The DFID Context

The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK’s work to end extreme poverty, deliver the Global Goals, and tackle global challenges in line with the government’s UK Aid Strategy. Our aid budget is spent on tackling the great global challenges – from the root causes of mass migration and disease, to the threat of terrorism and global climate change – all of which also directly threaten British interests. We are ending the need for aid by building peaceful and stable societies, creating jobs and strong economies, fighting corruption, unlocking the potential of girls and women, tackling climate change and helping to save lives when humanitarian emergencies hit. We are doing this because it is both the right thing to do and firmly in Britain’s national interest.

DFID works in partnership across Whitehall and with governments, civil society, the private sector and multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, United Nations agencies, and the European Commission. We have staff in two UK headquarters in London and Glasgow (East Kilbride) and a network of offices around the world. Wherever they are based, all DFID staff are united by a single goal: to tackle poverty and improve the lives of people in developing countries.

Working for the Department For International Development

Economics in DFID

Economic analysis matters, giving Ministers fresh ideas about big, complex issues and deep insight into policy options. Economists also delve into design details and advise on which aid investments are best value for money, looking at key trends in the countries where we work. The economics cadre is the largest advisory group in DFID, with roughly half its members based overseas. Economists work right across DFID, at all levels, and are at the heart of DFID’s decision making. Economists are all trained in macro, micro, international economics and econometrics and develop knowledge across many topics such as public financial management, growth, jobs, gender, inclusion, tax, trade, investment climate and the use of different aid instruments, including lending from the World Bank and IMF. DFID economists also play programme management roles, using skills in commercial awareness, financial management, risk management, and value for money as well as developing relationships with a range of partners.

Working as a Fast Stream Economist

DFID offers a diverse range of challenging roles. As a Fast Stream Assistant Economist you will potentially work in a range of roles across DFID – in teams spending aid in specific countries, in regional departments, in countries dealing with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), in teams commissioning cutting edge research, in teams defining national and international policy and in the corporate centre of DFID. Successful candidates will be
expected to rotate to a different post after the first 12 months of joining in order to develop a broad range of skills and experience.

Longer term, DFID offers an exciting career path and the chance to work at the heart of international development both in the UK and overseas working collaboratively with peers and senior economists, programme and policy advisers across DFID to deliver our collective vision. All Fast Stream AE roles provide excellent on-the-job learning and extensive continuous professional development; through our annual conference, workshops, seminars, peer learning, shadowing, self-directed learning, mentoring, and the fast stream programme.

Skills and Knowledge

All economists across the Government Economic Service need to demonstrate that they can:

Theory and Concepts
- Keep abreast of developments in economic theory & practice.
- Assess the reliability and relevance of evidence and give objective evidence-based advice.

Applied Analysis and Data
- Identify opportunities for economic analysis to contribute to policy development and appraisal.
- Select and apply appropriate economic concepts, use model-based arguments and other standard techniques to address issues and problems.
- Apply economics to offer workable solutions, taking into account opportunity cost and impact assessment; incentives; the specific political and conflict context - including as related to policy advice, diversity and distributional implications.
- Are proficient in Excel and other relevant software packages.

Effective Communication
- Synthesise technical papers.
- Communicate complex technical ideas and arguments in ways which non-economists can readily understand.

As a Fast Stream Assistant Economist in DFID there are opportunities to:
- Develop core GES skills in application of knowledge, analysis of data and effective communication.
- Provide advice and lead on appraisal, impact assessments, evidence-based business cases and evaluation.
- Work with and understand economic models and interpret output data for the purposes of providing supporting evidence.
- Work on country programmes and policy teams, using economic analysis to help make spending decisions.
- Lead economic reporting on specific countries or regions
- Lead and contribute to end of programme reviews and annual reporting
- Help build the evidence base for DFID’s interventions
- Lead briefings on economic issues for more senior staff, peers and partners.
- Help build economics knowledge of those around you through informal and formal training opportunities.
• Work with colleagues across Whitehall on cross Government agendas.
• Be a line manager (in some roles) and mentor.
• Participate in the full range of learning opportunities within DFID.
• Develop programme management skills.

Things you need to know

Qualifications

We are looking for candidates who have a Master’s degree in economics (including macro, micro, quantitative methods and international economics).

Salary and Benefits

As a Fast Stream Assistant Economist you would receive a starting salary of £26,800 plus a fast stream allowance of £2,400 per annum. DFID support flexible working: part-time; flexi-hours. DFID offer an excellent benefits package.

Security

Successful candidates must pass a disclosure and barring security check. Successful candidates must pass basic security checks.

Medical

Successful candidates will be expected to have a medical.

Nationality statement

Candidates will be subject to UK immigration requirements as well as Civil Service nationality rules.

Contact point for applicants

If you wish to discuss working for DFID, please contact: Vanessa Head, Head of Profession, Economics at DFIDHOP-Economics@dfid.gov.uk or Anne Mullen, Economics Cadre Manager A-Mullen@dfid.gov.uk