



Government
Communication
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GCS Accelerated Development Programmes





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VISITOR

Contents

Foreword	2
Our Accelerated Development Programmes	4
Government Communications Apprenticeship	6
GCS Internship	8
Government Communication Fast Stream	10
Impact	14
Inspire	16
Power of Choice	18
Your GCS career	20
Further information	22

Foreword

The Government Communication Service (GCS) delivers world-class communications through our high-performing, diverse and skilled people.

Our accelerated development programmes are key to raising our standards, developing inspiring leadership, and ensuring we have diversity in our senior leadership, reflecting the society we serve.

From our award-winning diversity internship to our accelerated development programmes aimed at senior communicators, we provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to grow their expertise.

Our programmes support them to develop a breadth of communication and leadership skills to become visible, trusted and strategic partners across government.

Alex Aiken
Executive Director
of Government
Communication



The GCS is a brilliant network of skilled professionals who provide world-class communication to deliver the Prime Minister's priorities to serve the public and improve lives.

We work hard to ensure the GCS is a welcoming and inclusive place to grow your career. So, whatever your background or however long you have been in communications or public service, take advantage of the wealth of exciting opportunities available.

Cheryl King-McDowall
Deputy Director, Professional Standards



Our Accelerated Development Programmes

The GCS draws together communications professionals to support the work of 24 ministerial departments, 20 non-ministerial departments and over 400 agencies and other public bodies, working in the UK and around the world.

The GCS is committed to developing exceptional communicators and establishing a strong talent pipeline for the future.



Apprenticeship

The GCS Apprenticeship offers a brilliant opportunity to learn while you earn and develop the skills needed to begin your career in communications.



Internship

The 6 to 12 week GCS Internship offers a unique opportunity to develop your skills and the chance to work across a wide range of communications disciplines, delivering cutting-edge work for the UK government.



Fast Stream

The Fast Stream offers ongoing development as a foundation for promotion, an accredited professional qualification and long-term career progression. Successful applicants could find themselves working with some of the most important issues in our society.

“ Our accelerated development programmes aim to attract, develop and retain brilliant professionals across the GCS. This ensures we keep up a rapid pace of professional improvement to raise the bar on our leadership skills and deliver excellent communications. ”

Elisabeth Vanderstock
Head of Talent, Government
Communication Service



Impact

Impact offers GCS communicators a concentrated development experience. It is designed to accelerate professional progression, focusing on building leadership and communication skills, leading to an accredited qualification.



Inspire

Inspire aims to develop excellence in leadership skills, building a strong talent pipeline for the profession from our G7/G6s, to create visible, trusted strategic partners across government. The programme leads to an academic qualification.



Power of Choice

The Power of Choice programme aims to accelerate and retain senior, high-potential, under-represented talent, to create a more diverse senior leadership across the GCS. The programme equips participants to drive their personal and professional success, creating practical steps to become future leaders of the GCS.

Government Communications Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship is an alternative route to learning, providing a brilliant opportunity for school leavers, career changers and those without a degree to learn and qualify while they work.

Our apprenticeship aims to bring talented people into GCS who would not have previously considered a career in government. The scheme is a development programme and involves having a full-time job, as well as completing training courses and assignments relevant to developing skills to equip you to work in the communications profession.

The apprenticeship programme runs for 18 months, during which participants will have experience of working in different communications teams across government departments. They will have the chance to be involved and take ownership of their own projects, as well as receive world-class training led by GCS and our apprenticeship training providers.



“ The Government Communications Apprenticeship introduced a host of opportunities to build a career at the heart of government. I now work on ministerial and world events – an experience I would not have gained anywhere else. ”

Jared Blake
Previous GCS Apprentice, now Event Programme and Communications Officer, Department for International Trade



Aims of the GCS Apprenticeship

- Develop key skills, knowledge and behaviours to prepare participants for their current and future job roles.
- Build a network of communicators and civil service contacts (mentors, trainers, colleagues) to help participants on their career journey.

Programme format

GCS apprentices will be matched to a government department with opportunities across the country. Apprentices will work on a variety of projects, and work towards completing the PR and Communication Assistant Level 4 Standard. Apprentices will receive a mentor and buddy, and career advice on how to secure a communications role.

Who can apply

The apprenticeship is aimed at all levels, ages and academic backgrounds

Candidates must have the following qualifications:

- Five GCSEs at grades 4 to 9 (A* to C) or equivalent, including English, with a minimum GCSE Maths grade 3 (D). A GCSE in ICT is preferable.

- The equivalent of two A levels, preferably including a communication-related subject (e.g. English Literature or English Language).
- The apprenticeship is also open to those with a degree, although in terms of content, it will be best suited to those who do not have a communications-related degree and would like to make a career move into communications.

To find out more about the Government Communications Apprenticeship, visit the Apprenticeship page on our website: www.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk

GCS Internship

The GCS Internship is a 6 to 12 week paid communications work experience placement. It gives penultimate, final year and graduate (including master's) students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to begin a career in government communications. The award-winning scheme is the first profession-led diversity programme across government and a key initiative in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The GCS internship is aimed at students from diverse backgrounds at university level, including those who are completing a degree-equivalent qualification (NVQ level 6).



“ The GCS Internship provided me with the foundation to begin my career in government. The scheme helped boost my confidence, enhanced my skills and introduced me to the field of communications, of which I had no previous experience. ”

Lauren Roberts
Previous GCS Intern, now Internal
Communications Manager, Cabinet Office



Aims of the GCS Internship programme

The programme offers a 6 to 12 week paid internship within either a government department or a public body. This will give participants the experience of what it's like to be a government communicator in the Civil Service, with potential opportunities to extend placements and apply for full-time roles.

Programme format

Participants will be subject to an intensive programme of communications profession activities. This includes a one-day induction into the GCS, training sessions, a careers workshop and networking events.

Who can apply

Candidates must:

- be in their final two years at university or a recent graduate in a communications-related subject; or
- be working towards a degree equivalent qualification (NVQ level 6); and
- meet the eligibility requirements set out on the GCS website.

Candidates must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- be from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background
- be from a lower socioeconomic background
- be from a care leaver background
- consider themselves to have a disability

To find out more about the GCS Internship, visit the Internship page on our website: www.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk

Government Communication Fast Stream

The Government Communication Service Fast Stream launched in 2015 to recruit and develop the profession's next generation of leaders.

Working with senior leaders and ministers in a fast-paced environment, participants will learn about leading world-class communications.

Promotion and successful completion of the scheme will see participants earn around £45,000 to £55,000. When you've finished the programme, you could be leading a communications team or even a directorate.



“ The GCS Fast Stream has provided the opportunity to explore multiple communication disciplines and is exposing me to just how different work cultures can be in different government departments. Also, it has helped me discover not just the area of communications I love and want to build a career in, but the kind of leader I want to be when I get there. ”

Sarah Cottrill
Government Communication Fast Streamer



Aim of the the Fast Stream programme

GCS Fast Streamers work across the Civil Service, typically gaining experience of working in different government departments, as they are developed to become future leaders.

As a Fast Streamer, you will be challenged and stretched from the outset and will be able to apply your skills and learning in a variety of contexts

Programme format

GCS Fast Stream is a four-year programme. It involves four six-month placements at IO level for the first two years, and two 12-month placements at SIO level for the third and fourth years. After completing this, Fast Streamers are assessed for a Grade 7 senior management promotion.

Fast Streamers will work towards the Level 6 Strategic Communication Management

Diploma with the Chartered Institute of Marketing. They will receive mentoring from senior leaders, a dedicated Talent Development Manager and attend a variety of learning events, which include world-class learning through GCS training courses, and leadership development.

Who can apply

Candidates must:

- be eligible to work in the UK
- have or expect to have a 2:1 or higher in any degree subject
- existing civil servants can apply without a degree.

To find out more about the Government Communication Fast Stream, visit the Fast Stream page on our website: www.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk





Impact

Impact is one of four programmes to support high-potential government communication professionals, building excellence in leadership and communication skills.

Running over 12 months, the blended development programme focuses on development opportunities to support progression to more senior roles, creating empowering and confident leaders.

Its core is an accredited postgraduate Diploma (from the Chartered Institute of Marketing), supported by communication and leadership masterclasses and coaching.



“ The Impact programme has been a great opportunity for me to expand my communication toolkit, through an industry recognised qualification. I’ve also developed new professional relationships with colleagues across government and shared knowledge that has proved invaluable to my day-to-day work. I’ve built up new confidence in my ability to lead teams through change and present complex topics with confidence. ”

Sam Woolven
Digital Engagement Manager, Department of Health and Social Care



Aims of the Impact programme

- Build and improve the strategic capability of government communication professionals, strengthening the internal talent pipeline.
- Build confidence and gravitas in working with peers, teams and stakeholders.
- Enable participants to increase self-awareness of leadership strengths and areas for improvement.

- Support participants in building a network of peers across government and Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs)

Programme format

The 12-month programme is delivered by the GCS Professional Standards team in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Marketing and communication leadership experts. Alongside five one-day modules and interactive

learning as part of the diploma qualifications, participants will also hear from world-class speakers and benefit from one-to-one individual coaching throughout the programme.

Who can apply

- Applicants must be current government communicators at either IO or SIO grade.
- Applicants must have the aspiration to progress to the next grade and beyond

and take on key leadership roles within government communications.

- Applicants should be confident that they can dedicate enough time and energy to get the most out of their participation in the programmes and that they can attend all the mandatory modules.
- Applicants should not be participating in any other government accelerated learning programme.

To find out more about the GCS Impact programme, visit the GCS Impact page on our website: www.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk

Inspire

Designed to accelerate the leadership development of high-potential senior communication professionals (G6/7), Inspire is an intensive blended development programme running over 15 months, leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Communication Leadership, with an option to continue to an MSc



“ I joined the Inspire programme wanting to become someone different – a confident, inspiring leader. Instead I came out of it having learned that to be a great leader you must be authentic to yourself. It wasn't easy but the academic theory, training and assignments provided the perfect blend of reflection and learning and I feel I'm a better communicator and leader having done Inspire. ”

Lucy Denton
Head Of Communications at Office of the Public Guardian



Aims of the Inspire programme

The programme aims to:

- develop exceptional communication leaders and practitioners
- build a strong talent pipeline for future senior communications roles

The programme is structured around the Civil Service Leadership Statement:

‘Inspiring, Confident and Empowering leadership’

Programme format

- The programme runs for 15 months and participants study towards a postgraduate diploma in Strategic Communication Leadership with our academic partner, the University of Huddersfield Business School. There is the option to continue to an MSc level degree.

- As well as the qualification, Inspire members will benefit from bespoke leadership development, mentoring, career planning support and masterclasses.

Who can apply

- Applicants must be current government communicators working at Grade 7 and Grade 6 level.
- Applicants must have the aspiration to progress and

take on key senior leadership roles within government communications.

- Applicants should be confident that they can dedicate enough time and energy to get the most out of their participation in the programmes and attend all the mandatory modules.

Applicants must not be participating in any other government accelerated learning programme.

To find out more about the GCS Inspire programme, visit the GCS Inspire page on our website: www.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk

Power of Choice

The GCS is committed to developing exceptional communicators, building confident, empowering leaders who are capable of leading diverse teams to deliver world-class communications.

Our accelerated development programmes are key to raising our standards, developing inspiring leadership and maximising the potential of our people to create a strong, diverse pipeline for our most senior roles.

The new programme, Power of Choice, launched in March 2020



“ I believe this programme will help improve the visibility of staff from a range of diverse backgrounds, enhance their development and increase opportunities for them to showcase their skills in more senior leadership positions. ”

Asif Siddiquee
Head of Strategic Communications, Judicial Office



Aims of the Power of Choice programme

The programme aims to accelerate senior, high-potential, under-represented talent to create a more diverse leadership across the GCS. The programme empowers participants to drive their own personal and professional success, creating practical steps to become future leaders of the GCS.

Programme format

- The programme consists of six months of face-to-face modules, coaching and sponsorship, with a further six months of continued sponsorship, action learning and career development support.

Who can apply

- Applicants must be high-performing GCS senior leaders.
- Applicants must have the aspiration to progress and take on key leadership roles within government communications.
- Applicants should be confident that they can dedicate enough time and energy to get the most out of their participation on the programmes and attend all the mandatory modules.
- Applicants must not be participating in any other government accelerated learning programme.

Your GCS career

The GCS provides support and guidance to empower government communicators to deliver world-class communications and campaigns. Here are some of the tools, guides and frameworks available to the communication professionals.

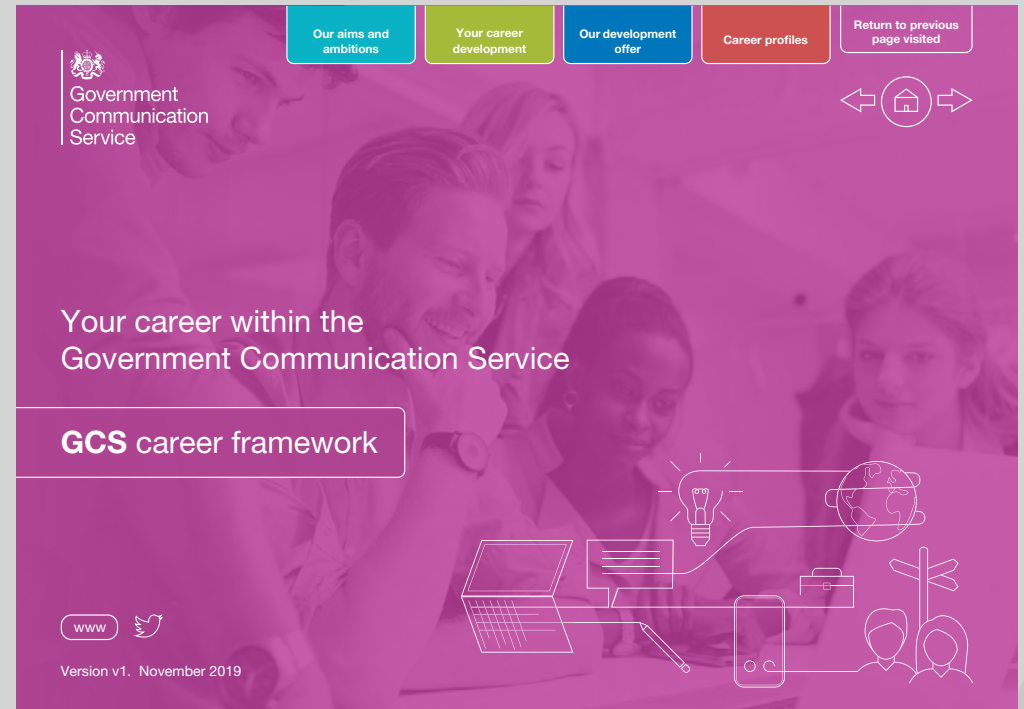
Career framework

This career framework is for all of you – from policy colleagues looking to move into communications, to professionals across the UK Civil Service, central government, arm's length bodies and devolved administrations looking to progress their careers in government communications.

The GCS career framework provides a snapshot of the core roles within the profession, and sets out the opportunities available to develop a career within the GCS. Each role is set out by level/grade, with an overview of the skills, experience and capabilities needed to develop within each role.

Find out more at:

<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/careers/gcs-career-framework>



GCS courses and webinars

The GCS curriculum helps communication professionals plan their continuous development to improve their performance and learn new skills.

The GCS offers this through a blended offer of guidance, curated reading list and videos, live and recorded webinars, and face-to-face training.

The aim is to develop the capability of government communicators in all five disciplines of the Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM 2.0) – External Affairs; Media; Internal Communications; Strategic Communications; and Marketing.

Government communicators are also encouraged to reflect on their leadership and personal impact skills.

Find out more at:
<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/professional-development/gcs-aspire-curriculum>

Mentoring schemes

Since its launch in autumn 2012, the mentoring programme has been extremely successful, helping people build skills and plan their career development.

GCS mentors are experienced communications professionals who have agreed to share their skills, knowledge and experience. They act as a guide and support to their mentee in a series of informal one-to-one discussions.

Mentees benefit from having an experienced person who takes the time to listen, explore and discuss specific development needs, be that career planning or expanding a personal network.

In turn, mentors are able to develop their leadership and communication skills through these mentoring partnerships.

Find out more at:
<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/professional-development/mentoring>

Further information

For more information about any of our accelerated development schemes, please send your query to the relevant mailbox:

Apprenticeships: gcs-apprenticeship@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Internship: gcs-internship@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Fast Stream: comms.scheme@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Impact, Inspire, Power of Choice: gcstalent@cabinetoffice.gov.uk



@UKgovcomms

Visit: <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/>

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