

Kitchen Assistant

A kitchen assistant helps the cook or chef by doing basic kitchen work in hotels, restaurants and other catering facilities. They are also called kitchen porters.

The Work

You could be:

- carrying in food deliveries and putting them into store
- cleaning ovens, dishes, pans and other equipment
- cleaning the floor and disposing of kitchen waste and rubbish correctly
- keeping kitchen walls and work surfaces clean
- bringing food in from the storeroom
- checking sell-by dates and rotating stock
- peeling and cutting vegetables and cleaning and preparing meat and fish
- preparing simple food
- using machinery such as grinders, mincers, slicers and mixers.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour. This may rise to around £13.00 an hour with experience.

Conditions

- You work shifts, including split shifts (working in the morning and evening with time off in the afternoon), early mornings, evenings and weekends.
- Part time work is common.
- Work can be seasonal with more vacancies in summer.
- The kitchen can be hot and noisy.
- There may be some heavy lifting.
- You will usually have to wear protective clothing such as apron, gloves, hairnet or hat.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Hospitality (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which gives you an introduction to working in the hospitality industry.
- You must be physically fit to do this job.
- You need to be over 18 to handle certain kitchen equipment, such as meat slicers.
- You must be aware of any allergies that you have and discuss these with the employer to assess risks.
- Jobs are in a wide range of places including restaurants, hotels, works canteens, hospitals and nursing homes.
- There is often a high turnover of staff, and so there are usually a lot of vacancies, which are advertised in jobcentres and online.
- For some jobs, for example in care homes, you may require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- energetic and hard-working
- able to follow instructions
- able to multitask
- a fast worker
- a good team worker
- able to stay calm under pressure.

You should have:

- excellent communication skills
- an awareness of health and safety, food hygiene and allergens
- attention to detail.

Training

- Training is on the job.
- Anyone with a job involving the handling of food must complete a relevant food safety and hygiene course.
- There are also SVQs in Food Production and Cooking at SCQF Level 5.

Getting On

- After experience as a kitchen assistant you might get promotion within a big restaurant to the post of head kitchen assistant.
- Otherwise you might be able to go on to complete a Modern Apprenticeship in Production Chef or Professional Cookery to become a commis chef.
- Or you could move into bar work or table service work and work up from those jobs.

Contacts

Springboard

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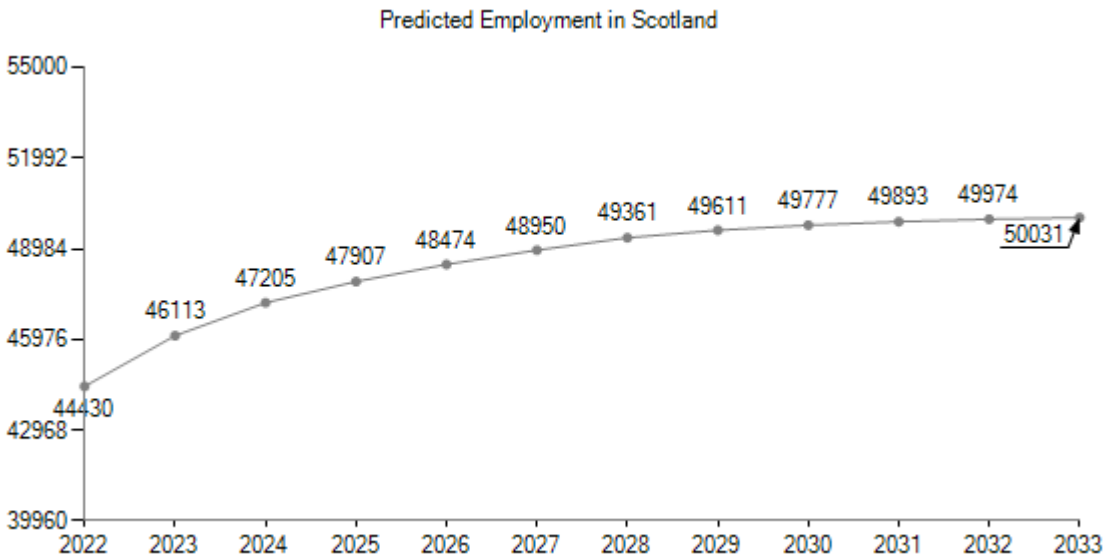
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SpringboardUKCharity

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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