

Cabin Crew

Introduction

As a member of the Cabin Crew you will look after airline passengers during a flight, making sure they are safe and comfortable.

Also known as

- Air Host/Hostess
- Airline Steward/Stewardess
- Cabin Crew
- Air Cabin Crew
- Steward/Stewardess, Airline



Work Activities

Cabin Crew look after airline passengers during flights and are trained to deal with emergency situations. Primarily, you are responsible for passenger safety.

As a member of the Cabin Crew you will arrive at the airport at least one hour before take-off to be allocated duties by the senior crew member. You will be informed about passengers, such as unaccompanied children, who may need special attention.

Before passengers board, all the Cabin Crew check emergency equipment and ensure that the aircraft is clean and tidy. You will then greet passengers on board, direct them to their seats, and help them store their hand luggage.

Before take-off, you'll check that all passengers are wearing seat belts. Some of the Cabin Crew demonstrate the use of oxygen equipment, explain emergency procedures, and point out emergency exits.

During the flight, you may serve hot meals, snacks and drinks. You might sell duty-free goods such as alcohol, cigarettes and perfume. You'll continuously check that passengers are following in-flight regulations, such as not smoking.

Once landed, and after all the passengers have safely left the plane, you must help to tidy the plane and prepare it for the next flight.

Finally, you'll write a flight report, recording any unusual circumstances or problems. You may also have customs and immigration documents to fill in.

Some airlines insist that their Cabin crew live within a certain travelling time of the airport to reduce the chance of you arriving late. Working hours can be long and may be altered at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, such as poor weather conditions.

You will have to wear a uniform and follow strict appearance regulations, such as pinning hair up if it is a certain length.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To do this job well, you'll need:

- To have excellent people skills. This means being understanding, friendly and polite to everyone.
- To be able to keep calm under pressure.
- Teamworking skills.
- The ability to work quickly and well in confined conditions.
- A good level of personal hygiene, as you'll be working with food and drink.
- To be physically fit and able to swim.

- An interest in aviation.

Being able to speak a foreign language can be useful, as can knowledge of first-aid.

Some airlines insist that recruits have good eyesight. You should have normal colour vision and your hearing should allow you to communicate effectively in a noisy environment. You will also have to pass a criminal records check. This is now known as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

A driving licence may be required for people wishing to get into this job. Some employers will expect you to live near the airport. This usually means being within one-hour's travel.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

Cabin Crew earn in the range of £15,500 - £18,000, rising to £24,500 - £33,000 with experience.

Hours of work

Cabin Crew usually work shifts, including weekends, on a rota basis. They need to be available to work at short notice and on any day of the year.

Demand

Demand is steady. However, there is very strong competition for jobs and there are always more applicants than vacancies. Airlines receive a very large number of enquiries about work.

Contracts are normally offered on a six-month, one year or permanent basis. New entrants normally require a DBS check.

Some airlines recruit seasonal staff who may later have the opportunity to take up permanent duties.

Future skills needs

The following skills shortages have been identified:

- customer service skills
- communication skills
- IT skills
- safety/accident management skills.

Where could I work?

Employers include domestic and international airline companies.

Cabin Crew work from airports throughout the UK.

Opportunities for UK trained flight attendants also occur with foreign airlines.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised on all the major job boards, on Universal Jobmatch, and at Jobcentre Plus.

Vacancies are also advertised on airline websites.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Airlines will usually expect you to be educated to at least GCSE, or equivalent, level.

Some knowledge of first aid would be very useful

An Intermediate Level Apprenticeship is also a great way into this career. Once employed you might be able to work towards an NVQ qualification.

People with experience of customer contact work, such as reception, sales and catering, will be at an advantage - so start to think now about what you can do to help your application.

Training

You will first receive airport-based training which can last up to 8 weeks. You may have to do some study at home before starting the course. The training usually covers subjects such as:

- Safety and survival, especially the use of emergency slides and chutes and of oxygen equipment.
- First aid techniques, such as handling heart attacks.
- How to serve food and use the galley.
- Customs and immigration regulations.
- Currency exchange.
- Customer service and conflict management.

This initial period is followed by further on-the-job training, and usually a period of regular on-board assessment.

Progression

Experienced attendants can go into senior cabin crew positions. Some attendants become cabin crew trainers. It may also be possible to become a cabin service director where you would have a managerial role over the cabin crew.

Qualifications

Entry requirements vary between airlines. However, most airlines usually ask for a minimum of 4 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade C/4 or above, including English and Maths, and a high standard of written and spoken English. Other useful GCSEs include:

- Modern Foreign Languages
- Leisure and Tourism
- Hospitality.

To get onto an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need at least 2 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English and Maths.

City & Guilds Level 2 Certificates, Awards and Diplomas are available in Air Cabin Crew. These cover health and safety, teamwork, customer care and emergency equipment. .

BTEC Level 2 qualifications are also available in:

- Air Cabin Crew
- Introduction to Cabin Crew
- Travel and Tourism.

Relevant BTEC Level 3 qualifications are also available in:

- Travel and Tourism and Aviation Operations

- Travel Services.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits. However, entry after the age of 35 is unusual.

Skills/experience

Applicants usually have at least one year's experience in an activity that involves dealing with the public, for example, travel agency, airport or catering work. Other relevant experience can include customer service, care work or retail sales.

The ability to converse in a foreign language relevant to a particular airline may be required. The ability to swim is usually necessary.

Courses

Some people enter this career via a Cabin Crew Intermediate Level Apprenticeship.

Further Information

Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 9178000
Email: info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
Website: www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships
- **City & Guilds**
Address: 1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2468
Website: www.cityandguilds.com
- **British Airways**
Email: barecruitment@ba.com
Website: www.britishairwaysjobs.com
- **Aer Lingus**
Irish enquiries
Address: Aer Lingus HR Department, Head Office Building, Dublin Airport
Email: recruit@aerlingus.com
Website: careers.aerlingus.com
- **Careers in Aerospace**
Website: www.careersinaerospace.com
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 028 4844
Website: ams.careerswales.com/

Related Careers

- Air Traffic Controller
- Airline Customer Service Agent

- Air Traffic Services Assistant
- Airline Pilot
- Flight Dispatcher
- Helicopter Pilot - Commercial
- Airport Baggage Handler
- Airport Information Assistant