



National Audit Office

CHANGE YOUR WORLD





National Audit Office

Analyst opportunities

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1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in joining the National Audit Office as an Analyst. This pack will give you a better idea of who we are, what you'll do when you join us, and what we offer. It also gives more details about the application process.

Our position is unique, and our work is extraordinarily influential. Totally and distinctively independent, we scrutinise public spending for Parliament. This means we work for, and for the good of, everyone in the country. We help society work better – supporting and enabling improvements in the way services are delivered right across the public sector. The recommendations from our work result in financial savings and positive changes in government to improve services and ensure value for money for the taxpayer.

For you, this means work that has a greater value, and offers a greater challenge. You'll tackle complex projects that inform debates and influence some of the biggest decisions that government makes. You'll collaborate with dedicated and talented people toward shared and important goals. And, by taking on new opportunities and challenges, you'll build a rewarding and fascinating career – one that will allow you to make an impact that you, and the nation, can clearly see.

As an Analyst you will help us deliver our Value for Money reports, which examine various aspects of government programmes and projects. You will get involved in other work too, including investigations and other assurance work. To be successful you would bring strong analytical skills and work with other colleagues in collaborative teams.

We are now looking to recruit a number of Analysts. We are looking for people with strong analytical skills, which can be drawn from a range of backgrounds, to join our mixed method study teams. We are also looking for people with analytical experience in the areas of energy and climate change to strengthen our capability in this area.

If you like what you see and can meet our requirements, then we want to hear from you.

More about the NAO, including some of our recent value for money reports, is available on our website nao.org.uk

2. The Role

Purpose

Each year we produce around 65 major Value for Money (VFM) reports examining various aspects of government programmes and projects. VFM reports are multi-method reports delivered to demanding timetables. The main role of Analysts in the NAO is to apply strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills to our VFM work and contribute to planning and drafting these reports, working alongside sector or topic specialists and qualified accountants.

Analysts also contribute to other assurance work, investigations - where concerns have been raised with us - and supporting Parliamentary select committees. Our VFM reports use mixed methods and therefore we are looking for a select group of talented analysts who have exceptional analysis skills (economics, modelling, data analytics, financial, social research methods, surveys, GIS mapping, or statistics) to join those teams. We are also keen to recruit those with analytical expertise in the areas of energy and climate change as this is a growing area of focus.

All Analysts are expected to spend part of their time using their expertise to contribute to our analytical and other networks across the office. This includes providing analytical support or advice to others outside of their team on analytical techniques and methods where they have experience.

Responsibilities

The main responsibilities include:

- Gathering, analysing and interpreting data on a wide range of relevant public policy topics, using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods
- Interpreting and presenting findings clearly and succinctly and contributing to the drafting of reports
- Providing written and oral briefings to managers and senior staff
- Supporting wider assurance work and assisting teams during engagement with Parliament and wider select committees, particularly the Public Accounts Committee.
- Gaining insight and knowledge of the client and developing and maintaining good relations with them and engaging with wider external analytical communities.
- Providing advice and support to other teams using your analytical expertise.
- For those in the central analysis team, you will use your exceptional quantitative skills to produce high-quality analysis and insight for VFM reports and other assurance work where more specialist expertise is required.

Relationships and Accountability

You will work as a member of a team, or a number of teams, delivering analytical work to time and budget. You will report to a team leader who may be a Senior Analyst or Audit Principal (Chartered Accountant). You will work with people across the NAO and from all grades.

The impact you'll make

Right from the start, you'll contribute to work that matters. Whatever you work on it all serves to help hold government to account for the way it uses public money and helps to promote improvements in public service delivery. The scope of our impact is huge – from health to education to justice to overseas development to the BBC and Bank of England – and much more.

Our recommendations and reports on good practice help government improve public services, and our work led to:

- positive financial impacts of £1.1 billion in 2019-20
- £16 savings for every £1 spent on running the NAO
- 94% of our recommendations accepted by the bodies we audit

You can find out a lot more about us and our work from our website nao.org.uk but here are some examples of recent work:

- The [Jobcentre Journey Time Model](#) - This interactive data visualisation, built in RShiny using Leaflet, presents our experimental jobcentre journey time model. Using data analytics and GIS techniques, it provides an overview of planned changes to the jobcentre estate in England and allows exploration of the estimated impact that these changes may have on the time it takes for people to travel to their nearest jobcentre when using public transport.
- In our [Smart Meters](#) report, we tested the sensitivity of the business case for the £11 billion, consumer-funded Smart Meters programme to changes in key modelling assumptions. We also compared actual outcomes to those expected in the business case. We found that the business case was overly optimistic, with installation costs being 50% higher than expected. The value of the programme was highly sensitive to small changes in the assumptions around energy savings.
- We reviewed the return of [Lloyds to private ownership](#) and identified lessons and recommendations for future sales of government's shares. As part of this, we compared the government's use of trading plans to sell Lloyds shares with other sales approaches by performing a hindsight simulation analysis, using code to manipulate a very large data set of possible scenarios. We showed that there were only a small number of scenarios where an alternative approach would have performed better.
- **Treasury** – the [Whole of Government Accounts](#) gives an overall picture of the financial position of the whole UK public sector. Our financial auditors have worked with the Treasury to improve the reliability of these accounts which enable decision makers to make more informed decisions and support better accountability and transparency. We have developed an innovative interactive visualization of the data to provide an accessible snapshot of finance.

Further details on our case studies can be found on our [website](#)

3. The people we are looking for

Education/work experience

A strong academic background. This means either:

- A minimum of a 2:1 degree in a discipline with a substantial quantitative, qualitative; mixed methods component (e.g. statistics, economics, management science/operations research, finance, data analytics, or social research methods) and relevant experience working as an analyst,
- or;
- A Masters degree with a substantial quantitative or research component.

One of the analyst roles we are looking to fill is in our energy and climate change study team. Previous work experience in an analytical role with knowledge of the energy sector and wider climate and environmental issues is desirable for this role; in particular, experience of evaluating the carbon and wider environmental impacts of policies.

Abilities

It will be essential that you can demonstrate the ability to:

- Deliver insightful quantitative, qualitative; mixed-methods analysis to time and quality
- Produce clear, well-structured and succinct written work which can be easily understood by non-technical readers
- Draw valid and succinct conclusions that are clearly evidence based
- Present complex data or other findings in a way which can be easily understood by the various audiences
- Engage confidently with colleagues and clients at all levels
- Use a range of software packages especially (and not limited to) MS Excel, and demonstrate interest in and potential to learn to use other analytical packages such as R, Python and SQL to manipulate and analyse data

Attributes

In addition, we are looking for the candidates with the following attributes:

- Intellectual curiosity, especially about using data and evidence to answer questions
- Flexibility to make a significant contribution across a range of topics and outputs
- A strong interest in the work of the NAO and public policy
- Ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively as part of a team to deliver outputs
- Drive and determination to overcome obstacles, resistance or challenges in order to achieve goals
- Commitment to personal development and keeping technical skills up to date.

4. Our People

In our open and inclusive working environment, you'll work with, and learn from, all kinds of people. Here are just a few of our Analysts and Senior Analysts:



Simran Nijjar – Senior Analyst

I studied Economics at university and trained as a professional internal auditor before joining the Regulation, Consumers and Competition team at the NAO as an analyst. Since joining the office, I have worked on several cross-cutting studies on consumer issues, most recently the report on problem gambling. My work is interesting and enjoyable - we make meaningful changes to the outcomes people experience in public service markets.

I also co-lead the Economics discipline, which offers advice and delivers economic analysis for teams across the office. The NAO actively supports you in pursuing your interests and getting involved in the wider sector. I regularly attend workshops, forums and training which enable me to network with my colleagues working in regulators and across the economic service.

James Gjertsen - Analyst

I started at the NAO as an analyst at the beginning of 2018, joining the energy and environment value for money team. My background is in geoscience and after my masters I spent four years working in the energy sector before deciding it was time for a change. The breadth of subjects the NAO works on was the main thing that attracted me, along with the range of skills that could be developed.

Energy and environment is an area I find very interesting and the projects I've worked on have been really varied and engaging. I feel like I've learnt something new from each study and that I've helped hold government to account on important issues.

I've also had the opportunity to develop skills outside my regular project work. Before I joined the NAO I started to teach myself to code and was keen to get more experience of this. Now I spend part of each week working in the data analytics research team helping to develop apps that support the wider office.



Marc Adams - Senior Analyst

I joined the NAO as an Analyst in 2016, initially attracted by work it does in holding government to account for spending on public services. Prior to the NAO, I completed a PhD on Transition in regional agri-food systems, a Masters in Geographic Information Systems and worked in industry.

Working at the NAO is challenging in terms of its breadth and hugely rewarding. I have contributed across many areas including: a high-profile investigation, developed an interactive application for the website and using my technical knowledge of GIS to influence the work the office.

Being an analyst at the NAO provides great development opportunities. Since joining I have had the opportunity to develop my technical skills further in R, SQL and QGIS.



Helen Roberts – Senior Analyst

I joined the NAO as an analyst in 2018 after completing a PhD in geography where I researched the utility of social media in understanding the value of ecosystem services provided by green spaces in cities. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I finished my research but knew I wanted to work for an organisation that had impact and worked to make a difference to society. For me, the NAO offered this opportunity.

Since joining the NAO I've helped deliver high profile reports and being part of an organisation that provides direct challenge to the way government makes decisions and implements policy is hugely rewarding. Seeing your work being discussed by MPs is also very interesting.

As an analyst I've been able to use the analytical skills I joined with including mapping, R and statistics. There are also opportunities to develop other skills and I'm constantly able to challenge myself. What's also important for me is that I've found the NAO to be a supportive and friendly place to work.

5. What we offer

- A very competitive salary: £35,006-£44,206 p.a. (London) or £28,391-£37,465p.a. (Newcastle)
- 35 days leave per year (including public holidays)
- Membership of an excellent civil service pension scheme, the Alpha pension scheme, which is a defined benefit, career average scheme
- Along with work that just means more, you'll benefit from a sociable, collaborative working culture, working with other highly professional people committed to making a real difference as part of a high performing organisation
- We provide excellent learning and development opportunities combining: a package of initial training to provide you with all you need to be an effective analyst. In addition, you'll have access to training on a wide range of analytical methods, as well as management and leadership skills; learning through our work; and learning from other colleagues
- Our annual LearnFest week combines presentations, workshops and seminars on a whole host of topics (you could also deliver one if you wish).
- The more you develop, the more options will open up for you in terms of career development
- Looking further ahead we run talent programmes which identify, support and develop those with the potential to reach our most senior levels.
- Our roles are based at either our London office or our Newcastle office, with travel to client sites across the UK as required. We are following Public Health England's advice and taking all necessary steps to minimise the risks to our colleagues, their families and the wider public during the pandemic. Our systems are designed to be operated remotely and the majority of our staff are working from home – as a result, we expect this role to be largely based remotely (while restrictions remain in place) when successful candidates take up post.
- Access to a wide variety of social activities, from quizzes to sporting events, coordinated by the NAO Sports and Social Association.
- Free Employee Assistance Program for confidential, wellbeing support and advice

6. How to apply

The closing date for applications is **11:55pm on Sun 25th Oct 2020**.

Please submit the following an up to date version of your CV, along with a covering letter, setting out briefly why you are suitable for this role. It is essential that you submit both of these documents.

For further details on how to apply, please go to our [website](#)

7. Contact Us

If you have any queries, please email our recruitment team on: hrservicedesk@nao.org.uk

For further information about us, please go to our website or follow us on social

media: <https://www.nao.org.uk/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/data-visualisations/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/search/type/report/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/highlights/audit-insights/>

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