

The GES: strengths and challenges

‘making economists better and the better use of economics’

Agenda

1. About us
2. Introduction to the UK's Government Economic Service (GES)
 - a) Entry requirements
 - b) Hierarchy
 - c) Appraisal and promotion
 - d) Economists across Whitehall
3. Successes
4. Challenges

1. About us

Our background

**Neil
Golborne**

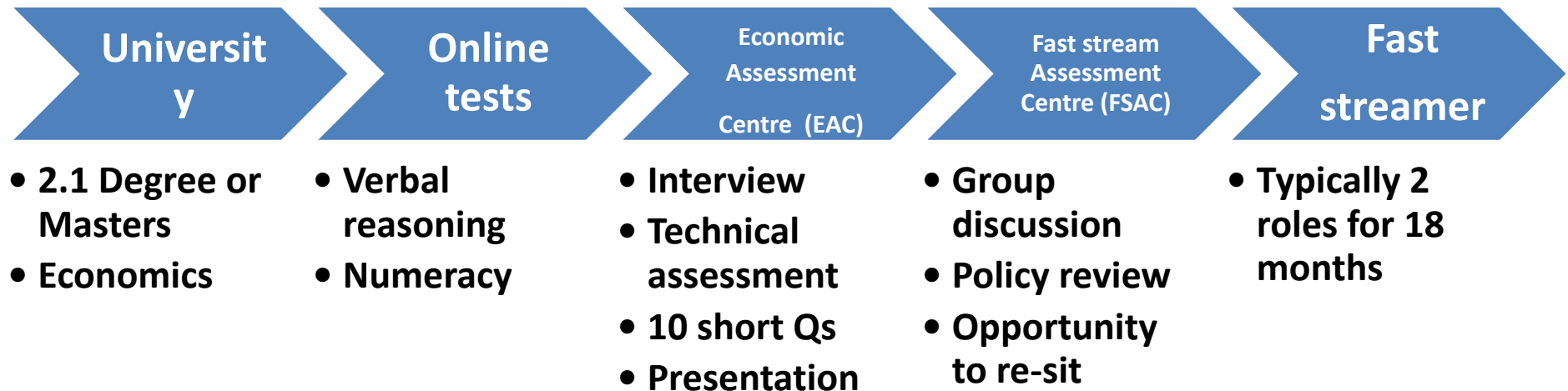
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Economics and Markets Group (led by Samantha Beckett, Deputy Head of GES)
- Lead a flexible team of economists
- Joined GES in 1992 worked in 5 departments
- BA, Essex University; MSc Warwick University

**Felicity
Hannon**

- HM Treasury
- Head of GDP, Economics Group (led by Dave Ramsden, Head of GES)
- Internal and external analytical experience
- MPhil Economics, Cambridge University

2. Introduction to GES

a. GES requires an extra assessment



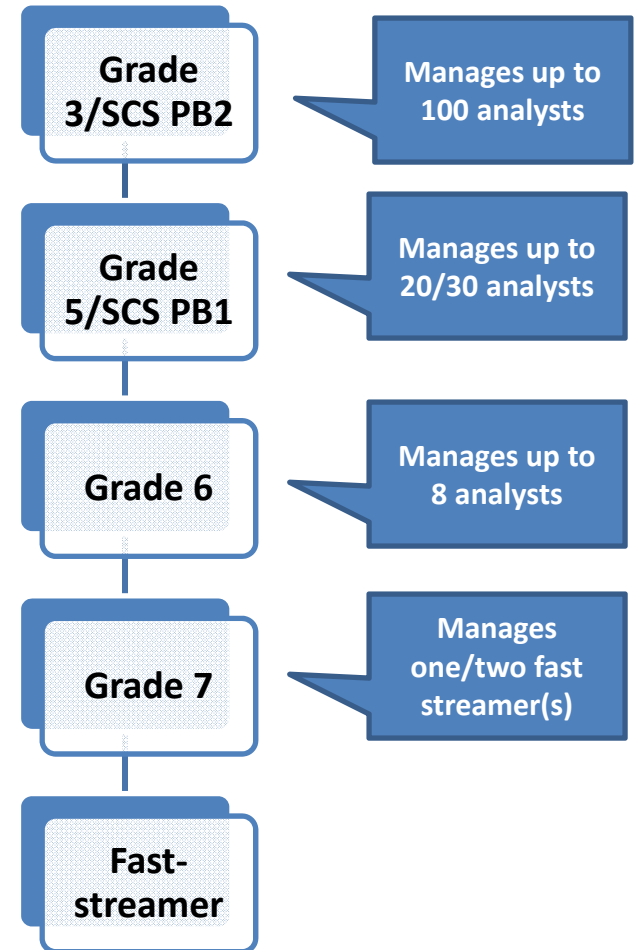
• As well as the normal steps of the Fast Stream application process, applicants for have to pass an extra assessment called EAC.

• Annual intake typically 200 selected from around 1300 applications.

• If you're successful at the EAC but not the FSAC, there may be the possibility of a provisional temporary appointment.

b. GES Hierarchy

- Economists have same grading structure as policy professionals within each Department.
- But to reach highest grades in Civil Service (DG, Permanent Secretary), need to switch to policy role.
- There is some variation across departments (grading and salaries).



c. Performance is assessed against objectives and behaviors...

Appraisal

- **Every civil servant is graded 1, 2 or 3 at mid year and end year. Marking depends on performance against objectives and behaviors (including soft skills).**
- **End year box marking determines size of pay rise.**
- **360 degree feedback**
- **Appraisal is also used to identify development needs**

Promotion

- **Promotion at all levels is competitive and competition varies by role – it is not related to time in post.**
- **Application and interviews, sometimes psychometric testing.**
- **Interviewing panel assess whether applicant displays the competencies required of the next grade up.**

d. All Departments have an economics capability led by a Chief Economist

- Size of economics teams varies according to size of department and balance between policy/implementation.
- Budget holders in Departments (e.g. DGs) decide how many economists they need.
- Chief Economists meet regularly to discuss professional issues, chaired by Dave Ramsden and/or Sam Beckett.

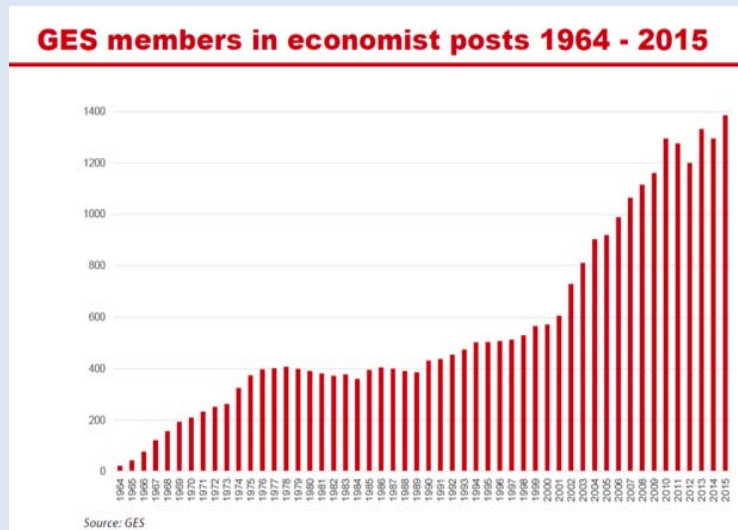
Department	Total economists	Total core staff	Economists/core staff
HM Treasury	136	1,220	11%
Health	67	1,920	3%
Energy and Climate Change	93	1,570	6%
Education	22	2,290	1%
International Development	116	1,900	6%
Transport	79	1,850	4%
Business, Innovation and Skills	128	3,080	4%
Communities and Local Government	32	1,680	2%
Justice	55	4,220	1%
Culture, Media and Sport	7	390	2%
Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs	65	2,070	3%
Cabinet Office	21	2,030	1%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	36	4,610	1%
Home Office	24	23,520	0%
Work and Pensions	91	95,920	0%
HM Revenue & Customs	56	69,310	0%
Defence	18	48,540	0%

Notes: some departments include implementation staff in core (e.g. tax and benefit inspectors); figures correct as of January 2014; excludes government economists working in agencies

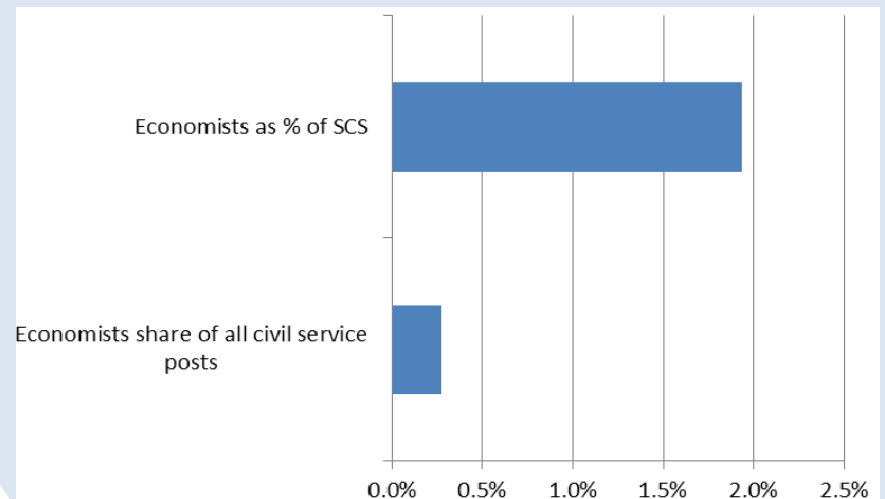
3. Successes

Successes: Increasing demand and high impact analysis

1. Growing demand for analysis has translated into increased demand for economists



2. GES is over represented in Senior Civil Service: 5 current permanent secretaries started their careers in the GES



3. High impact analysis: Euro five economic tests; analysis relating to Scottish independence and EU membership; and public sector efficiency.

What contributes to GES success...?

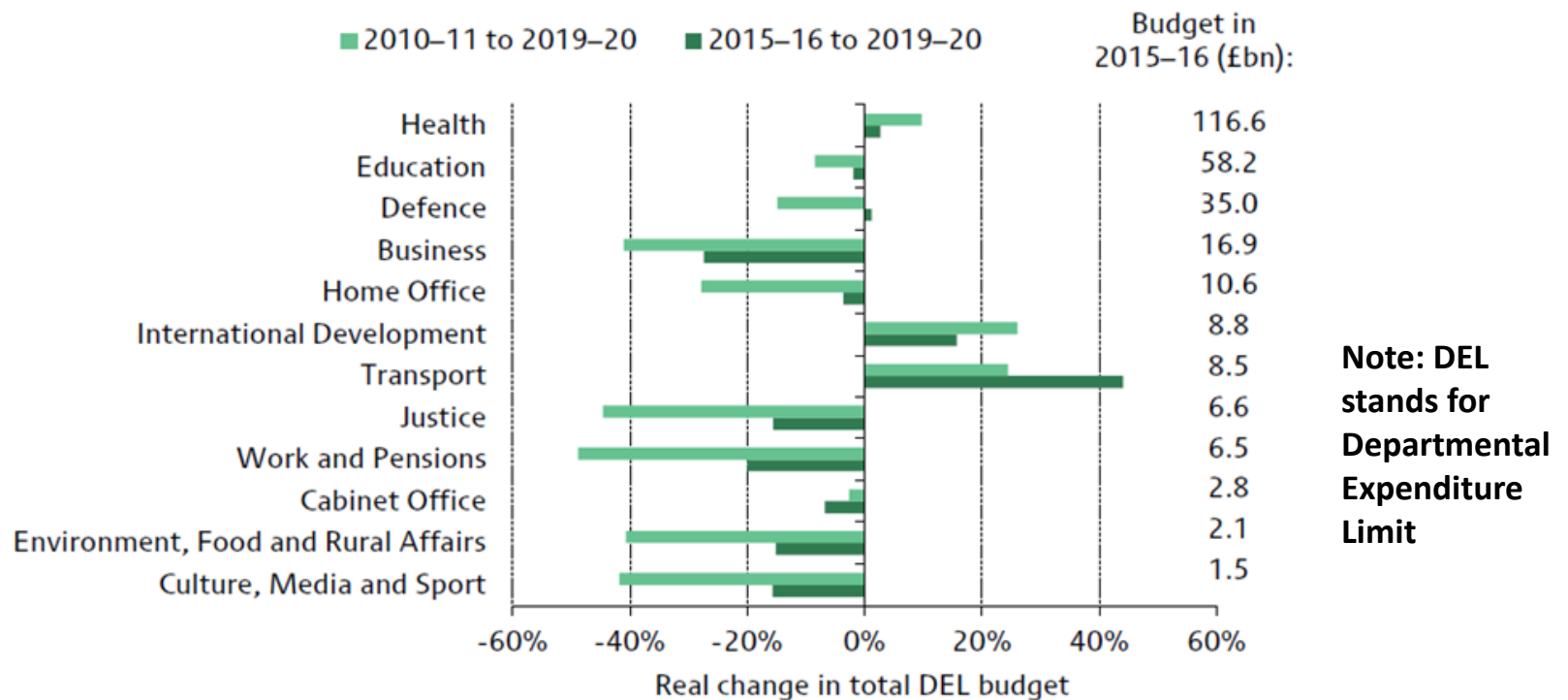
- Robust challenge from HM Treasury – “where is your evidence?”
- Appraisal and evaluation frameworks (Green Book) which shape policy making process.
- Championed institutions that have increased influence (e.g. better regulation).
- Highly independent media.
- Links with a strong, independent, research base (e.g. Universities).
- Locating SCS led analyst teams in policy led directorates helps build relationships with policy teams.
- Our ‘federal model’ allows economists to specialise while also getting cross-government support.

4. Challenges

Limited resources

Faced with limited budgets, there is pressure on leaders to manage change, deliver their objectives, improve systems and release resources to other teams that are working on Ministerial priorities.

Figure 6.2. Change in selected departments' budgets, 2010–11 to 2019–20



Ensuring quality

- **Complex policy problems; IT enables more powerful analytical tools and access to larger datasets.**
- **How do you manage analytical complexity?**
 - **Assurance:** Implementation of the Macpherson review requires all business critical models to be Quality Assured.
 - **Being Relevant:** Drawing on larger and non-traditional data sources (e.g. credit card companies); data linking and new approaches (e.g. behavioral economics).

Any Questions?

