

Apprenticeship at GAD – Mary’s story

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This is the 3rd in our series about the opportunities offered under various placement and career development schemes at the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD). We have previously heard from people on the trainee actuary scheme and on the actuarial placement scheme. This time, we speak to Mary Gurung, who’s an apprentice in GAD’s human resources (HR) team.

Mary, who’s working towards her CIPD HR Level 3 Support Apprenticeship, has been talking about her role and what she’s learned so far...

I became interested in human resource management, while studying Business Management A-level. The opportunity to interact with colleagues and to come up with ways to help their working lives, on a case-by-case basis really interested me. So, the opportunity to continuously learn seemed unending within a career in Human Resources (HR).

After graduating with a degree in International Business, (and after an initial foray into property management), I joined GAD in January 2019 as an HR Apprentice.

Why did you choose to work in the Civil Service?

The prospect of working within the government while studying to complete my HR Level 3 Support Apprenticeship for the CIPD – the organisation which sets professional standards for HR and people development. This is an internationally recognised qualification, offering me an accredited route into the HR profession.

It can be difficult to enter the HR workspace without experience or a relatable qualification. So, I was excited to be offered the opportunity to learn and earn all the while being a member of the Civil Service HR professional group.

How did you get the role at the Government Actuary’s Department?

I found out about GAD’s HR apprenticeship scheme through the Civil Service Jobs website. Now, around 9 months into my 18-month apprenticeship. I’m half way through my modules. Along the way I’ve learned invaluable HR skills that I am able to implement practically in my role. GAD is quite diverse as an organisation and since day one I have been made to feel like a valued employee among my peers.

What have you learned?

My job is very varied; no 2 days are ever the same. Daily tasks can include co-ordinating recruitment activities (such as interviews), drafting letters

concerning contractual changes and carrying out inductions for new starters. In my role I learn about new and innovative ways to operate on a regular basis. I'm gradually gaining a greater understanding of the complete employee life cycle from recruitment to their last day. I enjoy the variety of activities involved at each of these stages and being part of the visible impact that HR has in GAD.

How does the apprenticeship work in practice?

As an apprentice I manage working and studying in tandem which was, initially, quite challenging. I've learned how to manage my time effectively by prioritising my work, organising responsibilities effectively and breaking down processes into manageable tasks. The online learning facility from my apprenticeship provider Avado gives me the flexibility to study anywhere and at any time. It enables me to split my time between working and learning.

I have a dedicated Learning Development Coach, who is external to the Civil Service. My coach monitors my progress and provides effective feedback to support my final assessment which concludes my apprenticeship. My line manager and the wider team provide continuous support and help me to take full advantage of my apprenticeship.

So, once it's over, what next?

Once I've completed my apprenticeship, I'll receive my CIPD certificate and become an Associate member. This will allow me to work at a higher standard as a credible HR professional. My apprenticeship means I've already had the opportunity to consider further HR opportunities within the Civil Service.