



The Parliament Graduate Development Programme 2019

JOB DESCRIPTION

For anyone with an interest in politics, current affairs and public policy, a role at the House of Commons or the House of Lords is fascinating. A career in Parliament will give you the opportunity to develop a range of skills and allow you to be close to the parliamentary process while remaining independent of party politics. It offers a unique perspective on matters affecting all our lives. You will work directly with MPs or Peers, and with senior staff, and have the chance to be involved in a variety of work from researching and writing briefs for powerful select committees to supporting work in the Chamber of either House – for example, advising on amendments to legislation or Questions tabled on Government policy. This recruitment campaign is being run jointly between the House of Commons and House of Lords but the two development programmes are separate. Successful candidates will be offered a role in one of the two Houses.

Job details

This is a concurrent recruitment campaign which means both external applicants and existing staff may apply. The pay band/grade for this role is A3/AFS which has a starting salary of £27,775 pa.

Successful applicants to the House of Commons will mainly be based in the Chamber and Committee Team and can expect to change roles approximately every year, and to spend at least one year out of four working in a different part of the House. Specific job titles will relate to the particular posting, but all staff at A3 may be referred to as 'graduate trainees'. Training relating to specific roles will be available as well as a more general programme of training for all graduate trainees including parliamentary understanding and procedure. As part of training you would usually be expected to do some shifts in Chamber-facing Offices and to help with Divisions (votes) in the House. This may involve some late working but we value flexible working and understand that people have a variety of personal circumstances which we can accommodate if necessary.

Successful applicants to the House of Lords will mainly be based in the Committee Office, and will also support work in the Chamber of the House. They will be referred to as "clerks", and are likely to change posts less frequently than in the Commons, whilst developing similar skills including line management responsibility. At an early stage they will be trained in the procedural work of the House. This includes Minute and Division procedure which involves assisting Members with the drafting of Parliamentary Questions, the preparation of the "House of Lords Business" which is printed daily and with the administration of House of Lords Divisions (votes). Successful applicants are likely to work until the rising of the House (sometimes late at night) around once a fortnight, for which a late night duty allowance is paid.

Successful applicants will be offered a four-year training contract, with an initial probationary period of nine months. In the Commons net conditioned full-time working hours are based on a 36 hour working week (excluding meal breaks). Conditioned House of Lords hours are 41 hours per week including paid breaks. Consideration will be given to part time working, job share, or other flexible working patterns. If you are selected for interview, please inform the interview panel of the days/hours you are available to work. Roles are based on the Parliamentary Estate in Westminster, London.

A full description of the usual duties and of the person specification (what skills you need) is provided below, after the background information about the Graduate Development Programme.

Timings and application details

The deadline for applications, which must be submitted through <https://www.parliament.uk/about/working/jobs/> is **9 January 2019**. Longlisted candidates will then be invited to complete a written exercise online between **1 and 18 March 2019**. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to come to Westminster to participate in a group exercise (a discussion with other candidates) and attend an interview (on the same day). It is expected that this final stage will take place in the **week commencing 29 April 2019**.

Scope of the role and background

We are seeking to recruit four people to start work in September 2019: two people to the House of Commons and two people to the House of Lords (both Houses will consider requests for deferred start dates). In both Houses it is expected that the programme will last four years, offering you the chance to be part of a dynamic and evolving institution at the heart of UK democracy, able to witness at first hand the democratic processes and political events that shape the nation.

Over a four-year period the programme will include roles supporting the Chamber and Committees as part of a training programme designed to support graduates to build the foundations of their career in Parliament. In the Commons graduates may also have the opportunity to spend a year in another business area which might include Research, Participation and Outreach, Estates, Corporate Services (Finance and HR) or Digital to help you develop a broader understanding of the organisation and a wide range of skills. In the Lords you will be supported to manage a small team of staff from an early stage.

Training

Throughout the programme you will receive extensive training from external and internal providers, based on your own development needs. Each year you will build on your experience and skills, deepening your understanding of either House as an institution and the challenges it faces, and helping it to become more efficient, effective and better understood by the public. You are not expected to know everything about the work of Parliament, or know how to perform unfamiliar tasks without some training, support and supervision in the early stages. In either House you will receive structured training to build your parliamentary understanding and procedural knowledge, as well as on-the-job training.

Promotion

Entrants to the programme are eligible to apply for promotion opportunities after passing a nine-month probationary period. Promotion is by competitive process and it is usual and expected that it will take trainees 3-4 years to develop the competencies required to be promoted. You will receive learning and development support to help you from line managers, training coordinators and talent managers: providing a mixture of on-the-job learning and formal training, and bespoke advice. Promotion is typically to the A2/HL8 pay band with a starting salary of around £49,500 pa. In the event of trainees being unsuccessful in achieving promotion they may apply/be considered for other roles within a limited timescale, but such roles are not guaranteed and if no suitable role is available the contract will end at the end of the training period.

For further information

Please contact recruitment@parliament.uk if you have any specific questions or if you would like to speak to one of the Talent Managers please contact Mary Ollard (ollardm@parliament.uk) or Danielle Nash (nashd@parliament.uk).

JOB SPECIFICATION
DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

The House of Commons and House of Lords wish to attract candidates from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible. While you may feel that you do not have direct experience of all the types of work described, your particular experiences may be highly relevant if they have given you the capacity to develop these skills. If appointed, you will be supported in developing the skills and knowledge that are required for this job. You are not expected to know everything about the work of Parliament, or know how to perform unfamiliar tasks without some training, support and supervision in the early stages. You have nine months in which to show you meet the requirements of the job (although your training and development will be ongoing throughout the programme).

In both Houses you are likely to begin your career working for a select committee, but in the Commons you may start in an office which helps to support the work of the Chamber. In the Lords you will support the work of the House of Lords Chamber, in addition to supporting a select committee, from an early stage in your training. In either case, your work will centre on supporting Members of the Lords or Commons in their parliamentary duties, which in practice could involve:

- Managing committee inquiries, including: providing oral and written briefing material for committee members, liaising with and briefing committee witnesses, accompanying committees on visits and drafting committee reports;
- Helping to manage a committee's workload, agenda, advisers and staff;
- Responding to queries from Members of the Lords or Commons and members of the public about the work of Parliament; and
- Advising Members of Parliament on the customs, practices and 'rules' of Parliament.

In addition, in the Commons you will spend time in other business areas such as:

- The Outreach Service, working to improve public engagement with and understanding of Parliament;
- The Strategic Estates Team, working as part of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team to help plan for the refurbishment and renovation of Parliament's buildings;
- Corporate Services, supporting the Finance and HR functions of the organisation, and
- The House of Commons Library, which provides first-class research services and briefings to MPs.

In the Lords you will, from an early stage, be trained in the procedural work of the House. This includes Minute and Division procedure which involves assisting Members with the drafting of Parliamentary Questions, the preparation of the "House of Lords Business" which is printed daily and with the administration of House of Lords Divisions (votes).

Key relationships in the role

Most roles in either House are based in fairly small teams of people and good collaborative and team working skills are required. Relationships between teams and across different parts of Parliament are also important.

Almost all roles involve substantial contact with Members of Lords or Commons. Roles on the Graduate Development Programme also usually require contact with external individuals and organisations relevant to the subject area of the specific role. For example, in a Committee role, this may include potential witnesses (people who may be invited to provide information

to the committee either in writing or in person), Government departments and other public bodies, think tanks and academic experts. In other business areas roles may involve managing relationships with contractors. Most roles across either House involve some engagement with members of the public.

Management responsibility

In the House of Commons there is no formal line management responsibility at the A3/Graduate Trainee grade but roles undertaken are likely to involve substantial relationship management and informal management responsibility including providing guidance, supervision and support to more junior staff.

In the House of Lords you will be expected to undertake line management responsibility for a small number of staff, and will be provided with training and support to do this.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

Applicants are required to have a 2:2 degree in any discipline.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

	Application Form	Written exercise/group exercise	Interview
Good written and oral communication skills, and the ability to explain complex information clearly and succinctly.	x	x	x
An ability to provide politically impartial advice.	x	x	x
An understanding of how to research and organise material from a range of sources and use it to develop well argued, evidence-based conclusions using good judgement.		x	x
An ability to use the most appropriate techniques to influence or persuade others, using the best arguments for the purpose.		x	x
The ability to acquire knowledge rapidly in unfamiliar areas.		x	x
The ability to get on with people from all walks of life and the skills to build and maintain effective working relationships with a wide variety of people, both internal and external to the House.	x	x	x
Good organisational skills, with demonstrable experience of planning and prioritising your own work – whatever that may have been – to meet strict deadlines.			x