

Flight Dispatcher

Flight dispatchers co-ordinate all activities on the ground at an airport to ensure the safe, quick and efficient turnaround of aircraft from when they land to the time they depart. They are also known as turn around co-ordinators (TCOs) or flight operations officer.

The Work

Duties performed depend on the airline you work for and the size of the airport you are based at.

You could be:

- monitoring aircraft arrivals and departures and amending turnaround schedules if there are delays
- liaising with ground crew and ensuring that tasks, such as cleaning, refuelling and loading, are completed on time
- calculating how much fuel is required for the weight of the aircraft and distance of the journey
- calculating the payload (weight of passengers, luggage, cargo and fuel) and producing a plan of where it should be positioned in the aircraft
- preparing flight paperwork for the crew, such as printing of flight plans, passenger lists and weather reports
- checking that all passengers and luggage or cargo is loaded and deciding, along with the pilot, when to close the departure gate
- ensuring that pre-flight safety and maintenance checks have been carried out
- with the captain, authorising dispatch of the aircraft and completing all reports and logs according to company regulations
- operating equipment such as air bridges and driving airside vehicles for transport crew.

Pay

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

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

Starting salaries are around £25,000 and with experience this can increase to around £32,000 a year. In senior positions you might earn up to £40,000 or more. You may also earn extra through shift allowance and overtime pay.

Conditions

- You would spend some of your time working at a computer and using communication systems, such as phones and radios.
- You would spend some time outside at the aircraft you are dealing with (known as airside).

- You would wear a uniform and possibly safety clothing such as ear defenders and a high visibility jacket.
- Whether working inside a control room or airside, the environment is usually busy and noisy.
- With deadlines to meet you can be under a lot of pressure.
- You will work shifts, including nights, weekends and public holidays.

Getting In

- Qualification requirements vary but most employers will expect you to have a group of subjects at National 5, including English and Maths.
- 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.
- You may need to be at least 18 years of age, because of shift work regulations.
- You may need a driving licence.
- Some flight dispatchers start out in other airport roles, such as baggage handler or passenger service assistant, as a knowledge of aircraft and airport operations is usually required.

Jobs are advertised on specific recruitment websites such as [Aviation Job Search](#) and airline or ground handling company websites.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- strong communication skills
- excellent planning skills
- good IT skills
- an understanding of the importance of security and health and safety
- problem solving skills
- good team working skills
- a responsible approach.

You need to be able to:

- work calmly under pressure
- make decisions, sometimes very quickly
- work well in a team
- manage more than one task at once
- deal with technical information.

Training

- Training is mainly on the job with your employer.
- You would attend courses relating to areas of your job such as health and safety, aviation regulations and using specialist computer software.
- You would attend further courses throughout your career to keep up to date with new developments and new technology.

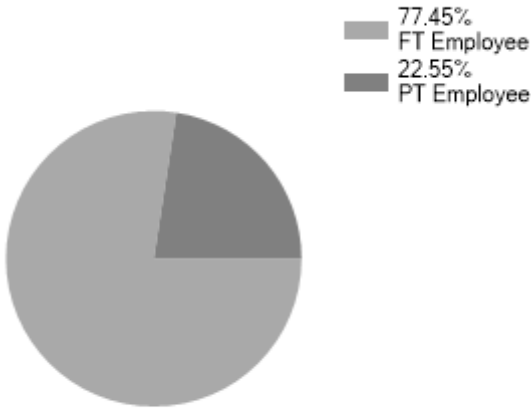
Getting On

- You could progress to a duty management role and then to flight operations manager.
- You could move into other areas of airport work, for example planning or project management for an airport or ground handling company.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

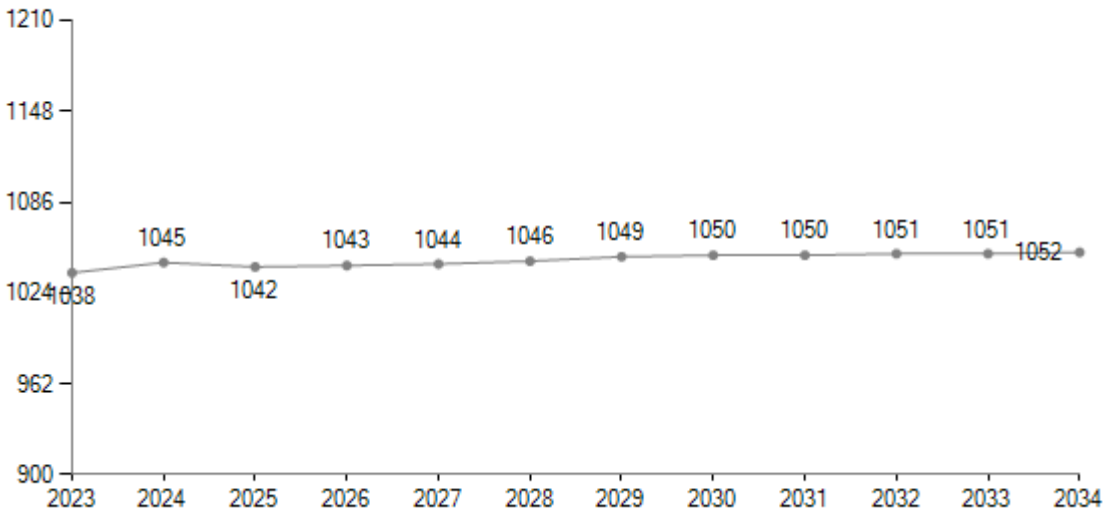


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)