Drafting a British Standard
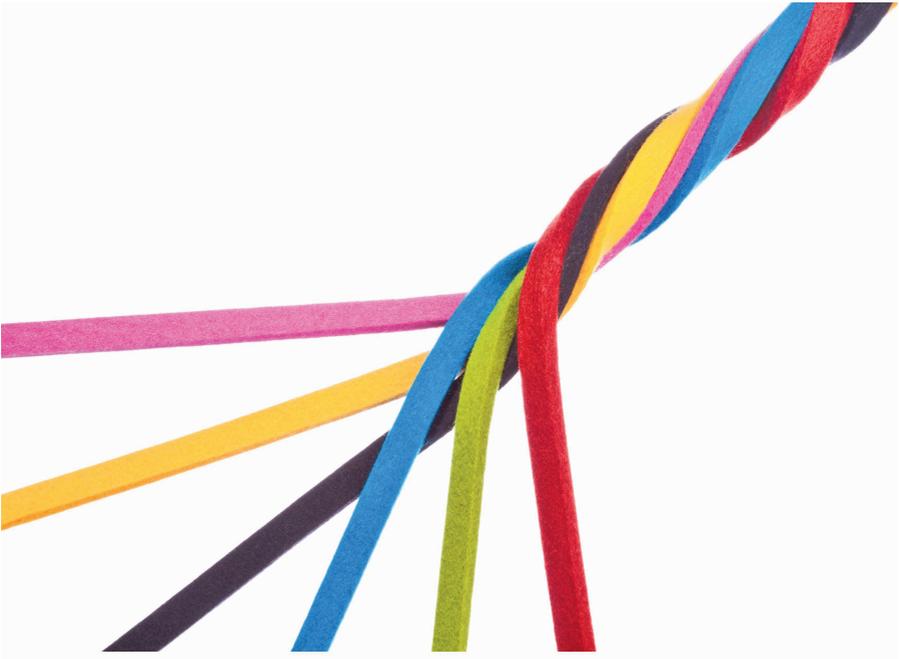## Working with your content developer

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Contents

Introduction

In 2006, a BSI committee chairman listed the principles that would inform the drafting of a new British Standard.

- I want to produce the best possible standard
- I do not want anyone on the panel to be unhappy with the standard
- I do not want to spend any longer on this project than is strictly necessary

These principles are as relevant now as they were in 2006, and while they might seem a little blunt, they are entirely consistent with the assumptions of BSI that:

- A standard needs to be authoritative, practical, of value to the community for which it is intended and of benefit to the wider community
- A standard needs to be based on consensus: everyone involved should feel that their concerns are considered during drafting
- Those involved in the drafting do so in their own time, but commit to taking an active part in developing a standard and keeping to carefully planned schedules so that they do not have to commit more time than is necessary

To help facilitate the process and allow panel/committee members to focus on agreeing the technical content, BSI assigns to each project a content developer to undertake the editorial and project management responsibilities.

Benefits of being involved in standardization

Panel/committee members will benefit from helping to develop standards, whether they are manufacturers, consumers, academics or regulators.

As a panel or committee member, you can:

- Gain a better insight into why a standard has been developed
- Have the opportunity to shape the development of a standard
- Gain a greater understanding of sector and industry trends, both nationally and internationally
- As a committee member, be nominated to represent the UK on European or international committees
- Keep abreast of the latest technical innovations in your field
- Gain a sense of achievement from knowing that you've made things better
- Have the opportunity to network and share expertise with fellow experts from industry and business, such as the business community, consumers, users, government and regulators, in a neutral environment
- Gain unique access into the standards development process
- Learn new skills which could help in your current job and career development
- Obtain certificates detailing your active participation in BSI's standards programme, which you can submit to your employer or professional body as evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Access free training courses through BSI Committee Member Training (see www.bsigroup.com/cmtraining), which covers a range of subjects including:
  - British Standards: A guide for new committee members
  - Drafting standards
  - Legal and environmental aspects of standards and standardization
  - Chairing meetings
  - Creative and innovative problem solving
  - Handling difficult people and situations
  - Working across cultures
  - Networking and task management

More information on the benefits of membership can be found at: http://www.bsigroup.com/Documents/about-bsi/committee-members/BSI-committee-member-brochure-the-benefits-of-getting-involved-in-developing-standards-UK-EN.pdf.

Your content developer

Content developers are specialists in the drafting and development of British Standards of UK origin.

While content developers are not technical experts, they have expertise in creating standards documents from existing text and helping panels/committees to develop new text, both of which meet all the criteria of BS 0 (see page 8) and of the *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*. BS 0 gives the principles of standardization; the *Rules* (which are based on the ISO/IEC Directives) give the format, structure and drafting rules for all standards of UK origin published by BSI. Presentation and house style are covered in the *Style guide for UK standards – Presentation, typography and standard wording*.

A content developer will work with each drafting panel/committee to guide the document through from inception to publication, within the timescale agreed by the panel/committee at the start of the project.

The responsibilities of the content developer are to:

- Manage the project through the key stages of the development process (see pages 6 and 7)
- Support the chairman in managing the panel
- Agree schedules with the panel/committee at the beginning of the project and subsequently throughout the project
- Arrange and attend drafting meetings, as necessary, providing editorial input
- Edit and style the draft in accordance with BS 0, the *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*, BSI house style and the principles of Plain English
- Offer relevant guidance and advice at any point in a committee's deliberations, and intervene in such deliberations if it becomes apparent that they are likely to lead to decisions that are illegal or potentially injurious to BSI's reputation
- Arrange for drawings to be prepared by the BSI Drawing Office
- Coordinate the resolution of technical and editorial queries
- Circulate all relevant documentation via eCommittees (see page 13)
- Keep the panel/committee informed of progress with the draft
- Work with the panel/committee to publish the standard on schedule

If you have a query regarding the composition of a committee or its membership or any questions technical committee activities, please speak with the committee secretary, who is usually a BSI programme manager.

Roles and responsibilities

Panel and committee members

The success of a project relies on the commitment and technical expertise of panel/committee members. The primary responsibilities of members are to:

- Be familiar with BS 0, BSI procedures and the key stages of the development process (see pages 6 and 7)
- Understand and adhere to BSI's policy on intellectual property rights and obtain permission to reproduce copyrighted material as and when necessary (see BS 0:2011, **9.5**)
- Register with eCommittees (see page 13)
- Commit to ensuring that the project is published on schedule
- Actively participate throughout the development process, take on actions, and meet agreed deadlines to ensure that the project is not delayed
- Provide relevant technical input (including copyright permissions as and when necessary), attending meetings where necessary and completing work between meetings
- Review all drafts and comments carefully, prior to meetings, and raise queries or objections within agreed timescales
- Maintain close and effective working links with the organizations that they represent, keep them informed, i.e. reporting back after meetings, and take briefs from them
- Actively promote Drafts for Public Comment to interested parties and ensure that comments are submitted on time using the correct procedure

The chairman

Effective chairing can make a great difference to the efficiency of the development process. In addition to being familiar with BS 0, BSI procedures, etc., registering with eCommittees and taking part in all of the drafting activities, the primary responsibilities of the chairman are to:

- Act to attain consensus throughout the drafting process
- Work closely with the content developer to ensure that drafting progresses on schedule and that any difficulties are resolved quickly
- Run meetings effectively to ensure that discussions are succinct and focused, and be decisive, where necessary
- Safeguard the impartiality and integrity of the development process
- Delegate actions
- Encourage all members to complete work within agreed timescales to ensure that the project is published on schedule
- Alert BSI to any perceived imbalance in the constitution of the committee, or under-representation of important interests or expertise
- Approve drafts for public comment (DPC) and publication promptly
- Agree/provide a list of items to cover at meetings

Drafting meetings

Drafting meetings are held as often as is deemed necessary in order to meet the agreed schedule. Physical meetings are not the only option for completing the work; other options include correspondence, teleconferences and web conferences.

Between drafting meetings, panel/committee members are expected to complete actions and work on the draft to ensure that projects progress in line with the agreed schedule and actions. Persistent slippages of the schedule could result in cancellation of the project.

Location and times

Meetings are generally held at BSI's offices in London, which are located at 389 Chiswick High Road, above Gunnersbury Station.

Start and finish times vary depending on members' availability, although a 10:30 start is common.

Attendance

If meetings are deemed necessary, it is essential that panel/committee members attend as frequently as possible so that drafting is not delayed. If panel/committee members do not consistently attend meetings or complete actions assigned to them, they might be asked to leave the panel/committee.

Content developers usually coordinate and attend drafting meetings unless otherwise agreed. They attend meetings to advise the panel/committee on editorial and drafting issues. Occasions when they might not attend a meeting include those where:

- Technical discussions are the only focus of the meeting
- Actions have not been submitted as previously agreed
- Panels/committees are happy to progress the technical content of the draft by themselves

Content developers update the draft during the meeting and project the changes on a screen, which allows members to follow the changes that have been discussed.

Agenda, minutes and actions

Content developers do not usually produce a formal agenda for meetings, but they do issue a formal calling notice, which is required in order to gain a security pass at BSI's offices.

Minutes are not produced, as the draft and/or annotated comments are considered to be a record of the decisions made during the meeting. However, any action points are circulated following the meeting. In order for drafting to progress on schedule, it is important that these are carried out by the agreed deadlines.

Overview of the development process

1. Proposal

A proposal for new work is submitted to BSI. Proposals are usually generated by the committee and are often the result of the five-year review.

2. Planning and approval

A business case is prepared by the committee secretary with guidance from the committee. This is submitted to the relevant BSI Planning and Approval team for consideration.

If the project is accepted, a drafting panel is identified. The work is assigned to a content developer once the panel has been set up.

Committee secretary + committee:
- Prepare business case for new project
- Set up the panel

Panel:
- Commits to undertaking the work and completing it within the agreed timescales

3. Allocation and kick-off

Once the panel has been set up, the project is assigned to a content developer, who liaises with the panel to arrange a "kick-off" meeting and determine a schedule.

Content developer:
- Contacts panel to arrange kick-off meeting
- Attends meeting and works with panel and committee secretary to agree a project schedule

Panel + committee secretary:
- Attend the kick-off meeting
- Agree a schedule

5. Approval for public comment

The draft is circulated to the panel and its parent committee(s) for approval (generally two weeks).

It is common at this stage for panel and committee members to be asked to reserve all further comments for the DPC, unless there are technical errors that need to be corrected before it can be issued.

Content developer:
- Prepares and circulates draft
- Makes arrangements for Draft for Public Comment (DPC) to be announced in "Update Standards"

Panel + committee(s):
- Review draft and approve for public comment

4. Drafting

Drafting is normally carried out by a panel of experts, usually consisting of 5 or 6 members, together with the content developer. Several versions of the draft might be produced before it is finalized.

Panel:
- Writes draft, employing technical expertise and liaising as necessary
- Attends meetings and completes work between meetings
- Meets the agreed target dates for public consultation (DPC) and publication

Content developer:
- Assists panel by providing editorial input and BS 0 expertise
- Circulates updated drafts
- Coordinates meetings
- Arranges for any drawings to be prepared by the BSI Drawing Office

6. Public consultation

The two-month public comment period enables a broader audience to view the draft, ensuring transparency and acceptability of the resulting standard.

Comments on all drafts can be made, by any interested party, through the online Draft Review System (see www.bsigroup.com/drafts).

Content developer:
- Circulates draft to interested committees as identified by the panel and/or committee secretary
- Acts as primary contact for comment submission

Panel + committee(s):
- Forward draft to nominating organizations and advise external contacts
- Submit any outstanding technical comments

7. Comment resolution

The comments received during the public comment period are considered by the panel, with input from the content developer, and the draft is amended in line with the decisions taken.

Content developer:
- Collates and circulates comments
- Advises on editorial and BS 0 issues
- Updates draft to reflect decisions made
- Circulates list of decisions made

Panel:
- Reviews all comments, agrees actions to be taken and completes actions within agreed timescales

Past this point no technical changes can be made, other than the correction of technical errors.

10. Typesetting and publication

The content developer prepares the document for publication and onward processing.

The standard is published and details are made available on the BSI website and through "Update Standards". A complimentary copy is made available to the panel and committee for two months through eCommittees.

Content developer:
- Prepares document for publication
- Checks and approves proofs of typeset documents
- Submits document for onward processing

9. Endorsement to publish

The committee secretary and chairman of the relevant subcommittee and/or technical committee endorse the draft for publication.

After this, there is generally no further involvement from the panel or committee(s) prior to publication.

Committee secretary + chairman:
- Sign draft off for publication

8. Final approval

A final draft is prepared by the content developer, and is then circulated to the panel and its parent committee(s) for a two-week approval period.

Consensus needs to be achieved by the relevant parent committee before the standard can be signed off for publication.

Content developer:
- Prepares and circulates final draft

Panel + committee(s):
- Review draft and approve for publication

Drafting rules

All British Standards of UK origin are written in accordance with the *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*, the aim of which is to ensure that standards are clear, consistent and usable.

Content developers are involved in the drafting process to help panels/committees understand and implement the drafting rules. Some of the more common issues and queries are outlined in this section.

Audience

The audience of a British Standard should be decided before drafting begins. The standard then has to be written so that its provisions are ones that the intended user is able to carry out.

The intended user of any standard should generally be a single party. For example, a specification will commonly address the manufacturer of a product. It should not specify requirements for the purchaser of the product to comply with, as once a product or material is sold the manufacturer has no control over what the purchaser does with it. Similarly, a code of practice might include recommendations for the designer and installer of a system, but should not address the manufacturer or provider of component parts or services.

Overview of BS 0

BS 0 gives the principles of standardization and outlines the role of BSI, as the UK national standards body, and that of its committee members in the preparation of standards (of national, European and international origin).

It covers topics including the key stages of the development process (see also pages 6 and 7 of the present document); BSI committees, including committee composition; roles and responsibilities; and content and drafting of standards, including intellectual property.

The issue of consensus is also addressed, and this is an important part of drafting as committees and subcommittees need to reach consensus before a standard can be published. For BSI's purposes, consensus is defined as: "general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments".

Types of publications

The following are the most common publication types that content developers produce.

Specification

A specification specifies requirements that have to be met, usually by a product or a material, in order for conformity to be claimed. Every requirement has to be drafted in such a way that conformity to it can be verified objectively. This usually means that there has to be a method for testing conformity (usually provided in an annex or by reference).

Code of practice

A code of practice gives recommendations on good practice, usually for one or more processes or procedures, e.g. the installation of a system. A code of practice cannot specify requirements. The recommendations should be as unambiguous as possible.

Claims of compliance can be made to a code of practice, and products and services certified against it.

Method of test

A test method gives detailed instructions for carrying out one or more procedures for measurement, testing, sampling or evaluating performance.

A test method can only give the procedure itself. While it can give pass/fail criteria, it cannot specify what the outcome of a test or measurement is to be. This has to be given in the specification for the material, product, etc. to which the test or measurement is to be applied.

Guide

A guide primarily contains information and guidance, although it can also contain recommendations where appropriate. A guide cannot specify requirements.

A guide does not support claims of compliance or certification.

Types of updates

Standards can be updated as full revisions, new editions or amendments.

- For full revisions, the text is completely reviewed from an editorial as well as a technical viewpoint, and is brought into line with the most recent edition of the BSI *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*. Revisions take a new publication date.

- New editions are re-typeset in the current house style but no changes are made to the wording or structure that are not required as part of the new edition. Additions, changes and deletions are not marked in the text, and only new or changed text is edited. New editions take a new publication date.

- Amendments retain the original publication date, with an amendment date added. They are not re-typeset (unless required for technical reasons), and only new or changed text is edited. Additions, changes and deletions are marked with amendment tags.

Drafting rules

Provisions

The text of a British Standard should set out clear and unambiguous provisions with a limited amount of supporting information.

Provisions describe what the user of the standard has to do in order to be able to claim compliance with the standard. Indeed, the user has to follow all the provisions in order to claim compliance. For this reason, a standard has to be drafted in such a way that the user can readily identify and understand the provisions.

The provisions have to:

- Be consistent, accurate and within the control of the user (see page 8)
- Be technically robust, practicable and achievable
- Take full account of the state of the art and provide a framework for future technological development
- Be comprehensible to competent people

Provisions come in different forms depending on the type of standard.

Normative vs. informative

Provisions are known as the "normative" element of the text.

e.g. "Copper pipes shall conform to BS EN 1057." (specification)

The "informative" element comprises any guidance on, or background to, the provisions. It is presented in the form of notes and/or commentaries.

e.g. "*NOTE   Copper is, in general, suitable for hot and cold water applications.*"

Type of standard	Provisions	Examples
Specification	Requirements	"When tested as described in Annex A, the product shall..."
Code of practice	Recommendations	"The product should be installed in accordance with..."
Method of test	Instructions	"Condition the sample for 2 h at a temperature of 65 °C."
Guide	*Does not contain provisions but may give recommendations*	"The plan should aim to set out a step-by-step process to be followed."

Spellings

Spelling conventions are taken from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. The dictionary prioritizes the use of "z" as opposed to "s", e.g. in "energize" or "organization". This is the traditional UK spelling rather than an Americanization.

The "f" spelling of the word "sulfur" and its derivatives is taken from the agreed variant adopted by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).

Verbal forms

The following verbs may be used. (The imperative may also be used within test methods.)

Verb	Implication	Typical context
shall	Requirement	Normative element of a specification
should	Recommendation	• Normative element of a code of practice • Informative element of a specification
may	Permission (within the stated limits of the standard to adopt a particular course of action)	Informative element of any standard
might/could	Possibility	Informative element of any standard
can	Capability	Informative element of any standard
is	Description	Informative element of any standard

The following verbs should be avoided.

Verb	Notes
must	Use is specifically prohibited by the BSI *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*, to avoid confusion with external statutory obligations
will	Should be avoided as it can be ambiguous and standards cannot predict the future

Differences between British and European drafting rules

While the CEN drafting rules, like the BSI *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*, are based on the ISO/IEC Directives (see page 3), the BSI rules include some important additional provisions. Therefore, a purely national standard has to be edited in accordance with the BSI rules; text cannot be copied verbatim from a European standard.

Changes to the drafting rules

When a standard is approved for revision, the draft is edited in accordance with the latest version of the drafting rules. Therefore, it is not always possible to copy text directly from a previous edition into a new draft.

Drafting rules

References to legislation

A standard cannot specify or recommend compliance with the law or the discharge of legal obligations.

Standards are not legal documents and compliance with them is almost always voluntary, whereas compliance with legislation is not voluntary. Users of standards are expected to obey the law, whether or not they choose to comply with a standard.

It is generally inadvisable to make reference in a standard to legislative or statutory instruments. Panels/committees should certainly resist any temptation to try to produce lengthy lists of relevant legislation.

There is a risk that any such list might be thought by the user to be definitive and exhaustive; it almost certainly will not be. Even if it were correct at the point of publication, it would soon become out of date.

Standards should be drafted as being complementary to regulation, offering routes for demonstrating compliance, good practice or due care.

No attempt should be made within a British Standard to offer explanation, interpretation or justification in respect of any regulatory measure. Any reference should be restricted to drawing attention to applicable regulations.

Panels/committees should also bear in mind that, in some instances, there are three or more sets of regulations in force within the UK.

Where references to legislation are deemed essential, they need to be presented informatively and are generally phrased in the following form: "*NOTE   Attention is drawn to the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998...*".

References to third-party certification

A standard cannot stipulate third-party certification of conformity.

This reflects the principle in the UK that certification should be a voluntary option, available in the market place as a service to manufacturers and purchasers but not in any way imposed on them.

If third-party certification or independent assessment is considered by the committee to be desirable, standard wording to that effect may be included in the foreword.

Drafting process

eCommittees

eCommittees is a web-based system that provides a working environment for panels and committees at BSI. Among other functions, the system allows members to access committee documents and hold online meetings and email discussion forums.

A username and password is sent to all members on joining a panel or committee.

It is essential that you log in to the eCommittees system as soon as you receive your username and password. If you do not log in, you will not receive important documentation and communications relating to the project (see https://ecommittees.bsi-global.com).

To use eCommittees, it is necessary to have:

- An internet connection capable of at least 56 kb/s
- A program to view and print documents in pdf format, e.g. Adobe Acrobat reader, and a program to open zip archive files, e.g. Winzip
- The ability to view Microsoft Word documents

The eCommittees support team can provide assistance for any system issues, e.g. forgotten log-in details, at ecommittee.support@bsigroup.com.

Electronic drafting

Drafting is undertaken in Microsoft Word, using a BSI template.

At the beginning of drafting, the content developer will inform the panel/committee how he/she plans to manage the draft. The following points should be noted:

- There is a master version of each draft of which control is vital as it allows the development of the draft to be traced, and this is managed by the content developer
- All changes, made by either the content developer or members, should be tracked using the "Track Changes" function (found in the Tools menu), unless otherwise agreed
- Drafts are sometimes circulated in pdf format, e.g. if they also have to be circulated to the parent committee

Further information

Useful websites

The following websites will be of use during drafting.

BSI
http://www.bsigroup.com

BS 0 and *Rules for the structure and drafting of UK standards*
http://www.bsigroup.com/en/Standards-and-Publications/About-BSI-British-
Standards/How-we-produce-British-Standards/

BSOL (British Standards Online)
http://bsol.bsigroup.com

Draft Review System
http://www.bsigroup.com/drafts

Update Standards
http://shop.bsigroup.com/Navigate-by/Membership/Update-Standards

ISO Online Browsing Platform
https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/

Standards Development
http://standardsdevelopment.bsigroup.com/

New Proposals
http://standardsproposals.bsigroup.com/

eCommittees system
https://ecommittees.bsi-global.com

Committee member training
http://www.bsigroup.com/cmtraining

Contact details

If you have any queries relating to the drafting of your standard, please contact your content developer, or for more general queries, email uk.nationalstandards@bsigroup.com.

bsi.