

Two-year graduate programme in entrepreneurship

Location: Central Oxford

Salary: £28,000

Type: Fixed-term/full-time



Background

Oxford-based **Fast Track** has launched a two-year graduate programme in entrepreneurship. We are offering two to four talented and hardworking graduates the opportunity to gain an in-depth insight into Britain's top entrepreneurs. Graduates will be trained to work in Fast Track's core business. They will also undertake one or two short placements of their choice with leading start-ups and scale-ups from Fast Track's extensive alumni entrepreneur network of top-performing UK private and VC/PE-backed companies, or with our blue-chip sponsors ranging from BGF to Virgin.

Over the years, Fast Track has successfully taken on a number of predominantly Oxford and Cambridge (also Warwick and City, University of London) graduates and postgraduates as MBA summer projects, summer interns and freelancers – some of whom have stayed on to work full-time.

Fast Track was founded in 1997 by Hamish Stevenson, who retains an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford, with support from Richard Branson, Virgin and **The Sunday Times**.

We now publish seven annual league table supplements ranking the fastest-growing tech firms to the biggest private companies; and we organise and host seven sponsored national awards dinners and 25+ networking dinners a year for our alumni of Britain's leading entrepreneurs. We are a small entrepreneurial company with c30 staff, but have a reputation for punching above our weight.

Overview

Graduates will have the option of **two or three rotations** within Fast Track's core business, and of one or two short placements with some of the UK's leading start-ups and scale-ups from Fast Track's extensive alumni entrepreneur network, or with some of our blue-chip sponsors.

Graduates will have the opportunity to conduct company visits and face-to-face interviews with entrepreneurs, shortlisting their companies for our league tables, and our four associated Ones to Watch programmes published in **The Sunday Times**. They will also have the opportunity to work at and attend all seven of our national awards dinners, and some of our 25+ networking alumni dinners for leading entrepreneur guests and speakers.

The £28k a year remuneration will consist of a base salary of £26k and a £2k annual discretionary bonus (plus any travel expenses for company visits to interview entrepreneurs and to Fast Track's entrepreneur networking events).

Type of graduates we are looking for

In our first year, we aim to take on up to four talented, hard-working graduates, postgraduates, or those who have graduated within the past 12 months, with minimum of a 2:1 from a Russell Group University or international equivalent.

Attention to detail is essential. Graduates should ideally have a demonstrable interest in, and some knowledge of, UK private companies and entrepreneurs. Some understanding of private company accounts would be helpful, for example, gained by a degree in management or a related subject or through a relevant internship or job; but is not essential, as training will be provided.

Structure of our scheme

Graduates will have the option to choose **two or three of six rotations** within Fast Track's core business.

Three of these rotations are company research related, including telephone and face-to-face interviewing some of Britain's leading and emerging entrepreneurial founders of the fastest-growing venture capital-backed and disruptive companies; as well as with senior directors of some of the biggest family or private equity-owned companies.

The other rotations cover our business-to-business activities, including event management, marketing communications and social media, and executive assistant (EA) and business development (BD) executive roles.

The six rotations

- 1. Business research analyst:** Helping to identify Britain's top-performing private companies, from the fastest-growing tech companies to the biggest family and private equity-owned companies. This will include training to use internet and database searches; and to analyse relevant company financials. These financials will need to be input into the company database to help assess companies for one of our league tables and/or our various 'Ones to Watch' and 'Disruptors to Watch' programmes.
- 2. Business writing/journalism:** Researching and writing short profiles on top-performing private companies for publication in our seven supplements in The Sunday Times, after the appropriate on-the-job training; and visit News UK to see a supplement being sub-edited and published. Graduates will also help research and draft profiles on hundreds of potential speakers to be invited to our awards and alumni events; and help draft final speaker profiles for publication in our events programmes. In addition, they will help with drafting of briefing documents for our sponsor articles published in our supplements; as well as helping write ad hoc articles and documents.
- 3. Company visits & entrepreneur interviews:** This will most likely come after having successfully completed the aforementioned two rotations and after some training, including shadowing one of our experienced interviewers. Graduates will conduct up to 50 company visits and face-to-face interviews with the founders and entrepreneurs who own and run some of the UK's top-performing private companies, including VC-backed companies, tech companies, leading exporters, and disruptors.
- 4. B2B event management:** Get hands-on training and experience of managing some of our 20+ networking dinners (20 – 40 High Net Worth entrepreneur guests) or help manage some of our seven large annual events (c250 guests) from the initial planning and invitation process, to researching and writing guest and speaker profiles, helping manage the event on the night, and dealing with post event feedback and documentation.
- 5. B2B marketing communications & social media:** Work closely with our small digital marketing team to help deliver and to improve our social media, including Twitter (10k followers) LinkedIn (2,500 followers) and Instagram; and work with our designer to help design and deliver all our events collateral.
- 6. EA & BD executive roles:** Provide executive assistance and business development support to Fast Track's CEO & founder (MPhil and DPhil in management studies and associate fellow, Oxford), and our editorial director (former enterprise editor of The Telegraph for 9 yrs) who will both assist with training. This will include preparing for and attending key meetings with senior representatives of our blue-chip sponsors, potential sponsors and key suppliers; compiling succinct meeting notes with action points and helping with (selected) follow-up actions; and working on ad hoc projects.

Second year placements

Towards the end of their second year, graduates will have the option to choose one or two placements covering a four week period. These placements will be selected by the graduate from Fast Track's extensive network of start-ups or scale-up companies, and/or with our blue-chip sponsors.

Our sponsors range from Virgin Group (or one of its operating companies or charities) or BGF, to one of our banking (HSBC, Lloyds, Barclays or Santander), accounting (PwC, Grant Thornton, BDO), or solicitor sponsors (Linklaters, Trowers, Charles Russell Speechlys), subject to their final agreement. Many entrepreneurial companies and sponsors have expressed a keen interest in hosting a "Fast Track graduate trainee."

Fast Track training & optional activities

Training and support will be provided by Fast Track's experienced staff ranging from our:

- Entrepreneurial founder & CEO, who holds an MPhil and DPhil in management studies, and retains an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford
- Director of editorial, a former Enterprise Editor of *The Telegraph* for 9 years
- Trained accountants and company analysts, including a Saïd Business School graduate
- Senior events staff with over 20 years' experience in running B2B events
- Digital marketing manager, who holds a PhD and a diploma from the CIM

Each graduate will also be assigned a mentor for the duration of their time at Fast Track.

All graduates will have the option to attend and work at our seven national awards dinners, including our flagship Fast Track 100 conference and awards dinner, which has been hosted by Richard Branson for all 21 years.

All of our awards dinners have inspirational keynote speakers from our Fast Track alumni network; including:

- Jim Ratcliffe, the founder & CEO of Britain's biggest private company, oil & chemicals giant INEOS (sales of £27bn in 2018) which has made him Britain's richest man, worth £21bn
- James Dyson, founder of Dyson – sales of £3.5bn & operating profits of £800m in 2017
- Ricardo Zacconi, founder of King Games – which floated for £8bn
- James Watt, co-founder of BrewDog – valued at £1.8bn
- Chrissie Rucker, founder of The White Company – sales of over £200m
- Tom Blomfield, co-founder of Monzo – valued at over £1bn
- Ali Parsa, founder of Babylon Health – valued at £213m

Graduates will also have the option to work at and attend some of our 25+ alumni networking dinners (20-40 guests) in London, and some in Birmingham and Manchester. They will get the opportunity to meet a cross section of entrepreneurial businesses from our alumni network and hear from speakers ranging from the founders of Fever-Tree drinks and Just Eat – both now floated and worth over £3bn – to the founders of up-and-coming companies such as Deliveroo, Rapha, Cult Beauty, and Gymshark; and disruptors such as Transferwise and Graphcore.

Finally, graduates will have the option to attend public lectures in Oxford on entrepreneurship related subjects at Oxford's Said Business School, including the Entrepreneurship Centre and Private Equity Institute, and at Oxford's Department of Economics.

What happens at the end of the programme

Although the scheme is a two-year fixed-term contract, at the end of it, Fast Track could be in a position to offer one or two full-time jobs, dependent on the graduate's performance and fit; however, there is no obligation from either party.

The aim of the scheme is that all participants will have gained valuable entrepreneurial experience and exposure in their chosen rotations to make them competitive candidates for their chosen careers, ranging from VC/PE and business journalism to starting up a company.

About Fast Track current staff & past interns/freelancers

As Fast Track is located in Oxford, with close associations with the University, we have primarily recruited summer interns and full-time staff with management or MBA degrees from Oxford University (including hosting five MBA summer projects). Some graduates have stayed on to work freelance or full-time – currently, 8 of our 25 full-time staff are Oxbridge graduates, as are 4 of our 8 freelance researchers. Many have gone on to a variety of successful careers, ranging from PE/VC to consulting and academia, including:

- Venture capital & private equity (managing partner of Graphite PE, principal of Exponent PE, partner at Apiary Capital and CEO of Catapult Ventures)
- Asset management (MD of Monument Group, CIO at Oxford University Endowment, and head of equity research at Charles Stanley)
- Consulting (partners at McKinsey and BCG)
- Journalism (literary editor of Sydney Morning Herald; broadcaster with BBC & Bloomberg)
- Entrepreneurs (founders of Mara Seaweed, Mangrove Consulting and Wonky Fruit)
- Other: MP & Parliamentary Private Secretary to Business Secretary; CEO of Novotech, Sydney; and director of CIIC Securities, Beijing)

Freelance researchers from the early years of Fast Track are now distinguishing themselves as Professors at Cambridge's Judge Business School; MIT Sloan Management School of Business; Carnegie Mellon University; and a Fellow in Economics at Oxford.

Recent summer interns from Cambridge have gone on to be:

- Associate at NorthZone, one of Europe's largest VCs Business analyst at Baylor & Klein, a boutique M&A firm in London
- 4th year finalist in Engineering Manufacturing at Cambridge

Other interns are completing their degrees at Warwick, Oxford, Oxford Brookes and City.

Application process

Applicants are asked to email a one page cover letter, including their degree grade or predicted grade and any other relevant information, and a copy of their CV to **jobs@fasttrack.co.uk**.

Fast Track will shortlist candidates on a rolling basis, therefore they are encouraged to apply **ASAP**. Candidates will be asked to complete some online exercises lasting 1 hour and then to attend an interview evening at our Oxford office.

We are holding our final round of interviews on **Tuesday 23 April** – with graduates starting on **2 September**.