

Tour Guide

A tour guide shows visitors around tourist attractions and other sites of interest, either on foot or by coach.

The Work

As a walking tour guide working at a specific site such as a castle, art gallery, museum or outdoor attraction, you could be:

- welcoming tourist groups
- doing presentations to groups, perhaps showing a video
- walking around the site leading them in a group
- stopping at points of interest, describing architecture, history or tales of interest
- answering the tourists' questions.

As a coach tour guide you could be:

- travelling with tourists around a city or from town to town
- giving a commentary about the places you are passing, using a microphone
- stopping off at places of interest, leading the tourists in a group and answering any questions
- checking everyone is back on the coach before moving off
- working as a driver guide, driving tourists around in a minibus while giving a commentary
- checking tour groups into accommodation if the tour is overnight.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Income for tour guides varies considerably, depending on:

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

Employed tour guides can earn from £18,000 up to around £26,000 a year, depending on where they are based, areas they cover and whether they are a driver guide.

The Scottish Tourist Guides Association (STGA) recommend fee guidelines for guides for full day and half day excursions, which starts from £200 for a half day (£240 for foreign language) and £320 for a full day (£370 for foreign language). Driver guides could earn from £650 for a full day. (2024 recommendations).

Conditions

- You might have to travel, around Scotland or abroad.
- You might have nights away from home.
- You work irregular hours including early mornings, evenings, nights and weekends.
- Work may be seasonal with longer hours in the summer.

- You might have to wear historical costume.
- You will be out and about a lot.
- You might work both indoors and outdoors.

Getting In

- Skills and personality are more important than formal qualifications.
- You usually need experience in working with the public.
- You should be able to demonstrate an interest in and knowledge of the local area, history and culture.
- You could consider taking one of the accredited guide training courses offered by the STGA. There are three different levels of training: Blue Badge Guide, Green Badge Guide and Yellow Badge Guide.
- A Blue Badge Guide is qualified by the STGA to guide throughout Scotland, Green Badge Guides are qualified to guide through a specific region of Scotland (such as Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles) and Yellow Badge Guides usually work for a tourism company or organisation.
- Fluency in at least one additional language is useful and for some jobs necessary. The STGA offers tours in English plus 20 other languages.
- A driving licence is useful. To work as a driver guide you must have the appropriate licence and insurance.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a good memory for facts and historical events
- excellent communication skills and an outgoing nature
- clear, fluent speech
- self-confidence and leadership skills
- a good sense of direction
- a genuine interest in art, history and Scottish culture
- patience
- stamina
- the ability to deal with emergencies and remain calm under pressure.

Training

- To become an STGA Blue Badge Guide you must pass an intensive 18-month part time course at SCQF Level 7. It includes classroom study, weekend and summer schools and field work.
- The Blue Badge Guide course runs every two years.
- Qualifying as a Green Badge Guide includes online learning and residential weekends. These courses only run from time to time and for areas requiring guides.
- To qualify as a Yellow Badge Guide you need to work for a company that provides this training for employees. See the [STGA](#) website for details.
- Entry requirements vary for each course.
- Some companies provide their own in-house training.
- STGA offer a voluntary Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme so you can make sure your knowledge and training is up to date.

Getting On

- If you are an employee of a company you could progress from tour guide to tour manager.
- Some guides are self-employed, working on a freelance basis for tourist companies or working directly for customers and charging a fee for each tour.

More Information

There are around 500 qualified STGA guides.

The next Blue Badge course will take place from Autumn 2025 to 2027. The fee is in the region of £7,500 - £7,850.

According to the STGA website there are a number of companies who provide Yellow Badge Guide training for their employees, including City Sightseeing Glasgow, Oban Walks, Stromness Town Walk and Ness Battery and Mercat Tours, Edinburgh.

Contacts

Scottish Tourist Guides Association (STGA)

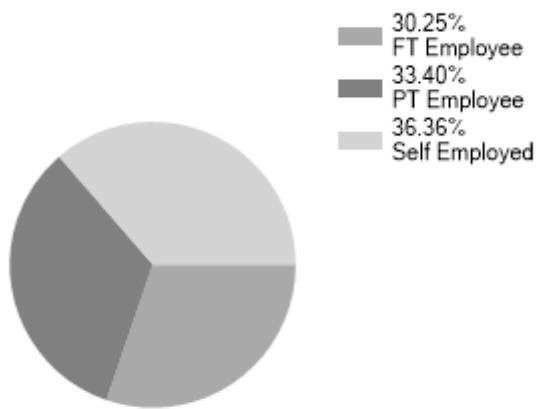
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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

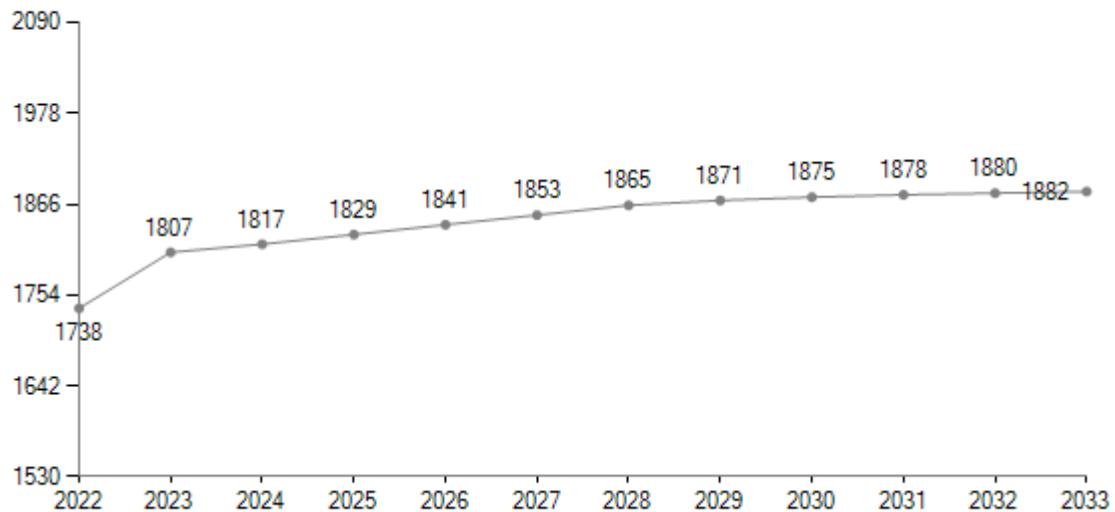


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)