



Civil Service
Fast Stream

Be Yourself
Make a Difference

Be a Fast Streamer

Diplomatic Service
Final Selection Board 2021
Candidate Guide



faststream.gov.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Many congratulations on passing the Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC).

In September 2020, the UK Government united development and diplomacy into one new department - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) - to bring together UK's international effort. It is therefore an exciting time to be joining the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream and be part of the FCDO.

The Final Selection Board (FSB) is the final assessment for candidates who have achieved sufficiently high scores at FSAC and have shown the motivation for a career in the FCDO career. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the FCDO has taken the decision to hold the FSB virtually rather than face-to-face. The aim is to minimise the risk of the process being impacted by the pandemic.

The method being used is a pre-recorded video interview. This format is where recruiters create video questions, to which applicants reply by recording their video answers. Think of a Skype or

FaceTime call without the in-person chat. It will feel similar to the video interview stage that you would have encountered earlier in the recruitment process.

2. LOGISTICS

The logistics of the FSB will be managed by [Capita Resourcing](#) on behalf of the FCDO. They will be using a platform called LaunchPad to deliver the FSB.

You will receive an email from Capita Resourcing containing a link that will take you to LaunchPad to complete the pre-recorded video interview. You will receive the email from Capita Resourcing on the date listed in the e-mail containing this guide. Please ensure you check your junk/spam folder in case it has automatically gone into this folder.

You will have 10 days to complete the interview. The link will expire after 10 days. You will have missed the opportunity to complete the FSB and your application for the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream will be withdrawn. The onus is on the candidate to action the email from Capita Resourcing and complete the interview.

The FCDO will only agree to an extension of the 10 day period in exceptional circumstances. All extension requests must be submitted ahead of the initial 10 day period expiring. If you request an extension after the 10 day period, then your request will be automatically rejected. All extension requests will need to be sent to the FCDO Fast Stream Team (email: Fast.Stream@fcdo.gov.uk). The FCDO will make the final decision over whether an extension is granted or not. There is no appeals process.

3. STRUCTURE & ACTIVITIES

The interview will generally last between 45 and 60 minutes. You can use a PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone with a front facing camera.

Prior to starting, there will be a short introductory guidance video on the LaunchPad platform to ensure that you are comfortable with the platform and understand all of the functions available to you. You'll then have the opportunity to set-up your camera and microphone to get the best quality.

You will then have a practice question. This is essentially a final check to make sure you are happy with your set-up before starting the interview for real. The practice question is not assessed, but we would strongly recommend completing this step to ensure your interview goes smoothly. You can record your response to this question as often as you wish.

Prior to starting your interview. You will be asked to hold up a photo ID (i.e. passport, driving license, etc.) to the camera. Please make sure that you have this to hand. You will need to ensure that the photo and the name on the ID is visible. This is to ensure that the individual taking the interview is the person we were expecting.

You are then ready to start your interview. You will have a series of 16 questions in total. Each question lasts approximately 2-3 minutes. You will have a short amount of time to prepare your response as well as time to record your response. The preparation and answer time may vary depending on the type of question being asked.

During the interview, you will be asked a range of questions including:

- Motivational Questions: Aimed at assessing your motivation and passion for joining the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream.
- Language Aptitude Questions: Designed to provide an indicator on your ability and aptitude to learn a language.
- Strength-Based Questions: Designed to understand your strengths with the aim of identifying individuals that will flourish and prosper in the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream.
- Behavioural Questions: These will be situational-based that are designed to assess your ability to gauge and handle hypothetical work-related situations.

It is important to note that you will only have one opportunity to record your responses. Do not expect follow-up questions - therefore please provide full responses.

Candidates are asked to keep the details of the FSB secure and not to breach confidentiality by divulging information to others including prospective or actual candidates for the Diplomatic Service.

For the strength-based questions and behavioural questions, you will be assessed against the [Civil Service Success Profiles Framework](#). The framework moves recruitment away from using a purely competency based system of assessment. It assesses candidates against a range of elements using a variety of selection methods. The following table highlights which elements of the framework will be assessed:

| Question Type | Number of Questions | Preparation Time per Question | Response Time per Question |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Motivational | 2 | 20 Seconds | 90 Seconds |
| Language Aptitude | 4 | 20 Seconds | 90 Seconds |
| Behavioural-Based: Leadership | 2 | 40 Seconds | 90 Seconds |
| Behavioural-Based: Seeing the Bigger Picture | 2 | 40 Seconds | 90 Seconds |
| Behavioural-Based: Making Effective Decisions | 2 | 40 Seconds | 90 Seconds |

| | | | |
|---|---|------------|------------|
| Strength-Based: Working Together (Inclusive & Relationship Builder) | 2 | 20 Seconds | 90 Seconds |
| Strength-Based: Communicating & Influencing (Explainer & Influencer) | 2 | 20 Seconds | 90 Seconds |

The assessors will be looking for a well-rounded performance across all aspects assessed. You will not be expected to excel in everything assessed; provided your performance is not too far below the standard, you may still be successful.

4. TOP TIPS

During your FSB it is important that you:

- Stay relaxed and try to enjoy the experience.
- Be yourself. The assessors are not looking for a specific ‘type’ of person.
- 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.
- Remember that you are not competing with others on your assessment. You are all being assessed against an independent standard.
- Go into the FSB with a positive frame of mind.
- Look directly at the camera, which may feel weird at first but makes the viewer feel like you’re looking and talking to them.
- Try to use a plain background or minimise any distractions - you should be the focus of the video.
- Look your best by having the light source directly in front of you, whether that be natural light from a window or a lamp directed at you.
- Dress appropriately. Approach in the same manner as you would a face-to-face interview.
- Ensure you speak loudly and clearly throughout the FSB.

5. TECHNICAL ISSUES

There may be occasions when candidates encounter technical issues with the LaunchPad platform. We are happy to work with you to resolve them, but any technical issues must be raised within your 10 day period by contacting the FCDO Fast Stream Team (email: Fast.Stream@fcdo.gov.uk). We therefore strongly recommend completing the interview as soon as possible. If you raise any technical issues after your 10 day period, then we will not be able to assist you.

6. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We want all candidates to be able to perform to the best of their ability and their experience of FSB assessments to be as stress-free and enjoyable as possible. Under the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the FCDO is legally required to make reasonable adjustments where a

provision, criterion or practice applied by the FCDO places a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage compared with a candidate who is not disabled.

If you have requested reasonable adjustments with Civil Service HR (CSHR), then this information will be shared with the FCDO to put in place for your FSB. The FCDO will always endeavour to implement any adjustments. However, in some circumstances it may not be reasonable to make the adjustment. Please note that the onus is on the candidate to request reasonable adjustments with CSHR.

In some exceptional circumstances, we might need to consult one of the FCDO's professional disability advisers to ensure that we are providing the correct adjustments for you. If you fall into this category, then the FCDO will contact you directly. Candidates may be required to supply a medical/ Occupational Health Report or a Workplace Adjustment Passport on request.

If you have any questions about reasonable adjustments during the FSB, then please contact the FCDO Fast Stream Team (email: Fast.Stream@fcdo.gov.uk).

7. RESULTS & DEFERRAL POLICY

You should receive the results of the FSB by the end of March at the latest.

If you are successful, the FCDO Recruitment Team will contact you by email to begin the security clearance process. The projected start date is November 2021.

If you are unsuccessful, the FCDO will update your status on the Fast Stream portal and you will automatically proceed with your next Fast Stream scheme option.

As the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream scheme is relatively small in size, the FCDO do not generally approve deferral requests except in exceptional circumstances such as medical reasons or bereavement. These types of deferral requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and a business case must be submitted to fast.stream@fcdo.gov.uk.

Please note that the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream is not a centrally managed scheme and we do not participate in the following partner programmes: Entrepreneur First; Frontline; Lead First; Police Now; TeachFirst; Think Ahead; and Year Here. Diplomatic Service Fast Stream candidates can therefore not request a deferral to participate in any of these schemes.

8. FEEDBACK

You will be sent a two page feedback report from your FSB. You do not need to request this individually. Please note that, owing to the numbers of candidates being assessed, you may not receive feedback until late April. Feedback is designed to offer a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. This could prove useful both if you are unsuccessful this year but wish to re-apply for the Diplomatic Service in the future and, if you are successful, as a guide to your next developmental steps.

9. PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS

Candidates who are successful at FSB are offered a position with the FCDO, subject to checks into their security, financial and medical backgrounds. This check is referred to as Developed Vetting (DV) clearance.

If you are successful at the FSB, the FCDO Vetting Team will send you a DV Supplement, Security Questionnaire and Financial Questionnaire. It is important that you return these to us as quickly as possible. Failure to do so could result in a delay in your security clearance, which could affect your start date. It is highly recommended that you keep a copy of the completed forms for your own record.

As part of this process, you will be required to attend a security vetting interview. In addition, your referees will be interviewed, either in person or by phone. It is therefore important that both you and your referees are available during the pre-appointment process between April and September. You must notify FCDO Recruitment Team of any time when you, or your referees, are unavailable between these dates. Failure to do so could delay both the vetting process and your potential start date.

10. SALARY DETAILS

The starting salary for Diplomatic Service Fast Streamers commencing in November 2021 is subject to confirmation but for comparison the starting salary for 2020 entrants was **£28,000**. If you are transferring from another government department, you may be entitled to transfer your salary.

11. CONTACT US

We'd be happy to talk to you if you have any questions relating to the FCDO or the FSB process. Please feel free to contact a member of the FCDO Recruitment Team on:

Fast.Stream@fcdo.gov.uk

Good luck with your FSB.

Richard

Richard Everingham
FCDO Recruitment Team



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