



# Digital, Data, Technology and Cyber



**Annabel Walker**

## **What attracted you to the Fast Stream programme and this particular stream?**

This was a fantastic opportunity to gain exposure to more technical digital roles without the need for a computing or programming background. In the modern workplace, digital literacy is highly valued, and thus the opportunity to work alongside technical professionals and gain access to specialist learning and development was an intrinsic selling point of the scheme.

## **How have the skills and knowledge you have acquired through the Fast Stream training helped you?**

My placement as a Data Engineer required me to learn Python, as well as languages such as JavaScript, SQL, HTML and CSS. I have developed basic coding abilities that will be invaluable in an increasingly digital age. Working with senior officials and policymakers has also enhanced my capability to influence others through reasoned argument and synthesis of complex information. The opportunity to work across different departments has increased my resilience and ability to adapt and respond to changing demands, ministerial priorities, and ways of working.

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

My first posting was as a data engineer at the (previously named) Department for International Trade (DIT), where I worked on DIT's in-house data service. My second posting, which I am currently on, is as a user researcher at the Department for Education (DfE). In September, I will start my final posting as a Service Designer at the FCDO.

## **What has been your experience on the Civil Service Fast Stream in terms of Diversity and Inclusion?**

I have worked alongside colleagues from a variety of backgrounds across my postings and have seen dedication to forward thinking and inclusivity as a priority throughout. I have particularly enjoyed my role as editor of the Fast Stream Disability Network newsletter, which involves signposting Fast Streamers to various disability and wellbeing events, and offering a plethora of engaging content and media that empower representation of disability.

## **What is your ultimate aim or career ambition after you complete the programme?**

After completing the programme, I would like to stay in the field of user-centred design and pursue a position of senior leadership within the user research profession. I would like to move into a role that works more closely with senior policy officials and ministers to deliver user-centric digital services.

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

Do not be put off by the competitive nature of the application process. The Fast Stream isn't looking for the perfect individual, but someone with the capacity to grow and develop into a future leader.

I would also encourage others to consider applying for schemes they haven't considered before. Coming from a humanities background, I did not expect to pursue a role in the digital space but have found it surprisingly complementary to my skill set and interests.