

Lecturer - Higher Education

Higher education lecturers teach in universities and other institutions of higher education (HE). They may teach a purely academic course (such as history or literature) or a more vocational course (related to a particular job, such as physiotherapy or pharmacy). Most HE lecturers also do research work in their own subject.

The Work

You could be:

- teaching groups of students on courses leading to a degree, DipHE or CertHE or HND, and also postgraduate courses
- helping students to work independently and to develop their critical and analytical skills
- preparing courses, planning lectures and other sessions, preparing handouts and computer-aided visual presentations and recommending books to read or websites to visit
- giving lectures (often to large groups), tutorials and demonstrations, leading seminars (group discussions) and also giving tuition on a one-to-one basis
- organising and supervising practical sessions, field trips, student projects and work placements
- setting and marking essays, projects and exams
- carrying out research work in your own subject and attending conferences to keep up to date and to meet other people working in your subject area
- writing and publishing reports, papers or books based on your research
- seeking funding for your research, attending staff meetings and doing administration.

Pay

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

- the university or HE institution in which you work
- the actual job you are doing, and the source of funding.

Research assistants usually start on a salary of about £26,000 a year.

Lecturers' salaries are in the region of £28,000 to £45,000 a year, which can rise up to around £52,000. Senior lecturers earn up to around £63,000 a year and above. There are also discretionary increments above these figures. Readers and professors earn more.

Conditions

- You would usually lecture to large groups in lecture theatres.
- You would also teach small tutorial groups and lead small seminars.
- In some subjects you would teach in studios, clinics or laboratories.
- In some subjects you would sometimes work outdoors, leading students on field trips or practical work.
- You would travel to meetings and conferences in the UK and possibly abroad, spending some nights away from home.

- You would do research work in your own HE institution, in libraries, laboratories and sometimes outside, depending on your subject.
- Although you might actually teach classes for only a few hours a week you would spend a great deal of your time preparing lectures, doing your own research, making applications for funding for research and carrying out administrative duties.
- You should note that you would not have the same long holidays as the students do.

Getting In

- Entry is very competitive.
- You need a first class or upper second class Honours degree (SCQF Level 10) in your subject.
- For entry to a degree course you normally need 4-5 Highers plus subjects at National 5, depending on the subject you want to study.
- In addition to their first degree, most new entrants have, or are working towards, a postgraduate qualification (such as MLitt, MPhil, MSc, MBA, PhD (SCQF Level 12)). It is now very difficult to become an HE lecturer in many subjects unless you have a PhD or are working towards one.
- Most entrants also have research experience and have published reports, papers or, in some cases, books on their subject.
- It is useful to have teaching experience of any kind.
- If your subject is a vocational one, it is very helpful to have had relevant work experience.
- There are no age limits for entry, but you will probably be in your mid to late twenties by the time you have the necessary qualifications.
- You will 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.

Job vacancies are advertised in the national press and on the Internet. However, in some cases, your prospects can be assisted through personal contacts, so it is important for junior staff to go to conferences so that they can meet, and talk with, senior researchers and lecturers from other institutions.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an excellent knowledge of your subject and a desire to share that knowledge
- a good memory
- good judgement and a fair-minded approach
- confidence when speaking to a large class
- good organisational skills, to balance teaching, research and administrative work
- good IT skills
- a logical and methodical approach.

You need to be able to:

- communicate well with students from all backgrounds
- explain new ideas clearly
- motivate yourself and others

- pay close attention to detail when doing research.

Training

- You could take a postgraduate qualification in HE teaching by part time study or distance learning while you are working. These courses are now run by several universities.
- Your institution might run its own staff development programme.

Getting On

- You may start by getting a short term contract, perhaps as a research assistant or tutorial assistant.
- You may then get a more senior research post or a lectureship.
- You might then gain promotion to senior lecturer, reader and perhaps professor.
- Your chances of promotion can depend on how many research papers you publish, how much funding you can attract for your research and whether you are willing to take on additional responsibilities.
- You should be prepared to move around the country, or possibly abroad, to gain promotion.
- You might move into consultancy work, perhaps abroad, and in particular in the USA.

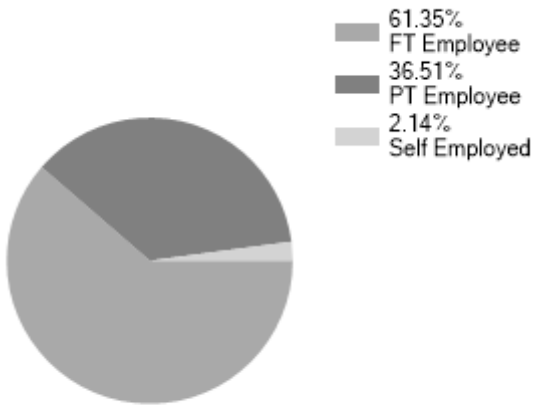
More Information

There are 19 universities and institutions of higher education in Scotland including the Open University in Scotland. You can find information on all of these in the [Universities](#) section of our website.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.