

OfS graduate entry scheme

Applicant instructions – 2022 entry

Thank you for your interest in applying for the OfS graduate entry scheme. This guide contains information about the application process for entry as part of the 2022 cohort.

Before you apply

To apply for this role you should have a degree (or equivalent level 6 qualification), or be on track to receive one before September 2022. When you received your degree makes no difference to how we assess your application.

We will assess your application against the following desirable criteria. No experience is necessary to apply for the role as it is a training scheme, and we do not expect all applicants to have fully developed all of these skills.

Desirable criteria:

1. Strong analytical skills
2. Demonstrable problem-solving ability in unfamiliar contexts
3. Ability to present confidently to different audiences, including senior leaders
4. Strong written communication skills, tailoring for different purposes and audiences
5. Ability to work collaboratively within in a team
6. Strong personal interaction skills and ability to influence people at all levels of an organisation
7. Ability to operate effectively in complex and ambiguous contexts where competing interests need to be considered
8. Ability to manage workload in the face of competing priorities and rapid change
9. A strong desire to make a difference for students and citizens

You can find information about what the role involves, the job description and the candidates we are looking for by visiting the [graduate scheme webpage](#), the [job advertisement](#) and the [OfS careers site](#).

We particularly welcome applications from people with a disability or impairment, those who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay or transgender, those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background, and people who are care experienced or studied as an estranged student as these groups are under-represented within our workforce.

Please note

Our general policy is to use anonymised applications. However, for the 2022 graduate entry scheme we are trialling an approach in which candidates' names, work history and educational institutions are visible to application assessors. Any personal information we request about age, disability, race and ethnicity, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation will remain confidential.

Drop-in sessions

We are holding two drop-in sessions for you to learn more about the scheme and ask any questions before you apply. These will be hosted by our current cohort of graduate trainees, who will be able to give you a first-hand account of what it is like on the scheme.

The sessions will be held online, and you are free to drop in and out at any time. For 2022 entry, the sessions will be held on:

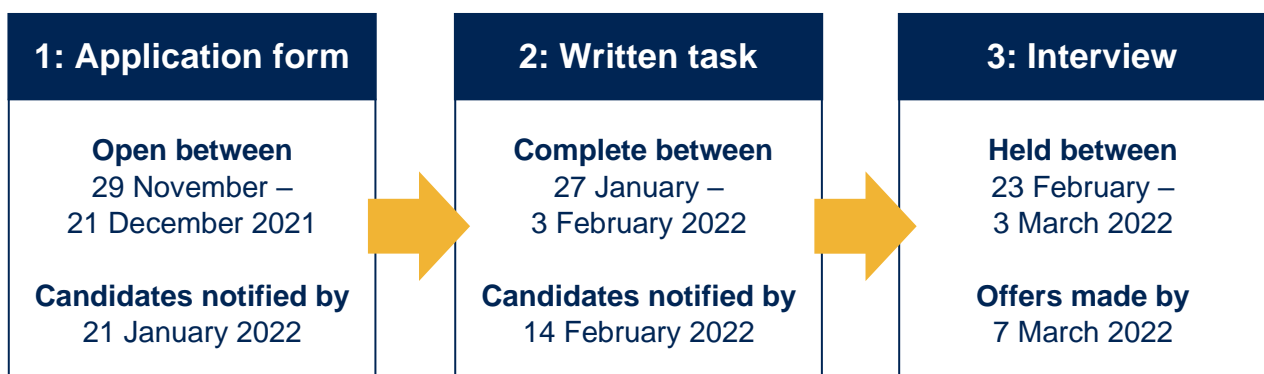
- Wednesday 8 December 2021, 12:00-13:00
- Thursday 16 December 2021, 12:00-13:00

To register for these sessions and receive a link to join, please email GraduateRecruitment@officeforstudents.org.uk. Please let us know if you need any reasonable adjustments to access these sessions.

If you cannot make one of these sessions, you can also use this email address to ask any other questions you have.

Application process

We will use a three-stage application process.



We plan to follow the above timeline as closely as possible. However, in some circumstances the timings may be subject to change. If this is the case, we will notify you as soon as possible.

Stage 1 – Application form

You will need to apply for the role through our [application portal](#). Once you have registered and created your profile, you will complete an application form.

You may wish to draft your responses in a separate word processing programme, such as Microsoft Word, then paste your answers into this form when you are happy with them.

There are word count limits for your responses. We may not consider any applications that exceed these limits.

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 21 December 2021.

The first section of the form will ask you to provide your personal details and education information. If you have not yet completed your degree, but expect to before the start of the scheme, you should still add your degree in this section.

You will also be asked to provide information of your previous employment. You may also use this section to add information about any voluntary roles that may be relevant to your application.

Competency question

The application form will ask you to answer the following question:

Tell us about a time when you worked as part of a team to achieve a common goal.

Your answer should follow the STAR format (Situation, Task, Action and Result). Your answer should focus on how you collaborated with other team members and contributed to the success of the whole team.

Your response must not exceed 250 words. We may not consider any applications that exceed these limits.

We will use your response to this question to assess whether you can demonstrate the following desirable criteria:

5. Ability to work collaboratively within in a team

Personal statement

The application form will ask you to write a personal statement in response to the following question:

Please explain why you want to apply for the role and how your skills would enable you to succeed in the role.

You should use this as an opportunity to talk about your motivation to apply for the graduate scheme and to work for the OfS more generally. We do not expect you to use more than 200 words on this subject.

You should also provide examples – from your education, employment, or other experiences – of when you have demonstrated the following skills.

2. Demonstrable problem-solving ability in unfamiliar contexts
6. Strong personal interaction skills and ability to influence people at all levels of an organisation
8. Ability to manage workload in the face of competing priorities and rapid change
9. A strong desire to make a difference for students and citizens

We will use your personal statement to assess whether you can demonstrate these desirable criteria.

You do not need to expand on any examples or skills you told us about in your response to the competency question.

As this is a graduate entry role, we will not assess the quality or range of your experience, but whether you can demonstrate the skills we are looking for.

Your response must not exceed 750 words. We may not consider any applications that exceed these limits.

We intend to notify candidates of the outcome of this stage of the application process by Friday 21 January 2022.

Stage 2 – Written task

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a short written assessment. We expect this task to take no more than one hour and thirty minutes to complete.

You will be able to complete this task at a time convenient to you, at any point between Thursday 27 January and Wednesday 2 February 2022.

You will not be expected to conduct any additional research to complete this task, and we will not be assessing your background knowledge of the subject or the OfS's work.

We will use your written work in this task to assess whether you can demonstrate the following desirable criteria:

1. Strong analytical skills
2. Demonstrable problem-solving ability in unfamiliar contexts
4. Strong written communication skills, tailoring for different purposes and audiences
7. Ability to operate effectively in complex and ambiguous contexts where competing interests need to be considered

We intend to notify candidates of the outcome of this assessment by Friday 14 February 2022.

Stage 3 – Interview

Candidates who are successful in the written task will be invited to a final interview with a panel of OfS staff.

We will hold interviews remotely, likely using Microsoft Teams, between Wednesday 23 February and Thursday 3 March 2022.

The interview will have two parts. The first will be a presentation, which you will be asked to prepare in advance. You will be given information about the presentation task when you are invited to interview.

At the interview, you will deliver your presentation to the panel, who will then ask follow-up questions.

We will use your presentation to assess whether you can demonstrate the following desirable criteria:

1. Strong analytical skills
3. Ability to present confidently to different audiences, including senior leaders
7. Ability to operate effectively in complex and ambiguous contexts where competing interests need to be considered

The second part of the interview will comprise several situational judgement questions. You will be given a scenario that you might encounter in your work should you join the graduate entry scheme and then asked to explain how you would respond in that situation. We may ask you follow-up questions to explore why you chose to take the actions you describe.

We will not assume any prior knowledge of the OfS's work. We will not be assessing your prior experience directly, but you can refer to previous experiences if it helps to explain how you might respond.

We will use your responses to the interview questions to assess whether you can demonstrate the following desirable criteria:

2. Demonstrable problem-solving ability in unfamiliar contexts
5. Ability to work collaboratively within in a team
6. Strong personal interaction skills and ability to influence people at all levels of an organisation
7. Ability to operate effectively in complex and ambiguous contexts where competing interests need to be considered
8. Ability to manage workload in the face of competing priorities and rapid change
9. A strong desire to make a difference for students and citizens

We intend to notify candidates of the outcome of their interviews by Monday 7 March 2022.

Further information

You can find more information about the scheme on the [graduate scheme webpage](#) and the [job advertisement](#).

If you have any further questions about the role or the application process, you can register for our drop-in sessions (see above) or email GraduateRecruitment@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Please also email us if you have a disability and wish to discuss reasonable adjustments as part of your application.