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BIRMINGHAM

CNT CAREERS  
NETWORK

EXPLORE

PLAN

# PG Skills: Critical Thinking

APPLY

Connecting you  
to your future

# HOUSEKEEPING

- Please stay muted unless invited to unmute
- Please join with your full name if possible
- You can use the public chat box to ask any questions

**Please note:  
This webinar  
is being  
recorded**

# CAREERS NETWORK IS HERE FOR YOU

- 1:1 guidance support:
  - You don't need to have career ideas or a plan to come and talk to us: we help people who have no idea where to start as well!
  - To book an appointment, ask a question, have an application checked etc., please email [careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- PGT-specific opportunities:
  - Professional Development Award <https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/enroll/MTJAJF>
- PGR-specific opportunities:
  - Career Mentor Beyond Academia <https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/enroll/M7WCDE>

# PRESENTERS

Katie Hoare, PGR Entrepreneurial Development Officer

Adam Ellis, Second Year Generalist Fast Streamer

Mattie Wormald, Second Year Commercial Fast Streamer

# What we'll cover...

Why CT is  
important &  
useful in work  
situations and  
tasks

How you can  
demonstrate  
your CT  
abilities in  
job  
applications

Practice CT in  
a group  
interactive  
activity



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# UoB Postgraduate - Critical Thinking

How to use and demonstrate Critical Thinking?  
14:00-14:35



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# What is Critical Thinking?

Put in the chat box what you think critical thinking is



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# Who are we?

## Adam Ellis - Second Year Generalist Fast Streamer

- History BA at UoB
- Cabinet Office
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

## Mattie Wormald - Second Year Commercial Fast Streamer

- International Business and Spanish BSc at UoB
- Crown Commercial Service
- Ministry of Defence



**Cabinet**Office



**Crown  
Commercial  
Service**



**Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport**



**Ministry  
of Defence**



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# Demonstrating Critical Thinking

What is Critical Thinking?

[Civil Service Behaviours](#)



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## Managing a Quality Service

Changing and Improving

Making Effective Decisions

Communicating and Influencing

Developing Self and Others

Seeing the Big Picture

Leadership

Working Together

Delivering at Pace



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# The STAR Model

**Situation** - set the scene

**Task** - objectives, challenges, purpose

**Action** - what YOU did

**Result** - outcomes, successes, consequences



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# Application Examples of Critical Thinking

We will provide two (2) good examples and two (2) bad examples of critical thinking using the Civil Service Behaviours.

Feedback after each example why you think they were good or bad.



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# Example 1: Seeing the Bigger Picture

While at the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) last year I was involved in a cross department carbon net zero project which was very long term focused. This means we all had to see the bigger picture. Carbon net zero may not seem like a major issue now but it will be in the future so being part of this project to focus on the impact of carbon reduction on our futures was very important.

My involvement focused around making sure I thought about all the consequences of our actions on the wider organisation, government, UK, and world as a whole as carbon net zero is imperative to the survival of the human race and to mitigate the risks of climate change.

The project was about raising awareness of carbon net zero, improving CCS' offerings of carbon reduction solutions as well as promoting those offerings externally through marketing and training. The team helped promote carbon reduction policy, created timelines to emphasise the importance of immediate action, blogs to make the content relatable, as well as mapped the solutions and interconnections that could be implemented to create a holistic carbon reduction strategy for the public sector. All of which I was involved in which shows I was effective at seeing the bigger picture.



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# Example 2: Making Effective Decisions

Before joining the Digital Knowledge and Information Management Team there was no centralised way in which training was delivered to staff and this was something that we saw as an issue. I realised the main way in which the team can ensure that Information Management performance is maintained and improved across the Cabinet Office is by improving our training offer. This was something that I was keen to implement during my time with the team.

I drafted a plan for a centralised training system to target as many staff as possible with high quality training. I invited members of my team to help draft training sessions based on their knowledge. I also included Information Managers from across the Cabinet Office to provide feedback on my plan as they are stakeholders that would benefit from the restructuring of training. I created feedback forms to collate qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact that we were having by creating this new training system. This training project was implemented within 2 weeks of planning beginning and was delivered in a timely manner. As well as this, the training system and creating further presentations does not cost any further money as already existing systems were utilised for this project.

This project was successful. The system is now used across the Cabinet Office for IM presentations and compliance with IM has never been better. I have trained over 600 members of staff and colleagues have also been able to significantly improve the number of people they have trained as well. This is demonstrated by the fact that our most recent quarterly assessment showed that the whole Cabinet Office was 100% compliant. Every business unit was rated either 'Good' or 'Outstanding', something never before achieved and is evidence that my decision to restructure training was an effective decision.



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# Example 3: Leadership

Leadership is something that I pride myself on. I am very keen to show this to my peers both at work and outside of work as well. When I was at university I showed this in many different ways. Whether it was volunteering, sports or societies that I was involved with. I have always believed that leadership is very important when making decisions.

I was able to coordinate events for over 200 people during my time at university and I was also able to raise a significant sum of money for an event as well. I did this by phoning, texting, emailing and speaking to people face to face. My efforts meant that the events could take place.

I have good communication skills and I enjoy talking to people. I was particularly able to show that when president of a society where I had responsibilities for both the committee and members. I ensured I was a leader by being inclusive to everyone and listening to their needs and wants.

I have also shown obvious leadership skills when it comes to sport and I have played football to a relatively high level. To play sports you have to be able to show leadership skills.

Leadership is therefore something that I am very passionate about and also am quite good at. The result of this is that I can get things done both on my own and also leading a team if need be.



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# Example 4: Communicating & Influencing

While at university I was a brand ambassador for the Business School, acting as a representative of my degree to promote the university to prospective students and answer any questions they or their parents had to aid their decision making on which course to take and whether to apply to UoB.

This role required me to communicate my experience and knowledge of the university, course and city in an appropriate manner that was suitable for the audience including through presentations, tours, Q&As and networking events. Part of this also required me to try and influence their decision making in order to increase the number of applicants to UoB and the business school specifically.

To communicate and influence effectively with the different audiences I was dealing with I changed the angle and focus of discussion depending on what I knew the individual's priorities were. For parents, they were often most concerned about academic qualifications, success stories of graduates, safety, and asked very specific questions about the application process or degree modules on offer. I answered these questions with professionalism, objective facts and statistics, as well as personal experience to appear sincere, and the application requirements which I had previously researched and memorised to put parents at ease with their children leaving home for the first time.

Contrastingly, I adapted my communication style to a more relaxed and candid approach with the prospective students where I answered their questions with candour, enthusiasm and approachability so they felt comfortable asking the questions they really wanted to ask such as about nightlife and assignment types without fear of judgement. I engaged with them in a more interactive way to ask about their hobbies and interests, taking them on personal tours to the sports complex, society areas and lecture halls to give them a more immersive experience and understanding of what they would face if they chose UoB.

My final year saw the highest number of applications received to the UoB business school and I personally received numerous messages, emails and LinkedIn requests from prospective students to say thank you or ask follow-up questions about their applications. On numerous applicant tour days I also met parents and students that I had previously interacted with on open days who approached me and stated my passion and effective communication was the principal reason for them applying.



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# UoB Postgraduate – Critical Thinking

Group Exercise  
14:35-15:15



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# Instructions

This exercise is designed to test your **critical thinking skills**, your ability to **work well with others**, to show **leadership** and to **communicate** well.

In your group of 4, 5 or 6 you will be **presented with a scenario** where you and your colleagues form a task group set up to **advise on a government objective or commitment**.

You will be given several options and, as a group, need to agree which one of these should be recommended:

- All group members will have the **same core information** about the scenario and an overview of the options
- Individually, you will be given information on the **main option** that you should strongly support, as well as **further information on another option** that you should support as your **second preference**

Your task is to gain the **best outcome for the position you are representing** as well as for the **whole group**.



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# The Scenario

**You are part of a task group in the Department for Foreign Affairs, Support and Development (FASD) and have been asked to review six aid options for supporting the small British overseas territory of Pérola Verde which suffered a hurricane six months ago. The UK government plans to commit £500 million in one “focused strategic intervention” to create a better long-term future for the island’s inhabitants, selecting one of the options.**

**Each of you represents a different government department and have been told to strongly support one specific option to the group, and another option to support, as your second preference.**



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# Breakout Rooms

6 in each group

1+ Facilitator per group



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# UoB Postgraduate – Critical Thinking

Q&A

15:15-15:30

**After this event you will receive an email requesting some feedback (it only takes 2 minutes)**

**At such a challenging time we really want to deliver what you need.**

**We look forward to welcoming you to future events.**



Tell us what you found useful so we can do more of it.

Tell us what we could do differently and we'll make changes.



# ANY QUESTIONS?

Contact us via [careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

[www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/pg](http://www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/pg)

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