

Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism

Do you enjoy working with people and using your communication skills? Are you happy to go the extra mile to provide customers with excellent service, including working longer hours? If so, then hospitality, leisure and tourism could be the industry for you.

This industry needs friendly, outgoing, helpful and well organised people.

According to UK Hospitality, hospitality is the third largest employer in the UK, with over 3.5 million people working across the sector, directly contributing £93 billion annually to the economy. ¹ In 2022, there were around 3.64 million jobs in the UK travel and tourism industry (directly and indirectly), 4 and contributed an estimated £237.1 billion to the UK economy. ⁵

What areas can I work in?

This is a wide ranging area, with jobs available at all levels. In hospitality you would be providing food, drink or accommodation services to customers. Leisure involves providing support in recreational activities. Travel and tourism can be a combination of both leisure and hospitality and also overlap with the culture and heritage sector in terms of certain visitor attractions.

All areas of this industry also involve an element of retail and jobs such as airline cabin crew and cruise ship workers are covered in the career area 'Transport and Distribution'.

There may also be opportunities to work abroad.

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our [Career Pathway](#).

What kind of companies can I work for?

You might work for:

- hotels
- restaurants, pubs or clubs
- holiday parks or centres
- cinemas
- leisure complexes
- travel agencies
- tour operators
- visitor attractions
- tourist boards and information centres.

What's the job market like?

In 2023, Scotland's tourism sector employed 175,900 people, accounting for around 6% of employment in Scotland. The highest proportion worked in the Glasgow College Region (32,400) closely followed by Edinburgh,

East and Midlothian (32,100), and the Highlands and Islands (20,500). Between 2023 and 2026 it is forecast that there could be a demand for an extra 39,300 people in this sector, with a growth forecast of 5.4%. This is a larger percentage growth than is forecast across Scotland, at 2.2% for this period. ²

The hospitality sector is an important part of the Scottish economy, supporting £1.7 billion of economic activity. Around 233,000 people worked in the Scottish hospitality industry in 2023, accounting for 8% of all jobs in Scotland, the 4th largest provider of workforce jobs. However, there was a reported skills gap of 7.5% between June 2022 and March 2023, with employers indicating that 8% of their workforce did not possess all the skills to be fully competent at their job. This was compared to the Scottish economy as a whole with a skills gap at 4.8%. ³

In the UK, despite vacancy rates being above pre-pandemic levels, the number of job postings in hospitality decreased by 31% relative to their peak in 2022, and between July and September 2023 there were 121,000 vacancies. ³

Facts and figures

- Across all sectors of the Scottish economy, hospitality continues to have one of the highest shares of part time workers as a share of the total workforce. In 2023, there were 126,000 full time workers and 111,000 part time workers in the Scottish hospitality sector. ³
- In 2023 the median hourly pay in the Scottish hospitality sector was £10.89, up 8.9% relative to the previous year. Despite this rise, this was still outpaced by average wage growth across the Scottish economy, at 10.9% between April 2022 and April 2023. ³
- Tourism has a lower proportion of the workforce educated to SCQF Levels 7 and above, and a higher proportion educated to SCQF Levels 5 and 6, compared to Scotland overall. ²
- In Scotland, the median real-time salary advertised in 2023 for Tour Guides was £31,500 a year. ²
- 45% of the hospitality workforce in Scotland did not receive the real living wage in 2022. ³
- There is a gender pay gap in the hospitality industry, indicating that men were paid by 4% more on average than women in 2023. ³

Want to find out more?

You can find out more information about different job roles in the industry from the [People 1st Career Map](#).

Sources

¹ [Facts and stats: The economic impact of hospitality in the UK](#), UK Hospitality (July 2024)

² Sectoral Skills Assessment, Tourism, October 2023, Skills Development Scotland

³ Hospitality Statistics Briefing, Q4 2023 (Calum Fox and Emma Congreve), February 2024, University of Strathclyde Information Portal

⁴ [Total contribution of travel and tourism to employment in the United Kingdom \(UK\) in 2019 and 2022](#), Statista (July 2024)

⁵ [Travel and tourism in the United Kingdom – statistics and facts](#), Statista (July 2024)

