

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Candidate Brief

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British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)

President

Y0601

June 2022

Managing Director

Sarah Thewlis

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Welcome from Mel Alcock, Chair of Board of Directors



Dear Candidate,

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in applying to be the President of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). We hope that you find the information in this candidate brief and on our website: <https://www.bbfc.co.uk/> useful.

At the BBFC, our focus is on helping children and families have a great viewing experience by providing them with all the guidance they need to help them choose content that is right for them, and to avoid what is not. We take the integrity and impartiality of our work very seriously, and for more than a century we have been recognised as the go-to guide that people can trust.

The current President of the Board, Patrick Swaffer, has completed his term of office. We are therefore looking to appoint a successor to chair the Board and the three annual meetings of the Advisory Council on Children's Viewing, and additionally to be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors, which I chair.

This is a high-level appointment that calls for wisdom, mature judgement and leadership. The successful candidate will need to maintain the confidence of the public in a rapidly changing context. They will need to maintain our independence and yet be able to work productively with Westminster, Whitehall, the media and the industry. They will need to be able to facilitate difficult decisions that are securely based on our classification guidelines, which are the result of an extensive public consultation every four years, other research, expert advice and our accumulated experience. Finally, they will need to have a genuine interest in film as an important social and cultural medium.

If this is an opportunity that appeals to you, and you have the skills set out in the job description and key responsibilities section of this candidate brief, we would very much like to hear from you.

For a confidential conversation with our recruitment partners, Thewlis Graham Associates, please contact Sarah Thewlis, Managing Director on 0207 850 4781 or email applications@thewlisgraham.com. Sarah will be happy to discuss this opportunity with you and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

Mel Alcock

Chair of Board of Directors

2. About the BBFC

The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is an independent media content regulator. It classifies theatrical films, home entertainment content including DVDs and VOD, and websites delivered via the UK's mobile networks. Its mission is to help families choose content that is right for them, and avoid what is not, and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harmful content. It carries out wide-reaching public consultation and research to reflect changing social attitudes toward media content, thereby ensuring it maintains high levels of trust among the British public.

Its standards, enshrined in its Classification Guidelines, focus on child protection and the position of vulnerable adults. They are revised every 4-5 years following an extensive public consultation process.

The BBFC is a non-profit making company limited by guarantee. As well as being a statutory regulator, it increasingly works in partnership with home entertainment and other technology-based companies to deliver trusted classifications through self-regulatory models. It is financed by the fees it charges for classification. It receives no government money. It is operationally independent of both the government and the film and home entertainment industries. Its fees are adjusted as required to cover its costs.

Alongside classification, information provision is increasingly important. A wealth of information about the BBFC can be found on its website, at www.bbfc.co.uk.

Governance

The BBFC has a twin governance arrangement consisting of the Board of Directors and the Board of Classification.

- The Board of Directors is concerned mainly with the BBFC's financial, administrative and strategic matters, and appoints the President, Vice Presidents and Chief Executive. It does not involve itself with classification decisions and policy.
- The Board of Classification consists of the CEO, President and Vice Presidents and meets monthly. It considers the most complex individual classification cases and the strategic policy framework. Other major issues at these meetings include the BBFC's service offerings in the non-statutory space; its relations with Government, to which it is formally accountable, and with Parliament; and its engagement with the public and other stakeholders.

You can view our annual reports [here](#).

You can see classification guidelines [here](#).

3. The role and responsibilities of the President

The role

The President of the BBFC chairs the Board of Classification, which meets monthly and considers the most complex or controversial cases, and the BBFC's strategic policy framework. The President also chairs the three annual meetings of the Board's Advisory Council on Children's Viewing and is an ex officio member of the Board of Directors, which meets five times a year.

This is a high-level appointment calling for wisdom, mature judgement and leadership. The President of the BBFC must bring intellectual rigour, independence, and a high-level approach to difficult cases and policy issues. They will be credible with a wide range of stakeholders across Westminster, Whitehall and the media and have experience or knowledge of regulation.

Along with the CEO and Vice Presidents, the President is personally designated by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as the responsible authority under the Video Recordings Act. The BBFC is also required to make an annual report to the Secretary of State and Parliament. The Government is not involved in the appointments process, but the Secretary of State's approval is needed for designation.

The appointment is for an initial period of three years, and may be extended by another three years, with a potential maximum term of six years.

The President's time commitment is notionally 24 days a year but may be heavier in busy periods. A good deal of e-mail traffic is also to be expected.

Person specification

This is a high-level appointment calling for wisdom, mature judgement and leadership. In such a case a rigid specification would be inappropriate, but the following highly desirable personal qualities may help to give the flavour of the role:

- The intellectual rigour to master complex and sensitive individual cases which may be appealed or challenged in the courts;
- Sensitivity to requirements for consistency and transparency which flow from the Classification Guidelines;
- An ability to cope with the most difficult material (e.g., depictions of sexual and sadistic violence, pornography);
- A strategic and penetrating approach to difficult policy issues, and to the BBFC's future;
- The ability to act as a source of support and wise counsel to the CEO;

- Credibility in Westminster and Whitehall, with other stakeholders, with the media;
- Independence, and an awareness of public concerns and the strategic environment, including new ways of delivering audio-visual content, and the developing role of social media;
- Experience or knowledge of regulation; and
- Impartiality, good humour, and a genuine interest in film as an important social and cultural medium.

4. Salary and expenses

Salary – £35,000 PA, subject to time commitment

Reasonable travel expenses for attending meetings can be claimed.

5. Timeline, Application Process and How to apply

Timeline

Dates	Activity
20 July 4pm	Applications close
w/c 1 and 8 August	Thewlis Graham pre-selection conversations with relevant candidates
w/c 5 September	Informal conversations for shortlisted candidates with key personnel at the BBFC
Monday 12 September	BBFC interviews London

Application Process

Thewlis Graham Associates will acknowledge all applications. These will be assessed against the criteria in the Role and Responsibilities section and the people who best meet these will be invited for pre-selected conversations with Thewlis Graham Associates online.

Those candidates not invited for pre-selected conversations will be advised by email by end of August.

Longlisted candidates will be advised by email. After a consultation between the BBFC and Thewlis Graham Associates a Shortlist will be drawn up and Shortlisted candidates invited for interview with the Client at their offices in London.

How to Apply

To apply for this role, please email in word format to applications@thewlisgraham.com the following documents quoting reference **Y0601**:

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1. A comprehensive CV.
2. A covering letter which fully addresses your suitability for the role and your motivation for applying.
3. A document with the name, job title, organisation, email address and mobile number of two professional referees. (Please note referees will not be approached without your prior permission.)
4. Details of your social media accounts.

Please ensure that you include your mobile phone number and email address in your application. Do not hesitate to contact Claire Drummond on 020 7850 4781 if you have any queries. Additionally, if you would prefer to receive this candidate brief in a more accessible format, please contact us.

6. Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring

Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring is independent of the recruitment process but please do complete your form as Thewlis Graham Associates is committed to monitoring and analysing diversity and inclusion information so that we can ensure that our processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group.

The link to this form is here: [click here](#). If you have any problems with this, please contact Tracey on: tct@thewlisgraham.com.

Any information provided on this form will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. It will not be seen by anybody directly involved in the selection process. No information will be published or used in any way which allows any individual to be identified.

Thank you



7. Advert

President

Location: Central London

Salary: £35K pa, subject to time commitment

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Alongside classification, information provision is increasingly important. A wealth of information about the BBFC can be found on its website, at www.bbfc.co.uk.

The President of the BBFC chairs the Board of Classification, which meets monthly and considers the most complex or controversial cases, and the BBFC's strategic policy framework. The President also chairs the three annual meetings of the Board's Advisory Council on Children's Viewing and is an ex officio member of the Board of Directors, which meets six times a year.

This is a high-level appointment calling for wisdom, mature judgement and leadership. The President of the BBFC must bring intellectual rigour, independence, and a high-level approach to difficult cases and policy issues. They will be credible with a wide range of stakeholders across Westminster, Whitehall and the media and have experience or knowledge of regulation.

The role

- The intellectual rigour to master complex and sensitive individual cases which may be appealed or challenged in the courts.
- Sensitivity to requirements for consistency and transparency which flow from the Classification Guidelines.
- An ability to cope with the most difficult material (e.g. depictions of sexual and sadistic violence, pornography).
- A strategic and penetrating approach to difficult policy issues, and to the BBFC's future
- The ability to act as a source of support and wise counsel to the CEO.

The Requirements

- Credibility in Westminster and Whitehall, with other stakeholders, with the media.
- Independence, and an awareness of public concerns and the strategic environment, including new ways of delivering audio-visual content, and the developing role of social media.
- Impartiality, good humour, and a genuine interest in film as an important social and cultural medium.

Please apply by visiting www.thewlisgraham.com/assignment-briefings and following the instructions in the candidate brief by 20 July 4pm to: Sarah Thewlis of Thewlis Graham Associates quoting reference Y0601

For a confidential conversation with Sarah Thewlis or for any other information please email applications@thewlisgraham.com

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