

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR

**STATISTICAL OFFICERS
AND THEIR MANAGERS**

**WORKING IN THE
GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL
SERVICE**

August 2010

GLOSSARY

Assistant Statistician (AS)
Fast Stream Statistician entry grade.

Catalogue of Statistical Learning Activities (COLA)
A Directory of statistical learning activities mapped onto the Statistician Competence Framework. (Refer to FoST below in the first instance).

Central Statistical Officer Recruitment Scheme
Rolling recruitment programme with set standards, managed by SiGT.

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.

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 *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, and to ensure overall quality of service.

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. The new Code of Conduct will be launched in autumn 2009 and go into more detail.

Code of Practice for Official Statistics
Sets out the professional standards which official statistics are expected to meet

Continuing Professional Development Policy (CPD)
A CPD Policy designed exclusively for UK government statisticians to, among other things, help safeguard the profession.

Countersigning Officer
Person responsible for ensuring staff reporting procedures are carried out within departmental guidelines between jobholders and line managers.

CPD Log Book
A running record of professional development which 'goes and grows' with you as you move around the GSS.

Departmental Groups (Assistant Statisticians/Statistical Officers)
Groups of statisticians who meet regularly to share good practice with their counterparts, including regional groups.

Departments
Government departments across the UK Civil Service, eg Department of Health.

e-bulletin
A monthly email communication to all statisticians (links to latest news on StatNet).

Eurostat
The Statistical Office of the European Communities (based in Luxembourg).

Fast Stream
A graduate entry route and accelerated development programme for senior civil service careers.

Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC)
The final selection process for the Fast Stream.

Framework of Statistical Training (FoST)
A specially selected list of training activities mapped onto the Statistician Competence Framework. Includes the new GSS Statistical Foundations course, which along with the GSS Induction course is compulsory for new entrant statisticians.

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.

Grade 7 Statistician
Grade on promotion from Assistant Statistician or Senior Statistical Officer, usually responsible for managing large teams.

GSS Directory
A directory on StatNet of Statistician Group staff by department, location, grade and area of responsibility.

GSS Human Resources Committee (GSS(HRC))
Acts on behalf of GSS Heads of Profession (HoPs), taking the lead in developing and implementing the GSS Human Resources Strategy to attract, recruit, accredit, develop and retain sufficient numbers of people to meet current and future statistical work force needs. The Committee is made up of departmental representatives from across the Statistician Group and the Secretariat is provided by the Statisticians in Government Team (SiGT). An annual work programme is one output of the Committee's activities.

GSS Induction Course
Managed by SiGT, developed for new ASs and StOs. Main aim is to introduce participants to the GSS and developments in National Statistics. Focusing on a mix of statistical policy and managerial material, 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. Different styles of learning, the art of communication and an introduction to leadership are also covered. It provides an excellent opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and build up strong working relationships with statistical colleagues across the service.

GSS Interview Boards
Selection and Promotion Boards, organised in-house for the Statistician Group.

GSS Statistical Foundations Course

Develop by MCS 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.

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 *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, and to ensure overall quality of service.

Higher Statistical Officer

Grade on promotion from Statistical Officer.

Line Manager

Person responsible for the performance management and development of jobholder.

Mentor

A senior statistician designated to look after the career development of one or more junior statisticians

Methodology Consultancy Service

A service based in ONS which provides expert methodological advice, primarily to the GSS, on a cost recovery basis.

National School of Government

The business school for government operating from its heart and dedicated to the public sector.

National Statistical Institutes

Government statistical organisations around the globe.

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.

Professional Competence Protocol

Sets out how the National Statistician and HoPs will carry out their responsibility for setting standards for professional competence and expertise. (Currently under review)

Professional Skills for Government

A key part of the Government's Delivery and Reform agenda. A major long-term, change programme designed to ensure that civil servants have the right mix of skills and expertise to enable their departments to deliver effective services. Provides clarity about the skills individuals need to develop and progress in the civil service and access to more consistent opportunities to develop those skills.

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 professional support to users of statistics and statisticians. The RSS Professional Development Centre (RSS PDC) delivers a programme of statistical training.

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.

Senior Statistical Officer (SStO)

Grade on promotion from Higher Statistical Officer.

Statistical Assessment Centre (SAC)

The statistical assessment centre for the Fast Stream

Statistical Officer (StO)

Main stream statistical entry grade.

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.

Statistician Group

Term used to define the professional group of statisticians working across the GSS.

Statistician Group Value and Values

A document which describes what binds the GSS together; the benefits of belonging to the *Group*.

Statistician Competence Framework

Identifies the core areas of statistical knowledge and expertise expected of a government statistician at different levels.

Statisticians in Government Team (SIGT)

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.

StatNet

The GSS intranet.

University Liaison Officers (ULOs)

An AS/StO volunteer who liaises with the careers service at a specified university. Provide information on GSS recruitment programmes through provision of information, literature and presenting to groups of graduates at university careers events.

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GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STATISTICAL OFFICERS (StOs) AND THEIR MANAGERS WORKING IN THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to the *Guidance notes for Statistical Officers (StOs) working in the Government Statistical Service (GSS)*. This guidance looks at the work, learning and development for StOs and the role played by their managers – as a result this *guidance* will also be of interest to managers.

1.2 If you have any comments or questions about this guide please contact Ken Anderson, SiGT - ken.anderson@statistics.gov.uk

2. Statistical Officers (StOs)

2.1 StO is usually a label rather than a grade. The label is used because it helps to promote a common language within the GSS and is an assurance for managers when they recruit an StO that that person has the core competences needed to carry out a variety of statistical work, this in turn facilitates inter-departmental mobility. Across the GSS, only those who have been recruited through one of the approved channels may bear the label StO.

2.2 Within departments StOs are allocated to the appropriate pay band/group based on experience and competence. Depending on departmental structures, StOs can comprise: Statistical Officer (StO) equivalent to EO; Higher Statistical Officer (HStO) equivalent to HEO; and Senior Statistical Officer (SStO) equivalent to SEO - but generally start at StO level. StO has been used to refer to all levels throughout the guidance except where there are specific differences.

2.3 Currently StOs are either recruited via the centrally run StO scheme, a handful from the fast stream process, or they are selected directly by a department, using the same recruitment standards as the centrally run scheme. Departments that operate a 'delegated' StO recruitment scheme or procedure must obtain approval from the Statisticians in Government Team (SiGT) to ensure that common standards are being applied. Please contact gss.recruitment@ons.gov.uk for more information about Statistician Group recruitment, promotion and assessment standards.

2.4 StOs are supported in managing and developing a career within the GSS. Many StOs will aspire to progress to G7 Statistician level, and some to more senior levels. As an StO you can be expected to develop and progress along similar paths as other main stream grades.

2.5 The focus for your development is on the *Statistician Competence Framework* and your non-statistical competences steered by your department. The *Statistician Group Continuing Professional Development Policy*, helps to underpin your professional development. The two documents mentioned above were shared with you as part of your welcome e-mail – and can also be found on StatNet; the GSS intranet.

2.6 As an StO you are a member of the Statistician Group. This group comprises all statisticians working in the GSS at any level including the current National Statistician, who is also Head of the GSS. Membership of the Statistician Group opens up the opportunity to manage and develop a career in the GSS.

2.7 The *Statistician Group Value and Values* document was produced in 2006 and is located on StatNet under the information for New Entrant Statisticians. It includes 16 components, which 'bind the Statistician Group together'. Its purpose is to improve the value, cohesion, and standing of the 'Statistician Group'. It also helps to show why you should value your 'Statistician Group' membership, and what you would lose if the GSS as a community did not exist. [This document will be reviewed and updated by December 2009).

3. Probation

3.1 On entry to the Civil Service, you will, generally, serve a probationary period of usually one year, in line with current employment law, although the length depends on the rules operating in your department.

3.2 The purpose of probation is to ensure that you are developing the necessary statistical and non-statistical competences. If you fail your probation period you will be invited to discuss your longer-term career options with your line manager. You may be advised to consider a non-statistical career. However, as with any probationary civil servant, you may be asked to leave the service.

3.3 You should have regular progress meetings with your line managers to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of your position and so that you can discuss and resolve any problems or concerns that you, or they, might have.

3.4 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 important that you check with your department what procedures are used. You should also read the *Statistician Competence Framework* (which has a section on competences expected at probation) and discuss with your line-manager or mentor how it will be used during the probation assessment.

4. Length of postings

4.1 In order to progress you will need to 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.

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 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.

5.2 As a general rule, once established, you should start thinking about moves around six months before any move is likely to take place. You should consider what development opportunities you need from your next post and discuss these with your line manager and whoever organises moves in your department. On average you are likely to spend about two to three years in each post.

5.3 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.

5.4 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 the posting may be adjusted to suit the particular talents and needs of the individual.

6. Moving departments

6.1 The *Protocol on Professional Competence* (which will be revised in 2009-2010), 'Putting the Principle into Practice - Key Commitments' (page 8) promises that 'The National Statistician, Heads of Profession and Chief Statisticians will:

h) Facilitate the transfer of GSS staff within and between departments both as part of an individual's career development and as a means of spreading best practice and new ideas.

6.2 The outcome of the discussion with your line manager might thus be that you need to move from your current department to broaden your experience - as it is desirable, as part of a professional group, that all members of the Statistician Group gain experience of a number of departments during their careers.

6.3 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. You should remember though that you are a member of a 'mobile band' and it may eventually prove essential to move location to develop your career fully (this does not apply to part time employees).

6.4 Departments are encouraged to advertise all statistical posts on StatNet, which is managed by the SiGT.

6.5 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 StOs to posts on the basis of developmental and business needs.

6.6 Departments may also set up 'managed moves', sometimes covering different parts of the country, to facilitate increased mobility. Speak with your Head of Profession to see if your department participates in such schemes.

7. Promotion

7.1 Promotion is on merit rather than seniority and the *Statistician Competence Framework* sets out the core professional competences. The Framework shows what is

expected of people at five levels (Level 1 to be reached by the end of probation; Level 2 to be reached after a few years experience; Level 3 being indicative of a Grade 7 Statistician); and it also includes the competences required for the Senior Civil Service (SCS).

7.2 You must demonstrate the skills, competences and behaviours necessary to succeed at the appropriate level and it is the job of the interview panel to ensure that a rigorous assessment is made. Below Grade 7 level, boards will normally operate according to departmental procedures, eg boarding, or progression/fluid grading, but it is the responsibility of the Head of Profession to ensure that the GSS StO (including HStO and SStO) requirements, as well as the departmental requirements are met.

7.3 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 PSG core skills framework (See Cabinet Office website: http://psg.civilservice.gov.uk/skill_selection.asp sets out the non-specialist competences required of a Grade 7 civil servant. StOs must also refer to any non-statistical competence requirements for their pay band as set out in their own department's HR policy.

7.4 On each Grade 7 promotion board 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 external 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 SiGT keeps a list of registered GSS assessors.

7.5 Some departments may also require StO grades 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.

7.6 In most departments, a Statistical Officer will be promoted to Higher Statistical Officer and then Senior Statistical Officer, as their merit deserves, as interim promotions before reaching Grade 7 Statistician.

7.7 Statistician Group staff are required to present their endorsed CPD log books to GSS Interview Boards.

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 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

8.3 There are two issues: membership of the Government Statistician Group (GSG) and re-appointment of Civil Servants.

8.4 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.

8.5 If reappointment 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.

8.6 People who left the Statistician Group before the introduction of CPD (1 April 2006) will not need to demonstrate formal CPD via a log book if they do not already have one. Re-admittance back into the Statistician Group will rest with the respective Head of Profession (HoP) who will test for the appropriate knowledge and skills to perform in the job. However, the HoP will be expected to test commitment and attitude towards personal development at interview.

9. StO career path examples

Damon Wingfield, Department of Energy and Climate Change and Shadan Yusuf, Valuation Office Agency, both G7 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.

Damon Wingfield, DECC

“After a year at the Home Office working on police funding, I joined the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as a Temporary Statistical Officer (TSO) and was offered a permanent post nine months later when I became a Statistical Officer. A year later, I was promoted to an exciting assistant post, working on the analysis and publication of the Retail (and Consumer) Prices Index (RPI). This meant first hand dealings with the Press, involvement in press briefings and working on high profile releases, often making important decisions on the spot.

After 18 months, I was promoted to Senior Statistical Officer in a more methodological and statistical role at ONS. This took me back to the ‘nitty gritty’ of statistics and I regularly ran regressions, hypothesis testing and sampling and would communicate methodology changes and present to a variety of audiences. In my first few posts, I represented the UK at a range of international events, most notably presenting at the United Nations, undertaking a methodology review for the Guernsey Statistical Office and Eurostat. These remain highlights of my time within the GSS.

In 2004, I was temporarily promoted to Grade 7, and later that year, this became permanent as I moved back into the RPI production team, to lead the team I had previously worked as an assistant. This meant managing a diverse team of 10 staff and many contractors and being responsible for a high profile output. I managed to get myself on tv a number of times for interviews!

In 2007 I moved to the Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) department, in the Energy Statistics team working on fuel poverty. This brought very different challenges to ONS, as it is vital to balance the needs of policies, ministers and users with preparing and publishing independent and informative statistics. It also involves regular contributions to a range of policy teams, often acting as a link between different areas hungry for statistics. In my first months, I was exposed to a number of interesting legal issues and presenting statistics to ministers. In 2008, the energy statistics team moved to a new department, DECC, and it has been great to be part of a ‘new department’ from the outset.

One of the most important pieces of advice in getting to Grade 7 is to take all opportunities and accept all challenges. The GSS is such a wide ranging place to work, there are always fresh opportunities and challenges to be enjoyed. If you are ambitious make sure you are able to reach your potential by seeking all opportunities and thinking twice before saying ‘no’. As an StO, if an AS post interests you, apply and be positive. Get to know fellow StOs and ASs and be aware of when and where jobs come up that may interest you.”

Shadan Yusuf, Valuation Office Agency

"I joined the Department for Environment, as a Temporary Statistical Officer in February 1997. I enjoyed the work and decided to apply for the fast stream which resulted in me obtaining a permanent Statistical Officer post in October 1998. I worked here for a further year and a half. I then moved to the Cabinet Office (HStO) for one year then on to Office for Standards in Education for two and a half years. At this point I felt more than ready for a G7 role so I updated my CV using old (but relatively recent) G7 job specs to pitch my CV to the right level and make sure the appropriate competences were covered. I was interested in roles that would offer new challenges and help to develop new competences, and several weeks after completing my CV a suitable role came up at the Department of Health. I did mock interviews with friends and colleagues but I was unsuccessful. I learned a lot from the feedback and tried again.

My second application to the Valuation Office Agency to work on a property pricing model for Council Tax Revaluation was successful.

Some practical statistical experience I gained during my posts are:

- *data related: data cleaning, identifying data issues, data imputing, data manipulations using various software;*
- *understanding what 'fit for purpose' meant in the context of my work and striking the balance between quality/time/resource;*
- *research work for policy investigations – sample surveys, questionnaire design, focus groups, interpreting the results, write ups etc;*
- *policy monitoring – updating tables on regular basis and highlighting issues early on;*
- *providing evidence/results for different what if scenarios to assist evidence-based policy making;*
- *always being mindful to work within the National Statistics Code of Practice.*

These experiences gave me a good foundation for my G7 post. I found the responsibility at this level challenging as you are seen as the 'expert statistician' in your area which can be a little daunting to begin with. I very much enjoy this role as it is high profile and very interesting. It contains a good balance of statistical theory (Multiple Regression) as well as exposure to Prince 2 project management methodologies and the challenge of practically explaining and advising on interpreting the statistics so that local staff can value properties and ministers/policy colleagues/other colleagues are informed of findings/progress."

10. Continuing Professional Development

The *Statistician Group Continuing Professional Development Policy* was developed by the GSS HR Committee, endorsed by HoPs, and launched in March 2006. The *policy* applies to all members of the Statistician Group.

The *policy* is intended to underpin the professional development of the Statistician Group. It links with the *Statistician Competence Framework*, the *National Statistics Protocol on Professional Competence* and the cross-departmental initiatives on the development of Professional Skills for Government (PSG). 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 Log Book and Catalogue of Learning Activities*. 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 Statistician Group, 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. 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. Any statistical activity should be discussed 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 (ie the development and presentation of new and revised material, or to new audiences).

10.5 Since 1 April 2007, the *Log Book* has been a compulsory part of the 'Statistician Group' selection process, when applying for posts across the GSS, and CPD evidence will form part of the sift criteria. (See page 8 of the *CPD Guidance* or CPD site on StatNet for more information).

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 Professional Skills for Government core skills.

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 Most departments have in-house learning advisors who can advise on appropriate learning methods.

10.9 The *Catalogue of Learning Activities*, available through Statnet and included in your welcome e-mail, is a useful source of learning providers, and is mapped onto the statistical competences.

10.10 The *Framework of Statistical Training for the GSS* was developed by a GSS focus group (under the auspices of GSS HRC) and was launched in October 2009. It has been developed to support CPD in the GSS, and complements the *Catalogue* mentioned above. 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* includes two new courses: 'GSS Statistical Foundations' and 'A GSS Guide to Conducting Statistical Business in Europe'.

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 Consultancy Service can also offer advice. Contact: statistical.training.enquiries@ons.gov.uk and mcs@ons.gov.uk

10.12 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.

10.13 ASs and StOs are offered the opportunity to participate in their **annual conference**, usually held in early December. These conferences are organised by a committee of ASs and StOs as a development opportunity. They provide an opportunity to discuss statistical issues affecting people in these positions and the GSS in general and are a useful networking opportunity. Attendance is strongly recommended and details are advertised on StatNet. Unfortunately demand is high so you may not be successful in your first application.

10.14 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.

10.15 You could consider taking up the opportunity to become a **University Liaison Officer** (ULO). ULOs are the link between the GSS and particular universities on careers issues and they help to promote the GSS as a career to students. SiGT can provide further information on the ULO scheme. Simon Nicholas is the manager of the ULO scheme and can be contacted on simon.nicholas@ons.gov.uk.

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

10.17 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 the other activities mentioned in 9.4 above.

The Royal Statistical Society

10.18 The RSS set up a Professional Development Centre (PDC) in January 2007. Look out for new RSS learning activities on StatNet. We have recommended some of these courses in the *Framework of Statistical Training* mentioned below.

10.19 As part of your CPD, and depending on your learning needs, you may consider studying statistics further, perhaps by studying for a part-time degree, taking the RSS examinations, or taking the MSc in Official Statistics, run by Southampton University (see *Framework of Statistical Training, below*). The MSc programme is modular and short courses are also available, where CATS points can be earned.

GSS Induction course (compulsory course)

10.20 You are strongly recommended to attend the GSS Induction course on entry to the GSS. This is a three day residential event which provides an introduction to National Statistics, the GSS and career development, as well as giving you the opportunity to think about your learning style, how you communicate, how you build and maintain relationships at work, and an introduction to management and leadership issues. It is also an excellent way to meet and make alliances with a network of colleagues with who 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.

GSS Statistical Foundations Course (compulsory course)

10.22 The GSS Statistical Foundations course has been developed by the Methodology Consultancy Service. It will run for the first time in October 2009. It is compulsory for new entrant ASs and StOs 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 making the transition from academic training at universities to the requirements of working in the GSS. Each session last approximately one hour and provides an overview of the subject, include group participation/discussion and highlight key points followed by signposting to 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 (NSIs) 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.

National School of Government Prospectus

10.24 The *National School of Government Prospectus* updates you on the latest events for statisticians and for other specialist groups. Contact: Sue Oxley, National School of Government, 01344 634580, email - Susan.Oxley@nationalschool.gsi.gov.uk - the statistical courses are also advertised on the website www.nationalschool.gov.uk/programmes/index.asp

10.25 The courses developed by the National School of Government are also designed to support the Professional Skills for Government initiative, and may help you to also fill some non-statistical learning gaps.

Catalogue of Learning Activities

10.26 The *Catalogue of Learning Activities* has been compiled by the GSS Human Resources Committee (GSS(HRC)) for the development of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and as part of the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) initiative. It identifies the **statistical** training courses that may be attended, along with key papers and articles, to assist you with the development of the statistical competences that you are required to develop during your career. Non-statistical skills learning activities are not included, although statisticians are encouraged to develop non-statistical skills through their own departments, or the National School of Government. All learning completed should be evaluated and added to your *Log Book*.

10.27 The statistical learning activities that are listed have been collected from within government departments and from external organisations and should be available for all statisticians up to and including Grade 7s. The *Catalogue* can be found on the CPD site on StatNet, under Reference Documents and Examples.

Framework of Statistical Training for the GSS

10.28 The *Framework of Statistical Training for the GSS* was developed by a GSS focus group (under the auspices of GSS HRC) and was launched in October 2009. It has been developed to support CPD in the GSS, and complements the *Catalogue* mentioned above. It has been designed to make it easier for statisticians to select appropriate courses; some felt the *Catalogue* provided too much choice. All courses are mapped onto the Statistician Competence Framework. The *Framework* includes two new courses: 'GSS Statistical Foundations' which is compulsory for new entrants and 'A GSS Guide to Conducting Statistical Business in Europe'. 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 SiGT 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. A monthly e-Bulletin is sent to every member of the Statistician Group and helps to highlight important information on StatNet. Please share StatNet with interested colleagues who are not members of the Statistician Group. Contact: ken.anderson@statistics.gov.uk

11.2 The SiGT is happy to discuss your learning needs and help you to identify appropriate learning activities. Contact: wesley.miles@statistics.gov.uk

12. Statisticians in Government Team (SiGT) – based in the National Statisticians Office (NSO):

Address:

London: ONS, 1 Myddelton Street, Islington, London EC1R 1UW

Newport: ONS, Room 1301, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG

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13. What you can expect from your Line Manager

13.1 Your line manager plays a key role in supporting your learning, development and for helping you to realise your full potential. As a StO you will normally be expected to work

directly to a professional Statistician, other than in exceptional circumstances, for instance if you are on a short term secondment, or working in a policy area. 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.

13.2 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.

13.3 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 (ie assessment against the *Statistician Competence Framework* and assist you with a forward looking assessment against the PSG Core Skills Framework at Grade 7) measure performance, and potential against these standards at the various stages of your career, and give you regular feedback.

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

- pass on feedback from the StO recruitment board and use this as a coaching tool for initial development discussions;
- be a role model, guide and tutor committed to developing you;
- be responsible for departmental induction;
- be responsible for managing your performance including influencing the development of the post; advising on personal and professional development (including endorsing your *Log Book*); and carrying out regular appraisals.

14. What you can expect from your Head of Profession (HoP), or Director of Statistics (DoS) or Countersigning Officer (CO)

14.1 The following gives a flavour of what you might expect from your HoP, or DoS, or CO.

- coaching and career management chats;
- championing professional development within wider teams;
- sharing their own professional expertise and knowledge;
- ensuring there is a level playing field, where formal learning is required, ie enough local resources available to meet needs in time and money; keeping in touch with those on career breaks etc.

15. Hints and tips for Statistical Officers

15.1 The following suggestions come from existing members of the GSS and also from discussions the SiGT have 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 the 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 procedures.
- 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 - ken.anderson@statistics.gov.uk (you will be recalled approximately six months after to attend the GSS Statistical Foundations course – mcs@ons.gov.uk)
- 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 StOs 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 SiGT 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 annual AS/StO Conference if possible.
- 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.

Learning activities

- Depending on your developmental needs, look at the details of courses available to you and recommended by the SiGT and discuss with your line manager what would be appropriate for you to attend in the next year.
- Familiarise yourself with *the Catalogue of Learning Activities* and *Framework of Statistical Training* on StatNet on CPD site.
- 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.
- 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 SiGT. This could be in a policy area or perhaps on a short-term training secondment or an interchange opportunity in the private sector. SiGT can offer you advice on these.
- Look out for jobs on StatNet.
- If you aspire to G7 Stat make sure you are familiar with the required competences.
- Try and map out where you would like to be in five years time and target your longer term development to that plan.

Statisticians in Government Team

August 2010

Summary of Assistant Statistician and Statistical Officer characteristics

Attribute	Statistical Officer	Assistant Statistician
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Statistical Officer' is usually a label, and so are paid according to their departmental pay band scales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AS' have their own pay scales set by their department.
Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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; ▪ 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. ▪ might consider trying for the Fast Stream; ▪ some may take different career paths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.
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. ▪ ASs are recruited in part for their potential to reach the senior civil service and there is an expectation that they will.
Length of posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ varies between StOs, but usually longer than ASs – every two years on average; ▪ likely to stay in post longer as they climb up the ladder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ movement between departments – many not in large departments are likely to move more between departments before promotion to G7 Statistician. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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; ➢ activities related to specific learning needs – see Catalogue of Learning. 	<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; ➢ activities related to specific learning needs – see Catalogue of Learning and General Fast Stream Brochure.
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 and development opportunities and support.