

JOB AND TASK DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Head of Conference Section

Division: Corporate Services Division

Grade: F

Reports To: Director, Corporate Services

General information

The Conference Section is part of the Corporate Services Division. It is the primary focal point for all matters involving planning, coordination and delivery of conference services for the Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministerial and other pan-Commonwealth meetings in London, Commonwealth member countries or other capitals. The team works closely with Secretariat divisions and collaborates closely with member governments on all administrative and logistical matters for Commonwealth conferences. A particularly high-profile activity is the organisation of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM). The team also has a key role in coordinating major events convened at the Secretariat's headquarters in London.

Job summary

The Head of the Conference Section is responsible for the organisation of all Commonwealth conferences/meetings and other high profile events held under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat, ensuring they meet the professional standards expected of a major international organisation. The post-holder reports to the Director, Corporate Services Division. The Section Head is currently assisted by a Deputy Head, and an Events Co-ordinator.

Task description

The post-holder:

- In consultation and collaboration with the relevant national authorities and Secretariat lead Divisions is responsible for the planning, development, management and execution of key Commonwealth Secretariat events including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Ministerial and Senior Officials meetings;
- Develops policy, strategies, guidelines and procedures relating to conference management;
- Prepares, manages and accounts for conference budgets ensuring compliance with the Secretariat's financial rules and regulations;
- Helps develop roles and responsibilities for staff members participating in overseas conferences in consultation with relevant Directors;
- Directs the activities and manages the staff of the Conference Section, and approves work plans;
- Supervises local staff teams on site and where necessary helps to develop local capacity in conference management;

- Develops internal guidelines and procedures to promote greater awareness within the organisation of conference practices and procedures. Reviews procedures and processes and proposes ways to improve and modernise them in line with best international practice. Proposes the introduction of new technologies and other ways to improve relevant administrative procedures;
- Ensures the provision of quality support services with regard to conferences and to this end, prepares and edits administrative documents, conference programmes, agendas and correspondence in order to achieve the expected results of the conference;
- Prepares guidance notes on the organisation of conferences and negotiates with national authorities the hosting arrangements for meetings held away from headquarters, in particular the hosting of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
- Undertakes conference planning missions and site visits overseas; briefs Ministers and senior government officials on the requirements for hosting meetings and where necessary proposes solutions to overcome any challenges. Prepares a written assessment of the host country's conference preparations;
- Reports to the Director, Corporate Services Division on the outcomes of planning missions and also prepares conference and meeting reports;
- Must be prepared to provide advice to senior management through the Director, Corporate Services Division on any critical matters concerning the arrangements for Commonwealth Heads of Government or Ministerial Meetings;
- Provides advice on protocol matters including Commonwealth practices and procedures and helps ensure impeccable administration of attendance at meetings and events by Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministers and other high-level personalities;
- Actively develops and maintains a network of relationships with relevant national authorities, civil society and international organisations as well as Secretariat partner divisions;
- Manages complex logistical arrangements for major Secretariat events including negotiation with travel agents, hotels and other service providers to ensure the most attractive and cost-effective terms;
- Ensures all meeting documentation is prepared in accordance with Secretariat guidelines and house style, and to appropriate standards;
- Helps to organise Commonwealth Day activities and London Open House Day visits to Marlborough House; and
- The post holder has a responsibility to help ensure the preservation of the Secretariat's property and resources.

Person Specification

Education

University graduate or equivalent professional qualification.

Experience

- At least five years direct conference management experience with overall responsibility for events at a senior level;
- Good understanding of global political matters and most particularly those of Commonwealth member countries;
- The ability to deal confidently and effectively at the highest level of government and with international organisations and to establish effective working relations ensuring dealing at all times with utmost tact and diplomacy;
- Excellent organisational, analytic and problem solving skills with the ability to lead and facilitate team and project planning, coaching and developing individual and team resources;
- Outstanding communication skills including strong written and oral communication skills;
- Ability to travel extensively often at short notice and to work effectively under pressure; and
- Excellent IT skills including databases and Microsoft suite.

Desirable:

Knowledge of the activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat and of Commonwealth member countries.

Competencies:

Respect for Diversity

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.

Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.

Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.

Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.

Encourages others to evaluate systems, processes & behaviour to ensure respect for diversity is demonstrated

Working with Others

Manages conflict and works towards mutual solutions

Identifies organisations with which to partner for specific solutions

Encourages others and provides them with the autonomy to pursue relationships

Uses personal influence to establish compromise and agreement when faced with conflict

Demonstrates balance between directness and diplomacy in negotiations

Uses influence to persuade partners and third parties toward Commonwealth Secretariat aims

Encourages and supports others in demonstrating cultural awareness when working with others

Managing Resources

Manages programme and cross team activities against specific objectives/results

Manages available resources in order to meet objectives e.g. by effective and efficient use of budget
inter alia

Identifies the best method and resources when high level course of action has been identified

Analyses available resources and what activity they will enable

Takes responsibility for multi team/programme activities

Manages diverse motivations of a range of groups in large scale programmes

Decision Making

Determines what can be realistically achieved when deciding on strategic solutions

Is proactive and responsive in making decisions on complex, technical issues based on appropriate information

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.

Supports subordinates, provides oversight and takes responsibility for all delegated assignments.

Leadership & Development

Reinforces vision throughout organisation e.g. by acting accordingly inter alia

Identifies and develops leadership skills in others

Empowers others to take control of their own development and progression

Offers sound guidance and direction on complex and critical issues

Maximises the potential of others e.g. by creating suitable opportunities for development inter alia

April 2013



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PAY POINT F

This is a summary of the principal terms and conditions for Pay Point F at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The full terms and conditions are set out in the Commonwealth Secretariat Staff Rules and Regulations which form part of the contract of all staff members.

A. GENERAL

<i>Contract Term</i>	Appointments are on limited term contracts usually of three years. Contracts may be renewed by mutual agreement and subject to fully satisfactory performance. Staff at this level may normally serve for not more than three three-year contracts. The Secretary-General will retain the flexibility to approve or decline extensions as circumstances warrant.
<i>Medical</i>	Appointments are subject to passing a medical examination.
<i>Clearance</i>	Appointments are also subject to clearance to the extent that the candidate's own government raises no objection to their suitability for employment.
<i>Probation</i>	All appointments are subject to a six-month probationary period. This may be extended at the Secretary-General's discretion for up to another six months.
<i>Period of Notice</i>	During probationary service, the appointment may be terminated by the Secretariat giving five weeks notice. Thereafter employment may be terminated by the Secretariat giving six months, or by the staff member giving three months, written notice.
<i>Annual Leave</i>	<p>Subject to the terms of the letter of appointment, each full-time staff member shall accrue annual leave at the rate of 25 working days per year, increasing to 30 days after 10 years continuous service. Leave without pay will not qualify for the earning of salary increments or annual leave entitlement.</p> <p>The Secretary-General may, upon application made to him/her allow leave entitlements accrued with other official bodies to count towards the 10 year figure.</p>
<i>Pension/Gratuity</i>	<p>Staff is eligible to join the Secretariat's Group Stakeholder Pension Plan (GSPP). This is a combination of a group personal pension and a stakeholder scheme. Pension benefits reflect the level of personal contributions and the value of the investments in the personal plan on retirement. The Secretariat contributes 15 per cent of gross salary; personal contributions are subject to limits based on a percentage of earnings depending on age.</p> <p>Alternatively, staff who do not wish to join the GSPP, may opt to join the gratuity scheme, whereby each month the Secretariat will pay the equivalent of 15 per cent of gross salary into an interest bearing account. At the end of the contract, the staff member will receive an ex-gratia payment of the cumulative amount including interest. This</p>

payment is subject to the Secretary-General's discretion.

Further information on the above schemes can be obtained from the Payroll Section of the Finance & Management Information Section.

Retirement Age 65th birthday.

Private Healthcare and Dental Cover The Secretariat provides non-contributory private healthcare and dental cover for all London-based employees, their spouses/officially recognised partners and children. The cover is subject to underwriting conditions

Insurance Subject to funding, the Secretariat may put in place various insurance schemes for its employees. Where such policies are in place, they shall be subject to the conditions of the underwriters and may change from time to time. Among the insurance policies the Commonwealth Secretariat provides is the Personal Accident/Travel policy. With regard to bodily injury, the underwriters conditions for that policy provide for the following, in respect of pre existing conditions;

Any contributory degenerative condition or disablement (as determined by a Qualified Medical Practitioner) known by the Insured Person to be in existence at the time of sustaining Bodily Injury will be taken into account by Insurers in assessing the level of benefit payable.

Further information on the existing policies would be made available to staff by the Corporate Services Division on request. Staff shall be notified of any changes in the policies as they become necessary from time to time.

B. APPOINTMENT OF BRITISH CITIZENS AND UK RESIDENTS

Salary £69,333 per annum gross, subject to deductions of National Insurance contributions and Commonwealth Secretariat internal income tax paid at UK income tax rates. This salary is fully inclusive.

C. APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEAS RECRUITED STAFF

“Overseas Recruited Staff Member” means an officer of the Secretariat whose stay in the UK is contingent upon their employment with the Secretariat. Should such a staff member acquire or have, while employed in the Secretariat, been entitled to British nationality or residential status in the UK the staff member will cease, from the date of acquisition or entitlement, to be an overseas recruited staff member.

Salary Gross Salary £69,333 per annum. Please note Salaries for overseas staff will be subject to deductions of National Insurance contributions and Commonwealth Secretariat internal income tax paid at UK income tax rates.

Installation & Termination Grant Will be provided on commencement and termination of appointment at 7% of net salary.

Expatriation Will be paid monthly at a rate of 14% of gross salary. Please note that

Allowance

this allowance is taxed at UK tax rates.

Travel

Upon commencement and termination of service, the staff member, and accompanying dependent family members, as defined in Staff Rule 69 c and d in the Human Resource Handbook, will have their air travel costs met by the Secretariat, as follows:

Directors	Economy – flights of 4 hours or less Business – all other flights
All Other Staff	Economy – where total flight time is less than 8 hours Business – where total flight time is more than 8 hours

For all journeys, the most direct means of air travel available will be provided. In respect of the accompanying family members the relevant journey must be made within 6 months of the eligible staff member's own journey.

If travel is not at the same time as the member of staff, family members will only be entitled to economy class travel, irrespective of length of journey.

Home Leave

The staff member is entitled to home leave once in every three years of qualifying service. Please see Rule 81 in the Sutherland Human Resource Handbook for more information.

Education Allowance

An education allowance will be payable, provided the dependent* child is in continuing full-time education at the time of the staff member's appointment.

The staff member may be entitled to 75% or £18,706 of admissible costs per child per scholastic year.

The admissible cost is subject to a maximum amount of £24,941 per child per scholastic year.

Transporting Effects & initial appointment arrangement

The Secretariat will pay the cost of transporting by sea a staff member's effects up to 500 cubic feet in the case of a single staff member, and up to 700 cubic feet in the case of a married staff member plus an allowance of 100 cubic feet per dependent child* residing with the head of the family. In addition, up to 15 kilograms of excess accompanied luggage by air will be allowed on joining and termination for the staff member, spouse and each dependent child*. No separate allowance will be made for transporting an automobile and not more than one automobile may be allowed to be transported. The Secretariat will meet the reasonable cost of insurance of personal effects. For a 20ft container (internal volume of 1,050 cubic ft) the value of goods insured is up to £35,000.

Subsistence Allowance

When first taking up an appointment and provided a staff member stays in approved accommodation, subsistence allowance at the appropriate United Nations rate will be paid in respect of the staff member, accompanying spouse (75 per cent) and a dependent child* (50 per cent) for a period of up to two weeks from the date of the staff member's arrival in post. Thereafter, the cost of a furnished apartment will be reimbursed for a period of up to three weeks or until suitable

accommodation is secured, whichever is the earlier.

***Diplomatic
Immunities &
Privileges***

There are no diplomatic immunities and privileges attached to the holder of this post. Staff members are expected to observe the laws of the UK and other countries in which they may work. Any involvement with the police or other law enforcement authorities must be reported.

+ on submission of receipts

* **‘Dependent child’** means an unmarried natural or legally adopted child of the staff member, who normally resides with the staff member and who is under the age of 18 years or, a child under the age of 21 years who is in full time attendance at an educational institution. With regards solely to Education Allowance a dependant child is recognised up to the age of 25. The Secretary-General may also declare a child who is not the natural or legally adopted child of the staff member as “dependent” on the basis of the information provided. The Secretary-General may waive the requirements as to age and attendance at an educational institution where the child is totally and permanently disabled. Unless otherwise specified, no more than three children (as designated by the staff member) will be considered as “dependent” for the purpose of these rules.

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Human Resources Division

MONITORING FORM - SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS

Please complete the form below providing the information to enable us to monitor our recruitment and ensure that our recruitment process is free from bias or unfair discrimination. The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to observing the principles and practice of Equality of Opportunity in all its activities.

Forename(s).....

Surname.....

Nationality

Please state.....

Gender

Please indicate with an "X" Male Female

Date of birth

Day "03"	"dd" e.g. "10"	Month "mm" e.g. "1973"	Year "yyyy" e.g. "1973"

Disability

Please indicate with an "X" whether you consider you have a disability or not.

Disability: Yes No.....

If you have indicated "Yes" that you do consider you have a disability please detail in the space below of any special requirements that you may require when attending for interview or group selection activities so that we can consider how to meet those needs to ensure equality of opportunity.

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Where did you see this post advertised?

Please tell us in which publication or on which website you saw this vacancy advertised.

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Thank you for completing these details – please make sure you return your completed form with your application.