***Comments from some of our summer Interns (2013 – 2015)***

My six week Summer Diversity Internship with the Foreign Office was an interesting learning experience. I previously had little knowledge of what people who work in the FCO do. But through my placement, I was able to learn a great deal about what an FCO career entails and the varied responsibilities the department has. As an intern, I was able to engage in foreign policy work and get a good sense of what the international relations landscape looks like at present. Most importantly, the experience taught me how necessary diversity programmes which target students from ethnic minorities and lower socioeconomic backgrounds are. Though I was initially sceptical, I have learnt how effective they are as a means to improve the diversity of the range of the people who apply for the Diplomatic Service.

* **Elizabeth Akita, University of York: Politics, Philosophy and Economics**

My six weeks at the FCO gave me a valuable insight into the workings of an important government organisation that I previously knew nothing about. It really helped me make up my mind to apply for the Fast Stream. The internship made me realise that a lot of my assumptions about government organisations were wrong. The diversity of people who work at the FCO was amazing and far from what I was expecting.

* **Fraser Deas, Sheffield University: Asian and Oriental Studies**

During my Summer Diversity Internship placement in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I was placed in the Association for South East Asian Nations Department working on the UK's political and economic relations with the ASEAN countries. My manager and team gave me great responsibility on a range of different areas from the beginning of my internship, from working on high-profile ministerial visits to the region to drafting correspondence letters to members of the public. It was a brilliant, invaluable experience that informed my decision to apply the Diplomatic Service, providing me with the confidence I needed to apply, knowing that I had gained so many vital skills and important qualities from my placement.

* **Chloe Cameron, Kings College (London): History**

I was encouraged to attend important meetings, introduced to senior team members and was working on vital projects from day one. I was certainly not fetching coffees and doing filing as is often the case with internships!  My time at FCO has shown me how open staff are to diversity of people and thought processes - innovation is welcomed and my ideas were really valued. The Summer Diversity Internship Programme has made me more confident about applying to the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream as I feel that I have a realistic idea of what it's like to work as a civil servant. I encourage anyone interested in the civil service to apply - my only negative is that my time at FCO went far too quickly!

* **Hayley D’Souza, University of Birmingham: Geography**

My experience at the FCO was fascinating and extremely informative. As a language student, I was keen to see what language training services the FCO offers and was able to sit in on an intensive course in Mandarin Chinese, as well as tour the impressive new language centre. I was also able to use my linguistic skills to present to a group of Chinese business delegates visiting the UK, which was a daunting but extremely exciting opportunity. I left the internship feeling absolutely confident that the FCO could offer me a fantastically diverse and challenging career and am now preparing to apply to the diplomatic service through the Civil Service Fast Stream.

* **Hannah Dudley, University of Leeds: BA Chinese**

The summer placement at the FCO enabled me to sample life as a civil servant and help me decide if it was a viable career choice. I was given responsibility for a number of projects that involved creating and delivering my own training workshop, developing a communication campaign across the office and seeing my work being rolled out at the United Nations General Assembly! Support and guidance was always on hand if needed, and I developed skills that I can take back to university and beyond.

* **Claire Huxley, Loughborough University: Economics with Politics**

My two months at the FCO gave me a real insight into the work of the civil service and the wide variety of challenges a career here involves.  Working on EU reform I was able to see how EU-decision making works close up and get a sense of the importance of building strong bilateral relations.  I was given specific projects to complete during my internship, covering a range of areas from policy to printing official reports.  The internship confirmed by interest in working for the FCO and I have since applied for the Fast Stream.
**- Nicola Deboys, Pembroke College, Oxford: Modern Languages**

The summer placement gave me a truly valuable, in depth and realistic experience of the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Working in the Human Rights and Democracy department, I worked on real projects. I saw the things I had been studying in action, and was able to gain a greater understanding of the way our government works to fulfil its aims through international institutions.  The placement gave me a great sense of the realities of working in the public sector, and enhanced my understanding of how British foreign policy is created and implemented, as well as cementing my intention of devoting my career to it! I wholeheartedly recommend you apply.

**- Rebecca Viney, University of York: Social and Political Sciences.**

I enjoyed a fascinating two months working within a unique and fast paced environment where I was given the opportunity to undertake work of a dynamic and challenging nature on issues that really mattered to people and that impacted at a national and international level.

The internship has also given me a much greater insight into career opportunities at a European and international level. Having the opportunity to work alongside and learn from experts in their respective specialist fields across the Foreign Office and other government departments, including the government solicitors office, has equipped me with the knowledge and skill set that would hopefully allow me to pursue such opportunities in the future.

**-**  **Romaine Love, University of Sheffield. Law: European and International**