The Scottish Government Graduate Development Programme 2023

Candidate Guide ▶

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Contents

1. Introduction

This guide provides information for candidates who are considering applying for the 2023 Scottish Government Graduate Development Programme.

There are up to 20 places available on the 2023 programme and competition for places is usually high. Reading this guide will help you to prepare for each stage of the recruitment process and maximise your chances of submitting a successful application.

Further information can be found in a new Graduates section of our careers website, Work for Scotland at: https://work-for-scotland.org/

You can also keep up-to-date with notifications about our graduate programme by following us on Twitter at: @scotgovjobs

Intake for the Scottish Government Graduate Development Programme is currently every other year - the next planned intake after 2023 will be in 2025.
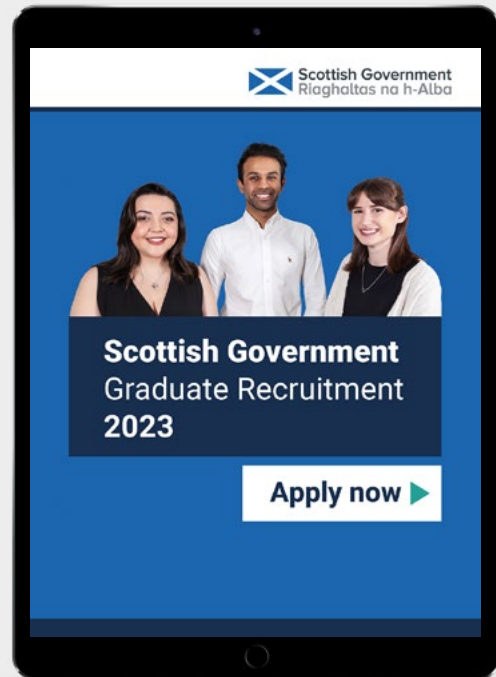
Apply online at:

work-for-scotland.org

2. About the programme

The Graduate Development Programme is an accelerated career pathway into senior roles in the Civil Service and a key initiative for talent development in the Scottish Government.

The 4-year programme includes a diverse mix of work placements lasting between 6 and 12 months in duration. These assignments will allow you to gain valuable experience and develop skills in a wide range of business areas, roles and activities.

You will be supported at every stage of the programme, undertaking a range of learning and development activities with a focus on personal and professional development in addition to work assignments.

The programme offers the opportunity to work alongside senior leaders and stakeholders to deliver impact on a range of key policy areas including health, education and the economy.

Reach your full potential:

The programme is designed to help you meet your career goals, by gaining:

- **Experience:** You will undertake a diverse mix of work placements to gain a broad range of experience and skills in different roles and business areas.
- **Capability**: You will undertake a mix of organised and self-directed learning, helping you gain the knowledge and skills you'll need to succeed.
- **Exposure:** You will work with a range of senior staff within the Government, wider public sector and beyond, allowing you to develop a strong network and learn from others.

Programme structure:

The programme is delivered over 4 years. During the first two years of the programme, you will undertake four separate work placements, rotating into a new position every six months. For the final two years of the programme, you will undertake two year-long work assignments.

Our dedicated Graduate Support Team look after graduates throughout the programme duration and arrange the placements for each participant.

Graduates on the programme do not have the option to select work placements.

Programme outcome:

At the end of the programme it is anticipated that you will have gained the skills and experience necessary to take on a senior role in the Scottish Government.

Graduates are supported at every stage of the programme

3. Key dates

A table of key dates relating to the graduate campaign is included below:

Applications open	**Monday 3rd April 2023**
Applications close	**Sunday 23rd April 2023**
Deadline for completion of initial assessment	**Sunday 30th April 2023**
Assessment centres to be held	**June 2023**
Offers made and pre-employment checks	**July 2023**
Start date in post	**September 2023**

Graduate Development Programme 2023

4. About the role

Duties:

Requirements of the role can vary as each work placement is different. As a participant on the programme, you will be given details in advance of each placement beginning about the role you will undertake and the duties required.

As a general guide, we expect graduates on the programme to:

• Take responsibility, make decisions and deal positively with challenges.
• Show promise as a leader by working hard to fulfil your potential.
• Prioritise your workload, communicate well, be resilient, and support others.
• Be flexible and adapt to working in a variety of roles.
• Learn quickly, balance different interests, engage with colleagues and live our values.

The majority of placements that graduates undertake are with policy teams. Some of teams successful in the most recent bidding round are listed below:

• Covid Inquiry Information Governance
• Mental Health and Crisis Support
• International Development
• Violence Against Woman and Girls
• Climate Change – Blue Carbon
• Security and Business Continuity
• First Minister's Policy Unit

Hear from past graduates:

You can watch our short videos to hear from previous graduates about their experiences of the programme:

Millie: https://vimeo.com/787560295
Rahul: https://vimeo.com/787558217
Natalie: https://vimeo.com/788610294

Working Pattern:

The standard working week on the programme is 37 hours over five days, but we do offer a range of flexible working options including flexi-time, compressed hours and part-time working patterns.

We are happy to consider applications for flexible working, if you would like to discuss this in advance of submitting an application, you can contact us at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot

Location:

Work location will vary over the term of the programme as the base location for each work placement is defined by the location of the team the graduate is working with.

Graduates are normally centrally-based and so travel to either Edinburgh or Glasgow offices will be required.

The majority of our graduates are currently working a hybrid model which includes home and office-based working. The split between locations varies, based on individual circumstances and team requirements.

Staff members who want to be office-based full-time also have the option to do so.

Probationary Period:

As with all Scottish Government roles, you will be required to complete a probationary period on joining the organisation. The probationary period for the Graduate Programme is nine months.

5. Working at the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government's work impacts on every aspect of society and the everyday lives of the people of Scotland. We cover areas like health, education, the economy, social security, culture, rural affairs and transport.

We collaborate to deliver the commitments made in the [Programme for Government](#) and measure our impact with the [National Performance Framework](#).

It is our mission to work together to improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

We employ over 8,000 people, at locations across Scotland in a diverse mix of roles and professions. We strongly believe in diversity and inclusion, and we aim to recruit a workforce that is reflective of our diverse population.

We are proud to be a Disability Confident Leader, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and holder of a Gold Healthy Working Lives Award and an Investors in People accreditation.

Our Vision and Values

The Scottish Government has a vision and set of values which are shared by all staff and underpin all of the work we deliver.

Our Vision:

We put the people we serve at the heart of everything we do. We use digital thinking and approaches to strengthen our work and provide a better service for everyone. We are driven by our values, always searching for new ways to learn and improve. All in the service of Scotland.

Our Values:

- we act with integrity
- we are inclusive
- we are collaborative
- we are innovative
- we are kind

Joining the Civil Service

The Scottish Government is a devolved administration of the UK. Staff in all of the devolved administrations of the UK work for the same organisation, known as the Civil Service.

As Civil Servants we are politically impartial and serve the government of the day in line with the civil service code core values:

- **Integrity** – putting the obligations of public service above personal interests.
- **Honesty** – being truthful and open.
- **Objectivity** – basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.
- **Impartiality** – acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving governments of different political parties equally well.

The Scottish Parliament

We are separate from The Scottish Parliament and cannot provide work placements at the Parliament as part of the graduate programme.

The Scottish Parliament is made up of all elected members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and is the law making body for devolved matters. It considers any proposed legislation and scrutinises the activities and policies of the Scottish Government through debates, parliamentary questions and the work of committees.

6. Salary and benefits

Pay and pension:

The starting salary for graduates on the programme is **£32,847**

Pay awards are reviewed and applied annually in partnership with unions. Pay progression takes place on an annual basis until staff members have reached the top of the salary band.

Information on all current pay scales can be found on our careers website, Work for Scotland at: https://work-for-scotland.org/our-reward-benefits

The Scottish Government also operates a generous pension scheme with employer contributions starting from 26.6%.

Additional benefits:

In addition to the competitive pay and pension provided, we also offer the following benefits:

- A generous annual leave allowance of 25 days plus 11.5 public holidays
- A range of flexible working options, including hybrid-working patterns
- An employee discount scheme
- Salary deducted savings option
- Interest free loans for travel passes
- A cycle to work scheme
- Paid volunteering days
- An ongoing programme of learning and development
- Limitless career opportunities and potential

7. Who we are looking for

We are looking for up to 20 graduates to join the Graduate Development Programme in 2023.

We are searching for candidates with leadership potential. If you are ambitious, motivated to learn, enjoy taking on new challenges and working as part of a team – this could be the graduate programme for you.

Whatever your background, age or degree subject, we value who you are and what you can bring to the programme. There is no time limit on applications after graduation, you can be a recent graduate or have achieved your qualification anytime in the past.

We strongly believe in diversity and inclusion, and we aim to recruit a workforce that is reflective of our diverse population. We want people who can bring fresh ideas and approaches to government and we fully support recruitment and workplace adjustments for anyone who needs them.

Key competencies for the role:

We are looking for candidates who can demonstrate the five key competencies which will contribute to success on the programme.

These are:

- **Understanding and developing self -** motivation to learn, develop and reflect on feedback and performance.
- **Early leadership** – Setting goals and collaborating with others to achieve results.
- **Communicating and engaging –** understanding different audiences and how to communicate clearly and effectively.
- **Analysis and use of evidence** – drawing on different data sources to analyse results and assess performance.
- **Changing and improving –** embracing change as an opportunity for improvement.

These key competencies will be assessed throughout the recruitment process.

We are looking for up to **20 graduates** for the 2023 Programme

8. Qualifying criteria

Qualification requirements:

You need to have, or be expecting to achieve a degree (or equivalent) in any subject by July 2023.

There is no minimum grade requirement and there is no time limit attached to when you achieved your degree. We are happy to accept equivalent qualifications to a degree whereby the qualification is equivalent to a level 9 SCQF qualification and 360 credits.

If you are a final year student and on track to obtain your degree before July 2023 you can still apply. If you're successful in the recruitment process, an offer of a place will be made subject to you successfully graduating.

Nationality requirements:

To qualify for a place on the programme you need to have the right to live and work in the UK.

A placement on the programme is broadly open to the following groups:

• UK nationals

• nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK

• nationals of the Republic of Ireland

• nationals from the EU, EEA or Switzerland with settled or pre-settled status or who applied for either status by the deadline of the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (settled and pre-settled status): Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

• relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service

• relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service

• certain family members of the relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals
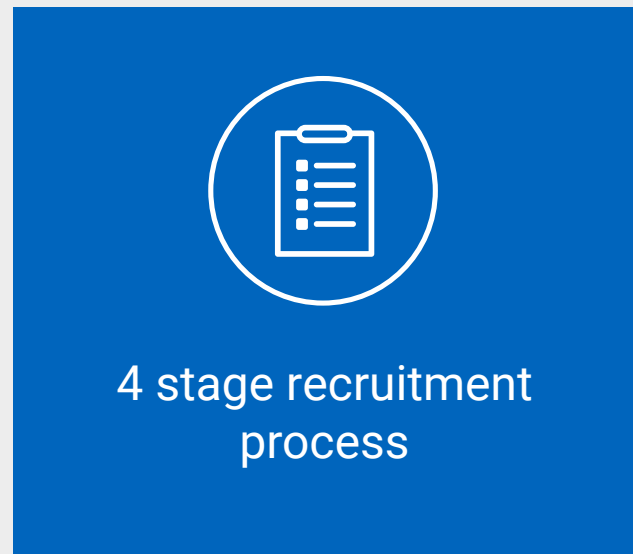
9. The application process

The Graduate Development Programme has a 4-stage application process:

- **Stage 1:** Online application
- **Stage 2:** Initial online assessment
- **Stage 3:** Virtual assessment centre
- **Stage 4:** Offers and pre-employment checks

Further information on each of the stages is included on the following pages.

4 stage recruitment process

9. The application process

Stage 1: Online application

To apply for a place on the programme you will need to complete the initial online application which can be accessed through our careers website, Work for Scotland: https://work-for-scotland.org/graduate-development-programme-2023

The application window opens on **Monday 3rd April 2023** and closes at **23:55pm** on **Sunday 23rd April 2023.** After the closing date has passed, we will no longer be able to accept applications for the 2023 intake.

To complete the online application, you will be required to complete some personal details, upload a CV and complete a Personal Statement (up to 500 words).

For the CV, we are looking for information typically provided in this format, such as contact information, qualifications, work history and skills.

You can find some helpful advice on how to write a CV here: CV advice | National Careers Service

Personal statements may be assessed as part of the application process, so it is recommended that you spend some time in advance of your application planning what you want to include in this.

You might find it useful to reference the Leadership Behaviours (as detailed in the *Who we are looking for* section of this guide) or reference the skills and experience you can bring to the role and your reason for applying to the programme.
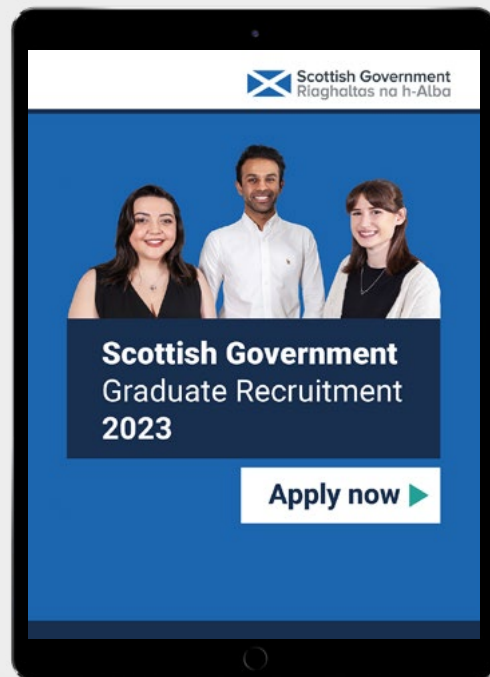
We highly recommend that you prepare your Personal Statement in an offline document in advance of the application, this will allow you to save a copy for your records and will also ensure that you do not lose any work if your connection to the system drops during application.

You will not be able to update or make changes to your application after you have submitted it.

You will be asked to provide some diversity information with your online application, please note that this has no impact on your application, it is captured for monitoring purposes only.

9. The application process

Stage 2: Initial online assessment

All candidates who complete an application will be invited to complete the initial online assessment.

You will receive an e-mail which acknowledges receipt of your application, this will also include a link to the online platform where you will complete the assessment.

If you have not received this e-mail, it is recommended that you check the spam or junk folder in your e-mail. If you still cannot find this please contact the recruitment team at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot

When you click on the link to access the assessment platform, you will be required to register for an account. **Please note: you MUST use the same e-mail address to register for the assessment platform that was used when submitting your online application. This is essential for us to be able to match your application to your test scores.**

Once account set up is complete you will be able to access the assessment platform, which includes:

*   information about the programme
*   a practice assessment
*   accessibility information
*   the online assessment

All candidates are invited to complete the online assessment

The online assessment is composed of two parts:

*   The first part of the assessment covers questions on your personality and behavioural preferences.
*   The second part of the assessment covers numerical and verbal reasoning, specifically how you analyse texts and work with the numerical data.

Instructions are included on how to complete each section and it is recommended that you undertake the practice test first to familiarise yourself with the format.

Online assessments are not timed but you should aim to complete the test as efficiently as possible.

You should also read the *Getting ready for assessment* section in this guide before you start the online assessment.

Screen-reader users:

Please contact the recruitment team at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot if you intend to use a screen reader for the assessment as an alternative version, optimised for use with screen readers can be provided on request.

Assessment results:

You will not receive the results of your assessment straight away. You will receive an e-mail after the initial assessment window has closed to advise you when your results are ready. You will then log into the assessment platform and be able to access a feedback report with information on your performance and the result.

9. The application process

Stage 3: Virtual assessment centre

Candidates who have passed the initial online assessment will be invited to participate in the virtual assessment centre.

You will receive an e-mail inviting you to the assessment centre which will include a link to log into the assessment platform, where you can book a slot for the assessment centre on a day and time which suits you.

You will have the option to change your slot later if required, but please note that options will be limited as slots book up.

On the day of the assessment, you will log into the assessment platform and find timeslots for the assessment activities and links to complete them. The assessment centre will consist of a competency-based interview and an analysis exercise aimed at assessing your ability to comprehend and process information.

The assessment platform can be accessed in advance of the slot for your assessment centre, details and links to the assessments will not be available in advance but you will be able to view some useful information and test access.

Assessment centres are planned to be held in June and will take place on weekdays during core working hours (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Assessment results:

You will not receive the results of your assessment straight away. You will be contacted after all assessment centres have been held and advised of the outcome.

We are happy to provide feedback on your performance in addition to the final outcome of the assessment centre.

9. The application process

Stage 4: Offers and pre-employment checks

The results of the virtual assessment centre will identify the candidates who will be offered a place on the programme.

If you have been successful, you will receive an e-mail to congratulate you on your success with a provisional offer of a place and details of the next steps.

Before you begin your employment with the Scottish Government you will need to complete a series of pre-employment checks and you will be required to provide some documentation at this stage. Pre-employment checks confirm identity, right to live and work in the UK, qualifications, work history and criminal convictions.

It is anticipated that successful graduates will commence their employment and start the programme in early September 2023.

The programme will start in **September 2023**

10. Getting ready for assessment

To get ready for your online assessment or virtual assessment centre, you should check your technology is compatible:

- **PC requirements:**
  Check your PC/Tablet meets the following specification:
    - Windows: Windows 7 or later
    - Mac: MacOS 10.11 or later
    - Linux: Any x64 based system

- **Browser:**
  Check you are using Google Chrome or Edge browser –only these will ensure a trouble free experience

- **Cache:**
  Clear down your cache and cookies from your browser to ensure that no programmes are blocking your camera/ microphone. How you clear your cache will be different on every device - check Google for further instructions.

- **Internet Speed:**
  Check your internet speed, try a Bandwidth Test to ensure that you will have a good connection (min. speed recommended is 3.2 Mbps)

For the virtual assessment centre you should also check:

- **Functionality:**
  Your device will need a microphone, speaker or headphones, In-built camera/webcam

- **Virtual Room:**
  Check your virtual room – you can test the Virtual Room on the assessment platform - ask a friend to join this link from their device too. Can you both see and hear each other?

If you have any technical problems with the assessment platform please contact us at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot

Accessibility Options for Assessment:

The assessment platform provides some self-service accessibility features for candidates through the use of a tool called ReciteMe.

The ReciteMe toolbar can be used on the assessment platform to:

- Make changes to the font type, size and colours
- Customise the background colour
- Use the reading ruler
- Focus on a small sections of text for usability
- Magnify text on the screen

Please note: if you opt to remove the ReciteMe Toolbar on the platform, this cannot be added again later.

Use of Screen Readers:

We have created a version of the assessments which are optimised for use with screen-readers.

If you intend to use a screen-reader to complete the online assessments please contact us in advance of your assessment at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov. scot

11. Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are important to us, and we aim to recruit a workforce that is reflective of our diverse nation.

We particularly welcome applications from groups currently under-represented in Scottish Government, including ethnic minority and disabled applicants and those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage.

We want all of our staff members to build a strong network and feel part of the wider SG community, so we have established a number of staff networks which are open to all employees to join and participate in, these include:

- The Race Equality Network
- The Disabled Staff network
- The LGBTI+ Network
- The Gender Equality Network
- The Age Network and more

All staff undertake diversity training and we have a range of activities which promote diversity within our workforce.

We are proud to be a Disability Confident Leader, Stonewall Diversity Champion, holder of a gold Healthy Working Lives award and an Investors in People accreditation.

12. Requesting adjustments

We want people who can bring fresh ideas and approaches to government and we fully support recruitment and workplace adjustments for anyone who needs them.

Recruitment adjustments:

You can find out more about requesting adjustments to our standard recruitment processes on our website at: [Candidate Support - Work For Scotland (work-for-scotland.org)](work-for-scotland.org).

For a personal perspective, you can also read our blog on adjustments by staff member Muireann: [Recruitment Adjustments Scottish Government (work-for-scotland.org)](work-for-scotland.org)

If you would like to request an adjustment or speak to a member of our team about adjustments in advance of your application, please contact us at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot

Workplace adjustments:

The Scottish Government has a dedicated workplace adjustments team who provide advice and support to staff and line managers on providing adjustments in the workplace.

Inclusivity is a core value of Scottish Government. If you are successful in securing a place on the programme, the team will ensure that any adjustments you need to do your job are in place for you on the first day in your new post.

Accessibility Options for Assessment:

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If you intend to use a screen-reader to complete the online assessments please contact us in advance of your assessment at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot

13. Requesting alternative formats

We are committed to providing adjustments to any standard recruitment processes and we will consider requests for alternative formats or translations for any materials relating to this recruitment campaign.

Please contact us at: ScottishGovernmentrecruitment@gov.scot if you would like to request an adjustment or alternative format.

You can find out more about requesting adjustments to our standard recruitment processes on our website at: Candidate Support - Work For Scotland (work-for-scotland.org)

For a personal perspective, read our blog on adjustments by staff member Muireann: Recruitment Adjustments Scottish Government (work-for-scotland.org)

We are committed to providing adjustments to any standard recruitment processes

14. Contact us

Further information is available on our careers website, Work for Scotland at: Home - Work For Scotland (work-for-scotland.org)

You can also keep up-to-date with notifications about our graduate programme by following us on Twitter at: @scotgovjobs

If you have a specific question relating to recruitment you can e-mail us at: Scottish-Governmentrecruitment@gov.scot

Contact us

The Scottish Government
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