

Construction

Would you like a job where you can see the results of your hard work on a grand scale? You might like using your practical skills, or have ideas about how public areas should look. Or, you could be interested in technical skills or using machinery, or even planning how something could be built. Either way, the vast and rewarding construction industry has something to offer everyone.

Construction projects are often complex, where there can be up to 60 different jobs involved in one building project. They all have to be done properly, and in the right order, if the building – or structure – is going to be fit for purpose and safe.

In 2021, the Scottish construction industry employed around 215,400 people and there were 47,715 construction enterprises.

What areas can I work in?

There are over 150 occupations in construction and the built environment, in areas including: architecture, building technology and management, civil and structural engineering, construction crafts, landscape architecture, surveying and town and regional planning.

Jobs range from management to technician and craft roles, all requiring a wide variety of skills, and offering a wide range of opportunities and experience.

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
- the Civil Service
- architectural and surveying companies
- colleges and training centres
- building contractors
- health authorities such as the NHS
- property developers

What's the job market like?

It has been a challenging two years for the construction sector, due to the pandemic, however construction output has recovered fairly quickly, with GVA forecast to return to the pre-pandemic level in 2022.

According to a recent report from the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board), the construction industry is predicted to grow over the next five years and the biggest challenge will be recruiting the number of people to fill the growing number of vacancies.

The CITB state that 266,000 additional workers will be required to meet UK construction demand by 2026 and if projected growth is met, construction employment will reach a high of almost 2.78 million. For Scotland, they forecast an extra 25,250 workers by 2026.

The report indicates that the largest annual demand will be for the following occupations: carpenters/joiners; construction managers; electronics technicians; civil engineering technicians; estimators and valuers; and office-based support staff.

In Scotland, infrastructure is strong, due to some major projects, such as the Moray Firth wind farms, Edinburgh Tram extension and Scottish Water investment programme, with annual average output growth to reach 4.7% between the end of 2020 and 2025.

Scotland's response to the climate emergency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2045 has highlighted the 'Retrofit Skills Gap', a major shortfall of specific trades and professions for the task of 'decarbonising' existing building stock. It is estimated an extra 22,500 people will be needed for retraining and creating new roles by 2028: this includes 4,300 plumbers and HVAC engineers for the installation of heat pumps, as well as over 4,600 project managers, and 1,900 building envelope specialists (including insulation installers).

Facts and figures

- Top employing regions in Scotland for 2021 were: Glasgow region, 36,400; Lanarkshire, 33,800; Aberdeen City and Shire, 31,400; Highlands and Island, 23,500; and, Edinburgh, East and Midlothian, 22,000.
- The median real time advertised salary advertised in the construction sector for 2021 was £32,200.
- Construction is forecast to account for 6.5% of Scotland's job opportunities from 2023-2031.
- In Scotland, the construction workforce is expected to increase to around 241,800 by the end of 2025.

Want to find out more?

CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) is the Sector Skills Council for construction industry. You can find more information about the sectors it covers and related careers and training pathways on the [CITB](https://www.citb.co.uk) website.

Sources

- Sectoral Skills Assessment: Construction (February 2022), [Skills Development Scotland](https://www.skillsdevelopment.scot.nhs.uk)
- Scotland's Business Base: Facts and Figures (8 September 2021), [The Scottish Parliament](https://www.scottish.parliament.uk)
- The skills construction needs: UK five-year outlook 2022-2026, [CITB/Experian](https://www.citb.co.uk)
- Labour Market Intelligence Report (Construction): Scotland five-year outlook 2022-2026, [CITB/Experian](https://www.citb.co.uk)
- Scotland construction sector to grow 4.1% with 26,250 extra jobs needed to meet demand (9 June 2021), [CITB](https://www.citb.co.uk)
- CITB Industry Insights and Analysis, Building Skills for Net Zero in Scotland (March 2021)