

Monthly Motivation: Laura Carruthers (class of 2014)



Hello! I'm Laura, and I'm currently working on organising the 2022 Commonwealth Games, as a government official in the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport' having recently graduated from the Civil Service Fast Stream scheme

What have you done since leaving Putney?

I left Putney in 2014 and studied for my degree in History & Politics at the University of York. Here, I gained a 1st class honours degree and played a lot of sport - legacy from my days on the lacrosse pitch at Putney! After graduating, I was elected to the Students Union as the York Sport President, and spent a year leading and directing all university sporting activity. I also campaigned on a variety of topical issues facing the sport sector, including mental health and wellbeing, equality of access and diversity.

What was your experience of applying for the Civil Service Fast Stream?

During my year as Sport President, I decided to re-apply for the [Civil Service Fast Stream](#) graduate scheme. I'd previously applied in my final year of study at York and not been successful, which is unsurprising given how fiercely competitive the scheme is. However, in true Putney style, I decided I wasn't taking no for an answer and threw my hat into the ring for a second time - this time with much greater success!

It's worth saying, for anyone considering applying for graduate or internship schemes, that although the application process is fiercely competitive don't let that discourage you. In my case, I hugely benefited from an additional year of work experience before re-applying. The application process felt much less daunting the second time round, when I had a better idea of what to expect and felt more confident in demonstrating the skills I had to offer. Failure is not a metric of your potential, so don't be afraid to try (or try again!) in the face of odds being stacked against you.

What were some of the highlights of the scheme?

My time on the FastStream was filled with a variety of exceptional highs and lows; determined in large part by the topical issues that continue to define the era of politics we are living in. I entered the FastStream in Autumn 2018 and spent most of my time on the scheme working on Brexit in some way shape or form.

The highs included: briefing the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; working directly to Rt Hon Ester McVey MP and working on legislation for the EU Withdrawal Agreement as it passed through Parliament. Certainly the historian in me felt I was at the forefront of history in the making!

What are you up to now?

Having left the FastStream, I am currently working in government to organise the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games - and am absolutely loving it. I'm responsible for developing and delivering various elements of legacy that the Games will generate, including physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, and opportunities for young people in the West Midlands. It feels like such an honour to be working on a major event for the nation, and to have a positive moment on the horizon at such a challenging time.

Putney was instrumental in shaping how I thought about my career, and has certainly influenced how it has mapped out so far. For me, I've navigated my way to my current role by trying to merge together two big passions in my life - sport and politics. This is definitely another Putney trait in me: the principle of being guided by your genuine passion for what you do, both in terms of the subjects you take and, beyond that, what you want to do in your career. We're part of a generation that is likely to be working for a pretty hefty chunk of time, so you want to make sure you're doing something you really enjoy and get fulfilment out of - whatever that may be!