

Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC) Guide

In this guide

What is FSAC?	2
Who are the assessors?	2
What will be assessed?	3
Strategic approach to objectives	3
Seeing the big picture	3
Changing and improving	3
Analysis and decision making	3
Making effective decisions	3
Achieving commercial outcomes	3
Delivering value for money	4
Building productive relationships and developing capability	4
Collaborating and partnering	4
Building capability for all	4
Leading and communicating	4
Life as a Fast Streamer	5
Profile – Jill Young, Fast Streamer	5
FSAC - a taste of life as a fast streamer	5
The group exercise	6
The analysis exercise	9
The leadership exercise	11
How can I prepare?	13
Before you arrive	13
Travel information - London	13
Travel information - Newcastle.....	15
While at FSAC	17
What happens after FSAC?	17
Other assessments	18
European Fast Stream.....	18
Commercial Fast Stream/Finance Fast Stream.....	18
Generalist Fast Stream/HR Fast Stream	18
Claiming expenses	19

Congratulations

You've reached the Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC).

This guide tells you what to expect there and what happens afterwards.

What is FSAC?

FSAC is a half-day assessment centre that selects graduates with the calibre and potential to join the Fast Stream. Research shows that assessment centres make more accurate predictions about how you will perform at work than other recruitment methods. Fast Stream standards are high and to have reached the assessment centre is a significant achievement. You now have the chance to show that you have the skills and personal qualities to be a successful Fast Streamer.

Our aim is to measure each candidate's skills, aptitudes and abilities against set criteria. You will complete a variety of exercises, including a group exercise, in which you'll be working with 4 or 5 fellow candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

You will attend FSAC either in Newcastle or London.

Who are the assessors?

"The Fast Stream selection process is award winning and we pride ourselves on ensuring fairness throughout. Our aim as assessors is for you to have a really positive candidate experience and to perform at your very best."

Phil Wilson, Chief Assessor

Each group of candidates will be seen by specially selected and trained assessors. These are mainly experienced civil servants. There will also be occupational psychologists, with experience in assessing candidates for employment, and some recently retired civil servants.

A trainee assessor, senior assessor or a visitor might accompany the assessors to observe this process and will take no part in your assessment. If you are uncomfortable about the trainee or visitor sitting in on your leadership exercise, please feel free to say so – this will not affect your assessment in any way. However, most candidates don't mind an extra observer in the room.

What will be assessed?

Fair and open recruitment is important to us. We will assess you solely on your performance in the exercises.

The assessors will have no information on you except your name. They will not have seen your application form or your scores from earlier stages in the selection process. They will not know which university you attended or are attending. Nor will they know whether you have applied before. Also, the Civil Service is committed to equal opportunities, so your socio-economic or ethnic background, gender, appearance, age, sexual orientation, accent, political views, religion, personal beliefs or previous employment play no part in our final decision. We want you to feel free to express your point of view throughout the assessment.

You will be assessed against the following competencies, grouped into 4 areas:

Strategic approach to objectives

Seeing the big picture

- Having an in-depth understanding of how your role supports organisational objectives and the wider public needs.
- Meeting Civil Service goals and providing the greatest value.

Changing and improving

- Being responsive, innovative and looking to create effective change.
- Being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements, and working in smarter, more focused ways.

Analysis and decision making

Making effective decisions

- Being objective; using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice.
- Showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned decisions.

Achieving commercial outcomes

- Maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities.

- Having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are providing added value and working to stimulate economic growth.

Delivering value for money

- The efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in providing public services.
- Implementing solutions that achieve quality and effectiveness for the least cost.
- Basing decisions on evidence and following agreed processes and policies and challenging these where they appear to prevent value for money.

Building productive relationships and developing capability

Collaborating and partnering

- Creating and maintaining positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people to help get business done.
- Working effectively, sharing information and building good relationships, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Building capability for all

- Having a strong focus on continuous learning.
- Keeping your knowledge and skill set up to date.

Leading and communicating

- Leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm.
- Supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens.

Top tip

“Try to relax, sleep well the night before. Remember you will not do as well on all the activities so try hard to compartmentalise them and do not let a perceived bad performance in one affect you in the next – let it go.” **Maya Desai, Fast Streamer**

Life as a Fast Streamer

Profile – Jill Young, Fast Streamer

“The FSAC can sometimes be a somewhat worrying prospect. All those exercises packed into a half day; all those activities providing numerous opportunities to trip up or just not do yourself justice. The more you think about the tasks the worse it becomes.

In preparing for my FSAC I received loads of great advice, such as:

- *Don't worry if you feel you performed better in some tasks than others. This is to be expected. Just don't dwell on those you wish you could redo and focus on the next task ahead.*
- *Make sure you have breakfast and lunch. Ok, this advice was clearly from my mum but she was right, you feel nervous, you can't face food but it's such a long day you really need to make sure that you are ready to work hard and concentrate on the task in hand.*

To save you from the hours of worrying I am going to let you into the best secret for success for the FSAC I was given. It's not as practical as some of the advice you will hear and maybe harder to do when you first hear it, but I am convinced that when I was in your shoes it helped me pass and most importantly get this job:

Enjoy it.

Enjoy the experience. Enjoy the task that you are doing. And by enjoying it you will give it your best shot.

Having done this myself I know it works. I left the assessment centre exhausted, but travelled home reflecting on how it had been a great learning experience for me and I had done all I could to show not only how much I wanted a place on the scheme but also that I would also be capable of doing it.”

FSAC - a taste of life as a fast streamer

As well as giving us a chance to assess you, FSAC will offer you the opportunity to sample the life of a Fast Streamer. You will do exercises designed to stretch you: a group discussion, a written analysis exercise and a leadership exercise.

To give you a feel for the type of work a Fast Streamer does, you will find that the tasks given to you whether in the group meeting, writing policy advice or when

making an individual briefing to a senior manager, will give you a flavour of the varied work you might do as a Fast Streamer. They will show the kinds of tasks which you might do from the very start of your career.

The group exercise

This oral exercise is designed to test your ability to make decisions, to work with others, to show leadership and communicate well, and to give value for money. You will be given approximately 30 minutes to prepare for the exercise by yourself.

The following gives a flavour of this exercise – the actual exercise differs in content each year.

In your group of 5 or 6, you will be presented with a fictitious scenario where you and your colleagues form a task group set up to advise on meeting a government objective or commitment. You will be given several options, typically in the form of different proposals or projects. The group will have about 40 minutes to agree which of these should be recommended to ministers and to provide some supporting advice.

At the start of the exercise, you will receive a brief which summarises the overall scenario, and gives detailed information on the main issues for discussion and on the position you are representing. All group members will have the same information about the scenario and the options. Each group member will also have an individual, assigned brief, setting out a different negotiating position and some supporting material. Your task is to gain the best outcome for the position you are representing as well as for the whole group.

Group members are regarded as equal and groups are told not to appoint someone to chair the meeting. Not only will you be expected to present a strong case, you will also need to listen to what the other candidates have to say and then negotiate to come to an agreed position. All members of the group are expected to contribute to the discussion on all of the projects. You are advised to keep to the information in the briefs, remembering that the scenario is fictitious and you should avoid introducing information or assertions that contradict evidence from the papers.

You should not feel that you are competing with other members of your group. You should seek to establish co-operative relationships within your group, rather than try to score points off other participants.

Overall, your assessor will be evaluating your performance against 3 competency areas:

- **Analysis and decision making**
- **Building productive relationships and developing capability**
- **Leading and communicating**

A summary of the type of scenario you can expect in the group exercise:

Transport programmes

The Department for Transport and Communications wishes to review 6 major transport programmes to identify where savings can be made. This means that tough decisions will need to be taken about the future of existing programmes, including some that have been regarded as priorities in terms of meeting the government's objective of developing a modern, integrated and sustainable transport infrastructure across the country.

You are a member of a task group of 6 people representing different sections of the department. The task group has been set up to review 6 short-listed options and to reach agreement on the 2 programmes where you believe it would be least damaging to cut the budget for the next 3 years and the 2 where cuts should be resisted most strongly.

The options are:

A new high speed rail link

Following the success of previous high speed rail links, the government has announced plans to build a new high speed line linking the main cities on the south coast of England, running from Dover to Exeter. The project has strong support from the business community, which has benefited greatly from improved speed and reliability of travel between major cities on existing high speed rail routes, both directly and through relieving congestion on local roads.

The current rail links between the south coast cities are slow by modern standards: a new high speed link would increase passenger numbers and increase economic activity in the areas served. Environmental groups and the local population closest to the proposed routes have voiced opposition to the scheme.

Free access to cycles and cycling facilities

The government is committed to encouraging cycling as a low cost, healthy and environmentally friendly form of transport. It is seen by many as providing a cost-effective way of reducing congestion in major towns and cities, where many people still use cars for relatively short journeys.

The success of some demonstration projects providing free cycle hire and access to dedicated cycle ways has led the government to draw up plans for a major national initiative providing funding to local authorities or local community groups planning to set up similar schemes in their areas. Environmentalists and cycling organisations

support this initiative but the business community feels that the money would be better spent on road and public transport improvements.

New runway at Birmingham International Airport

Airports within easy reach of London are currently operating at full capacity and efforts are now focused on making more effective use of other airport capacity. The government has made clear that it will not support significant expansion at any of London's international airports. However, it is considering whether a second runway should be built at Birmingham International Airport.

There is strong pressure from the business and financial communities for the government to make an early announcement confirming that the project will go ahead. There is a strong economic case for the project but the proposal has attracted opposition from some quarters.

Concessionary travel for older people

People of pensionable age have been entitled to free or reduced price travel on buses in their local area for many years. In 2010 a national scheme was introduced allowing such people free transport on local buses throughout the country and to other forms of transport in some urban areas. Despite the raising of the age at which people come entitled to free travel, an increasingly ageing population has led to the numbers benefitting from the scheme growing every year, with consequent loss of revenue to transport providers which the government has to make good. Removing or restricting the entitlement to free travel would be highly controversial and go against previous government commitments.

Electric vehicle support infrastructure

Use of battery powered plug-in vehicles and hybrid vehicles (combining a traditional and electric engine) has become more common in the last decade as the cost of these vehicles has reduced from levels that initially discouraged many potential buyers. However, the growth in their usage has proved disappointing, mainly because of the lack of suitable electric vehicle charging points.

The government has set out its intention to develop a national electric vehicle support infrastructure. Environmental groups have welcomed the initiative but traditional car manufacturers have given only lukewarm support.

Reducing motorway congestion

Road congestion remains one of the most serious transport problems facing the country. It is widely recognised to be bad for motorists, bad for business and bad for the environment. The government has therefore drawn up plans for a range of traffic management initiatives on existing motorways designed to reduce congestion in the worst affected areas. The 3 main elements are single tolled motorway lanes that allow drivers to pay for access to faster lanes, improved signalling and traffic

management controls at major junctions and new 'rapid response' systems involving emergency services to clear motorways more quickly following accidents. Environmental groups oppose this, claiming that such investment merely encourages more traffic onto the roads.

The briefing for the exercise will provide further details about the options, including comparative data on things like the expected savings, impacts and timescales, and advice on potential support for or opposition to each option from different interest groups. It will also provide further background on the government's aims and objectives. Each group member's individual assigned brief will explain their negotiating position on the different options and provide some points and arguments to support their position. You will be able to take all the briefing material into the meeting.

Top tip

"It's really important to remember that this isn't a competition, it's a time for you to show that you can influence other people in a positive manner. Making sure that everyone feels involved is a good way to start."

Stephen Dick, Fast Streamer

The analysis exercise

This written exercise lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes and contains 2 tasks. You will be presented with a file of papers which provide information from different sources on 2 fictitious initiatives which are each being trialled.

Your first task is to analyse the issues and results to date and, on the customised PC provided, prepare a recommendation which builds a balanced and convincing case for extending 1 of the 2 alternatives nationwide. To do this you will need to compare and contrast them, using criteria you will be given, and explain convincingly the reasons for your recommendation. There is no right answer; a good case can be made for either initiative. The important thing is how you support your decision, using the facts provided, and how you express this in writing. You should pay particular attention to the time when completing this exercise. You will find you have no time for rough drafts and you should work quickly and methodically through the papers. We suggest you spend around 30 minutes reading through the documents and then 40 minutes to do the comparative analysis.

The second task is to draw conclusions from the quantitative data in the papers, to identify trends; you will need to present your conclusions clearly so that a Minister could use the figures during an interview. We suggest you spend around 20 minutes on this task.

Your assessor will be evaluating your performance against the following competency areas:

- **Strategic approach to objectives**
- **Analysis and decision making**
- **Leading and communicating**

A summary of the type of scenario you can expect in the analysis exercise

The UK is searching for alternative sources of energy from within the country. Your minister has asked for advice on the best allocation of £100 million start-up funding for 1 of 2 projects concerning the exploitation of new sources of energy in the UK.

Option 1: Seabed mineral extraction

The £100 million would be invested in a joint venture with the British energy company, LHP (Light, Heat and Power), to extract minerals such as coal, titanium and manganese from the sea bed. New technology would extract and crush coal on the sea bed and suck it via a flexible pipe to the surface, where it would be burnt at an environmentally friendly power station. LHP has identified a site for the first power station near Hemmingfleet on the East Anglian coast.

If successful, this method could result in cheap electricity for the domestic market. The technology could be a major export earner and 20-25% of the UK's future electricity requirement could be provided from this source in 25 years' time at 20 power stations spread around the coastline of the UK. There would be a total capital cost of £25 billion. The power stations would be environmentally clean and 90% of the carbon dioxide emissions from burning the coal would be captured and fed back into the sea bed. The pilot scheme would last 5 years. However, there are risks. The financial position of LHP is not secure and the government could be left to pick up the bill. If the scheme doesn't work, a stretch of East Anglian coast would have been damaged unnecessarily. There are significant presentational issues about using coal and strong local opposition to this project.

Option 2: Fusion

This option involves investing £100m as the UK share in a £500m international academic consortium involving 7 countries including China and India. It is investigating a promising line of research into nuclear fusion, which would produce electricity by separating deuterium from sea water. The research in this country would be carried out at an existing research facility in South Lancashire, led by a distinguished scientist. There are virtually limitless supplies of deuterium in sea water and if fusion can be made to work there is the prospect of producing electricity in vast quantities.

Furthermore, unlike 20th century fission reactors, which produce long lived, environmentally harmful waste products, the fusion process is largely pollution-free. It is the least environmentally damaging option as no carbon dioxide emissions are involved. Fusion requires large initial amounts of energy to produce electricity and the

reactor buildings are huge. Five would ultimately be needed at a capital cost of perhaps £40 billion. These could produce 15-20% of electricity supply in 25 years' time. In the much longer term, as the cost of building the power station is written off, perhaps 75% of electricity could come from fusion. The pilot programme would take 10 years. The risks are potentially huge. If the research came to nothing there would be the financial cost of disbanding and paying off the research team – and loss of national prestige. Public opinion may not accept that fusion does not have the same problems as fission and persuading them otherwise might prove too difficult.

“The most important part of this exercise is to remember that you do not want to spend too much time making a decision as each option can be justifiably argued. The assessors are looking at how you justify your decision and use the supporting evidence. Finally, even though each option can be argued equally it is important to take time to structure your answer and demonstrate the correct logic while using the supporting evidence provided.”

James Curran, Fast Streamer

The leadership exercise

This exercise lasts up to 30 minutes (with 25 minutes preparation time) and is designed to test your ability to take on a leadership role, dealing with team members and stakeholders and the various issues they present. Your assessor will play the part of a senior manager to whom you have been assigned.

Your task is to give your assessor an oral briefing on how you plan to take on the role of team leader and handle the various issues that will be presented to you in advance in a written brief. You will have 25 minutes to read the brief and prepare for the meeting with the assessor. You will be given up to 10 minutes to deliver your oral briefing to the assessor, after which the assessor will ask you some further questions and engage in discussion with you for the rest of the 30 minutes' exercise time. After the exercise, you will be asked to complete a short self-review form. This is an integral part of the assessment of your performance at FSAC.

Overall, your assessor will be evaluating your performance against 3 areas:

- **Strategic approach to objectives**
- **Building productive relationships and developing capability**
- **Leading and communicating**

A summary of the type of scenario you can expect in the leadership exercise:

You are about to take over the leadership of a small team that is managing a project that needs to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. You will be given details of the aims of the project, the current and expected progress and some further materials that describe a range of issues both within the team you are about to lead and with the various stakeholders. You are asked to give an oral briefing to an assessor, who will be in the role of your future line manager, describing how you plan to take on the role of team leader and deal with the issues that have been identified. After the briefing, you should also be prepared to explain and defend your proposals, answer questions, respond to additional information the assessor may give you and come up with further ideas that the assessor may ask for.

An example of the kind of scenario would be a new government initiative for an 'Enhanced Living Wage'. The 'Enhanced Living Wage' would be set at a level, higher than the National Minimum Wage that would enable people to live without having to rely on government benefits. While retaining the National Minimum Wage (to protect jobs, especially for young people) the new government is keen that as many people as possible are in jobs that provide an income which ensures they don't need to rely on means tested benefits. The government must set an example both through pay rates for its own staff and for those of contractors/ suppliers. If it is successful, the government envisages rolling it out for all companies with more than 250 employees.

Departments with large numbers of junior administrative staff perceive a problem in terms of cost, and there are also issues around contracted cleaners etc. You are given information about your team, about the stage implementation has reached and the problems faced with it. You need to make an oral briefing for up to 10 minutes and then be prepared to discuss the issues and your ideas further.

Top tip

"Make the most of your preparation time to ensure that you feel comfortable with presenting your ideas. Also, use this time to think of potential questions that the assessor might ask you.

If the assessor asks you something that you have not prepared, don't be afraid to take the time to consider the answer fully. Try to be positive rather than confrontational, as the questions they ask may help you better develop your ideas, or give you the opportunity to present an angle that you missed during your initial presentation.

Finally, remember to breathe! I have a problem with speaking too quickly when I am nervous. If you are similar, try to concentrate on slowing down and speaking clearly, this will help you keep to the allotted time."

Alisa Harris, Fast Streamer

How can I prepare?

Before you arrive

There's a limit to what you can do to prepare for FSAC, but here are a few pointers.

- Try to remember the competencies and have those in mind during the FSAC to help direct your performance.
- Read this guide carefully. It sets the scene and gives examples of the exercises you'll come across during your day with us.
- Find out as much as you can about what civil servants, and particularly Fast Streamers, do. The Fast Stream website (www.faststream.gov.uk) has a lot of information on this .
- Get a good night's sleep!

Travel information - London

FSAC takes place in the headquarters of HM Revenue and Customs at 100 Parliament Street, London, SW1A 2BQ. But don't use the main door: FSAC has a dedicated entrance around the corner on King Charles Street. You'll find the door beneath the arch which spans the end of King Charles Street. It's clearly marked and there's a map on the next page. Our telephone number is **03000 584 994**.

If you are unable to come or are delayed on the day, please call us (messages can be left on the answerphone outside office hours).

London travel information

Visit www.tfl.gov.uk All London mainline stations are within Travel Zone 1 – ask at the ticket office for the best travel card to buy.

London Underground

You need to travel to Westminster station.

Euston or King's Cross St. Pancras

Take the Victoria line to Victoria, change to the Circle or District line for Westminster.

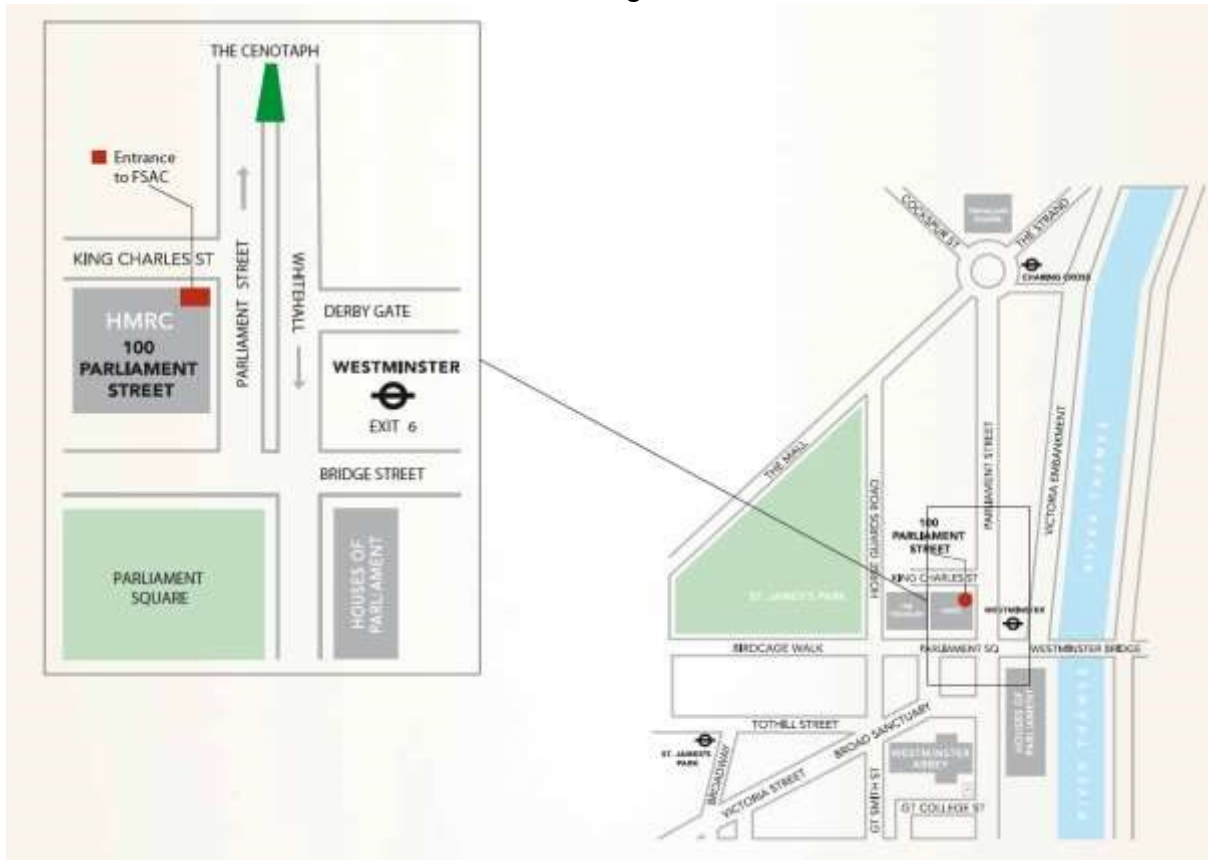
Liverpool Street, Paddington or Victoria

Take the Circle or District line to Westminster.

Waterloo

Take the Jubilee line to Westminster (1 stop).

The walk to FSAC from Westminster Underground station takes about 5 minutes



Travel information - Newcastle

FSAC is located in Tyne View Park, D Block, Tyne View Park, Whitley Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 9RZ. Upon reaching the site, please report to the Tyne View Park Security Gatehouse. There's a map on the next page. Our telephone number is **03000 553 194**.

If you are unable to come or are delayed on the day, please call us (messages can be left on the answerphone outside office hours).

Newcastle travel information

Visit www.nexus.org.uk

By train

Newcastle Central Station is the nearest mainline station.

By Metro

Take the Metro to Benton on the Tyne and Wear Metro Yellow line

By bus

Bus stops are located nearby, further details can be found on www.nexus.org.uk/bus

Park and ride

Park and ride facilities are provided at various Metro station, further details can be found on www.nexus.org.uk/metro/metro-park-and-ride-stations.

By car

(There are no parking facilities available and car parking fees are not reimbursed)

Northbound from A1(M)

- Follow A194(M) just past Washington Moto Service Station
- Continue to A19 Northbound towards Tyne Tunnel
- Continue through the Tyne Tunnel (Toll £1.70) and follow A19 North
- Take Exit for A191/A186 from A19
- Follow A191 towards Gosforth
- Tyne View Park entrance is situated approximately 100 yards past Blue Flames Leisure Centre on the left

Southbound from A1(M)

- Exit A1(M) at Seaton Burn/Fisher Lane Interchange and follow signs for A19 Southbound
- Continue southbound and take exit for A191/A186 from A19
- Follow A191 towards Gosforth
- Tyne View Park entrance is situated approximately 100 yards past Blue Flames Leisure Centre/Whitley Park on the left

Taxis

Please contact the Operations Team on 03000 553194 if you require local taxi firm details **Please note that taxi fares will not be reimbursed.**

The walk to FSAC from Benton Metro station takes around 10 minutes.



(Image taken from Google Maps)

While at FSAC

- Stay relaxed and try to enjoy the day.
- Be yourself. There is no such thing as a typical Fast Streamer. The Civil Service is committed to increasing the diversity of the Fast Stream intake.
- Remember that assessors can only give credit for what you say and do. They are not trying to trip you up; they want you to do well and show what you are capable of.
- Remember that you are not competing with others in your group. You are all being assessed against an independent standard. All of you or none of you may be successful.
- Go into each exercise with a positive frame of mind. It is hard to do well in every exercise. In any case, you may not be the best judge of your own performance and the process is designed so that, if you do badly at one exercise, you have a chance to perform better in another.
- Read the instructions carefully and follow them to the letter. If you are not sure of anything, ask before the exercise begins. Don't feel embarrassed about doing so.
- All the exercises require you to work at speed. This is to reflect the demands of Fast Stream jobs. Make sure you keep an eye on the clock and use your time as effectively as possible.

Top tip

“The assessment process is comprehensive, and the exercises are each considered separately, with all relevant assessors involved at different times. No final decision will be made until your performance in all the exercises has been fully evaluated. The process is designed to be challenging and it's rare for a candidate to do well in everything. It's quite possible that you'll feel you haven't performed well in a particular exercise, but no single part of the assessment will rule you in or out. So it makes sense to concentrate on doing your best at each stage and not to dwell on what's happened earlier in the FSAC.

Also, when you do FSAC, try to imagine you are already working in the Civil Service and the assessors and other candidates are your colleagues – your mind set and behaviour are then more credible and convincing.”

Phil Wilson, Chief Assessor

What happens after FSAC?

You will receive a report on your performance, regardless of whether you are successful or not. This will contain feedback on how you did in each exercise and a list of the strengths and areas for development. You can download this report from the Fast Stream website as soon as possible. Candidates for the following Fast Stream options/schemes will be asked to attend a specialist assessment (or Final

Selection Board), where they will need to show evidence of further skills and particular strengths. Information regarding these specialist assessments will be offered in advance. The options/schemes are:

- **Diplomatic Service**
- **Houses of Parliament**
- **Science and engineering**
- **Digital and technology**
- **Project delivery**
- **Government Communication Services**
- **Economist**
- **Social research**
- **Operational research**
- **Statistics**
- **Diplomatic Service (Economist)**
- **Diplomatic Service (European)**

Other assessments

European Fast Stream

This option does not have a specialist assessment but will be selected by a paper sift and confirmation that you fulfil language and nationality requirements.

Commercial Fast Stream/Finance Fast Stream

These schemes require candidates passing the FSAC to undertake a numerical reasoning test. Details of this will be forwarded after FSAC.

Generalist Fast Stream/HR Fast Stream

If you applied for the Generalist Fast Stream or HR Fast Stream, FSAC is the end of the selection process.

If you are successful you will receive detailed information about what happens next, including how your pre-appointment checks will be completed and how you will be placed in your first post.

Claiming expenses

Candidate expense policy – travel and accommodation.

Terms and conditions

You have a maximum of 30 days from the date of incurring the expense to submit your claim online and send in the printed expense claim form and any original receipts to the Fast Stream Team.

Providing you have spent at least £11, you may claim the amount of your actual travelling expenses from the place where you normally live, work or study to the test/assessment centre. However, you must pay the first £10 of the costs for each event yourself and this will be automatically deducted when you make any claim. Your journey should be by the most economical method of travel. Please retain all original travel/hotel/accommodation receipts and return them with your completed claim form, as without proof of expenditure it will not be possible to refund your claim. However, where an overnight stay is unavoidable and you stay with friends or relatives, you may claim a flat rate sum of £25.

Rail

We can only reimburse standard class fare, however, please take advantage of any available cheap or discounted fares by booking ahead where possible.

Private car

You will be refunded at a rate of 25 pence per mile. Mileage cannot be claimed if you are a passenger in another candidate's car. However, the car driver can claim a passenger supplement of 5 pence per mile for the first passenger and 1p per mile for any additional passengers.

Please note: Taxi fares will not be refunded, car parking fees are not reimbursed and that the Fast Stream Assessment Centre in London is within the London Congestion Charging Zone. Any charges or fines incurred will not be reimbursed.

Motorcycle

You will be refunded at a rate of 24 pence per mile.

Air

Air fares will be refunded only where they are cheaper than the cost of travelling by a surface route, including overnight expenses where necessary. However, you may claim the tourist air fare (please send air tickets in with your claim) if at the time of your interview or test you reside in:

- Shetland or Orkney
- Isle of Man
- Inner or Outer Hebrides
- Isles of Scilly
- Northern Ireland, Channel Islands

Overnight

You will be refunded any actual expenses subject to the following:

- FSAC held in London - up to £120 (including evening meal and breakfast)
- FSAC held in Newcastle - up to £80 per night (including evening meal and breakfast)
- Sleeping berth on a train or boat - cost of berth plus £10 per night

Candidates travelling from abroad

You may claim travelling expenses, as above, only between the place of arrival in the United Kingdom and the interview or test centre. Exceptionally, candidates' expenses direct from Eire may be refunded if this is cheaper than the costs of travelling from the nearest point of entry in the UK. You may not claim overnight expenses for nights spent in the UK because flight or sailing times do not match the interview date or because departures are delayed.

Candidates requiring assistance with mobility

Should you experience difficulty with travelling arrangements, please consult the Fast Stream Team using the message system in your candidate website.

Important: We reserve the right to refuse to pay a claim that does not comply with these terms.

Good luck!
www.faststream.gov.uk