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**PhD in Science and Technology Studies,
2008**

Who is your current employer and what do they do?

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is the devolved government for Scotland. It plays a part in most day to day issues that matter to people in Scotland – health, education, housing, crime, transport, agriculture, culture and the economy, plus many more.

What is your job title and what does the job entail?

Principal Research Officer

I work in the Office of the Chief Researcher covering a large number of issues that keep the researcher teams in Government going. This includes procurement, staffing issues, training and development, publication and freedom of information issues, data and digital issues and anything else that comes into the Chief Researcher that she needs me to work on.

I work in a small team and also manage staff who are responsible for our internship and PhD schemes.

How did you achieve your current position?

After finishing my PhD I was working as an interviewer at Ipsos-MORI in Edinburgh and applying for academic jobs. Then I saw an advert for the Government Social Research service, and saw that they had jobs available in Scotland.

I applied, went through a civil service assessment centre in London and was offered a job in the Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services Division in Edinburgh working on Housing Research. A Government Social Researcher's job is to provide evidence to support policymaking, which means some management of commissioned research and some in-house research. It's also about

communications skills, finding the right person to speak to, meeting and learning about the academics in your field and crucially developing relationships with policy colleagues so that you can be more useful to them.

I enjoyed the work, and also the feeling that it was directly contributing to the policy development process. I worked in Housing for a couple of years, and then was moved to another research post in Transport Scotland, a public agency, which was a good opportunity to learn about different ways of working as well as looking at a different policy area. This also gave me the chance to work with both policy professionals and operations staff, who have a very different set of interests and perspectives.

After another assessment centre (the civil service is bound by legislation in how it does its recruitment and promotions) I was promoted into my current job in May 2013 and also moved back into core Scottish Government.

How do you feel you have used the skills and/or knowledge developed during your research degree in your career to date?

I did both my MSc by Research and PhD at Edinburgh, and I would say that both were helpful in getting my current job, and also in what I've had to do day to day. The statistical component that was a part of my MSc is something that is frequently useful in understanding survey data that is the bread and butter of a Government Social Researcher.

Other skills that I picked up during my PhD, such as communicating with academics, and getting a good understanding of what is relevant and important in other people's research have also been very useful to me. My PhD involved reading a lot of other people's research and trying to make sense of it, even where it was very different to my home discipline. That is a hugely useful skill in Government, where even as a 'specialist' i.e. a researcher, you have to be much more of a jack-of-all-trades, in both methods and topic than a researcher in a university.