

Fast Stream

The UK's national Civil Service run a number of graduate entry programmes under the banner of 'Fast Stream'. This is a report from a Careers Adviser's day hosted by the Fast Stream recruitment team on Monday 10th, August 2009. Jeff Riley, King's College, University of London

The 'Graduate Fast Stream' The 'Graduate Fast Stream' (GFS) is just one of the Fast Stream Programmes. There are a number of others including ones for economists and statisticians and a new Human Resources Fast Stream. The GFS is a generic programme and trainees can eventually be placed in a number of central government departments such as the FCO (diplomatic service), the Home Office, the Department for International Development (DFID) and others. There is no guarantee that trainees will be placed with the department of their choice though all efforts are made to match trainees with their preferred departments. From the most recent recruitment round 48 were allocated to the Diplomatic Service, 8 (approximately) to DFID and 15 to the Home Office. There were 300 successful candidates drawn from around 1098 invited for Fast Stream Assessment Centre days which, in turn, were drawn from 15,300 initial applications.

The 'European Fast Stream'. This is a new option within the Graduate Fast Stream programme available for those applying to start from summer 2010. Lots of Europe oriented work across a range of Civil Service departments (including DFID) plus an EU placement via a 'Structural Traineeship', previously known as a 'Stage'. All in support of helping trainees eventually getting jobs in EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European parliament in which the UK is severely under-represented. If trainees aren't able to secure an EU job through the regular 'competitions' then you are still able to work in the full range of regular Fast Stream posts. Those applying to the EFS will need an A level in French or German at minimum or equivalent and will be given language training to help them in the EU competitions (which, for UK applicants, are conducted in either French or German). If you are on the EFS strand of the GFS you will be expected to enter all the EU competitions for which you are eligible during your two years on the scheme. In addition the EU eligibility rules means that commonwealth citizens who can apply for the GFS are excluded from the EFS option.

Incidentally, if you want to see why the UK is making more efforts to get better representation in EU institutions you might read a recent report on the EC Traineeships (Stage). This report from 2008 shows that the UK provides less applicants proportionately to the traineeship programme than any other EU country. The report is also a useful insight into how trainees found the programme. How to apply and what happened to them afterwards. Details at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/civilsociety/2008/stagereport_en.pdf

More Fast Stream details at. Visit www.civilservice.gov.uk/faststream. Many university careers offices will also hold copies of the handouts issued on the day which also covered entry criteria for all the Fast Stream programmes

More links to Europe at www.careers.lon.ac.uk/policy > Resources > European Union