Application Guidance

Welcome and Thank you.............................................................................................................................................1
Overview of the application process.........................................................................................................................2
What we are looking for in our PhD tutors..................................................................................................................2
Guide to the application process...................................................................................................................................3
Assessment centre..........................................................................................................................................................4

Welcome and Thank you

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying to become a Brilliant Club PhD tutor.

The Brilliant Club is an award-winning charity that exists to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities.

We do this by mobilising the PhD community to share its academic expertise with state schools.

Over the academic year 2016/7 we have recruited, trained and employed a cohort of over 450 doctoral and post-doctoral researchers to deliver university-style teaching to more than 10,500 high performing pupils across England, Scotland and Wales.

We are delighted that you are considering making an application to work as a Brilliant Club tutor. We believe that aside from the proven 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; building your teaching experience; the opportunity to disseminate your research to a non-specialist audience; meeting like-minded researchers; and earning money.

This application guide is designed to support your application to join us as a PhD 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 currently have a rolling application system and, as such, there are no specific deadlines after which we no longer consider application forms.

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 PhD tutor, then please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

Email:  appl y@thebrill iantclub.org  Phone:  020 7939 1946

Yours sincerely,

The Brilliant Club Recruitment Team
Overview of the application process

The application process is broken down into three stages:

1. Online application form
   This contains five sections:
   i) Personal details
   ii) Contact details
   iii) Academic history
   iv) Employment details
   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 either at one of our offices (London, Birmingham, Leeds), or at a university close to your home.
   The assessment centre consists of four activities - you will attend for about two hours
   i) a mini-lesson delivered to two Brilliant Club assessors
   ii) a written evaluation of your mini-lesson
   iii) a group activity
   iv) a short interview

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 often asked whether applicants need to have previous experience of teaching or working with young people - the short answer is no. We are not necessarily looking for the finished article.

We are looking for applicants who have the potential to deliver excellent small-group tutorials to high performing pupils, 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 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.

The key competencies we look for in our PhD tutors are:

   Communication Skills – Humility – Passion for Subject – Professionalism – Reflection
Guide to the application process

Online application form https://www.tfaforms.com/421564

1. 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.

2. Contact details
3. Academic history
4. How did you hear about The Brilliant Club?
5. Employment and placement 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.

The Brilliant Club provides enhanced disclosure DBS checks for all its PhD tutors. These show all unspent convictions. A conviction does not necessarily mean we will not be able to place you in a school, however an unspent conviction can make it more challenging to place a PhD tutor in a school. We approach these on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the PhD tutor and potential placement schools. If you have any questions on this, please contact tutorhr@thebrilliantclub.org and the team will be happy to set up a phone call to discuss this further.

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 tutor. Most of our tutors conduct placements alongside other academic commitments, and we work hard to match tutors who have requested placements to schools.

6. 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. Please answer the questions in detail (within the word limit) and if you see fit feel free to draw upon your personal beliefs, past experiences and any empirical data or theory that supports your answer.

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.
Assessment centre

If your application form meets our criteria (and the vast majority do) then you will be invited to take part in an assessment centre either at one of our offices (London, Birmingham, Leeds), or at a university close to your home.

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

1. A mini-lesson delivered to two Brilliant Club assessor (8 minutes)
2. A group activity in which all candidates participate together
3. A written evaluation of your mini-lesson
4. A one-to-one interview

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.

Mini-lesson

You will be required to plan and deliver an 8-minute mini-lesson on an aspect of your doctoral or post-doctoral research 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 on which to present any slides (you will either present on the laptop, or onto a screen if a projector is available)
- 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 always able to provide internet so please ensure that any e-resources are downloaded onto your laptop or memory stick
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)

Group Activity

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.

Written Evaluation

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.

One-to-one interview

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.