CIVIL SERVICE FAST STREAM RECRUITMENT 2011

Published by the Cabinet Office, December 2012

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

The Fast Stream is the Civil Service's training and development programme, which attracts some of the country's brightest graduates. Fast Streamers are selected for their potential to become the leaders of the future, and it is expected that many will reach the Senior Civil Service.

The Civil Service recruits to the Fast Stream on the basis of fair and open competition and selection on merit. This report summarises recruitment into the Fast Stream in the year ending July 2011.

2011 Fast Stream Recruitment Report

To help you understand the Report

The Fast Stream consists of five separate schemes:

- **The Graduate Fast Stream**. This is the largest. In 2011, applicants could ask to be considered for: Central Departments (essentially the Home Civil Service), the Houses of Parliament, the Diplomatic Service and the Science and Engineering Fast Stream. Because the Graduate Fast Stream accounts for such a large proportion of each year's intake into the Fast Stream, the Report focuses on it separately as well as on the Fast Stream as a whole.
- **The Analytical Fast Stream.** In 2011 this encompassed options for Economists, Statisticians and Social Researchers.
- **The Technology in Business Fast Stream.**
- **The HR Fast Stream.**
- **The Northern Ireland Fast Stream.**
- **The European Fast Stream.**

The Analytical Fast Stream involves a specialist assessment stage but, in all cases, assessment of suitability for the Fast Stream itself is aligned with that of the Graduate Fast Stream - through the requirement for all candidates to complete the generic Fast Stream Assessment Centre.

All Graduate Fast Stream options except Central Departments apply some form of final selection procedure after the Assessment Centre before deciding whom to recommend for appointment. However, all candidates who achieve the pass mark at the Assessment Centre have reached the required standard and are guaranteed a place in the Central Departments option if they want it.

There is also an annual competition (the In-Service competition) for serving civil servants who wish to join the Fast Stream. This too is included in the Report.

FAST STREAM SELECTION PROCESS

The Cabinet Office, in partnership with Parity plc, managed the development and delivery of the 2011 competition. As always, our priority was to recruit the best talent available to us, while building on past achievements to make Fast Stream recruitment as diverse, efficient, attractive and accessible as possible. The key considerations were:

- **Fairness and objectivity** The Civil Service maintains, and must be seen to maintain, the highest standards of open and fair recruitment. The Fast Stream selection process is designed with this aim in mind, and is subject to a thorough annual check on compliance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Principles of fair and open competition. We do everything possible to ensure that our assessment methods are scientifically robust, psychometrically valid and capable of withstanding close scrutiny.

- **Diversity and best practice** We are determined to reach out further to minority groups who have not always been proportionately represented in the Fast Stream. By ensuring that key stages are online, we aim to achieve greater transparency and objectivity, and also allow candidates to drive themselves through each stage of the process using a personalised management support system.

- **Efficiency** We use the latest online selection technology, and seek constantly to develop it so that it is as efficient as possible. We aim to complete the process in the shortest possible time, and to make job offers to the best candidates as quickly as possible.

The selection process consists of the following stages:

- Register interest on Fast Stream website

- Online self-assessment

- Application and online tests

- Invigilated electronic in-tray exercise (the "e-Tray")

- Fast Stream Assessment Centre

Candidates are ranked in order of merit, based on a final mark awarded at the Assessment Centre. All candidates, successful and unsuccessful, receive detailed feedback on their performance at the Assessment Centre.

The Fast Stream competency framework

Fast Stream candidates are assessed against six competencies, determined by the needs of the Civil Service. They are spread across three skill sets, as follows:

| SKILL SET	COMPETENCY
DELIVERY SKILLS	Drive for results
	Learning and improving
INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY	Decision-making
	Constructive thinking
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Building productive relationships
	Communicating with impact

FAST STREAM RECRUITMENT IN 2011

APPLICATIONS

The number of registrations (i.e. initial expressions of interest) on the Fast Stream website were down by 19 per cent compared with 2010 (from 32,061 to 25,955). It is likely that this was as a result of reduced expenditure on marketing and attraction, in line with government restrictions. The number of actual applications (i.e. those who, after completing the online self-assessment, proceeded to take the online tests), also fell, by 15.6 per cent (from 21,761 to 18,361).

Chart 1 shows the number of applications submitted to the Fast Stream since 1998. The fall in 2004 reflects the introduction of online self-assessment, which has proved effective in discouraging unrealistic applications. Since then, the popularity of the Fast Stream as a career choice continued to increase, until the fall-off in 2011.

Chart 1 – Applications to the Fast Stream 1998-2011
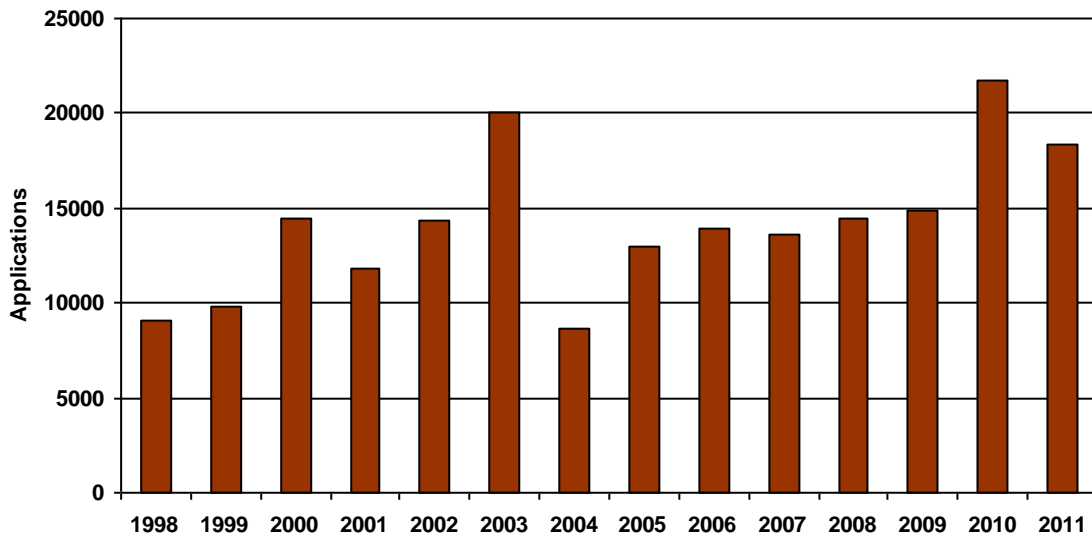
DIVERSITY

By respecting and valuing differences, the Civil Service is better able to ensure that policies and services respond to the needs of the society it serves. We therefore aim to build an increasingly diverse workforce with the richest possible mix of talent, and to ensure that all levels of the Civil Service benefit from better representation of women, colleagues from ethnic minorities, those with a disability and also those from lower socio-economic groups. Because many Fast Stream entrants progress to the Senior Civil Service, the Fast Stream is well placed to support this aim.

Tables showing the diversity of the Fast Stream intake every year since 1998 are provided in the main statistical analysis. The following are headline figures from the 2011 competition, including a comparison between the 2010 and 2011 intakes.
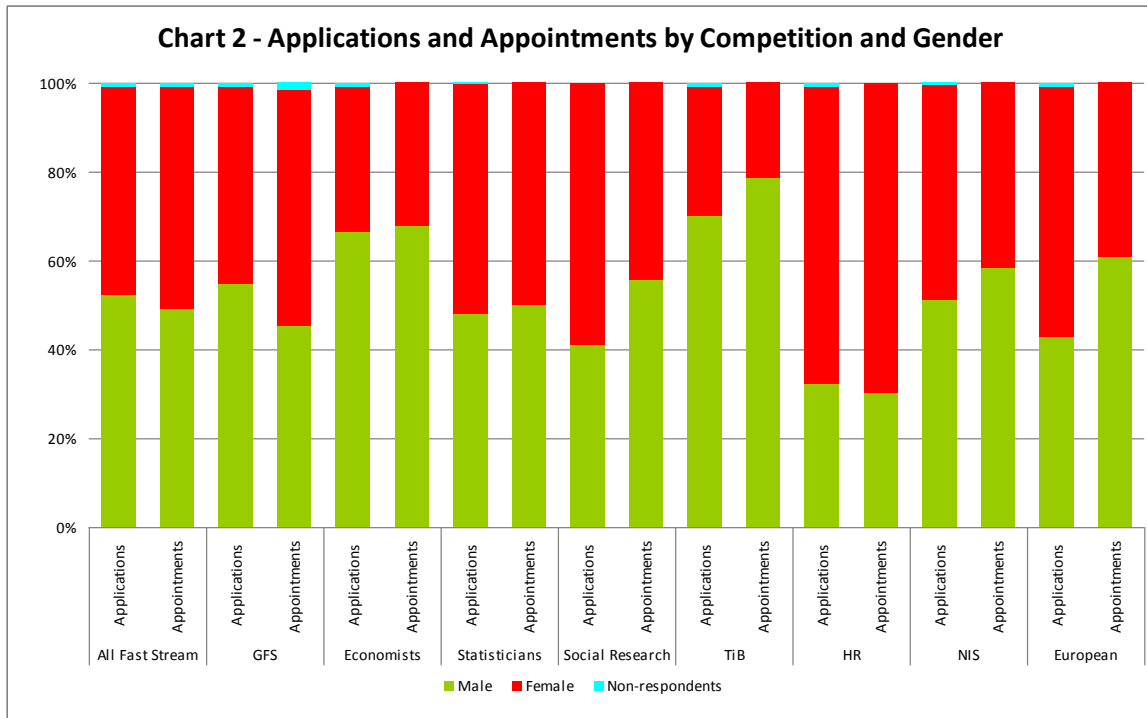
(i) Gender

Overall

In 2011 the proportion of applications from women rose slightly to 47.0 per cent, from 46.0 per cent in 2010. The proportion of successful women candidates rose to 50.1 per cent, from 46.2 per cent in 2010.

In the **Graduate Fast Stream**, 44.6 per cent of applicants and 53.2 per cent of successful candidates were women, representing a highly positive performance [See Chart 2]

Overall, 2.3 per cent of female applicants were successful and 2.0 per cent of male applicants.

Chart 2 - Applications and Appointments by Competition and Gender

Legend: Male, Female, Non-respondents

Categories: All Fast Stream, GFS, Economists, Statisticians, Social Research, TiB, HR, NIS, European (each with Applications and Appointments)

(ii) Ethnicity

Overall, the proportion of applications from ethnic minority groups dropped slightly to 17.3 per cent, from 21.3 per cent in 2010. However, the proportion of successful candidates from ethnic minority groups rose, to 13 per cent, from 12.3 per cent in 2010.   [See Chart 3]

In the **Graduate Fast Stream**, 17.3 per cent of applicants, and 11.2 per cent of successful candidates were from an ethnic minority. This success rate is significantly up from 6.3 per cent in 2010.

Overall, 1.6 per cent of ethnic minority applicants were successful, compared with 2.3 per cent of white applicants.

Chart 3 - Applications and Appointments by Competition and Ethnicity
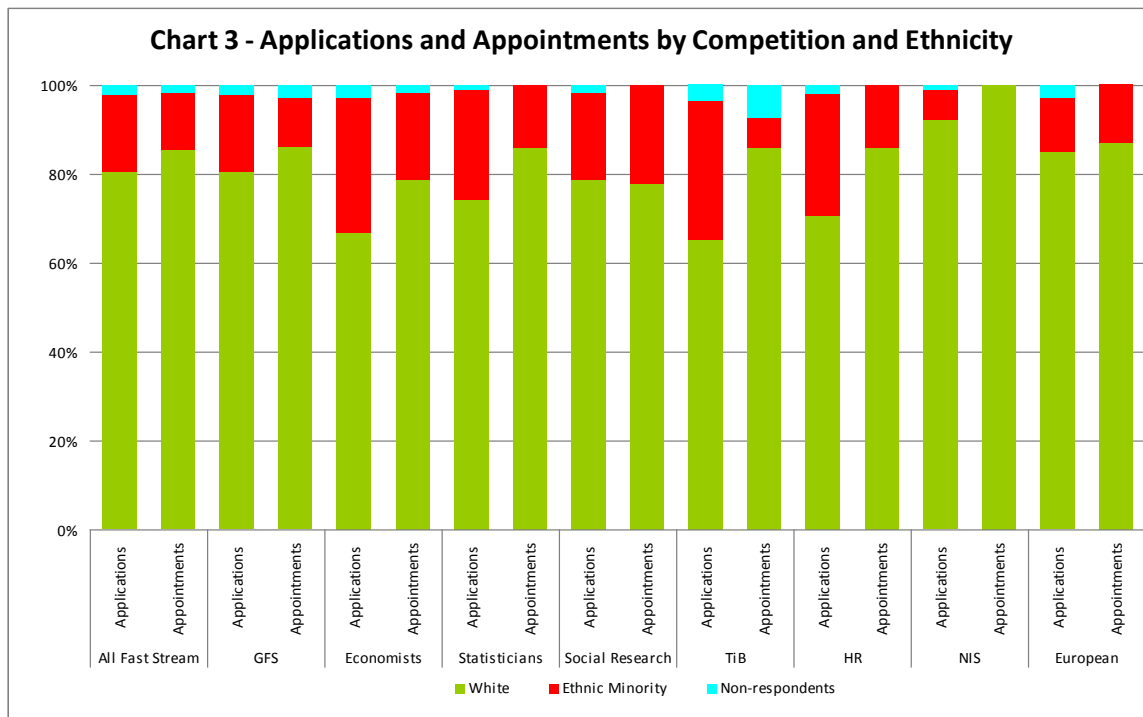
We are required to monitor and publish the number of applications for employment from members of different racial groups. This information is in the following table, revealing some positives and also certain challenges, such as Black Caribbean candidate success rates.

All Fast Stream Schemes (excluding In-Service Fast Stream Competition)

| Ethnicity	Applications		Recommended for Appointment	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
White - British	12,660	68.9%	310	79.6%
White - Irish	1,000	5.4%	10	2.8%
White - Any other White background	1,110	6.1%	10	2.8%
Asian - Bangladeshi	160	0.8%	..	..
Asian - Indian	760	4.1%	20	4.3%
Asian - Pakistani	330	1.8%	..	..
Asian - Any other Asian background	180	1.0%	..	..
Black - African	650	3.6%	10	1.3%
Black - Caribbean	130	0.7%	..	..
Black - Any other Black background	30	0.1%	0	0.0%
Chinese - Any Chinese background	180	1.0%	..	..
Mixed - Asian and White	270	1.5%	10	2.3%
Mixed - Black African and White	70	0.4%	..	..
Mixed - Black Caribbean and White	70	0.4%	..	..
Mixed - Any other Mixed ethnic background	200	1.1%	..	..
Any other Ethnic Background	150	0.8%	..	..
Prefer not to say	410	2.2%	10	1.8%
Total	**18,360**	**100%**	**390**	**100%**

Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten and numbers less than five are represented by "..".
Percentages may not total 100% due to suppression of numbers less than five.

(iii) Disability

Overall, the percentage of applicants who consider themselves disabled decreased marginally to 5.0 per cent, from 5.2 per cent in 2010. The proportion of successful disabled candidates fell slightly to 13.2 per cent, from 13.5 per cent in 2010.

In the **Graduate Fast Stream**, 5.4 per cent of applicants, and 18.6 per cent of successful candidates, were disabled. [See Chart 4].

Overall, 5.7 per cent of disabled applicants were successful, compared with 2.0 per cent of non-disabled applicants.

Chart 4 - Applications and Appointments by Competition and Disability
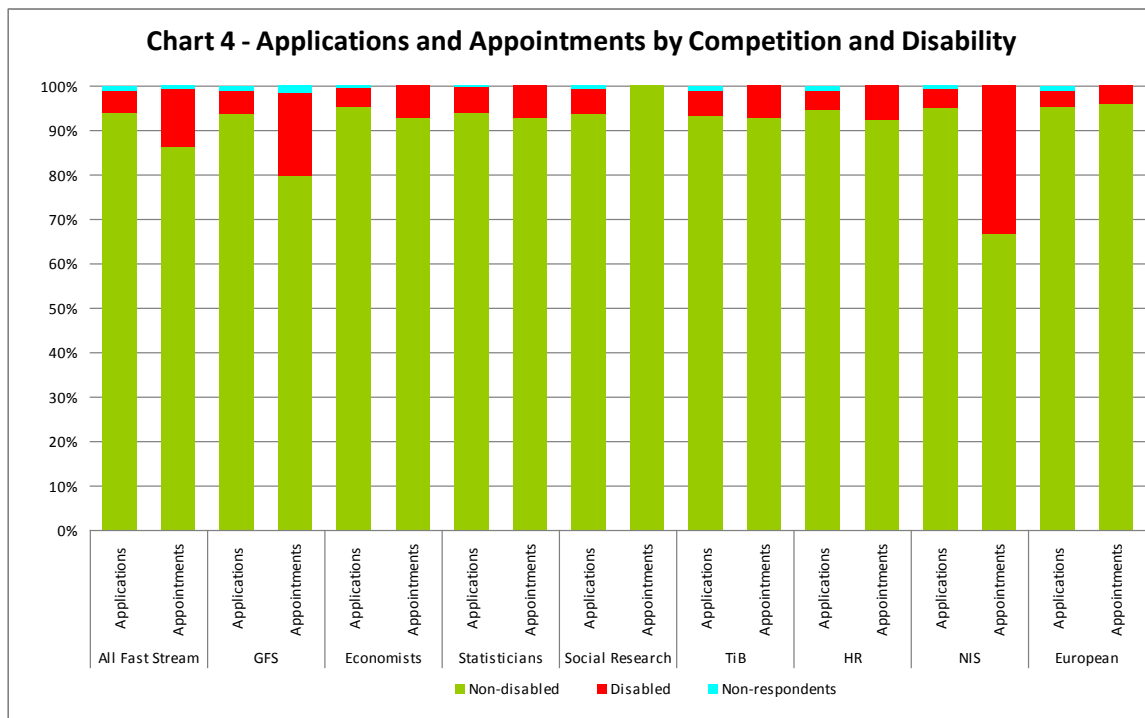
(iv) Socio-economic status

For the first time, the socio-economic status (SES) of applicants to Fast Stream was monitored. SES measurement is based principally on occupational background of parents.

In 2011 the proportion of applications from 'routine and manual' occupational background was 6.1 per cent. 12.5 per cent had an 'intermediate' occupational background and 70.3 per cent had a 'higher managerial, administrative and professional' occupational background.

The proportion of successful applicants from a routine and manual background was 2.5 per cent, compared with 8.9 per cent in the middle category and 78.9 per cent in the higher managerial, administrative and professional category.

In the **Graduate Fast Stream**, the proportion of applications from 'routine and manual' occupational background was 5.4 per cent. 12.1 per cent had an 'intermediate' occupational background and 71.9 per cent had a 'higher managerial, administrative and professional' occupational background. [See Chart 5]

The proportion of successful applicants from a routine and manual background was 1.1 per cent, compared with 8.0 per cent in the middle category and 79.3 per cent in the higher managerial, administrative and professional category.

Chart 5 - Applications and Appointments by Competition and Socio-economic status
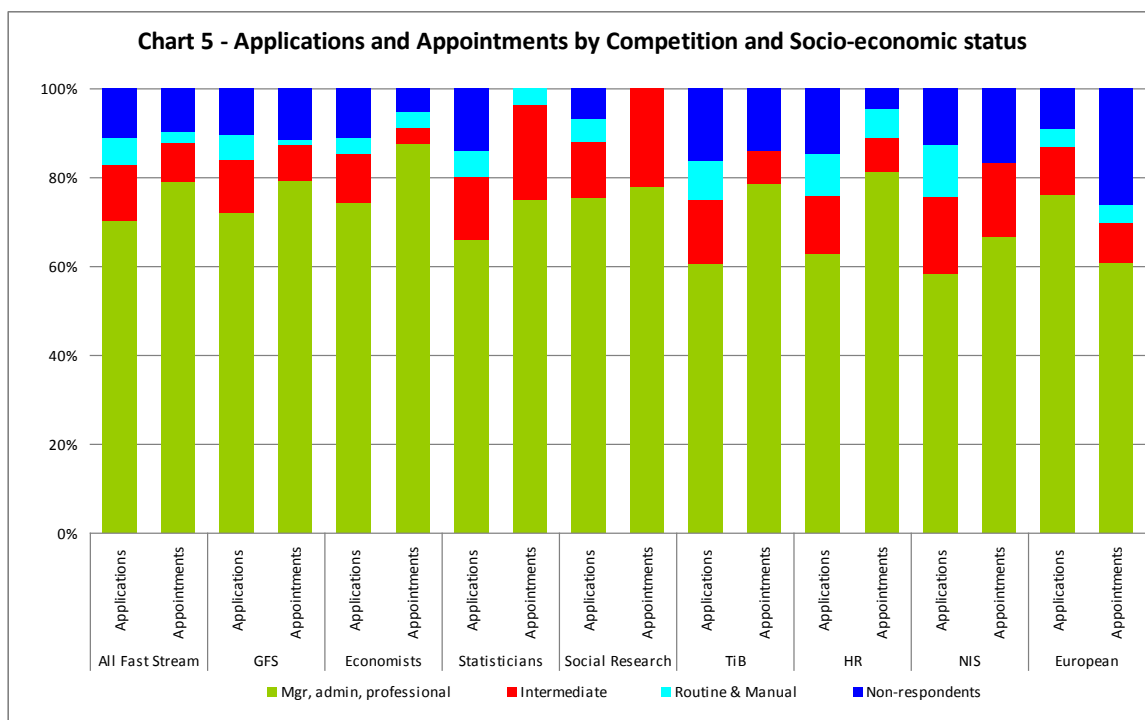
(v) Academic Institution and Degree Discipline

Applications for the 2011 Fast Stream competition came from 155 degree-awarding institutions in the UK, and from a wide range of academic backgrounds. Successful candidates came from over 60 different institutions.

Overall, applications from Oxford and Cambridge Universities rose to 10.5 per cent, from 9.1 per cent in 2010. The proportion of successful candidates from those Universities rose to 26 per cent, from 22.4 per cent in 2010.

In the **Graduate Fast Stream**, 12.1 per cent of applicants, and 30.9 per cent of successful candidates were from Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

The most common degree disciplines amongst successful **Graduate Fast Stream** candidates were Humanities and Social Science (75 per cent and 51 per cent respectively).

IN-SERVICE COMPETITION

The annual competition for serving civil servants wishing to join the Fast Stream again proved a valuable source of talent. Of those shortlisted by their departments for the Fast Stream selection process in 2011, 33.6 per cent were successful. Of the successful candidates, 47.1 per cent were women, 2.0 per cent were from an ethnic minority and 2.0 per cent were disabled.