



Diplomatic and Development



Bartholomew Oram

What led you to apply for the Civil Service Fast Stream programme?

It was a scheme I had been interested in for a while, in particular for the opportunity to work for the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in an economist role. I had applied a couple of times before (without success) and worked elsewhere in the public sector for a couple of years. I decided this would be the last attempt – and thankfully I was successful!

What attracted you to the programme and this particular stream?

It felt like a real confluence of my personal and professional interests – undertaking and communicating economic analysis, working on international affairs, and working in the public sector. The Civil Service and FCDO are unique in what they do in the UK

and I always knew that I would jump at the opportunity to join.

How did you first hear about the Civil Service Fast Stream programme?

I heard about it during my time at university and it had stayed in my mind and as a saved tab on my computer for quite a few years after. I also sought advice from a colleague who I knew had previously worked at the FCDO to understand how they found it (they recommended joining!).

Tell us a little bit about yourself. What is your degree and how do you feel you can use it in the Civil Service?

I studied Economics and History at the University of Leeds, and worked on financial policy and financial regulation immediately after graduation. I did a master's in International Relations, and then applied for the Fast Stream. I find I can use a combination of all of these in my work, though my core economic and analytical skills have been particularly important given the nature of the scheme.

Tell us about your Civil Service Fast Stream experience. What kind of projects have you been involved in?

My experience to date has been marked by being able to work on a range of topics and issues. I don't think any two Fast Streamers on the scheme have the exact same experience. Being able to work on live and evolving international issues you would usually only read about in the news has been particularly rewarding.

How have the connections and networks you have made via the Fast Stream benefited you?

There is a strong connection between those of us who joined at the same time on the economics scheme at the FCDO. That's been invaluable for me for touching base on personal and professional issues and sharing notes on navigating the early stages of our careers at the FCDO together.

What advice would you give to someone else considering applying to the Civil Service Fast Stream programme?

Definitely apply and see where it takes you. Whilst the pay is not comparable to what you may earn elsewhere, I do genuinely believe the trade-off is worth it for being able to work on such interesting topics in the public interest.