

Technical Distiller

Technical Distillers are in charge of the entire distillation process of a variety of spirits. In small sites this involves more hands on work, whilst in large sites many functions are automated.

The Work

You could be:

- ensuring plant and equipment is properly maintained
- responsible for the ordering and storage of the raw materials, such as yeast, cereals, flour and molasses, that is required to make spirits
- overseeing the production process and managing the other technicians involved in the process
- monitoring the production process at regular intervals, testing samples and making adjustments where necessary
- tasting a sample of each batch of spirit produced to ensure the taste, strength and appearance is consistent
- specialising in a particular stage of the process, such as fermentation, filtering or maturation
- keeping up to date with new scientific and technological advances
- keeping records and ensuring quality control standards are met throughout the process.

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.

The starting salaries for technical distillers are in the range £18,000 to £24,000 a year. With experience this can rise to £35,000 a year. A master distiller can earn up to around £60,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- You would work mostly in the production areas, which may sometimes be noisy and smell of the fermenting liquids.
- You might also spend time in an office.
- Your working hours may vary, but you will probably work shifts, including some evenings and weekends.
- You may have to wear protective clothing such as overalls and ear protectors.
- There may be bending, lifting and carrying involved.

Getting In

- The majority of people who start as a trainee distiller have a degree, such as biological science, microbiology, chemistry or chemical engineering.

- Herriot Watt University in Edinburgh offers a BSc Hons in Brewing and Distilling, which includes modules in biology, chemistry, biochemistry and microbiology. For entry you need 5 Highers at ABBB including Maths and Biology or Chemistry, plus National 5 English. For Widening Access entry you need 4 Highers at BBBC including Biology or Chemistry at B plus National 5 English.
- If you have a suitable science degree, you can take a postgraduate courses in Brewing and Distilling or Brewing and Distilling Entrepreneurship at Heriot-Watt University. These are available full time or part time.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- an aptitude for science
- excellent communication skills
- an awareness and understanding of business
- excellent attention to detail
- IT skills
- enthusiasm for the industry.

You should be able to:

- apply technical and scientific knowledge
- motivate and lead a team
- make decisions
- organise processes.

Training

- Training would be on the job and include technical aspects as well as health and safety, quality control and management.
- You would usually complete professional examinations with the Institute of Brewing and Distilling (IBD), which can be studied via short courses or distance learning.
- The IBD runs several courses including: Fundamentals of Distilling, General Certificate in Distilling, Diploma in Distilling and the Master Distiller qualification.
- Heriot-Watt University's degree and MSc courses allow exemption from the first professional IBD examinations, allowing you to undertake the Master Distiller qualification.

Getting On

- With experience and ability, you may move on to become a master distiller.
- You might specialise in working with a small craft distillery or a larger commercial one.
- You may move into related work such as research and development, quality control, distribution or sales and marketing.
- You may be able to work abroad.

Contacts

Chartered Institute of Brewing and Distilling

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Scotch Whisky Association

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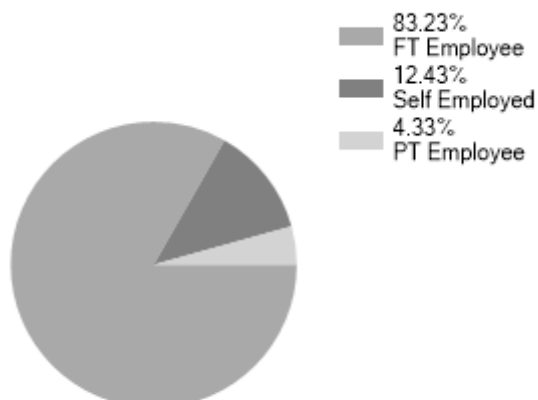
Email: info@swa.org.uk

Website: www.scotch-whisky.org.uk

X: @scotchwhiskyswa

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

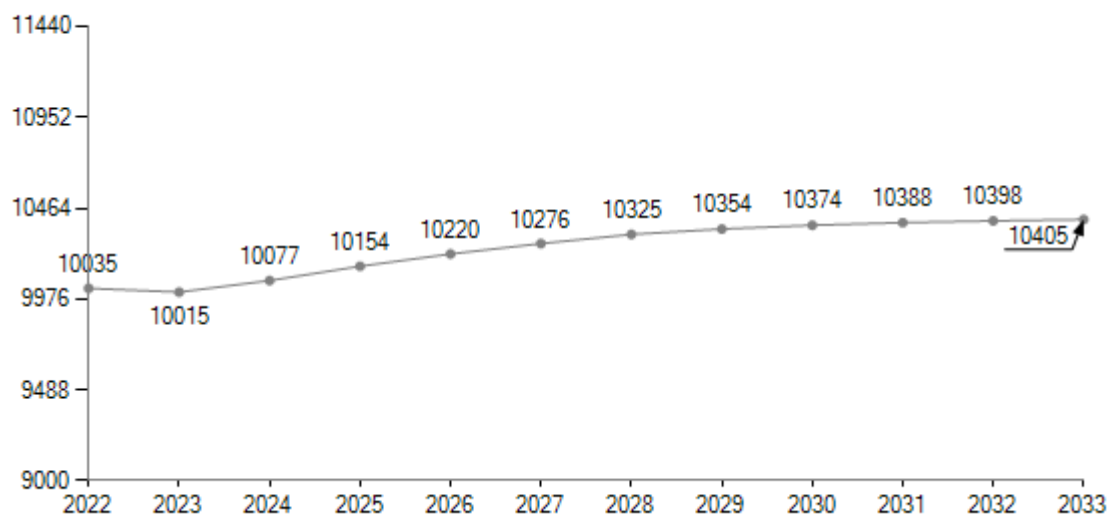


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)