

## Civil Service Fast Stream

Case Studies 2021

**The best things about the Fast Stream are the community, the accelerated professional development and the exciting opportunities that come up**

**Rumbi Ruwanza, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Rumbi talks to us about the Science and Engineering Fast Stream**



I studied chemical engineering at university but always had an interest in policy. When I came across the Fast Stream, it looked like the perfect opportunity to use my engineering knowledge while helping to shape government policy.

My experience on the Fast Stream has been great so far. My first posting was as a policy advisor in the Government Office for Science. The high level of responsibility I was given made the role really stretching and rewarding. For example, I chaired meetings with a group of director-general level Chief Scientific Advisors. This is not something I expected at such an early stage but it made the experience extremely exciting. I've also led on a number of other projects and activities as part of my corporate objective, including being a mentor and a Science and Engineering Fast Stream rep. My next posting is in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Clean Heat directorate which I'm really looking forward to.

The best things about the Fast Stream are the community, the accelerated professional development and the exciting opportunities that come up. My advice to someone considering applying is first of all to make sure you actually apply! I think a lot of people don't because they know the scheme has a large number of applicants but don't let that put you off. Secondly, I would look on the Fast Stream website to find out a bit more about the scheme in general and each of the different streams. The

Assessment Centre can be nerve-racking. I would recommend going in as prepared as you can but then beyond that, just enjoy it. Don't be discouraged if you are not successful first time, I've met Fast Streamers who re-applied and made it on to the scheme!

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Science and Engineering Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

## The Fast Stream is a promising pathway to a future career

### Kisshor Samyrao, Civil Service Fast Stream

Kisshor talks to us about the Government Economics Service Fast Stream and producing work that ended up on the news!



There are many exciting streams available within the Fast Stream. The Government Economic Services is the largest employer of Economics intakes in the country. Joining the scheme has presented me with a direct path to apply my economic insights into the real world, as well as making a positive change to the lives of millions of people both in the UK and abroad.

I like the ability to rotate postings and be exposed to a range of work across government, such as emphasising macroeconomics one year, and then microeconomics the next. I have really enjoyed my roles, involved in an array of interesting and complex workstreams, and surrounded by smart, passionate people. Whilst at the Department of International Trade, I worked on high-profile government reviews on its trade modelling practices. I also took the opportunity to develop new skills, learning coding and Mandarin, as well as running advanced CGE modelling. I have chaired meetings with some of the most notable Economists in trade policy from around the world, fostered close friendships and working relationships with colleagues from a range of other government departments, worked with sensitive documents, and produced work that ultimately ended up on the news!

The Fast Stream is a promising pathway to a future career. Perhaps undertaking some light research about how ministries operate, as well as the balance of power between Parliament and government, will give you a sense of the work and tensions at play. Being informed about the news will also go a long way to being able to say something relevant and pertinent in interviews and more! The application process on the whole

is very intuitive and easy to follow. There are plenty of example questions and tests online. I made sure to try my hand at a few before sitting all the tests.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Government Economics Service Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**There is no one ‘type’ of Fast Streamer**

**Alex Ciupka, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Alex talks to us about diversity, changing career and the Finance Fast Stream**



I was seeking a career change when I came across the Finance Fast Stream. I've always been comfortable with numbers, am very interested in government spending and also knew I wanted a job where I felt like I was making a difference, so this seemed like the right option for me!

I've been posted to a range of departments, locations, industries and policy areas so far: the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency in Nottingham, HM Treasury in London and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), working from home. During the Covid outbreak I worked on a BEIS task force, set up to protect the aviation industry from economic crisis and collapse. This was an interesting and tense role. It had me watching the news anxiously every day in case there were any unexpected announcements from aviation companies. I also performed a review of the support and funding in place to help young people with special educational needs and disabilities, with a view to streamlining support across government departments and improving outcomes for young people. In my latest role, I have supported the nuclear sector by creating financial models to strengthen business cases for innovations in nuclear technology.

There is no one ‘type’ of Fast Streamer. My assumption on joining was that everyone was an Oxbridge student arriving straight from university. However, whilst there were some who fit this description there were also plenty who didn't. I have met people from a variety of backgrounds, including those who have changed careers, like myself, or were part of the Civil Service before becoming a Fast Streamer.

The Fast Stream is a great opportunity to anyone interested in public service who wants to stretch their leadership ability, experience a vast array of roles and continuously develop their skills. I would advise someone considering applying to just go for it! It is a long application process but it's worth it.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Finance Fast Stream:  
<https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**There are fifteen different schemes to choose from, there will be a scheme that is perfect for you!**

**Kim Emenike, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Kim talks to us about diversity networks, workplace adjustments and the Project Delivery Fast Stream**



I was drawn to the Fast Stream due to the fact that it is a leadership development scheme, with a variety of professions and paid for qualifications. I was particularly attracted to the Project Delivery scheme, as it would give me the opportunity to work on a range of government projects within a number of departments, as well a six-month secondment outside of government and also a six-month complimentary posting, working in another government profession.

I have just completed my first posting at the Department of Transport (DfT) in a complex programme transforming Britain's railways. The reforms represent a bold new offer to passengers, of punctual and reliable services, simpler tickets and a modern, green and innovative railway that meets the needs of the nation. I achieved so much whilst working on this programme! I undertook secretariat for various senior meetings, led programme reporting and information management, and ran a team Away Day. Finally, I passed the Prince2 Foundation and Practitioner exams!

I have also been involved with DfT's Black Staff and Allies and Social Mobility networks, to increase the number of students from ethnic minority and lower social economic backgrounds applying to the Fast Stream/DfT and Civil Service, attending events and building a support system which contributed to me quickly settling in.

Being on the Fast Stream has helped me grow within a work context and also aided my personal development, enhancing my professional brand and building my network. My dyslexia and dyspraxia were fully accommodated for throughout the application process and I now have a Workplace Adjustment passport which allows me to access additional resources to assist with my daily duties. There are fifteen different schemes to choose from, there will be a scheme that is perfect for you!

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Project Delivery Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**The Fast Stream convinced me it would offer the variety I wanted**

**Kit Henderson, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Kit talks to us about the Commercial Fast Stream, variety on the scheme and the application process**



The Fast Stream is a fun and exciting way to get involved in a wide range of activities. One of the reasons I applied was that I really wanted a varied job and feared becoming bored by doing the same thing day in day out. The Fast Stream convinced me it would offer the variety I wanted. I found it hard to choose my schemes, as I didn't know what most of them were and had no experience in any of the areas, so I picked those that had some relation to my degree. Luckily that worked for me and I really enjoy the Commercial Scheme.

The application process was long but relatively clear. I struggled a bit with giving myself enough time to complete each stage and preparing for the Assessment Centre. If applying, give yourself more time than suggested, but it's perfectly fine if it takes less. I had no clue what an Assessment Centre was, but fortunately my university organised a mock one which gave me a taste of what to expect. So, if you haven't done one before, look for resources that will tell you what to expect and if possible try to do a mock one.

My first posting was in the Crown Commercial Service, setting up and analysing agreements, working on final business cases, running market engagements and creating bid packs; crucial stages of any commercial and procurement activity. Beyond that, I also evaluated and spoke to many suppliers and assessed our customer journey, gaining key procurement experience and greatly developing my skills. As with all jobs, my role was not short of challenges and I had to quickly build my knowledge and understanding. However, with help from my department and colleagues, I've learned how to use a variety of new websites and programmes. I have just started at

the Ministry of Justice. So far, I've really enjoyed meeting my new team and I'm ready to get stuck in!

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Commercial Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**I was keen to work in a role where success looked like providing help and services to people rather than financial profit**

**Mei Mei Loh, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Mei Mei talks to us about flexible working and inclusivity, changing career and the Digital, Data, Technology and Cyber Fast Stream**



After more than fifteen years working as a fashion buyer in the private sector, I was keen to be in a role where success looked like providing help and services to people rather than financial profit. The Fast Stream offered a way to experience different departments and roles within the Civil Service, providing the opportunity to discover your own strengths and what you might be suited to, with flexible working more widely encouraged than in some industries and inclusivity a priority. Digital, Data, Technology and Cyber appealed due to the ever shifting and evolving nature of technology - it's an endlessly exciting field!

My first posting was on a Covid Response team at the Department for Education, helping to get laptops to children who were unable to access a remote education during Lockdown. I really enjoyed worked with such a welcoming and highly talented team who were all determined to deliver something that made a huge different to so many children and families during difficult times.

The Fast Stream application process is rigorous. Be prepared for it to be difficult and to take a long time. Prepare really well for each stage, get advice from current Civil Servants or Fast Streamers to help with the process and think carefully about which stream you want to join, as you are offered a place based on your preferences, much like a university application. Answering questions live in a recorded, automated interview was a new and slightly unnerving way of interviewing but – as with most experiences on the Fast Stream – it pushes you to learn new skills!

The Fast Stream is explorative and inclusive, with terrific career opportunities - I would recommend it to anyone. Many Fast Streamers are graduates of university leaving age but there are a number of people who aren't. I have a young son which has meant working a full-time job around my commitments and I'm happy to have had full support from managers and colleagues. The Fast Stream has given me the opportunity to undertake different roles, providing flexible working, camaraderie and breadth of experience, whilst supporting my development.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Digital, Data, Technology and Cyber Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**The Fast Stream is fast paced, varied and rewarding; full of opportunities at every turn and makes me feel like a part of something bigger!**

**Naomy Kuma, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Naomy talks to us about the Project Delivery Fast Stream, diversity and overcoming her fears during the application process**



I graduated from university the year before I applied to the Fast Stream and was working in a job that didn't challenge or engage me enough. I knew I didn't want to stay put and was therefore looking for a graduate scheme that offered variety, progression and a great learning and development offer. I was most interested in the Project Delivery Scheme because of my existing skill set; it is also an increasingly sought-after profession that is quickly gaining a lot of importance in the workplace, and I wanted to be a part of this.

I spent my first year working at the Department for Transport in a programme delivering outcomes for road users after the UK's transition out of the EU. Throughout my time in this role, I managed risks, milestones and dependencies, oversaw correspondence, coordinated ministerial briefings, ran the secretariat for a number of boards and helped to set up a new governance function. I also supported the team during the French border closure of December 2021 which launched us into crisis response mode (think 7am shift starts, lots of coffees and GIFs to keep morale high!). On the side, I also got involved with the directorate's Diversity and Inclusion initiative and helped design our virtual Away Day which was a huge success.

During the application process I suffered from self-doubt and fears of not 'fitting in'. I overcame this by reminding myself after every successful stage that I have got what it

takes and that my progression through the process was not a 'fluke'! I focused on what assessors would like to see and showcased my best self.

As a Black African woman from Germany, who has grown up in a single-parent household and is state school educated, I am constantly aware of my surroundings and who is in the (virtual) room. Fortunately, I have never felt out of place and have been lucky enough to work within diverse and transparent teams who empower and uplift one another. I encourage others to apply to the Fast Stream all the time. I think it's a fantastic opportunity that not many people in my community know about. It is fast paced, varied and rewarding; full of opportunities at every turn and makes me feel like a part of something bigger!

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Project Delivery Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**I am proud to have made it on to the Fast Stream and for the work I produce and what it is used for**

**Nawal Raza-Malik, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Nawal from the Government Statistical Service Fast Stream, talks to us about LGBTQ+, diversity networks and shares tips for the video interview**



I was looking for an opportunity to use my statistics and research knowledge and came across the prestigious Fast Stream. I was particularly drawn to the focus on development, postings rotations so you can understand what you enjoy working on - especially useful for those just starting their careers straight or soon after university.

My first posting was in HM Revenue and Customs, where I built on my coding skills to produce multiple national statistics and my second was in the Department for International Trade, undertaking a range of reporting and analysis.

I am proud to have made it on to the Fast Stream and also for the work I produce and what it is used for. I'm part of the LGBTQ+ community and the network support has been amazing. There are so many diversity networks, ensuring you feel included and meet like-minded individuals, which has helped me a lot.

Here are my tips for the Fast Stream video interview and how I overcame my nerves:

- Use the fact that it's not in person to your advantage - there is no assessor and therefore no one can see your screen or surroundings, meaning you could have a few notes to prompt yourself if needed. Make sure they are short because you don't want to look or sound like you're reading anything out.

- Eye contact - try and look at the camera as if you were in a real interview as this is more engaging for the audience. Ensure you're not looking around the room too much or clearly reading notes.
- Practise speaking your examples out loud - I would also suggest recording yourself doing this and listening back or testing on friends/family.
- Timing - keep an eye on the timer and check how long you have for each question as you start. You don't want to finish your answer super early, nor be cut off mid-sentence at the end, so try and adjust your timing and be flexible.

Finally, don't be discouraged if you don't get through first time, many people get in on their second or third attempt; prepare for each stage, find tips online from current/ ex-Fast Streamers; really think about the order of your scheme choices.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Government Statistical Service Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**As I have a strong desire to give back to the country that has given me so many wonderful opportunities, I applied for the Fast Stream**

**Rabia Nasimi, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Rabia talks to us about what led her to apply to the scheme and her first role on the Government Social Research Fast Stream**



I am a former refugee who fled Afghanistan with my family in 1999 and arrived in the UK in the back of a refrigerated container. As I have a strong desire to give back to the country that has given me so many wonderful opportunities, I applied for the Fast Stream. I previously worked in the charity sector supporting refugee integration in the UK which provided me with experience of grassroots, frontline services where you really see the difference you make to every single person you work with. Now, being behind the scenes and working on much bigger, national priorities is really interesting for me. I am able to build on my expertise working with migrant communities whilst doing compassionate work at a wider level and trying to make a difference to the country as a whole. At the same time, I can gain additional skills as a public policy specialist.

Joining the Civil Service has provided me with the opportunity to expand my skills and interest. My main area of expertise is qualitative research, but it's been great to re-focus on quantitative methods as well. As a social researcher at the Covid Interventions Analysis team, in the Department of Health and Social Care, I have supported the development, implementation and review of some of the biggest government interventions ever introduced, which have a huge impact on everyday life for both individuals and business. I have conducted research into how health inequalities have been highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic and around the easing of Lockdown and how society might react to having to cancel some of the

festivities. It is a very fast paced environment to work in, but I quite enjoy that! I have also taken part in recruitment and staff engagement exercises and undertaken some mentoring.

Despite the gravity of the pandemic, the best thing about my job is working with a dedicated team to help contribute to tackling Covid, one of the biggest problems we are facing globally. Colleagues from different backgrounds and professions working tirelessly to lead the nation's health and social care. Their resilience during these very hard times is noteworthy!

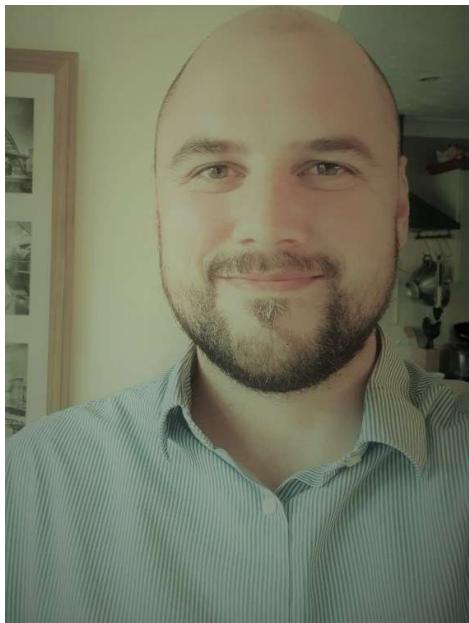
I hope that with the skills and experience that I gain over the coming months and years, I will be able to not only support the UK government but make a difference to life in Afghanistan as well.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Government Social Research Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**It definitely feels like I'm on a career path now rather than just doing a series of jobs**

**Robin McCarty, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Robin talks to us about changing career, social mobility and the Commercial Fast Stream**



I worked in sales and business development for fifteen years, which always felt like a series of jobs rather than a career, so I decided to get out of the private sector. Joining the Fast Stream seemed like a great opportunity to 'trial' a few departments and roles. I put Commercial down as a preference because I thought my business experience would be useful, but I was generally just happy to get onto the Fast Stream!

My first posting was in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), where I was involved in some high-profile work, including coordinating whole supply chains and attending senior meetings where DWP were discussing their response to the pandemic. As one of the larger departments, DWP had lots of opportunities for me. The culture was fantastic and everyone was really supportive. My biggest challenge was getting to grips with the posting during the first few weeks, when it was all new and there was a very steep learning curve. But it's reassuring to know that everyone feels this way.

There are Diversity & Inclusion networks both in the Fast Stream and in host departments. I'm a co-lead on Social Mobility, which involves encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to apply for the Fast Stream. I am a big advocate of the scheme and of the Civil Service as an employer. Most of the application process relies on your ability to answer questions and think on your feet, rather than what (or worse, who!) you know or where you're from.

If I was to give one piece of advice to someone applying for the Fast Stream, it would be to internalise the Civil Service Success Profiles. Everything you do is assessed against them and if you understand what you're being asked to demonstrate then you'll find it easier to succeed!

The Fast Stream is all about developing leadership. Experiencing different departments and working styles has given me some great examples of the kind of leader I aspire to become. I definitely feel like I'm on a career path now rather than just doing a series of jobs!

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Commercial Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>

**The opportunities on this programme are endless!**

**Callum Allison, Civil Service Fast Stream**

**Callum talks to us about bringing his whole self to work and the Government Social Research Fast Stream**



I was close to finishing my degree and thought I'd apply to the Social Research Fast Stream, as I have a keen interest in research and knew I wanted to work in the public sector. I was attracted to the programme because of its reputation of being an extremely competitive graduate scheme and I wanted to prove to myself that I have what it takes to become a leader and a competent social researcher in government. Also, the chance to be able to commission and manage research projects that would have a long-lasting impact on policy really interested me.

The Fast Stream is fast paced and challenging but extremely rewarding; knowing that you are helping to drive forward work that benefits society and meeting a range of like-minded individuals who are driven towards delivering for the public. Plus, the opportunities on this programme are endless! I've been pushed to develop and feel like I have done so, massively, in the last two years. To date, I've had two very different placements. My first was at the Office for National Statistics where I was looking to improve the harmonisation of statistics across government in influential areas such as homelessness, gender, migration and sexual orientation. My current placement is in the Department of Health and Social Care where I am drawing up evaluation and monitoring plans for the government's Healthy Weight policies. This has been my favourite so far, working in a high-profile area, which is likely to have a long-lasting impact on future policy. I also feel like I can bring my 'whole self' to work, which is something that is really important to me.

I would advise someone considering applying to just do it! You will likely be thinking 'is this really for me' or 'this wasn't in my career plan' but believe me, you'll have a

fulfilling career and enjoy being a big part of the Civil Service. Just be yourself and show the assessors what you've got to offer.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Government Social Research Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk>

## The Fast Stream is a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds

### Eli Hurst, Civil Service Fast Stream

**Eli talks to us about her roles on the Government Operational Research Service Fast Stream**



I've been on the Fast Stream for two years, joining right out of university. I knew I wanted something with a bit of variety and real-world impact so the Civil Service Fast Stream seemed like the perfect fit!

I did a degree in Mathematics, Operational Research and Statistics. So, either the Operational Research or Statistical Streams were the obvious choice for me. I was really interested to see how operational research is used across government.

I have worked on a range of things over the past few years. In National Accounts I worked on a project to find areas where household spending might be under recorded. The impact of this project was big, accounting for an approximate £11 billion increase in the estimate of household spending. I was also embedded in an analytical team, working on election funding and allocating money to local authorities for voter registration activities. This role gave me a wealth of experience, not only in modelling, but also in policy making and writing documents for ministers.

The Fast Stream is a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds. I strongly encourage anyone and everyone to apply. The application process is very long, but each stage is really rewarding. Try to have as much fun as possible. Although it was difficult I actually really enjoyed the Assessment Centre and I think that made it easier to do well.

Go to the Fast Stream website for more information about the Government Operational Research Service Fast Stream: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/>