

Drafting a British Standard

Working with your content developer



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Introduction

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

- 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

While these principles 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 are likely to benefit from helping to develop standards, whether they are manufacturers, consumers, academics or regulators.

Members can:

- Influence the content of standards
- Gain knowledge of standards in advance and so anticipate requirements and trends
- Get to know their peers and others who influence industry, such as the business community, consumers, users, government and regulators, in a neutral environment
- Share expertise
- Be nominated to represent the UK on European or international committees
- Attend free training courses (see www.bsigroup.com/cmtraining) to complement their standards work, for which topics include:
 - An introduction to the standardization process
 - Drafting standards
 - Legal aspects of standards
 - Chairing meetings
 - Creative and innovative problem solving
 - Handling difficult people and situations
 - Working across cultures
 - Awareness of environmental aspects in standardization

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)
- 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
- 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

The content developer is not involved in “supporting committee services”, e.g. issues relating to the composition of a committee or its membership. These are the responsibility of 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 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)
- Register with eCommittees (see page 13)
- Actively participate throughout the development process, take on actions, and ensure that their availability is such that the project will not be delayed
- Provide relevant technical input, attending meetings where necessary and completing work between meetings
- Review all drafts carefully, prior to meetings, and raise comments 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

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 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 focussed, 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
- 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 and teleconferences.

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 BSI deciding to cancel 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. It is recommended that finish and lunch/break times are agreed at the beginning of the meeting.

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

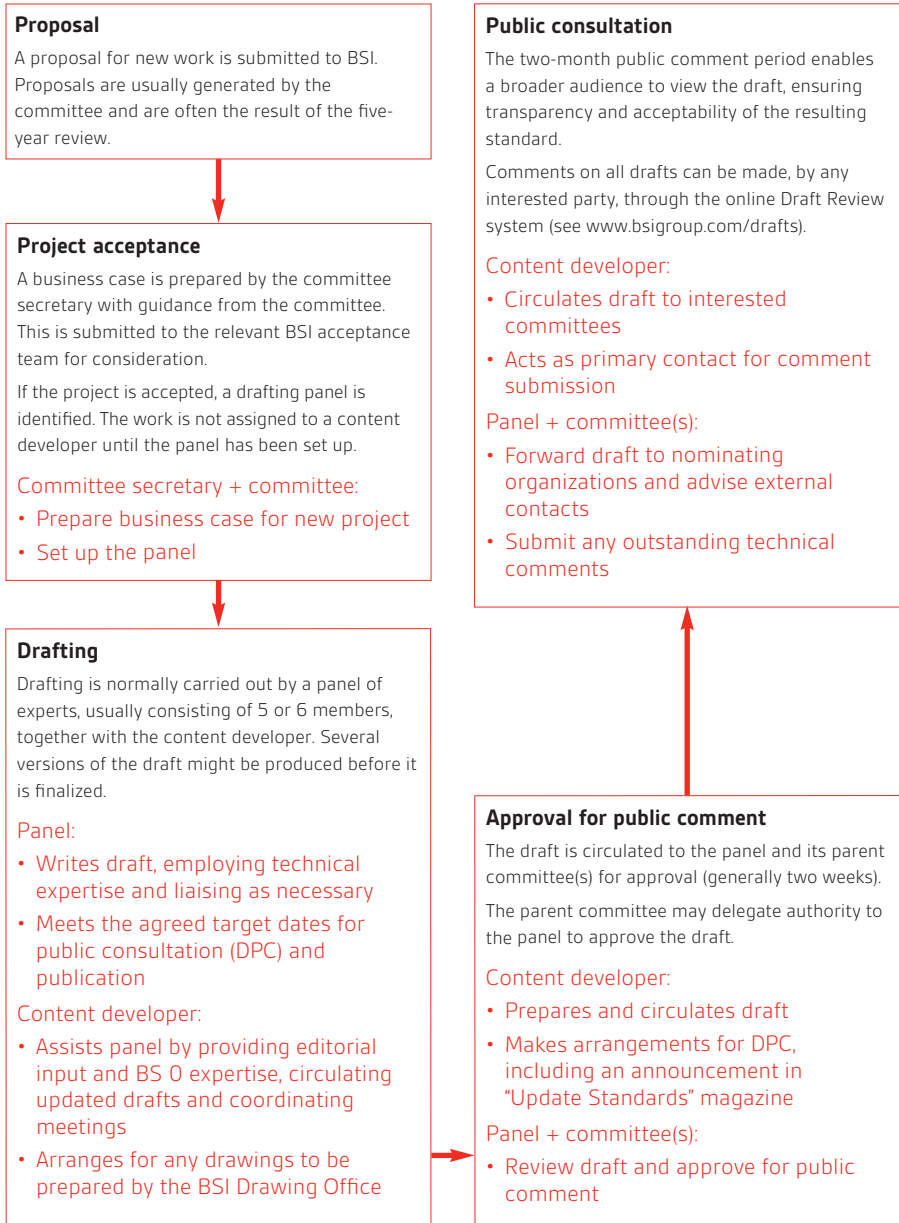
Content developers update the draft during the meeting and project the changes on a screen, which allows members to follow the changes that have been discussed.

Agenda, minutes and actions

Content developers do not usually produce a formal agenda for meetings.

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 will be 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



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 O issues
- Updates draft to reflect decisions made
- Circulates list of decisions made to the panel (and committee, where required)

Panel:

- Reviews all comments, agrees actions to be taken and takes on actions

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

Publication

The standard is published and details of the new publication are made available on the BSI website and through "Update Standards".

BSI aims to publish British Standards and Published Documents within 18 months.

When the standard is published, the panel and committee receive a complimentary copy. It then becomes the committee's responsibility to maintain the standard.

Committee:

- Reviews the standard within five years to ensure its continuing accuracy and relevance

Content delivery

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

Content developer:

- Prepares document for publication
- Checks and approves proofs of typeset documents
- Submits the document for onward processing

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

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 final draft
- Circulates 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 of component parts.

Overview of BS 0:2011

BS 0:2011 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 (Clause 5; see also pages 6 and 7 of the present document); BSI committees, including committee composition (Clause 7); roles and responsibilities (Clause 8); and content and drafting of standards, including intellectual property (Clause 9).

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

Content developers are responsible for producing, revising and amending:

- Formal British Standards of national origin (BSs)
- Published Documents of national origin (PDs)

These will usually be drafted as one of the following.

Specification

A specification specifies requirements that have to be met, usually by a product or a material, in order for conformity to be claimed. (Process specifications, e.g. for management systems, are also quite common.)

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 (provided, for example, as an annex within the specification or by reference to another standard).

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 and the recommendations should be as unambiguous as possible.

Claims of compliance can be made to a code of practice.

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 is similar to a code of practice but is generally more discursive and informative, with fewer recommendations.

A guide does not support claims of compliance or certification.

Drafting rules

Provisions

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

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.

Type of standard	Provisions	Examples
Specification	Requirements	"When tested as described in Annex A, the product shall..."
Code of practice or guide	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."

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.

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.*"

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 in provisions is specifically prohibited by BS 0, 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 strictly factual.

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 (see the back cover for Adobe and Winzip downloads)
- 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

<http://www.bsigroup.com/drafts>

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>

Software downloads (for eCommittees)

<http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/> (Adobe Acrobat Reader)

<http://www.winzip.com/downwz.htm> (Winzip)

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 Group Headquarters
389 Chiswick High Road
London W4 4AL
bsigroup.com

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