

Robyn Smith, Operational Research Fast Stream

While studying Maths at the University of Surrey, I had no idea what I was going to do. I loved the module on Operational Research (OR) in my course. OR is solving problems, using analytical techniques. Finding jobs that use OR lead me to the Government Operational Research Service (GORS). I was still in my second year, so carried on with my studies but kept an eye on GORS activities.



In my final year, the Fast Stream were at my university's careers fair. Taking a closer look at their analytical streams, I recognised the GORS Fast Stream. This was the opportunity to do the job I really wanted while getting the extra support to help me progress in the civil service effectively. I was very excited, and none of the other jobs I applied for held as much of a draw as this one.

My first role has been in the Youth Justice Analysis team in the Ministry of Justice. Once you're in the civil service, you see exactly how many opportunities there are to use analysis to help. While in the Youth Justice Analysis team, I've created tools to help consultants have access to data and graphs that may be useful to their work. I worked on a large project that will help identify where to best target interventions to be of the greatest impact. I've modelled scenarios and advised policy makers which are feasible and which aren't. I've also help draft statements for the Secretary of State, answers to questions from MPs and press statements to be released under very short time scales.

While on the Fast Stream, there are training opportunities you don't get otherwise. My favourite is the Understanding Government course when you join. I didn't know much about government or politics. This was very informative and I could relate it back to my own job, as well as giving me the chance to visit the Houses of Parliament. I even got to meet and chat with Jeremy Corbyn (this was back in 2014, I imagine that he's a bit busier now).

While on the Fast Stream, I am hoping to move between departments and get more experiences of dealing with different working styles. My hope is that seeing things from alternative

perspectives will help when managing people in the future. I'm already meeting people with very interesting and varied backgrounds.

The main reason I would encourage people to apply for the Fast Stream is that you are involved in something that is really important and exciting. It impacts people every day. Working through the May 2015 election really emphasised this for me. We were in the centre of it all: working with people who've experienced previous elections, who've worked with Ministers before. The outcome directly impacted our life day-to-day as the Ministers determine the direction our work takes. It's exciting and you know that what you're working on makes a difference and helps people across the country.

Read more about [The Government Operational Research Service](#) and about [fast stream entry](#).