

# My Career in Catering



With a *Certificate in Catering*, graduates may have the possible *career options* of the following:

- Kitchen assistant
- Counter service assistant
- Kitchen porter
- Waiting Staff
- Hotel porter
- Leisure Centre assistant
- Baker
- Catering assistant

NB: Although the job titles may vary, of the tasks executed are very similar from one title to another.

### **Careers in Catering**

The job descriptions and job specifications for these careers are as follows:

#### **Career Overview**

Your roles are to assist in the kitchen and to be responsible for hygiene and cleanliness within food preparation areas. You are also responsible for carrying out basic food preparation tasks, such as washing, peeling food and serving food to customers. Wait staff have the responsibility of greeting customers, taking orders, giving advice on menu choices, serve meals and deal with payments.

#### **Typical Duties:**

- Clean the kitchen, including washing kitchen appliances, work surfaces, floors and walls.
- Carry out basic food hygiene preparation tasks.
- Assist with administrative tasks as required.
- Help to serve meals to customers.
- Helping the chef get ready for service by preparing food. You may be expected to peel, trim or wash food so it is ready to be cooked.
- Deal with bill payments.

## **Typical Duties Cont'd**

- Make sure tables are clean and tidy.
- Serve food and drink.
- Give out menus and take orders for food and drink.

## **Work Environment**

The hours of work can be long and the work physically demanding, so employees may find the job tiring. The kitchen environment is likely to be very hot, noisy and busy, which can all be stressful. Stamina and physical strength are also important for the job, as employees are expected to lift and carry heavy items regularly. It is likely that the employee will be provided with a uniform, and as part of this, most employers request that their staff wear an apron or overalls. Waterproof boots and gloves may also need to be worn and other special protective clothing may be supplied when handling chemicals used for cleaning, for example. The physical conditions of the job can be dangerous, as employees are likely to be working in a kitchen that contains potentially hazardous equipment, such as sharp knives and other implements for cutting. Catering assistants are likely to have to use these as well as automatic mixers and chipping machines.

The average working week for full time is 40 hours, although around two-thirds of all kitchen jobs are part time and casual and seasonal jobs are also available. They may be expected to start work very early or work at night, although shifts are also usually split between employees. On a positive note, the working environment can be enjoyable, and staff discounts or free meals may be available.

## **Qualifications and Licenses**

No particular qualifications were required for these jobs; however, it helps to have a general interest in food, customer service and working as a team. Training is usually provided on the job continually. It is more useful to have a technical qualification in some specialty of catering like a Certificate in Catering from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, certification through City and Guild or C/NVQs certification.

## Essential Qualities and Skills

- ❖ Ability to work well in a team
- ❖ Practical skills and technical knowledge
- ❖ An interest in food and catering
- ❖ Ability to work efficiently and keep calm, under pressure
- ❖ High standard of personal hygiene
- ❖ Awareness of health and safety
- ❖ Communication skills and the ability to follow instructions
- ❖ Reliability, responsibility and motivation
- ❖ A willingness to work flexibly and work long hours in a stressful environment

## References

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/search/pages/results.aspx?k=Certificate%20in%20Catering&start1=1> Retrieved February 2016

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<http://www.myjobsearch.com/careers/catering-assistant.html> Retrieved February 2016