Sport

Are you interested in helping people to stay fit and lead a healthy lifestyle? Maybe your dream is to take part in sport at a professional level, or coach and advise those who do? If this sounds like you this career area may be just what you're looking for.

Those who aspire to become sports professionals, whether that be an athlete, golfer or football player, amongst others, must be dedicated and show commitment by putting in a lot of hard work! Even those who do not work in sports performance itself have a real passion for sport, fitness or a healthy lifestyle.

What areas can I work in?

The jobs and courses for this career area are in three sectors: sport and fitness; sports performance; and, sports science.

There are many different types of work in sport, including: coaching and instructing, sports development, leisure centre operations and management, sports science and therapy and, of course, professional sport performance.

There are also sport-related jobs in other career areas, for example: sports journalism, retailing (clothing, footwear and equipment), administration, facilities management and event management.

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?

Possible employers include:

- local authorities – community sport, schools and leisure centres
- private gyms and health clubs
- large sports clubs – such as football clubs and golf clubs
- sports councils and governing bodies.

What's the job market like?

The Scottish Government has announced an additional £40 million towards sport, providing a much needed investment into the Scottish sporting system. [1]

The most recent Nomis figures for Scotland in December 2025 show the most common roles include sports coaches, instructors and officials (8,400), fitness and wellbeing instructors (4,300) and sports and leisure assistants (9,800). [3]

In Scotland, growth in this sector in recent years has been driven by factors such as Scottish Government

initiatives to encourage people to take part in sport, investment in new sporting facilities and an increase in the number of people with an awareness of the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

Job opportunities are throughout Scotland, particularly in and around major cities and towns with large populations. In rural areas there are opportunities in outdoor activities, such as climbing, canoeing, riding or skiing, although these can be mostly seasonal.

It is important to remember that young people joining the industry often start in low-skilled, entry-level jobs that are low paid. You have to be prepared to work your way up by developing your skills and knowledge of the industry. There are many opportunities to volunteer in this sector to get the necessary experience.

Facts and figures

- From the academic year 2022/23, 48.8% of sports science graduates were in full time employment 15 months after graduating. [2]
- Of those graduates finding work, the top three professional job sectors were sports coaches, instructors and officials; secondary education; and therapy professionals. [2]
- Glasgow will host a scaled back Commonwealth Games in 2026, only the third city in history to host the games twice. 3,000 athletes from 74 nations and territories will compete in 10 sports over four venues in the city. [5]
- Scotland will co-host the UEFA EURO 2028. Glasgow will be one of nine cities across the UK hosting the event. [4]

Want to find out more?

Sportscotland is the national agency for sport in Scotland and provides a wide range of information on issues such as funding in sport, getting involved in volunteering, individual sports and sporting developments in your local area.

Sources

[1] A perfect chance to capitalise on Scotland's summer of sport, SportScotland (January 2026)

[2] What do graduates do? Prospects in association with AGCAS (2025/26)

[3] Annual Population Survey - Occupation by sex, employment status and full/part-time - UK, Nomis (December 2025)

[4] UEFA website (May 2026)

[5] Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026 (May 2026)