
Leisure and Tourism

Summary

This article looks at some of the jobs related to this subject that might interest you.

Introduction

A qualification in leisure and tourism will help you to develop the understanding, knowledge and skills needed to work in a broad range of jobs in this industry.

Following your course, you might be able to enter a related job. Or, you could go on to take a further education qualification such as a BTEC level 3 National Certificate in leisure and tourism or an A level in leisure studies or travel and tourism.

This could help you on the way to taking a relevant course at a university or college of higher education.

The world of work

Many of the jobs in the leisure and tourism industry involve direct contact with the public. You will need to have a confident and outgoing personality and good communications skills. If you are working overseas, knowledge of the local area and language is an asset.

Tourist Information Centre Assistant

Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Assistants provide information about local facilities and tourist attractions for people visiting their area. They deal with enquiries by phone, email and directly with people who call in to the centre.

TIC assistants keep up-to-date information on bus and train schedules and on attractions such as theatres, nightclubs, restaurants, local sporting events and places of interest. They make bookings for local events and also for people who need accommodation.

Tourist information centres also sell goods, such as maps and souvenirs. Assistants place orders for the goods, display them in the centre, handle cash transactions and account for the money they've taken.

Travel Adviser

Travel Advisers give advice customers on holidays in the UK and abroad. They help clients to choose a holiday that suits their needs.

Travel Advisers help their client sort through lots of information for their holiday. Once a client has chosen their holiday destination, they might check the availability of tour packages. They can look at the cost of:

- tour operators
- airlines tickets
- cruise companies
- attraction tickets
- coach operators
- car hire companies

Travel Advisers may also advise clients about what they need before they travel on holiday. This includes details on passports, vaccinations, visas and insurance.

Holiday Representative

Holiday Representatives look after tourists on behalf of a travel company. It is their job to make sure that the tourists have a memorable and enjoyable holiday!

They could be based at a holiday resort abroad or in the UK. If they are based abroad, they might need to be fluent in the

local language.

They will have a busy schedule, which changes from day to day. They will go to meet the holidaymakers as they arrive, whether that be at the airport, port or train station, and take them to their accommodation. On the coach journey to their hotel, they will tell the holidaymakers useful information about things like currency, shopping and transport.

Then they will arrange a welcome meeting, where they tell people all about the resort/accommodation and answer any questions.

If there are any problems, such as illness, lost luggage or passports, they will try to sort them out. It is important that they have good relationship with hotel and travel staff.

They will also organise, promote and sell excursions, and sometimes accompany the tourists on them.

Sports and Leisure Centre Assistant/Manager

Sports and Leisure Centre Assistants set up and look after equipment, and supervise members of the public when they are using the facilities. They are also responsible for general cleanliness of the centre, for supervising changing rooms and for maintaining safety standards.

In centres with swimming pools, suitably qualified Assistants patrol the pool area, keeping watch on swimmers and rescuing anyone who gets into difficulties in the water. They may also help Instructors to run sports and fitness courses.

Sports and Leisure Centre Managers run sports centres and related activities. Much of the work involves administration - managing finance, business plans, marketing and staff supervision.

Managers also organise sporting events, courses, competitions, etc, but they have little opportunity to join in. So while an interest in a wide range of sports is useful for this type of work, the job itself is mostly managerial and administrative.

Outdoor Pursuits Instructor

Outdoor Pursuits Instructors work with individuals and small groups of all ages and abilities. They teach a range of skills by giving practical demonstrations and short lectures. Activities include abseiling, canoeing, caving, rock climbing and windsurfing.

Courses can last from a few hours up to one or two weeks. Groups come from places like schools, youth clubs and Guide/Scout groups. They can also be made up of adults, on work-based teambuilding schemes, for example.

Instructors need to plan programmes of activities that meet the interests and ability levels of each group they work with.

Fitness Instructor/Personal Trainer

Fitness Instructors provide exercise instruction to improve people's fitness. They normally specialise in one area of fitness, such as keep fit, step aerobics, aquarobics, weight training or circuit training.

Instructors work with people individually or in a group, depending on the area of fitness they are working in. They teach people by explaining and demonstrating techniques or movements.

Personal Trainers work with people who want to improve their health and fitness. They find out what each client is aiming for and plan different activities to achieve this. As well as exercise, their plan often takes into account general health, lifestyle and nutrition.

Personal Trainers are usually based either at a gym or leisure centre, or they visit clients in their home or workplace. Training could take place in any of these locations, as well as outdoors at a local park or at the trainer's own home-based gym, if they have one.

Recreation Manager

Recreation Managers plan, organise, promote, provide and develop leisure and recreational facilities. Managers may be responsible for any one of a range of facilities, such as a theme park, bingo club or historic building.

Duties, responsibilities and skills are similar, although managers usually choose a field of work according to their personal interests, academic background and experience.

The daily running of any leisure facility needs careful organisation. Managers are responsible for personnel matters such

as recruitment, training, staff rotas, catering facilities and the maintenance of any equipment and buildings. They are also responsible for the health and safety management of their facilities.

Higher education courses

There are many leisure and recreation courses to choose from, at colleges and universities throughout the country.

You will need to look at college/university prospectuses to make sure that the course content is right for the career you want. It's important to check the course entry requirements.

Higher education courses include HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees and degrees.

A Higher National Diploma (HND) is a full-time vocational course that can last up to three years. Successful completion of a HND can lead to the second year of a degree course.

A Higher National Certificate (HNC) is usually a part-time vocational course, combined with employment and studied by day or block release.

Foundation degrees take two years, full-time. Completion can gain you entry into the third year of a related degree.

A degree is usually a three or four year course studied at a university or institute of higher education. Degrees and foundation degrees can usually be taken part-time.

Here are some examples of course titles:

- sport and recreation studies
- leisure management
- sports science
- leisure, recreation and community studies