

Architect

Architects design new buildings and adapt or restore existing buildings. They are actively involved in every stage of a building project, from original idea to completion.

The Work

You could be:

- consulting with your client and coming up with a design concept which takes account of the use of the building, the kind of site it will be on, any environmental issues and the budget
- preparing a design proposal using computer-aided design (CAD) software such as AutoCAD and building information modelling (BIM) processes, ensuring that it meets building regulations and safety standards
- once the design is agreed, producing detailed drawings to send to the quantity surveyor for costings, and to builders for competitive tender
- preparing planning applications to be submitted to local authority
- visiting the site, attending progress meetings to ensure that the project is on schedule, meets agreed standards and is within budget
- making sure that any impact on the environment is limited
- working closely with other professionals in the team such as surveyors, engineers and contractors to solve problems.

Pay

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

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

For self-employed architects most of the income may derive from negotiated fees. The salary for students on their placement after year 3 of their degree (Part 1) would earn around £25,000 a year. This rises up to between £24,000 to £30,000 on completion of (Part 2). A newly registered architect on completion of Part 3 can earn £31,500 to £37,500 a year. Architects with over 5 years experience can earn £36,000 to £45,000.

Senior or associate architects may earn up to £60,000 or more a year, depending on the size of the firm.

Conditions

- You work in an office, but spend time visiting clients, planning departments, and builders.
- You visit sites in all weathers.
- You have to wear safety clothing on site including a hard hat and protective boots.
- You may have to work evenings and weekends to meet deadlines and spend time away from home.
- The company you work for, or you if you are self-employed, must be insured against the possibility of future litigation in the event that one of your buildings develops serious structural faults.

Getting In

- You need a degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) recognised by the [Architects Registration Board \(ARB\)](#) and the [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](#). There are five schools of architecture in Scotland offering recognised degrees.
- For entry to a course in architecture, you need 4-5 good Highers, usually including English and Maths or Physics. Art and Design is preferred. Most schools will ask for a portfolio of your work.
- Degree courses in architecture last 5 years. On completion of the first three years (known as Part 1), you would work in an architectural practice for one year before returning to complete years 4 and 5 (Part 2).
- To qualify as an architect you must then complete Part 3 – a further period of 24 months in practice before sitting the professional exam to gain professional registration with ARB.
- There is a new qualifications system being phased in - it is expected that the new master's-level qualifications, practice qualifications and combined qualifications will start to be offered in the second half of 2026. More information is available on the [Architects Registration Board website](#).

The majority of architects work in small private architectural practices. Other jobs are with local authorities, the Civil Service, the Health Service, industry or commerce.

What Does It Take

You need:

- excellent communication skills
- good imagination and spatial awareness
- practical skill and technical knowledge
- good maths skills
- a strong interest in buildings: their structure, the materials and processes used in their construction, and their impact upon the environment
- excellent IT skills including CAD software
- a willingness to accept responsibility.

You should be able to:

- accept and learn from criticism
- negotiate with and persuade others
- manage projects and people
- analyse data
- work under pressure to deadlines.

Training

- Once qualified, you must keep your knowledge up to date throughout your career by doing short courses for continuous professional development (CPD).
- If you register as a Chartered member of RIBA you must complete 35 hours of CPD each year. This can be done through online learning.

Getting On

- You usually start as a salaried employee in a practice.
- If you work for a big firm you may find you're doing small scale detailed work all the time, whereas if you work for a small firm you get a wide range of responsibility.
- Once you are experienced you can get into a partnership, open your own practice, or move into freelance consultancy work.
- There are openings abroad, for example in the USA and the Middle East.
- There are also opportunities in fields such as property development, lecturing and journalism.

More Information

These organisations are a source of good information for architects.

- [Architecture+DesignScotland](#)
- [Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland](#)

Contacts

GoConstruct

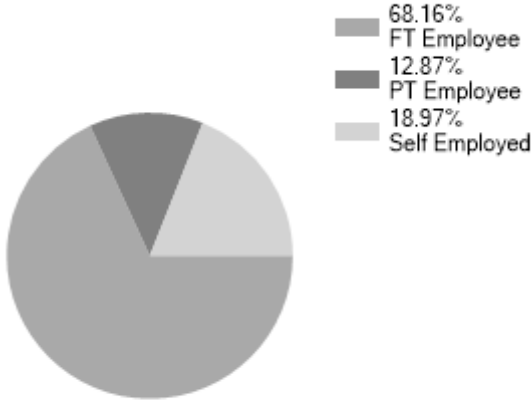
Website: www.goconstruct.org

X: @GoConstructUK

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

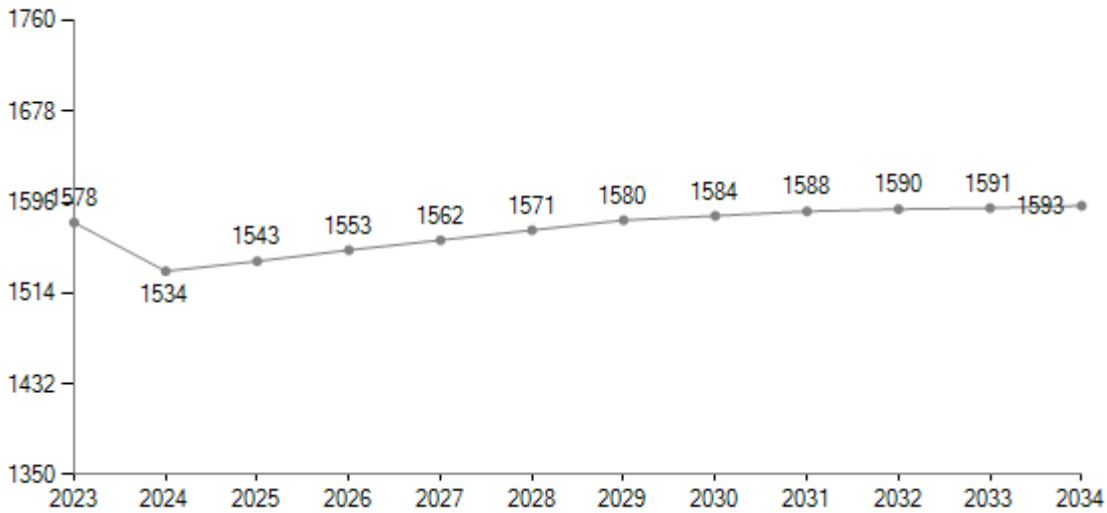


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)