



PhD tutors

Application Guidance

Welcome

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying to become a Brilliant Club tutor. As a charity, our vision is an education system in which pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are proportionately represented at highly selective universities. We intend to bring this change about by mobilising doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to engage with high performing pupils in low participation schools through our structured programmes of tutorials and extended learning. This is where you come in.

Over the academic year 2013/14 we have recruited, trained and employed a cohort of over 250 researchers from leading universities to deliver university-style teaching to more than 5000 high performing pupils from low participation schools in London, the South East, the Midlands and the North East of England. Whilst we are happy with the progress we have made in the three years since we started The Brilliant Club, we are committed to ensuring that pupils across the country have access to outstanding researchers and cutting-edge research. Over the course of 2014/15 we look forward to increasing the number of pupils and researchers that we work with.

We are delighted that you are considering making an application to work as a Brilliant Club tutor. We believe that aside from the impact you will have on the outstanding young people you will work with, there are also significant benefits for tutors themselves including: excellent training and support, experience of work in a dynamic environment, the opportunity to communicate your research to non-specialist audiences and the fact that you will earn good money doing so.

This application guide is a detailed document and we have tried to include everything that we think you need to know in order to make a successful application to work as a Brilliant Club tutor, including how to complete your application form and what you need to do to prepare for the assessment centre if you are invited.

We have tried to offer as much detail as possible here but if you have any further questions about the application process, or about the organisation and the opportunity to work as a Brilliant Club tutor, then please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

The application form is available on our website:

www.thebrilliantclub.org/researchers/online-application-form/

Email: apply@thebrilliantclub.org

Phone: **020 7921 4540**

Yours sincerely,

The Brilliant Club Recruitment Team

Section 1 – Overview of the application process

The Brilliant Club strives to ensure that we recruit outstanding individuals to work as PhD Tutors and we have worked hard to develop an application process that is thorough and effective, as well as being transparent and consistent. We believe that an effective application process is one where we see you perform at your best and so we have created this guidance document to help support your application to work as a Brilliant Club tutor.

The application process is broken down into three stages, which will be explained in full detail over the following pages:

1. Online application form

- This contains five sections: i) Personal details, ii) Contact details, iii) Academic history, iv) Employment details and v) Assessment questions, which require you to explain why you want to work as a Brilliant Club tutor and why you think you will excel in the role.

2. Assessment centre

- If your application form meets our criteria then you will be invited to an assessment centre which will be held at either our offices near Waterloo in London, or Warwick, Leicester or Durham Universities.
- The assessment centre consists of four activities: i) a mini-lesson delivered to two Brilliant Club assessors, ii) a written evaluation of your mini-lesson, iii) a group activity, and iv) a short interview.
- You will be required to attend for roughly two hours.

3. After the assessment centre

- We will inform you of the result of your application as soon as possible after the assessment and will provide you with feedback on our decision.

What we are looking for in our PhD tutors

We are looking for applicants who have the potential to deliver excellent small-group tutorials to high performing pupils in low participation schools and who are motivated to support The Brilliant Club in its mission to widen access to highly selective universities and build a movement that mobilises the PhD student community to address educational disadvantage.

We are often asked whether applicants need to have previous experience of teaching or working with young people - the short answer is no. Although we do look favourably on evidence of past success of working as a teacher or with young people, we do not require our PhD tutors to have any specific experience. We are not necessarily looking for the finished article; rather, we are looking for applicants who have the potential to deliver excellent small-group tutorials and are motivated to make a difference. We are looking for people who have a positive attitude to education, who can demonstrate our core values and key skills, and who will act professionally as ambassadors and advocates for The Brilliant Club, their university and higher education more broadly.

We are confident that our application process identifies these people and that our training and support programmes ensure that they are well equipped do an outstanding job.

The key competencies we look for in our PhD Tutors:

Communication Skills; Humility; Passion for Subject; Professionalism; Reflection.

Section 2 – Guide to the application process

1) Online application form www.thebrilliantclub.org/researchers/online-application-form/

i) Personal details

We ask for some personal details to help us track applications and evaluate our recruitment. Information given is not shared with anyone else and in no way affects the success of your application to work as a Brilliant Club tutor.

ii) Contact details

iii) Academic history

iv) Employment details

This section asks firstly about your legal eligibility to work and secondly about your availability and preferences in terms of subjects. In order to work as a Brilliant Club tutor you need to be eligible to work in the UK and also to have passed a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check - now also known as DBS.

The following groups of people will typically be eligible to work in the UK:

- UK citizens
- EU nationals
- International students residing with a Tier IV visa or other appropriate visa

If you do not fit into one of these groups then please check your eligibility before proceeding with your application.

Upon enrolment on to a Brilliant Club training programme we will ask you fill out an Enhanced Disclosure CRB check for which we will then pay to be processed. Having police cautions or criminal convictions does not necessarily preclude you from passing a CRB check but if you have these on your record we would ask that you make the Team Administrator aware of the situation in advance of your enrolment on to the training programme.

Although your availability is likely to change over the course of the year as field work, conferences and deadlines come along and we understand this, it is helpful if you are able give us an initial indication of the best time(s) of year for you to work as a Brilliant Club. At the assessment centre, you will be able to complete an 'Unavailability Form'. On this, you can note which dates and times you are not able to deliver tutorials over the period of each placement. From this information, a Programme Officer will be able to match successful applicants to schools. Most of our tutors conduct placements alongside other academic commitments, and we work hard to match tutors who have requested placements to schools.

v) Assessment questions

Section 5 asks you to explain why you want to work as a Brilliant Club tutor and why you think you will excel in the role. For questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 please answer the questions in detail (within the word limit) and if you see fit please feel free to draw upon your personal beliefs, past experiences and any empirical data or theory that supports your answer. For questions 4 and 6 we are asking for an objective list of any relevant experience you may have and an explanation of the context in which this experience was gained.

Although we do look favourably on evidence of past success of working as a teacher or with young people, we do not require our PhD tutors to have any specific experience. First and foremost we are looking for people who have the potential to have a significant positive impact on the education of the young people they will be working with.

If your application form meets our criteria (and the vast majority do) then you will be invited to take part in an assessment centre which will be held at either our offices near Waterloo in London, or Warwick, Leicester or Durham Universities. We aim to process application forms within two weeks of receipt, although there may occasionally be delays at peak times, especially when PhD placements are taking place. If we have not responded within two weeks please feel free to chase us up for an answer.

**We currently have a rolling application system and, as such,
there are no specific deadlines after which we no longer consider application forms.**

2) Assessment centre

Each of our assessment centres last for about two hours, and each applicant will take part in four activities:

- i. A mini-lesson delivered to two Brilliant Club assessors (8 minutes)
- ii. A group activity in which all candidates participate together (28 minutes)
- iii. A written evaluation of your mini-lesson (15 minutes)
- iv. A one-to-one interview (20 minutes)

Candidates will take part in the activities on a carousel so you will not necessarily complete each in the above order. When you are allocated to an assessment centre, you will be given an arrival time - you can expect to leave about two hours later.

Please bring along to the assessment centre:

ONE of the following:

- Current valid passport (including any relevant visas)
- Birth certificate (UK & Channel Islands)

and TWO proofs of address. This can be any of the following:

- Council tax bill
- Bank statement / credit card bill
- P45 / P60 form
- Utility bill / TV license

i) Mini-lesson (8 minutes)

You will be required to plan and deliver an 8 minute mini-lesson on an aspect of your PhD thesis to two Brilliant Club assessors. The assessors will be acting in the manner of high performing 14 year-old pupils and you are expected to interact with them as such. There is no need for you to plan for behavioural challenges; the mini-lesson is not designed as a test of your behaviour management skills but rather to assess how you demonstrate and uphold our core values and key skills.

Speaking from past experience of assessing mini-lessons, we recommend that you give real thought to the challenges associated with delivering such a short lesson:

- The lesson should be accessible but challenging, and should be pitched at a level that you could realistically expect 14 year-old Brilliant Club students to meet
- The lesson will require good organisational skills and we are looking for applicants to deliver a lesson with appropriate sections and well managed timings
- The lesson should be interactive and allow the pupils to directly engage with the material; in order to aid this you may want to plan activities and questions
- The lesson will be strictly timed and you will not be allowed to run over eight minutes

We will provide the following resources only:

- A laptop with a Windows operating system and Microsoft Office 2010
- A whiteboard with a projector
- Whiteboard pens, biros, pencils and paper

You are welcome to use any other resources as you see fit but will have to provide them yourself, including bringing electronic documents on a USB stick or sending them by email in advance. If you want to use your own laptop then please bear the following two things in mind: 1) We are not able to provide internet so please ensure that any e-resources are downloaded onto your laptop or memory stick, and 2) If you use an Apple Mac then please ensure that you bring an adapter for a VGA cable in order that you can connect it to the projector.

Finally, we would like to stress that we are asking you to plan a **lesson** and **not a presentation**.

To this end, we have included for your consideration an excerpt from a short article addressing the question:

“What makes an effective teacher?”

From H.G. Wells’ Mr Chips to Robin Williams in Dead Poets Society, tradition in literature and films show the charismatic teacher as the heroic figure. But what does research tell us? An observational research and classroom learning evaluation study based at Leicester University in the 1970s investigated teachers’ classroom behaviour and its impact on pupil progress.

Some behavioural features were consistently exhibited by more effective teachers:

- High numbers of interactions with pupils
- Higher level questioning of pupils
- Regular constructive feedback
- Encouraged independence - pupils think things through for themselves

(The Oracle Study, 1970)

Furthermore, in 1979 Michael Rutter’s landmark study found that effective teachers:

- Created a work-centred environment
- Often engaged and interacted with the whole class
- Had high expectations of pupils
- Provided stimulating learning activities that were challenging
- Used higher order questioning of pupils
- Consistently praised pupils for their achievements

(Rutter et al, 1979)

ii) Group activity (28 minutes)

The group activity is designed to assess your interaction with your peers, particularly in reference to The Brilliant Club’s key skills and core values. There is nothing you need to do in advance to prepare of the group activity and all resources will be provided for you on the day. Before the group activity starts you will be given a brief that sets out what is expected during the activity.

iii) Written evaluation (15 minutes)

At some point after your mini-lesson we will ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on how you think the lesson went and the complete a short written evaluation including ‘what went well’ and ‘even better if’. The evaluation is designed to assess your reflection skills, which play a crucial part in excellent teaching. The evaluation will usually take about fifteen minutes and there is nothing you need to do in advance to prepare.

iv) One-to-one interview (20 minutes)

The final stage of the application process is a short one-to-one interview. This will comprise of questions about your motivation for the role, competency and scenario questions, also an opportunity for you to ask us any questions you may have. There is nothing you need to do in advance to prepare for the interview.