages, the risks associated with setting up of vendors</p> <p>Ensures payments are processed correctly and creditors are effectively managed</p>	<p>Ensure that resources are in place, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and allocated and that there is compliance with corporate standards, to enable the payment process to run efficiently and effectively</p>

Area of Responsibility	Level 1 This level - will be expected to seek guidance from L2 and L3	Level 2	Level 3 Although not specifically stated L3 will provide guidance to L1 and L2
Impact of financial transactions on BC statutory reporting plus other reporting obligations	<p>Has a basic awareness of how transactions impact on corporate accounts</p> <p>Awareness of statutory and internal management principles and practices, including accruals, and where to locate guidance</p> <p>Ability to correct accounting entries and to cross charge between business activities or provide relevant information for the journal to be raised.</p>	<p>Understands how transactions impact on the corporate accounts</p> <p>Understand internal management principles and practices, including accruals, in the recording of transactions</p>	<p>Demonstrates an understanding of the wider environment in which the organisation is operating and the impact this has on financial transactions, e.g. devaluation</p> <p>Takes lead responsibility for ensuring that transactions are properly recorded in the accounts</p>

Links to behavioural competencies	Links to job families	Links to other generic skills
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analytical Thinking 2. Holding People Accountable 3. Customer Service Orientation 4. Inter-cultural Competence 5. Professional Confidence 6. Self Awareness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business management and development 2. Communications 3. Project and contract management

Project & Contract Management

Definition

Delivering client and partnership funded projects and contracts, and internally commissioned projects, using the project cycle of identification and development, implementation and evaluation and reporting; understanding the context of projects and contracts and their contribution to British Council purpose.

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>Context, market and stakeholders</p> <p>Understanding the context and market to identify and develop new project opportunities, and managing clients/partners/ stakeholders</p>	<p>Understands project identification processes and demonstrates ability to contribute to these.</p> <p>Uses effective approach to communicating with project stakeholders to maintain relationships.</p>	<p>Applies knowledge of organisational purpose, strategy and business context to identify appropriate project opportunities, products and services, and partnerships, underpinned by dual-key planning.</p> <p>Manages and develops client/partner/stakeholder relationships that support the delivery of specific projects</p>	<p>Assesses and makes judgements on project investments that achieve maximum impact against corporate outputs and business targets.</p> <p>Responsible for identifying, managing and developing strategic relationships with principal clients, partners and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Development and delivery</p>	<p>Understands processes for developing proposals and demonstrates ability to contribute to these</p> <p>Contributes to the development and implementation of project plans and schedules using appropriate systems and tools.</p> <p>Undertakes assigned role(s) in project delivery to internal and external client/partner/stakeholder satisfaction.</p>	<p>Leads the development/authoring and quality review of project proposals to corporate standards and internal/external client requirements.</p> <p>Takes lead responsibility for the implementation of projects at different stages of the project cycle to ensure delivery of project outputs and targets and manages change.</p> <p>Designs and manages logically inter-related input plans, costings, schedules and responsibility matrices, revenue forecasts and work breakdown structures.</p>	<p>Leads the development of highly complex and business critical project proposals using appropriate tools, business processes and system standards.</p> <p>Ensures 'fit' between project level outputs and targets and the achievement of corporate outputs.</p> <p>Takes lead responsibility for implementation of highly complex and business critical projects.</p>

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>Tendering and procurement</p> <p>Application of tendering process (competitive and single source) to win business; procurement of goods, services, internal/ external resources to support project delivery</p>	<p>Understands basic contracting terminology and uses this appropriately</p> <p>Has basic understanding of tendering and procurement procedures</p> <p>Supports the procurement and management of: project goods and services, and internal resources.</p>	<p>Leads in developing, negotiating and managing pre-contract agreements, contracts and Service Level Agreements with individuals, departments and organisations.</p> <p>Designs appropriate tender documents. Manages the procurement process to internal and external client standards for specific projects.</p> <p>Leads on the identification, procurement and management of goods, services, and internal/ external resources (including consultants, partners and suppliers).</p>	<p>Manages the tendering process to corporate and external standards across a portfolio of projects.</p> <p>Negotiates and manages strategic partnerships which enhance BC's reputation.</p> <p>Is responsible for and manages the procurement process to secure internal and external resources to corporate and external standards across a portfolio of projects</p>
<p>Managing risk</p>	<p>Demonstrates an understanding of project risks and operating context, and adjusts planning accordingly during implementation.</p>	<p>Undertakes business risk identification (technical and financial) and analysis for specific initiatives. Uses this to inform approach and manage risk.</p>	<p>Responsible for risk and opportunity identification and business assurance across a portfolio of projects.</p> <p>Business Risk Management Framework Process Owner for project related areas (as appropriate).</p>
<p>Monitoring, evaluation and reporting</p>	<p>Understands basic monitoring and evaluation tools and processes.</p> <p>Contributes to the development of monitoring plans and takes part in monitoring.</p> <p>Contributes to project closure, including systems closure.</p> <p>Supports project reporting by collating management information.</p> <p>Contributes to the collection of information for lessons learnt.</p>	<p>Agrees monitoring and evaluation criteria and plans with internal and external clients/partners/ stakeholders at project pre-implementation.</p> <p>Manages the delivery of monitoring plans and takes action to ensure projects are delivered to time, quality and cost targets.</p> <p>Communicates outputs and targets.</p> <p>Takes the lead for specific projects on the management of project/contract closure and financial and technical reporting to internal and client/partner/ stakeholder standards and needs.</p> <p>Communicates the findings from project impact evaluation, captures and disseminates lessons learnt.</p>	<p>Acts as internal consultant to monitoring and evaluation design and delivery.</p> <p>Manages and monitors project delivery across a portfolio of projects to meet corporate strategy and business target requirements.</p> <p>Takes the lead for highly complex or business critical projects on the management of project/contract closure and financial and technical reporting to internal and client/partner/ stakeholder standards and needs.</p> <p>Applies the results from project impact evaluations to strategic business development, leading to performance improvements.</p>

Area of Responsibility	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Business and system processes	Operates within corporate guidance and standards for project implementation on SAP, manages expenditure and income to plan.	Ensures compliance with corporate standards and guidance for project implementation, including on SAP.	Contributes to the development of best practice for the use of SAP in project delivery corporately.

Links to Behavioural Dictionary	Links to job families	Links to Other Generic Skills
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achievement 2. Analytical thinking 3. Leading and developing others 4. Relationship building for influence 5. Holding people accountable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English 2. Programme and project management (PPM) 3. Marketing and communications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Resource Management 2. Financial Planning and Management 3. Business Management and Development