

JOB AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Assistant Secretary to the Governing Boards

Division: Assistant Secretary-General's (ASG) Office

Grade: H

Reports To: ASG/Secretary to the Governing Boards

General information

The Commonwealth Secretariat is the principal intergovernmental body of the Commonwealth, responsible for advancing and achieving the shared goals of the association's 52 member governments in advancing democracy, development and respect for diversity.

The Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) supports the Secretary General in strategic, governance, and programme matters, and also works as Secretary to the Governing Boards. The ASG's office has the delegated authority for managing the Secretariat's programme portfolio, partnerships and strategic initiatives such as the innovation hub. The ASG supports the Secretary-General in devising strategies, policies and innovative institutional mechanisms and practices to implement the Secretariat's programme of work as mandated by member governments. It puts together the Strategic and Delivery Plans and ensures programme quality and coherence through monitoring, evaluation, learning and organisational reporting. The ASG's office also works as the Secretariat for internal and external governance and provides support in convening high level meetings such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Ministerial Meetings and the London-based Governing Boards. It builds and maintains relationship with member states, Commonwealth organisations and external partners and also represents the Secretary-General as and when required.

Job summary

The Assistant Secretary to the Governing Boards supports the ASG/Secretary to the Governing Boards to manage the external and internal governance of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Externally, this involves coordination of the Governing Bodies of the Commonwealth, facilitation of the annual Diplomats Induction Programme in conjunction with other Commonwealth organisations, as well as the accreditation and reaccreditation process.

Task description

The post-holder will be responsible for the following areas of work:

A. External Governance

- a. Governing Board meetings (Board of Governors, Executive Committee, Accreditation Committee and working groups)
 - i. Coordinate preparation and circulation of agendas and meeting papers, including liaising across the Secretariat and, where required, with other Commonwealth organisations
 - ii. Provide support in drafting meeting papers for the Governing Boards
 - iii. Prepare briefing notes for the Secretary-General, Chairs, and the Secretary ahead of Governing Boards meetings;
 - iv. Take minutes and draft a summary of decisions of Board meetings
 - v. Follow-up on matters related to decisions of Governing Boards, including communicating required action
 - vi. Maintain an up to date electronic and paper record of documentation related to Governing Boards matters
- b. Organising planning, preparatory and wash-up meetings for high level meetings, respond to queries from member states and assist in the accreditation and reaccreditation process; and,
- c. Support the Secretary to brief new Governors about the organisation and governance matters, including facilitating the annual Diplomats Induction Programme in conjunction with other Commonwealth organisations.

B. Internal Governance

- a. Provide support to ASG to organise Senior Management Group (SMG) meetings; prepare minutes of meeting; and coordinate logistics for SMG events, such as retreats and lunches;
- b. Provide advice Secretariat staff on diplomatic and governance protocols, risks and opportunities.

C. Other

- a. Maintain and organise an electronic and paper record of the above meetings;
- b. Provide support to the Strategy, Portfolio and Partnerships teams during peak periods, including the six-monthly and annual results reporting periods;

- c. Undertake research and analysis on matters of Commonwealth interest, as required;
- d. Adhere to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy;
- e. Perform other duties as required.

Person specification

Education:

A post-graduate degree in international relations, management, development studies, economics, public administration or related field.

Experience:

At least 7 years working experience in supporting high level meetings; preparation of strategic papers and reports in the corporate sector, national government or in an international/inter-governmental organisation.

Desirable: Research and networking background with 2 or more years of experience in dealing with a Board of Governors and related matters.

Competencies:

Respect for Diversity
<p>Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.</p> <p>Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.</p> <p>Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.</p> <p>Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.</p> <p>Changes systems and processes when biases are identified</p>
Working with Others
<p>Promotes team work and removes barriers to effective team working</p> <p>Provides advice and guidance for others sensitively and where appropriate</p> <p>Establishes ownership for relevant activities from the outset</p> <p>Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts to facilitate activities and further own knowledge</p> <p>Manages expectations of member states e.g. to ensure the alignment of what is requested and what Commonwealth Secretariat can offer</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to negotiate with and influence senior colleagues and contacts</p> <p>Proactively liaises with other divisions, partners & third parties</p>
Planning and Analysis
<p>Breaks long term plans into clear milestones</p> <p>Builds in contingencies for potential obstacles</p> <p>Takes corrective action if activities are off track</p> <p>Uses past experience to inform future planning</p> <p>Quickly and accurately identifies subtle themes and relevant issues in complex information</p>
Developing and Applying Professional Expertise
<p>Applies specialist knowledge to achieve anticipated results</p> <p>Proactively identifies how to develop specialist knowledge</p> <p>Presents self as credible to both internal and external contacts</p>
Managing Resources
<p>Identifies targets for team activities and manages progress against objectives</p> <p>Plans and manages activity spend accurately against budget</p> <p>Takes responsibility for team activity and finds solutions to set backs in a timely and professional manner</p> <p>Effectively motivates team e.g. by recognising and promoting team and individual contribution inter alia</p> <p>Recognises strengths and weaknesses in others, structuring teams based on this knowledge</p> <p>Drives forward results of others</p> <p>Takes ownership for team wellbeing</p>



Decision Making

Considers the relevant justifications for a particular course of action
Takes context into consideration when making decisions
Makes effective decisions when acting on behalf of a senior colleague, seeking advice where appropriate
Bases actions and approaches on the root cause of an issue, rather than the symptoms

Accountability

Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines.
Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters.
Takes responsibility for own shortcomings and compliances.

Leadership & Development

Mentors colleagues effectively e.g. by suggesting development goals and providing on the job coaching inter alia
Provides constructive feedback to team members and colleagues with confidence and sensitivity