

Clerical or Administrative Assistant

Clerical or administrative assistants do a wide range of office work. They assist more senior members of staff with a variety of different tasks.

The Work

You could be:

- opening mail and delivering it to the appropriate staff members
- stamping or franking mail to be posted
- using a computer to type documents such as letters and reports
- answering the phone and covering reception duties
- filing, photocopying and using the fax machine
- taking minutes on a notepad at a meeting and then typing them up on a computer
- keeping accounts, preparing invoices, handling cash and processing wages
- managing diaries and making travel arrangements for staff
- using specialist software such as a customer relationship management system or finance packages.

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.

Starting salaries for clerical or administrative assistants in Scotland tend to be around £13,500 a year. This may rise to £22,000 a year with experience.

Conditions

- You could work within a wide range of different types of companies and organisations, for example engineering, commercial, legal, manufacturing or scientific firms.
- You would be based in an office.
- You would spend a lot of time working at your desk.
- You would normally work Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm.
- You could be asked to work overtime.

Getting In

- You could go in straight from school, usually with 3 subjects at National 4 or 5 including English and Maths.
- In other cases, you could take a full time course at college. Relevant courses include a National Certificate (NC), National Qualification (NQ), Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) in

administration or business before applying for a job.

- There are often no formal entry requirements for an NQ or NC but some colleges may ask for 3-4 subjects at National 4 or 5.
- Entry requirements for an HNC or HND are 1-2 Highers plus some subjects at National 4 or 5.
- You could enter through the Business Skills Foundation Apprenticeship (FA), which you can start in S5 and study at school and college. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually need 3 subjects at National 5 including English and Maths.
- You may get in through a Modern Apprenticeship.
- You usually need good IT skills.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to follow instructions closely and accurately
- able to spell, punctuate and do basic number work with or without a calculator
- familiar with using a computer
- well organised and methodical
- able to communicate well face to face and on the phone
- able to work as part of a team.

Training

- Training is usually on the job.
- If you do not already have an NQ, NC, HNC or HND you could study part time for a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Business and Administration at SCQF Level 5 to 7.
- If you do a Foundation or Modern Apprenticeship, you would study for the relevant SVQs.

Getting On

- You could be promoted through the grades from administrative assistant to administrative officer.
- You might become a supervisor or team leader and then an office manager.
- You could also gain wider experience and broaden your career by moving to different types of organisations.

Contacts

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