

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

Engagement with Politicians, Special Advisers and Civil Servants Policy (UK)

Responsible Body	Community Board
Version Number	1.0
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Date Approved	10-17 October 2024
Date Issued	17 October 2024
Date of Last Review	17 October 2024

Summary of Revisions Made	Version	Date
Initial draft for approval by Community Board	0.1	30/05/24
Amendments to the policy section to clarify the consultation between Member Groups and the policy and PR team.	0.2	13/06/2024
Section 3 rewritten to clarify the policy further.	0.3	18/06/2024
Removed 'elected'; added reference to special advisers throughout; added UK-only specification, with international political engagement to be a separate project.	0.4	17/09/2024
Amendments made to Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 for clarity. Approved by Community Board on 10-17/10/2024 by electronic meeting. CB/2024/079.	1.0	10-17/10/2024

ENGAGEMENT WITH POLITICIANS, SPECIAL ADVISERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS POLICY (UK)

Community Board

1. Introduction

As BCS increases its ambition and impact, it is important that our engagement with policy makers is aligned and consistent. The expertise of the BCS Community is vital in our work with UK politicians, their special advisers ('SPADS') and civil servants but it is important that the BCS Policy and PR Team have a central view of our activity and messaging.

Most members who engage at this level do so in healthy partnership with the central BCS team, but there have been instances where members have made independent approaches to government departments that could have been more effective and positive if they had consulted with the Policy and PR Team first.

This policy intends to help members, who wish to speak with policy makers and reference BCS or its work, to engage with confidence and the support of the central team.

2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that we protect and enhance BCS' reputation as an Institute and community in our engagement with politicians, their advisers and civil servants in the UK, and that we speak consistently in terms of content and approach.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy is in relation to engagement with politicians, their SPADS and civil servants (UK only).

This policy applies to all BCS members, particularly those volunteering for the Institute, when approaching politicians, their advisers and civil servants about BCS or its work. The policy applies to the UK political sphere only, given the strong variations in the nature of member involvement across the political sphere globally; international engagement will be addressed separately.

4. Policy

The BCS Policy and PR Team manages BCS' engagement with politicians, civil servants and special advisers – but they can only do so effectively with expert advice and guidance from BCS Member Groups, and with support from bodies such as Influence Board and F-TAG.

BCS' relationship with these key stakeholders needs to be consistent and aligned with our strategic priorities. Close working between the BCS Policy and PR Team, Member Groups and the wider membership is essential in developing and communicating agreed BCS Positions, the process for which is documented in the [Process for submitting policy and research proposals policy](#).

Members must contact the Policy and PR Team for advice and guidance before new engagements with politicians, civil servants or advisers on behalf of BCS.

An exception would be if members have an opportunity to reference existing BCS work or research 'ad hoc' during a meeting or when contacted proactively. However, the team would appreciate being updated following this, and we would always recommend referring enquiries back to the team where you are unsure of the BCS position.

In the same way, The Policy and PR team must consult with relevant Member Groups, wherever possible, before pro-actively engaging these audiences on new policy ideas in these domains.

The BCS Policy and PR team may also involve others within the Institute, such as the BCS Executive Team or related Member Groups for further support. Members should email policyhub@bcs.uk in the first instance.

Members contacting these audiences in a personal capacity are of course free to seek advice from the BCS Policy and PR Team at any time.

5. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with related policies and rules, particularly:

- [Member Group Rules](#)
- [External Representation on Technical Standards Policy](#)

6. Responsibilities

Community Board is responsible for this policy under its Terms of Reference.

It is the responsibility of individual BCS members to seek advice from the BCS Policy and PR Team before contacting any political representative, their special adviser or civil servant if they intend to reference BCS or its work.

It is the responsibility of a Member Group Chair or their appointee to seek clearance from the BCS Policy and PR Team before their group contacts any politician, associated adviser or civil servant.

Members are reminded of their duty under the BCS Code of Conduct to uphold the reputation and good standing of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

7. Review and Approval

Community Board will review this policy on an annual basis.