



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR
ASSISTANT STATISTICIANS
AND THEIR MANAGERS
IN THE
GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL
SERVICE

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GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ASSISTANT STATISTICIANS (ASs) AND THEIR MANAGERS WORKING IN THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE

1. Introduction

1.1 This guidance looks at the work, learning and development for ASs and the role played by their managers – as a result this *guidance* will also be of great importance to managers.

1.2 If you have any comments or questions about this guide please contact nsoffice.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk

2. The Fast Stream and Assistant Statisticians

2.1 As an AS you are a specialist professional member of the Civil Service Fast Stream. The Civil Service recruits Fast Streamers to junior positions and prepares them for relatively quick promotion to senior posts within the Civil Service. Other Fast Stream analytical schemes include economists, social researchers, policy and operational delivery experts.

2.2 Grading procedures vary somewhat between departments but generally, Fast Stream ASs are graded in the same way as the other Fast Stream groups and placed on special pay scales. Your department will be able to explain this in more detail.

2.3 The Civil Service Fast Stream recruits high calibre graduates into a range of departments. The broad aim of the Fast Stream is to recruit and develop the future leaders of the Civil Service, i.e. the people who will have the capacity to lead and manage the delivery of the Government of the day's agenda.

2.4 Recruitment for all Fast Streamers is via the Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC) and all specialist statistician recruits are assessed as having the potential for early promotion to Grade 7 Statistician (the main management grade in the GSS) and the Senior Civil Service.

2.5 The focus for your development is on the Civil Service Competency Framework as well as a specialised set of statistical competences.

2.6 The aim for fast stream statisticians in all their postings is to learn the G7 role. To do this, ASs must achieve a good level in all Civil Service core competencies and also the GSG competencies to Level 3. There should therefore be a strong emphasis on the development aspects of each post as well as fulfilling the requirements of the day job.

2.7 As a Fast Stream Statistician you will experience different types of work in different departments and/or sectors; early responsibility and challenge; formal and on-the-job learning; and opportunities to build networks across the Civil Service. The *Government Statistician Group Continuing Professional Development Policy* (CPD) helps to underpin your professional development. .

2.6 Direct entrant ASs serve a probationary period, after which you should be ready to apply for promotion to Grade 7 Statistician within a further four to five

years. You should aim to have developed SCS competences about eight years after promotion to G7. Throughout your career you should continue to realise your Fast Stream potential in your work and take a proactive approach to your personal development. Promotion is on merit rather than seniority or age.

2.7 As an AS you are a member of the Government Statistician Group (GSG). This group comprises all statisticians working in the GSS at any level including the National Statistician, who is also Head of the GSS. Membership of the GSG opens up the opportunity to manage and develop a career in the GSS and gain valuable experience in the many departments that make up the GSS. However, your career as an AS depends to a great extent on experience, ability and realising your potential.

3. Probation

3.1 On entry to the Civil Service you will generally serve a probationary period of one year, in line with current employment law, although the length depends on the rules operating in your department. In some departments the Fast Stream probationary period is two years. Probation is especially important for ASs because a Fast Streamer has certain responsibilities to justify his or her place in the Scheme.

3.2 The purpose of probation is to ensure that you are developing the necessary statistical and Fast Stream competences to reach Grade 7 Statistician within an appropriate period – usually after about five years of completing probation. You should have regular progress meetings with your line managers to review performance and development against competences and to discuss strategies for developing gaps and achieving your Fast Stream potential. However if you do not make the grade you will be required to leave the Fast Stream. This may mean that your employment is terminated or, in some circumstances, there may be opportunities to re-grade to a Statistical Officer (StO) grade or move to a main stream administrative post. Your departmental Staff Guide will give you further information about the precise procedures that operate in your department.

3.3 Probation procedures differ between departments. Some departments for example require you to submit a portfolio of evidence at the end of your probationary period. It is good practice to maintain such a portfolio whether or not it is actually required, as it will give you an audit trail of your learning and development. It is important that you check with your department regarding the type of procedures to be followed. . You should also read the *Statistician Competence Framework* and discuss with your line-manager or mentor how it will be used during the probation assessment.

3.4 Some departments may carry out additional assessments or ‘gated reviews’ **after** the probationary period to ensure you are continuing to progress as expected along the fast stream route. These assessments may determine in some cases whether you actually remain in the fast stream.

3.5 When fast streamers first join departments they should also expect to be contacted by that department’s fast stream support team; if this does not happen automatically it might be worth finding out who to contact.

4. Length of postings

4.1 In order to progress you will need to continue to show fast stream potential and prove yourself in a variety of posts and develop the range of skills needed to operate effectively. The length of each posting depends on departmental business needs and the range of work in particular posts. As a Fast Streamer, you are expected to show particularly high development potential and rapid progress. By the time you are considered fitted for promotion to Grade 7 Statistician, you should normally have had experience in about three or four different posts. On average you should probably spend around 12 -18 months in each post.

4.2 Ideally, the length of time spent in a post should be a balance between your developmental needs, your performance in the job and the needs of your department. It is recommended that you discuss this with your Head of Profession and line manager at the outset, and that you review progress throughout the posting. Line managers are encouraged to co-operate by supporting their staff in moving between posts as appropriate to business objectives and personal/professional development needs.

5. Moving posts within a department

5.1 The procedures for moving posts vary between departments and you are encouraged to find out about these procedures in your first few months. In some departments the Head of Profession organises moves at certain times during the year, but in some larger departments an open postings system is used, where a post is advertised and candidates are invited to submit an application for the position. Some departments will use a combination of these two approaches.

5.2 Whichever method is used, the HoP has a duty to ensure that ASs are placed in a range of posts that guarantee that the full range of competencies can be developed. If these posts have previously been filled by StOs/HStOs for example, they should be significantly modified to ensure they are appropriately stretching to be suitable AS development roles. This process will need to be even more carefully monitored when ASs move into posts in departments managed by other HoPs.

5.3 As a general rule and once established you should start thinking about moves around six months before any move is likely to take place. You should consider the range of development opportunities you need from your next post (both statistical and generic) and discuss these with your line manager and whoever organises moves in your department.

5.4 You should be aware of your development needs and you may wish to consider, or be asked by your Head of Profession, to move to a post where you will be able to develop a gap in your competence profile, rather than moving to a post to do more of what you are already good at.

5.5 Some departments may place both ASs and StOs in the same post, but in those cases the detailed requirements of the job and the length of posting may be adjusted to suit the particular talents and needs of the individual. It is also a requirement that an AS receives challenging work that provides him/her with the opportunity to demonstrate FS skills.

6. Moving departments

6.1 It is desirable, as part of a professional group, that all members of the GSG gain experience of a number of departments and statistical functions during their careers. This is especially important for fast streamers to ensure you gain a broad spectrum of experience to prepare you for more rapid progression to senior posts. It is however unusual for someone to move departments during their probation period unless they are in a department with a small number of statistical posts.

6.2 Moving departments may be more difficult if you work for a department that is the only one in a particular location. In such situations, line managers should endeavour to design posts to be as flexible and wide-ranging as possible. This will benefit you in a similar way to working in several departments.

6.3 Departments are expected to advertise all statistical posts on StatNet, which is managed by the National Statistician's Office.

6.4 Departments may also set up a 'chain' of managed moves. Such a process can be much more efficient for all concerned as it eliminates strings of vacancies, but more importantly it allows the matching of ASs to posts on the basis of developmental and business needs. Speak with your Head of Profession to see if your department participates in such schemes, which may be around a regional location.

7. Promotion

7.1 Promotion is on merit rather than seniority and the *Statistician Competence Framework* sets out the core professional competences expected of a Grade 7 Statistician. The Framework shows what would be expected of people at four levels, including the Senior Civil Service (SCS). You must demonstrate the skills, competences and behaviours necessary to succeed at a higher level.

7.2 When approaching promotion to Grade 7 Statistician you should aim to have most of the level 2 competences and many of the level 3. The Civil Service Competency Framework sets out the non-specialist competences required of a Grade 7 civil servant.

7.2 On each promotion board to Grade 7 there must be either a Grade 6 or SCS GSS statistician external to the department, whose role is to ensure common standards are applied across the GSS. Posts may be advertised publicly and the senior panel member's role is also to ensure fair and open competition. The board will ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate the specialist and generalist competences necessary to perform satisfactorily as a Grade 7 Statistician in a broad range of posts across the GSS and not just the particular one for which they are applying. The Capabilities Team in NSO keeps a list of registered GSS assessors.

7.3 Some departments may also require ASs applying for promotion to Grade 7 Statistician to go through an assessment centre. Check what the procedure is in the department of the post for which you are applying.

- 7.4 GSG staff are required to present their endorsed CPD log books to GSS Interview Boards to provide evidence of their continued learning and development.
- 7.5 For more information on promotion requirements, please refer to the Recruitment and Promotion Guidance on Statnet.

8. Returning to the Group

- 8.1 Statisticians who have left to have a career break, work outside of the professional group or work outside the Civil Service often request to return to the GSS.
- 8.2 There are two issues: membership of the GSG and re-appointment of Civil Servants.
- 8.3 Re-appointment by a department should be taken up with the respective department's HR. Re-appointment policy is based on the Civil Service Commissioners Recruitment Code (section 2.33, page 23) found in the Recruitment area of StatNet.
- 8.4 If re-appointment to the department is possible then the Head of Profession will wish to see evidence of your CPD, and you will need to demonstrate that you have achieved 30 hours a year of statistical CPD over a five year rolling period. Please refer to the CPD section of StatNet for more information.

9. AS career path examples

Statisticians here describe their career paths. They highlight the sorts of work they have been involved in, what they have particularly enjoyed, and the range of other opportunities they have taken advantage of which have helped them manage their own development in the GSS.

Sumit Rahman, Grade 7, BIS

I joined the Office for National Statistics in 2007, working in National Accounts. I worked on the production of high profile statistics (such as GDP and household disposable income) that are published frequently and attract a very wide range of users. There was excellent training available that quickly gave me an understanding of macroeconomics and I soon worked independently on projects such as quality assurance of new methods and publishing a journal article explaining the rather bizarre treatment of pensions in the National Accounts. One highlight of my time in ONS was seeing one of my statistics on page 2 of the Sun (a low estimate for the household savings ratio, headlined "Brits stash less")! After 18 months I went on loan to the Cabinet secretariat where I worked as a policy adviser for the Cabinet Office ministers who had various responsibilities under the new Statistics Act. It was a fascinating time to be in this post as ministers and Government more generally were adjusting to the newly created UK Statistics Authority. I wanted to obtain policy experience and this proved invaluable in letting me see how policies develop, and how statistics affect decision making at the very top of government. Being in the centre let me work with statistical colleagues across Whitehall. Highlights of this post include getting legislation through Parliament and writing a paper for discussion at a Cabinet committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. These opportunities are often available to 'general' fast streamers but there is no reason why an Assistant Statistician should not look for these posts too.

After two years at the Cabinet Office I returned to ONS but into a technical post in the Methodology Advisory Service. This was a real contrast to my previous two posts as I now applied a range of statistical techniques and specialist software on short-term projects. This included projects to calculate standard errors for complex social surveys, advising on imputation methods for business surveys and using time series analysis techniques for improving energy statistics (I presented a paper on this at the GSS Methodology Conference). This was a fantastic post as I got to apply many techniques I learnt from doing the MSc in Official Statistics. This course is well worth considering as a way to broaden your knowledge – it gives you more flexibility and confidence when choosing where to take the next steps in your career. During this post I had a short two month loan on temporary promotion to the Treasury assisting in the ‘Data Review’, which allowed me to refine my policy and briefing skills at a more advanced level.

As an Assistant Statistician you can have an influence on cross-departmental work. I have represented the profession on the Fast Stream Forum and helped organise the GSS conference (these are great ways to meet colleagues from across Whitehall).

The experiences gleaned from these posts were all useful when I successfully applied for my Grade 7 promotion to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in 2012, where I am an in-house statistical consultant. There is such a wide range of jobs for an Assistant Statistician and I would strongly encourage you to take advantage of this in your first few years in the GSS.

Louisa Ashby, AS, Department of Health

I graduated from the University of Warwick in July 2010, and took up my first AS post at the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in September. My post was within the Neighbourhood Analysis Division working on a range of housing and planning Statistics.

During the year, I had the opportunity to work in a wide range of areas including producing a statistical publication of household projections, regularly providing briefing to ministers on housing repossessions and analysing the effect of suggested new policies around planning permissions on the different uses of commercial buildings. I also coordinated a UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) assessment of eight statistical releases produced within the division, giving me a thorough understanding of the UKSA and of the statistics code of practice. I found being at one of the smaller central departments gave me the chance to work with a wide variety of people and it meant that policy colleagues, media officers, ministerial teams and Number 10 officials were often in contact.

Whilst at DCLG I had the chance to get involved in organising the 2011 Fast Stream Conference and was lucky enough to spend the conference in the green room mingling with our Secretary of State, two permanent secretaries and numerous other very interesting speakers. I also helped to set up the cross-Government “AS Network” giving fellow ASs a place to discuss issues which were affecting them and to meet up for social events.

Having worked in London for a year, I realised there were many interesting and challenging job opportunities out in the regions, and I decided (to the surprise of friends, family and colleagues) to return to my more northern roots. I successfully secured a job at the Department of Health in Leeds and moved in autumn 2012, joining the Knowledge and Intelligence branch.

The branch works to hold the NHS to account for delivering improvement in healthcare in England, and my first project involved supporting the NHS to plan activity in key areas. Alongside NHS planning, I have been helping to lead a project to set up a new data collection, which supports the Government’s Improving Outcomes for Cancer Strategy. The key objectives of the project are to monitor the level of access that GPs have to cancer diagnostic tests such as lung x-rays and MRI brain scans, and to provide detailed information

about scans carried out on NHS patients. Setting up this Diagnostic Imaging Dataset has been my greatest challenge so far and I am looking forward to publishing this data, and being able to use it to analyse the effectiveness of the Department's cancer policies.

Outside of my main role, I have been involved in helping with staff recruitment, working with directorate business leads and members of the HR team to recruit both permanent and temporary members of staff including Fast Streamers. I have also continued to be involved in the Fast Stream community since moving to Leeds, most recently having worked with colleagues to organise and host the summer meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Fast Stream Network.

David Jagger, Grade 7, MoJ

I finished my Masters at University of Manchester in 2003 and joined the Environment Protection Statistics team at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in April 2004.

My first AS role was working on Sustainable Consumption and Production, challenged with improving the underlying evidence base for this newly developing policy area. Alongside this, I led a technical project linking data from Office for National Statistics' Environmental Accounts with economic input-output tables, to quantify the environmental impacts of public sector procurement. This post gave me a great first taste of working closely with policy colleagues to identify their analytical needs.

After 18 months, I took up a secondment to the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in the Cabinet Office. This provided a fantastic opportunity to work on high profile topics at the very heart of Government. My role in their Analyst team involved providing Prime Ministerial briefing on performance against certain Public Service Agreement targets, and acting as lead analyst on a series of reviews across the Unit's Housing, Health and Home Office briefs. The latter gave me numerous opportunities to spend time experiencing first hand issues faced on the front line – I'll never forget my day at Heathrow Airport on the hunt for criminal cash smugglers... The role was also my first taste of working in a multi-disciplinary team with economists, OR and social research colleagues. I also volunteered to join the organising committee for two AS/StO conferences – my role of chair of the committee in my second year granting the opportunity to hobnob with the National Statistician over breakfast...

Three years and two AS posts in, I requested to take a career break and was granted special leave to go travelling. I count myself very lucky to have spent the next two years backpacking and volunteering all over the Americas, Australia and Asia, and learning a great deal about other cultures and customs, and how I respond to challenging situations.

At the end of my travels in 2009, I returned to the Waste Statistics team at Defra. I was excited by the primary responsibility of designing from scratch and project managing a large national statistical survey of businesses on their waste production and management activities. I had a very supportive line manager who granted me the responsibility I desired to drive through the project from conception to delivery of results, giving me plenty of experience of contract negotiation and managing expectations of project stakeholders. Alongside this, I was responsible for delivering a European data return on UK waste management, involving chairing a project group across four administrations. Firing off the final return to Eurostat was a great feeling, after months of compiling and quality assuring complex data from over 40 sources...

I've always closely monitored my development in terms of the required statistical and professional competencies, and chose my next post carefully to round my experience looking towards Grade 7. A distinct strength of the GSS as an employer is the ability to easily move between Departments, to follow your interests, and to seek out positions which benefit your career development. I'd long since been interested in the Department for Education's agenda and was thrilled, in November 2011, to take up a role working on School Performance Tables, specifically working on 'value added' measures for quantifying school effectiveness. The post positioned me exactly where I wanted to be – working very closely with policy – and also covered what I felt I needed to develop – undertaking technically challenging regression modelling, and a first taste of line management responsibility. I also took the opportunity to spend a week as private secretary for my Director General, which provided a valuable insight into the political world at the 'top of the office'. The greatest challenge (and also most rewarding aspect) of the role was the need to explain complicated statistical concepts, not just to colleagues, but to school inspectors, the public and irate head teachers...

At the start of 2012, I passed the Grade 7 board at Ministry of Justice, and took up my current position shortly after, working on Criminal Justice System Statistics. I'm yet again building my experience in covering new areas, now responsible for managing the production of a number of National Statistics bulletins and heading up a large team. The development never ends...

10. Continuing Professional Development

The GSG's *Continuing Professional Development Policy* was re-launched in June 2012. The *policy* applies to all members of the GSG.

The *policy* is intended to underpin your professional development. It links with the *Statistician Competence Framework*, and the Civil Service Competency Framework. It has been endorsed by the National Statistician and GSS Heads of Profession as a vital tool to ensure that statistical staff acquire and retain the range of skills necessary to perform effectively throughout their careers.

Your responsibilities

10.1 You should familiarise yourself with the *Policy* and *CPD Guidance*, including the Log Book. The CPD site on StatNet also includes all the necessary guidance and links.

10.2 The *policy* states that a total of **60-100** hours of CPD activity per year is required for each member of the GSG, of which **30-50 should be statistical – the lower level of the statistical requirement is compulsory**. Statistical CPD is defined as anything that helps you to develop against the *Statistician Competence Framework*. This is a minimum requirement, and there is no upper limit. (Part-time staff should manage their CPD on a pro rata basis). In the early stages of a career the upper end of this guideline will generally be required. Non statistical learning is also an essential element of your professional development and this should be linked to the Civil Service Competence Framework. The amount of CPD activity undertaken will be assessed over a five year, rolling average period, to take into account for example career breaks or a move out of statistics into a policy area.

10.3 The *Log Book* allows you to record a running tally of planned and any **unplanned learning**, and also reflects on the impact of your learning. The running tally of learning should be recorded throughout your career, and the record should

'go and grow' with you from job to job. The onus is on you to keep your personal record up-to-date and to get it signed-off by your manager. Any statistical activity should be discussed with, and endorsed by, a statistician.

10.4 Relevant CPD activity must be new or refreshed learning and may include: formal qualifications, short training courses, conferences, seminars, reading, secondments, involvement in collaborative GSS initiatives, the acquisition of new statistical skills in order to advise others who may be leading on an application, articles written/submitted to publications, on the job learning. Teaching/coaching, outside normal duties is also relevant (i.e. the development and presentation of new and revised material or to new audiences).

10.5 The *CPD Log Book* is a compulsory part of the selection process, when applying for statistical posts across the GSS, and CPD evidence will form part of the sift criteria.

Your opportunities

On-the-job development

10.6 Much learning and development will take place 'on-the-job'. Postings will provide opportunities to develop the range of skills needed and performance will be assessed against the *Statistician Competence Framework* and Civil Service Competency Framework.

Off-the-job development

10.7 You may find that your post does not meet all of your development needs, but a planned series of posts should. Off-the-job development helps to complement on-the-job development and some suggestions follow.

10.8 Civil Service Learning (CSL) provides a consistent approach to training across the civil service. Based on a single catalogue, (the 'Common Curriculum') CSL will facilitate a range of generic learning and development options via third-party providers. There is also a dedicated Professions page which will outline a range of options for furthering your statistical training.

10.9 The *Framework of Statistical Training for the GSS* has been developed to support CPD in the GSS, and highlights and complements courses available via Civil Service Learning. This framework has been designed to make it easier for statisticians to select appropriate courses. All courses are directly relevant to the Statistician Competence Framework.

10.10 Completing the Professional Development in Official Statistics programme, including the MSc in official statistics, should afford a very useful background for your professional development as a government statistician. This course is run on a modular basis and GSS departments are generally keen to support you through this valuable learning opportunity. The MSc programme is modular and short courses are also available, where CPD hours can also be accrued. You may also decide to study part time for examinations held by the RSS.

10.11 Please also look out for learning activities advertised on StatNet on the 'News and Announcements' page. The Statistical Training Unit and the

Methodology Advisory Service can also offer advice. Contact: statistical.training.enquiries@ons.gov.uk and mas@ons.gov.uk.

10.12 It is also very important to carry out all generalist fast stream training alongside other departmental fast streamers. This will be vital to ensure you develop the generic competencies required to progress quickly to higher level grades. Details of relevant courses etc. can be found on the Civil Service Learning website. It is highly recommended that you register as an individual to CSL in order to keep up-to-date with learning and development opportunities for the Civil Service Core Competences.

10.13 In some departments, the **Departmental Group of ASs and StOs** can play an important development role by giving people experience of chairing meetings or working in small groups on projects. They also bring peer groups together to discuss professional and career issues. These may also operate across a group of departments within a common location, thus providing a broader spectrum of experience.

10.14 ASs are offered the opportunity to participate in the Government Statisticians' Conference. This allows you to discuss statistical issues affecting people in these positions (and the GSS in general) and is a useful networking opportunity. Attendance is strongly recommended and details are advertised on StatNet. There is also an opportunity for ASs to volunteer to participate in the organising group for these conferences. As well as leading on the logistical tasks, there are valuable opportunities for planning and chairing workshops at the conference which would provide excellent evidence for developing the more generic skills as CPD.

10.15 You might also consider the developmental opportunities offered by, for example, **presenting a session** on a training course or working on a **project** directly to a senior civil servant.

10.16 Some ASs have volunteered, or been nominated by their HoP, to fulfil the role of International Liaison Officer (ILOs) for the GSS. This is an excellent opportunity to gain an overview of the international issues affecting your department. Full training and support for this role will be provided by the National Statisticians' Office.

10.17 You could consider taking up the opportunity to become a **University Liaison Officer** (ULO). ULO's are the link between the GSS and particular universities on careers issues and they help to promote the GSS as a career to students. The Capabilities Team in NSO can provide further information on the ULO scheme please contact nsoffice.enquiries@statistics.gov.uk.

10.18 Some departments may offer opportunities for **short placements** in business or other public bodies, including the Statistical Office of the European Commission, Eurostat.

10.19 Other off-the-job learning options include attending formal **training courses** or **evening classes**, undertaking a course of **distance learning**, **reading books** and **watching videos**, and other similar activities.

10.20 Some activities undertaken outside of work could also do prove valuable development opportunities and be used as evidence for CPD learning. An example would be any pro bono work you do such as chairing committees or volunteering statistical help to charities for example.

The Royal Statistical Society

10.18 You are expected to keep abreast of developments in statistics, take an interest in wider statistical issues and be involved in professional statistical organisations such as the Royal Statistical Society (RSS: www.rss.org.uk). Some departments, in recognition of the importance placed on membership of professional bodies, will reimburse the cost of membership fees and may in fact take out corporate membership.

10.19 We will advertise new RSS learning activities on StatNet. We have recommended some of these courses in the *Framework of Statistical Training* mentioned below.

GSG Induction Course (compulsory)

10.20 You are strongly recommended to attend the GSG Induction course on entry to the Group (further information available from nsoffice.enquiries@statistics.gov.uk). This is a two day event which provides an introduction to working in the GSS and career development, giving you the opportunity to understand current strategic thinking in the GSS, how you communicate, and the impact of the Code of Practice on your day-to-day work. It is also an excellent way to meet and make alliances with a network of colleagues with whom you will be sharing a career, including the National Statistician.

10.21 You should also participate in any departmental induction events which are offered to you to familiarise yourself with the departmental context in which you will be working. Some departments have compulsory training requirements for fast streamers – this should be clarified soon after joining to enable training plans to be made.

GSS Statistical Foundations Course (compulsory course)

10.22 The GSS Statistical Foundations course has been developed by the Methodology Advisory Service. It is compulsory for new entrant ASs and cohorts from each induction course will be recalled to attend at the same time, six months after the induction course. The course captures each of the steps of the Statistical Value Chain and aims to assist the development of technical skills. It helps facilitate the transition from academic training at universities to meeting the requirements of working in the GSS. Each session last approximately one hour including group participation/discussion and provides an overview of each topic, highlighting key points and signposting further courses/data sources for further learning. The following elements are included:

- Introduction to Official Statistics and the Code of Practice
- Objectives setting and Project Planning
- Introduction to the Statistical Value Chain

- Collection Design
- Accessing Administrative Data
- Sample Design
- Implementation
- Editing and Validation Derivation and Coding
- Weighting and Estimation
- Analysis of Primary Outputs
- Index Number Construction
- Time Series Analysis
- Confidentiality and Disclosure
- Dissemination of Data and Metadata
- Data Archiving and Ongoing Management
- The Use of Data and Impact
- Planning your learning and development (CPD, MSc, etc)

European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP)

10.23 Look out for courses on the European Statistical Training Programme (ESTP), managed by Eurostat, Luxembourg, which encourage members from across the various National Statistics Institutes (NSI's) to share and learn together. The annual programme and application form is advertised on StatNet. Contact: ESTP national correspondent: wesley.miles@statistics.gov.uk for more information.

Framework of Statistical Training

10.24 The *Framework of Statistical Training for the GSS* has been developed to support CPD in the GSS, and complements training resources highlighted via Civil Service Learning. It has been designed to make it easier for statisticians to select appropriate courses. All courses are mapped onto the Statistician Competence Framework. The *Framework* also offers an outline of the GSS and its component parts, and information about the Assessment function, including links to the UK Statistics Authority website. This information is available as reading material on StatNet under 'Working in the GSS'/'About the GSS'.

11. StatNet

11.1 StatNet, the GSS intranet, is managed by National Statistician's Office and provides lots of useful information for the GSS community. Departments are also encouraged to share information on StatNet that might be of interest to the rest of the GSS. Please share StatNet with interested colleagues who are not members of the GSS. Contact: nsequiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk [mailto:](mailto:nsequiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)The GSS Capability Team is happy to discuss your learning needs and help you to identify appropriate learning activities. Contact in the first instance: nsoffice.enquiries@statistics.gov.uk

GSS Capability Team – based in the National Statisticians Office (NSO):

Address:

Newport: ONS, Room 1.015, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport
NP10 8XG

Head of GSS Capability Team (Newport) Andy Roberts andy.roberts@statistics.gov.uk 01633 455849 (Newport)	
All GSS Recruitment (Newport) Simon Nicholas simon.nicholas@statistics.gov.uk 01633 456351	GSS Professional Development, GSS Induction, GSS People Committee (Newport) Gaynor Ace Gaynor.ace@statistics.gov.uk 01633 651636
	European Statistical Training Development (Titchfield) Wesley Miles Wesley.miles@statistics.gov.uk 01329 447909

12. What you can expect from your Line Manager

12.1 Your line manager plays a key role in supporting your learning, development and in helping you to realise your full potential. As an AS is expected to learn all aspects of the G7 role, you should normally expect to work directly to a Grade 7. You will be assisted not just to do an excellent job in your current post, but to ensure that you are moving towards your long-term development goals.

12.2 The close working relationship with your line manager often means that they are the main source of advice, feedback, support and guidance. Because of this, your line manager is often more than just a manager and many also see themselves as trainer, coach, mentor and role model. Some departments also run a mentor scheme. If you do not work directly to a member of the GSG you should ask your Head of Profession to appoint someone to act as your statistical mentor.

12.3 Your first line manager will also support you through your probation and others with any promotion assessments. This requires them to understand the standards expected (i.e. assessment against the *Statistician Competence Framework*). They will assist you with a forward looking assessment against the Civil Service Competency Framework, measure performance and potential against these standards at the various stages of your career and give you regular feedback.

12.4 The following gives a flavour of what you might expect from your line manager, including your early days:

- ensure that the post you have been placed in is essentially a fast stream role and not one more suited to an StO/HStO;
- pass on Fast Stream Assessment Centre feedback and use this as a coaching tool for initial development discussions;
- be a role model, guide and tutor committed to your development;
- be responsible for departmental induction;
- ensure they concentrate on your developmental needs as well as focussing on the day job;
- be responsible for managing your performance including influencing the development of the post, advising on personal and professional development (including endorsing your *CPD log book*), and carrying out regular appraisals;

12.5 As you approach promotion you should be exposed to much of what ‘hits the desk’ of your Statistician line manager so that after promotion you are fully aware of the scope of a Grade 7 Statistician post. This may include carrying out technical projects with a high degree of independence, preparing ministerial briefings and submissions, presenting press briefings and statistical commentary, and explaining your work and the work of your team to the user community. You should also familiarise yourself with some of the work of your HoP and other senior statisticians in your department.

13. What you can expect from your Head of Profession (HoP), or Departmental Director of Analysis (DDAN) or Countersigning Officer (CO)

13.1 The following gives a flavour of what you might expect from your HoP, DDAN or CO:

- coaching and career management chats;
- monitoring the type of work allocated to fast streamers to ensure these posts are appropriate and offer challenging opportunities for development;
- championing professional development within wider teams;
- sharing their own professional expertise and knowledge;
- ensuring there are resources in place to meet your needs for training and development
- keeping in touch with those on career breaks etc.

14. Hints and tips for Assistant Statisticians

14.1 The following suggestions come from existing members of the GSS and also from discussions the GSS Capabilities Team had with new recruits and their managers. These suggestions are consistent with the guidance, only framed in a more user-friendly way.

When you join the GSS

- Meet with other ASs and StOs in your department as soon as possible. Discuss their experiences of joining the department and what they found useful.
- Wherever possible, you will normally meet your Countersigning Officer and your Director/Head of Profession when you join. If this is not possible, seek your line manager's help in arranging a meeting shortly afterwards.
- Ask about staff appraisal arrangements in your department and the use of personal development plans. Also ask about probation.
- Find out about the role of statisticians, the GSS, how it operates and its history. Find out from your line manager what current issues are affecting the GSS.
- Apply for the GSS Induction Course - nsoffice.enquiries@statistics.gov.uk [mailto:\(you will be recalled approximately six months after to attend the GSS Statistical Foundations course – \[mas@ons.gov.uk\]\(mailto:mas@ons.gov.uk\)\)](mailto:mas@ons.gov.uk)
- Contact your fast stream support section if you do not hear from them. You will need to find out if there are any compulsory training requirements for fast streamers;
- Ask questions. Question how and why things are done and develop quickly an understanding of your work area and of statistics within your department.
- Consult StatNet (including GSS Directory on StatNet) regularly. If your line manager is not a Statistician, introduce them to StatNet too.

Development opportunities in general

- Discuss your learning and development with your line manager and produce a Personal Development Plan. Make sure that learning activities are transferred to your *CPD Log Book* and endorsed by your line manager/mentor.
- Meet with other specialist groups in your department. Learn how they develop themselves and their jobs.
- Discuss your work with a range of other ASs and fast streamers to develop your network and build relationships.
- If your line manager is not a Statistician, make sure that you have access to a statistical mentor, especially when reviewing and evaluating statistical development.

Development off the job

- Be proactive. Seek out development opportunities outside your main work area that give you added experiences.
- Discuss with your line manager and GSS Capabilities Team how you can take advantage of development opportunities that exist outside of your main work area.
- Attend departmental meetings of ASs and StOs (if they are held) and the statisticians' conference when they occur.
- Look at the statistics knowledge you have. Fill any gaps through reading or, if necessary, attend appropriate courses. Use the CPD process to do this.

- Take an interest in developments in statistics and join the RSS, attending meetings whenever possible. Find out more about Chartered Statistician status from the RSS;
- Think about the possibility of undertaking pro bono work which might offer additional development opportunities for you.

Learning and development

- Depending on your developmental needs, look at the details of courses available to you and recommended by GSS Capabilities Team and discuss with your line manager what would be appropriate for you to attend in the next year.
- Register yourself with Civil Service Learning and look at the *Framework of Statistical Training* on StatNet on CPD site.
- Consider enrolling for an MSc in official statistics – this will give you a very useful technical background in preparation for progression to senior statistical grades;
- Find out who holds the training budget and keep them informed of your training needs and plans for each financial year. Most departments will have a Learning and Development Plan; use that to stake out your needs. Encourage your line manager to make sure that sufficient resources are available for you to attend the training courses you need.
- Talk to more experienced statisticians about the courses they found particularly useful and at what stage in their career they went on them.
- Before going on a course, think carefully about why you are going and what you want to learn and achieve. Discuss this with your line manager. All training should be evaluated. On return, discuss the course content with your line manager and how you are going to implement and review what you have learnt.
- Don't forget to look for opportunities to broaden your knowledge in other career groupings (see Civil Service Competency Framework).
- GSS HoPs have a responsibility to champion and support CPD within their teams – find out what your department's approach is.
- Record your continuing professional development activity in your CPD Log Book and get it endorsed by your line manager.
- Be ready to show your endorsed CPD Log Book to GSS Selection Board Panels.

Measuring your progress

- Talk to your line manager about what you must do in order to pass probation.
- Ask for regular feedback from all your work colleagues (not just your line-manager) on your standard of performance and how to overcome your weaknesses.
- Make sure that your Countersigning Officer regularly sees a selection of your work. Discuss with him/her on a regular basis what he/she expects from you and how they can also help with your development.

Your career

- Agree with your line manager how long you should stay in the post early on and review this at regular intervals.
- Find out how moves are managed in your department.
- Start thinking about future moves well in advance. Think carefully about what you need from your next posting. Discuss your development needs with your line managers and explain these to everyone involved in deciding your next posting. If you are unsure about your move seek advice.
- Discuss the possibility of a posting outside the GSS with your line managers and the GSS Capabilities Team This could be in a policy area or perhaps on a short-term training secondment or an interchange opportunity in the private sector. GSS Capabilities Team can offer you advice on these.
- Look out for jobs on StatNet.
- Make sure you are familiar with the required competences for operating at G7 Statistician level. Try and map out where you would like to be in five years time and target your longer term development to that plan.

15. Useful Links

15.1 The following documents have been referred to throughout this document and can be accessed via StatNet:

CPD Policy -

CPD Log Book -

Framework of Statistical Training -

Statistician Competence Framework -

Summary of Assistant Statistician and Statistical Officer characteristics

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Statistical Officer</i>	<i>Assistant Statistician</i>
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1st or 2nd class hon's degree in a discipline containing formal statistical training; or ▪ two years statistics experience & minimum of the RSS Higher Certificate; ▪ via centrally run StO scheme; ▪ some locally recruited (but should follow the main stream recruitment standards). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1st or upper 2nd class hon's degree in a discipline containing formal statistical training; ▪ via Civil Service Fast Stream Assessment Centre.
Pay	'Statistical Officer' is title, and so are paid according to their departmental pay band scales.	AS' have their own pay scales set by their department
Probation	one year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-two years, depends on departmental policy; might be regraded to StO or another grade if do not realise Fast Stream potential during probation or first six years.
Time taken to reach Grade 7 Statistician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no upper limit, varies between StOs, but usually longer than AS – depends on the individual, opportunities available and approach to career management; 	As a fast streamer there is an expectation, and with the right management, that an AS should achieve G7 status in at most six years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ aligned to other graduate EO schemes in departments. So likely route: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promotion to HStO (HEO); ▪ then via SStO (SEO); ▪ promotion to G7 Statistician. this may differ in some departments where fluid grading operates; ▪ might consider trying for the Fast Stream; <p>some may take different career paths</p>	
Traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ developmental position; ▪ may be largely a statistics job but with some opportunities to develop broader skills; ▪ proactive approach to work; ▪ representation – may have some opportunities to work with colleagues and customers, deputise for line manager, etc; ▪ if highly motivated, ambitious and has acquired the appropriate statistical and broader competences can achieve G7+ status – but not a requirement, or expectation of the position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ developmental position; ▪ Fast Stream skills required as well as basic statistics. ▪ proactive approach to work and a chance to influence work agenda; ▪ representation – some limelight (should have good opps to work with senior colleagues and customers, deputise for managers, international meetings etc) ▪ expect to be showing early signs of potential to G7 Statistician, which they are expected to achieve within six years); ▪ expect to be ready for Grade 5 Statistician within about eight years of achieving G7 Statistician status. <p>ASs are recruited in part for their potential to reach the senior civil service and there is an expectation that they will.</p>
Length of posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ varies between StOs, but usually longer than ASs – every two-four years on average; ▪ likely to stay in post longer as they climb up the ladder. 	around 15 months – as there is an expectation that they will achieve G7 Statistician status in six years, so lots of experience required.
Movement around GSS	movement between departments – many not in large departments are likely to move more between departments before promotion to G7 Statistician.	movement between departments – many not in large departments are likely to move more between departments before promotion to G7 Statistician.
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ on merit and driven by competences. 	on merit and driven by competences
Learning & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ driven by Statistician Group CPD policy which underpins SG Competence Framework and PSG initiative; ▪ opportunities within working environment largely focused on production and analysis. ▪ development opportunities outside of job: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ departmental induction; ➢ GSS induction and GSS Statistical Foundations; <p>activities related to specific learning needs – see Catalogue of Learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ driven by Statistician Group CPD policy which underpins SG Competence Framework and PSG initiative; ▪ opportunities within working environment to focus on Fast Stream skills; ▪ development opportunities outside of job: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ departmental induction; ➢ GSS induction and GSS Statistical Foundations; <p>activities related to specific learning needs – see Catalogue of Learning and General Fast Stream Brochure.</p>
Line Manager role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ usually a G7 Statistician (need access to a statistician to discuss and evaluate professional development if not); ▪ mentor role; ▪ provide development opportunities/support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ .usually a Grade 7 Statistician (need access to a statistician to discuss and evaluate professional development (if not); ▪ Mentor role; ▪ Provides experience of operating as a G7 Statistician

Glossary

<p>Assistant Statistician (AS) Fast Stream Statistician entry grade.</p> <p>Capabilities Team in NSO A dedicated professional support unit, based in the National Statistician's Office (NSO) - manages recruitment, professional development and policy initiatives for the Statistician Group. Works in close collaboration with HoPs and GSS HRC.</p> <p>Statistical Officer Recruitment Scheme Rolling recruitment programme with set standards, managed by NSO Capabilities team.</p> <p>Chartered Statistician The Royal Statistical Society's highest professional award. It provides formal recognition of an individual's statistical qualifications and professional training and experience.</p> <p>Chief Statisticians and Heads of Profession (HoPs) Have a role to promote good practice in statistical work throughout their department, in particular observance of the <i>Code of Practice for Official Statistics</i>, and to ensure overall quality of service.</p> <p>Civil Service Competency Framework Provides clarity about the skills individuals need to develop and progress in the civil service .</p> <p>Civil Service Learning Civil Service Learning (CSL) provides a consistent approach to training across the Civil Service. Based on a single catalogue, the 'Common Curriculum' , CSL will deliver a range of generic learning and development options.</p> <p>Code of Conduct Producers of official statistics should lead by example, act with propriety, and serve the public good by balancing the needs of their stakeholders and users against the rights and wellbeing of those affected by their actions.</p> <p>Code of Practice for Official Statistics Sets out the professional standards which official</p>	<p>Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC) The final selection process for the Fast Stream.</p> <p>Framework of Statistical Training (FoST) A specially selected list of training activities mapped onto the Statistician Competence Framework. Includes the new GSS Statistical Foundation course, which along with the GSS Induction course is compulsory for new entrant statisticians.</p> <p>Government Statistical Service (GSS) The Civil Service community which produces the UK's National Statistics, and provides other statistics, statistical analysis, interpretation and advice to the UK Government and Devolved Administrations. It is the hub of the UK's public sector statistical service. Statisticians working in Northern Ireland are not formally part of the GSS. However, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Northern Ireland departments and the Northern Ireland Office work closely with other departments in the UK to ensure common standards apply to the production of statistics.</p> <p>Grade 7 Statistician Grade on promotion from Assistant Statistician or Senior Statistical Officer, usually responsible for managing large teams.</p> <p>GSS Directory A directory on StatNet of Statistician Group staff by department, location, grade and area of responsibility.</p> <p>GSS People Committee (GSS(PC)) Acts on behalf of GSS Heads of Profession (HoPs), taking the lead in developing and implementing the GSS People Strategy to attract, recruit, accredit, develop and retain sufficient numbers of people to meet current and future statistical work force</p>	<p>Heads of Profession (HoPs) and Chief Statisticians Have a role to promote best practice in statistical work throughout their department, in particular observance of the <i>Code of Practice for Official Statistics</i>, and to ensure overall quality of service.</p> <p>Higher Statistical Officer Grade on promotion from Statistical Officer.</p> <p>Line Manager Person responsible for the performance management and development of jobholder.</p> <p>Mentor A senior statistician designated to look after the career development of one or more junior statisticians</p> <p>Methodology Consultancy Service A service based in ONS which provides expert methodological advice, primarily to the GSS, on a cost recovery basis.</p> <p>National Statistical Institutes Government statistical organisations around the globe.</p> <p>National Statistician The National Statistician is appointed by Her Majesty on the advice of the Prime Minister and, simultaneously, is the Head of the Government Statistical Service, and the Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority. As such is a member of the Board of the Authority and its principal adviser on statistical matters. As Head of the GSS, provides professional leadership to all statisticians within government, and to other producers of official statistics including the devolved administrations.</p> <p>Royal Statistical Society (RSS) The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) is the UK's only professional and learned society devoted to the interests of statistics and statisticians. It promotes public understanding of statistics and provides</p>
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<p>statistics are expected to meet</p> <p>Continuing Professional Development Policy (CPD) A CPD Policy designed exclusively for UK government statisticians to, among other things, help safeguard the profession.</p> <p>Countersigning Officer Person responsible for ensuring staff reporting procedures are carried out within departmental guidelines between jobholders and line managers.</p> <p>CPD Log Book A running record of professional development which 'goes and grows' with you as you move around the GSS.</p> <p>Departmental Groups (Assistant Statisticians/Statistical Officers) Groups of statisticians who meet regularly to share good practice with their counterparts, including regional groups.</p> <p>Departments Government departments across the UK Civil Service, e.g. Department of Health.</p> <p>Eurostat The Statistical Office of the European Communities (based in Luxembourg).</p> <p>Fast Stream A graduate entry route and accelerated development programme for senior civil service careers.</p>	<p>needs. The Committee is made up of departmental representatives from across the Statistician Group. Secretariat is provided by the NSO Capabilities team. An annual work programme is one output of the Committee's activities.</p> <p>GSS Induction Course Managed by NSO Capabilities team developed for new ASs and StOs. Main aim is to introduce participants to the GSS and developments in National Statistics. The course offers an insight into the roles of ASs and StOs, working environment, expectations in the workplace and opportunities available to support career development. . It provides an excellent opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and build up strong working relationships with statistical colleagues across the service.</p> <p>GSS Interview Boards Selection and Promotion Boards, organised in-house for the Statistician Group.</p> <p>GSS Statistical Foundations Course Developed for new ASs and StOs. Captures each of the steps of the Statistical Value Chain and aims to assist the development of technical skills making the transition from academic training at universities to the requirements of working in the GSS.</p> <p>Senior Statistical Officer (SStO) Grade on promotion from Higher Statistical Officer.</p> <p>Statistical Assessment Centre (SAC) The statistical assessment centre for the Fast Stream</p>	<p>professional support to users of statistics and statisticians. The RSS Professional Development Centre (RSS PDC) delivers a programme of statistical training.</p> <p>Senior Civil Service (SCS) Grade 5 and above. Exist to provide high-level support to government ministers; assist in the development and implementation of government policy; and ensure the effective management of services.</p> <p>Statistical Officer (StO) Main stream statistical entry grade.</p> <p>Statistical Training Unit Based in the Office for National Statistics. Develops and delivers statistical learning activities for the ONS and the rest of the GSS.</p> <p>Statistician Group Term used to define the professional group of statisticians working across the GSS.</p> <p>Statistician Group Value and Values A document which describes what binds the GSS together; the benefits of belonging to the <i>Group</i>.</p> <p>Statistician Competence Framework Identifies the core areas of statistical knowledge and expertise expected of a government statistician at different levels.</p> <p>StatNet The GSS intranet</p> <p>University Liaison Officers (ULOs) An AS/StO volunteer who liaises with the careers service at a specialist university. Provide information on GSS recruitment programmes through provision of information, literature and presenting to groups of graduates at university careers events.</p>
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