

BCS, THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR IT

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION POLICY

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, prides itself on its impartiality, independence and transparency in providing informed advice. It is important for the Institute to promote itself as a source of authoritative opinion in its field. All parts of the Institute benefit from a strong public image and it is therefore incumbent on all parts of the Institute to enhance its standing and especially to avoid inadvertently damaging it.

BCS maintains an active engagement with government departments participating in numerous advisory committees and working parties and providing input to national consultations. This relationship is based on mutual trust developed over many years, which must not be compromised by partisan, real or perceived, affiliations.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy document has been developed to ensure that engagement with external audiences is undertaken in a controlled manner that does not prejudice the impartiality of BCS.
- 1.2 This document applies to all BCS members and should be adhered to in conjunction with the [BCS Member Groups Guidance on Acceptable Behaviour](#).
- 1.3 In case of any conflict, the provisions of the Institute's [Code of Conduct](#) for BCS members shall prevail over those of this document.
- 1.4 BCS strives to maintain the highest level of professional behaviour and probity. Comments should always be expressed in a professional manner including on social media. Inappropriate statements could be deemed to bring the Institute into disrepute and leave a member subject to disciplinary action.
- 1.5 This policy identifies three possible types of external representation:
 - Ambassadors/spokespeople: those members authorised to speak in public on behalf of the Institute on a particular topic (often related to published BCS position statements)
 - External Representatives: those members who are authorised to represent BCS on a particular external body/committee/panel
 - Individual members or groups: those members who are not authorised to represent BCS but who may advise externally on a personal or commercial basis noting that they are a member of the Institute but views are their own.
- 1.6 PPAB will receive and review requests and nominations for new ambassadors and external representatives and review for approval.

2. Accountability

- 2.1 BCS members are accountable to the Institute and must adhere to the Institute's code of conduct and in so doing help promote the charitable objects of the Institute (to promote the study and practice of Computing and to advance knowledge and education therein for the benefit of the public).
- 2.2 All approaches to members from political parties for BCS advice should be reported to the BCS Policy team (policyhub@hq.bcs.org.uk) since formal engagement between BCS and political parties should only be via officials and/or nominated representatives authorised to speak on behalf of the Institute.
- 2.3 Consultative engagement should generally follow the established [process](#) and guidelines available on the Policy hub web pages.
- 2.4 An Ambassador or Representative will be nominated for an indefinite term and the Policy team, in conjunction with PPAB, will review the lists of Ambassadors and representatives on an annual basis and instigate amendments as required to ensure currency.

3. Ambassadors/Spokespeople

- 3.1 Each BCS position statement has a number of official ambassadors who are authorised to speak on behalf of the Institute on that particular topic. These are determined in conjunction with the author at the time of production of the position statement. Details of ambassadors and the Institute's existing policy statements can be found on the Policy Hub web pages.
- 3.2 Members of the Institute must not purport to formally represent BCS in the media as an ambassador or spokesperson without approval from the Policy and Public Affairs Board. Any members wishing to represent BCS or approached to do so by the media or an external organisation should contact the Policy team (policyhub@hq.bcs.org.uk) before proceeding.
- 3.3 The approved position statement spokespeople, whilst having authority to speak on behalf of BCS, must adhere to the BCS Representation Policy and the Institute's [Code of Conduct](#).

4. External representatives

- 4.1 From time to time member may be approached by external bodies, or proactively seek, to join a committee or panel to provide BCS input to particular topics.
- 4.2 New requests for BCS representation on an external body should be made to the Policy team (policyhub@hq.bcs.org.uk) in the first instance who can advise of any existing related or conflicting representation and refer the request to the PPAB for review and approval.
- 4.3 To ensure clarity of thinking and accountability, new external representation requests will be reviewed with several key questions in mind, such as:
 - Will representation benefit BCS?
 - Is BCS support likely to be seen in anyway as divisive and offensive to any portion of the membership?

- Is this a topic/cause that would seem to any reasonable person to be one that the BCS should or would be involved in?
- Is the stance controversial or political and are there any possible unforeseen consequences that could arise from involvement?
- Is there anything in the articles and objectives of BCS that would rule out the support or action?

4.4 A list of current BCS external representation is available on the Policy Hub web pages <http://policy.bcs.org/>

4.5 External representatives must provide regular updates of their engagement activity which will be published on the Policy Hub web pages.

5. Individual members

5.1 Individual members may advise on external organisations or the media in a personal or commercial capacity.

5.2 Members of BCS member groups or branches are not automatically assumed to be approved spokespeople and, as detailed in section 4.2, should contact the Policy team (policyhub@hq.bcs.org.uk) should they wish to be listed as a spokesperson or external representative.

5.3 Individual members should not represent their own views as being those of the Institute and where necessary should make a clear disclaimer that, 'these views are my own and not those of BCS'.

5.4 Individuals and BCS Member Groups are not authorised to make submissions to UK government or similar consultations on behalf of BCS (individuals may of course submit responses in their own name) without obtaining express permission via the Policy team since any BCS submissions must be made centrally as a BCS response.

5.5 Where time permits, opinions will be sought, via the Policy Hub, from all interested BCS stakeholders when drafting a submission.

6. Review and approval

6.1 The Policy and Public Affairs Board will review this policy on an annual basis.