



Graduate FAQs 2026

Your guide to applying and getting started with us

Our graduates come from a wide range of backgrounds, but they all share one thing - a desire to do work that matters. Whether you're an engineer, communicator or problem-solver, these FAQs will give you a clear picture of what it's like to start your journey with us.

Can't find the answer you're looking for? Drop us a note at earlycareers@scottishwater.co.uk and we'll get back to you soon.



How can I apply for the 2026 Graduate Programme?

Applications for our 2026 graduate programme will open in November 2025.

Head to our graduate home page at www.scottishwater.co.uk/graduates to search for live roles as they become available.

Want to stay in the loop? Follow on LinkedIn, Instagram, X (@ScotWaterJobs), and Facebook (Scottish Water Jobs) for updates, behind-the-scenes stories and reminders as our graduate campaign goes live. The job advert will include everything you need to know - from closing dates to what we're looking for.

What graduate programmes can I apply for?

Our graduate programme gives you the chance to turn what you've learned into real experience. You'll build new skills, learn from people who really know their stuff and grow the confidence to take the next step in your career.

The pathways on offer vary each year, dependent on business need. Keep an eye on our recruitment portal for any new roles as they become available. Two ways to join our graduate community typically include:

- **Specialist Graduate Programme** - If you want to focus on a particular field, this route is for you. You might join us in Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Data and Digital Technology, Finance, Sustainability, Science, Communications or Environmental specialisms. You'll build depth in your area and see how your work helps deliver a better future for people and the environment.
- **Management Graduate Programme** - This route does not usually ask for a specific degree discipline. It is about building strong foundations in how our organisation runs. You will work across different teams, learn how we deliver services, and develop skills in areas like project delivery, problem solving, people and stakeholder engagement. The aim is to prepare you for a future management role.

Depending on your role, the programme lasts two or three years. During that time, you will rotate through placements, take on real projects and access structured learning and professional development to help you grow.

What does the application process involve?

Applying for a graduate programme shouldn't be complicated. We keep things simple, fair and designed to give everyone the chance to show their strengths - no jargon, no trick questions, no surprises. Here's what to expect:

Stage 1: Online Application

Applications open in November and close in December - check the advert for the exact dates.

This is your chance to introduce yourself. You'll complete a short online form and upload your CV so we can get to know you - your studies, experience and what interests you about Scottish Water.

If you need any adjustments or support with your application, just let us know when you apply. We'll make sure the process works for you.

Top Tip: We get thousands of applications for our graduate programme each year. A thoughtful cover letter goes a long way in helping you stand out from the crowd. Tell us why you're interested in Scottish Water and what you'd bring to the team.

Stage 2: Online Skills Assessment

Assessment activity starts in December with our online skills assessment, which we've designed to be fun (no, really!).

It's a short set of gamified questions and activities that help us understand your strengths and how you like to approach challenges. You can complete it on your phone, tablet or laptop - whatever works best for you. We'll send clear instructions, so you know exactly what to expect.

Stage 3: Individual Interview

If you're successful, we'll invite you to a one-to-one interview with one of our hiring managers in February/March. It usually lasts around an hour and gives us the chance to learn more about you - and, importantly, for you to learn more about us.

We'll talk about your experiences, what motivates you and how you like to work. You'll have time to ask your own questions to; about the role, the team or what life at Scottish Water is really like. Think of it as a two-way conversation, not an interrogation.

To help you feel confident and prepared, we'll send you the interview questions in advance - no surprises. You can expect questions that reflect our **Scottish Water Character**, as well as competency-based questions tailored to the role you've applied for.

What is the Scottish Water Character?

Our Character is all about the behaviours and values that we demonstrate every day when working at Scottish Water. It's what makes us, well... us.

We look for people who embody these four characteristics every day:

Bold. Responsible. Inspiring. Caring

Here's what they mean to us:



BOLD

- Being bold is about having the courage to seize opportunities and the self-belief to set ambitious goals and targets.
- It's about seeing the need to embrace change and move forward.
- Bold people show a 'can-do' attitude about their work and the courage to suggest new ideas and try new ways of working.

RESPONSIBLE

- Responsibility is core to who we are. It's about openness, transparency, and ethics.
- It builds the foundations for trust and confidence both internally and externally.
- Responsible people demonstrate a readiness and curiosity to learn, to calmly solve problems and to take accountability for making things happen.

INSPIRING

- Inspiration is about the relationships we build with our colleagues and customers.
- It can be about motivating and inspiring your teammates to achieve their goals and reach their potential. And it can be about inspiring trust and confidence in each other and striving for excellence.
- Inspiring people have a positive vision for the future and collaborate with others to make that future a reality.

CARING

- Caring is about looking out for our customers, colleagues and communities, and making their safety and welfare a priority.
- We also play a critical role in caring for our nation's natural environment and how we contribute to the development of a flourishing Scotland.

Top Tip: Our interviews aren't designed to be memory tests. Feel free to bring a note pad with you if you want to refer to notes. Try not to over prepare or take really detailed notes, or you might end up just reading your answers. Instead, just jot down some bullet points to jog your memory.

What happens next?

If you're offered a place, you'll go through pre-employment checks in the spring, including a standard criminal record check.



Can I use AI in my application?

We're always keen to get to know the real you.

If you'd like to use AI tools to help you draft or review your application, that's completely fine - just make sure what you share reflects your own experience and voice. We're looking for thoughtful, honest answers that tell *your* story.

Top Tip: Try writing a first draft of your CV or application yourself, then use AI to help improve structure or clarity. Let it polish your words, not replace them.

What if I need adjustments to perform at my best?

At Scottish Water, we want everyone to feel confident and supported when applying to our graduate programme. If you need any support, adjustments or have access needs at any stage, please get in touch with us at earlycareers@scottishwater.co.uk - we're here to help.

Did you know? Around *one in four* Scottish Water employees has a disability or neurodiverse condition - including members of our recruitment team. Supporting colleagues and candidates who need adjustments is part of how we work every day, and never something you need to worry about.

We want you to do well and enjoy your experience with us. If there's anything we can do to remove potential barriers, please tell your interviewer or contact us before your interview.

Here are some examples of the kinds of support we can offer:

Application

- Adverts available in large print or digital formats
- Alternative ways to apply, beyond submitting a CV

Assessments

- Audio or Braille formats
- Assistive tech such as screen readers

Interviews

- Flexible scheduling
- Accessible locations
- Quiet spaces
- Interview questions shared in advance
- Breaks if needed

We'll work with you to make sure the process works for you - so you can focus on being yourself and performing at your best.



What degree do I need to apply?

You'll need at least a **2:2 undergraduate degree**. Some specialist roles may ask for a higher qualification, such as a master's degree. Details will always be included in the job advert.

Can I apply if I've already graduated or been working?

Yes. You can apply if you've graduated within the last **three years**, whether you've been working, travelling, studying or volunteering since.

Do I need the right to work in the UK?

You'll need to have the right to work in the UK for the full duration of the programme, as we're not able to offer visa sponsorship for graduate roles.

We need to confirm that you have the legal right to work in the UK before we can make a job offer, and we normally check this at the interview stage.

For most candidates, it's a simple case of showing a UK or Irish passport.

If you don't have a UK or Irish passport, you can also provide your original UK or Irish birth certificate together with an official document that shows your National Insurance number - for example, a P60 from a previous employer or a letter from HMRC.

If you're not a UK or Irish national, you'll need a valid work visa to work here. You can show us physical documents such as your passport with the visa clearly displayed, or share your Sharecode and Date of Birth so that we can check your Right to Work status on the [UK Government website](#).

When would I start if I'm successful?

All graduates start together in **September 2026**, with a week-long induction in Glasgow.

It's a great mix of learning and connection - you'll meet our leaders, visit operational sites, get to know your fellow graduates, understand how we all work together and have a lot of fun along the way.



What's the starting salary?

Starting salaries for the 2026 intake are:

- **£30,000** for two-year programmes
- **£33,000** for three-year programmes

How does pay progression work?

Programme Type	Starting Salary	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Milestone 3	Milestone 4	Milestone 5	Substantive Role
2 Year	£30,000	£31,000	£32,000	£33,000			£36,410 Grade 6 minimum
3 Year	£33,000	£34,000	£36,000	£38,000	£40,000	£42,000	£44,030 Grade 7 minimum

We want you to feel valued as you develop. Your pay will increase at set points during the graduate programme, recognising the skills, experience and responsibility you gain along the way.

You'll always know what to expect, with clear pay rates and a direct link between your development and progression.

What does the graduate training plan look like?

Every graduate follows a structured training plan that supports your development from day one. It combines technical learning, personal development and real-world experience - helping you build confidence and capability as you move through the programme.

The plan sets out what you'll learn, when you'll learn it and how it connects to your on-the-job experience. You'll take part in workshops, skills sessions and project work alongside other graduates from across the business.

Here's a snapshot of what to expect:

Graduate Training Plan



Graduates on both programmes follow the same plan, with those on the 3-year route focussing on developing the technical skills required for their substantive role in their final year.

Where will I be based?

We have offices and sites across Scotland, including **Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth, Stirling** and **Inverness**. You may work in more than one location during your programme, depending on your placements.

Is hybrid working available?

Yes. We've introduced a balanced hybrid approach that gives you flexibility while helping you stay connected to your team and our wider business.

We expect you to spend around **50% of your time in a Scottish Water location**, such as an office, operational site or project base. The rest of your time can be spent working from home or wherever you do your best thinking.

It's all about balance - giving you the flexibility to manage your work and life, while making sure there's plenty of time to collaborate, learn from others and build relationships in person.

How will I be supported during the programme?

You'll be supported from day one.

You'll have a **Placement Manager** to guide your day-to-day work, a **Development Manager** to help you grow and a **dedicated Early Careers team** to support your wider development. You'll also be part of a graduate community of around 80 people across the business.

What happens after the programme ends?

When you complete your programme, you'll move into a permanent role, usually in the area you've been developing your skills.

The graduate programme is just the start - your development continues long after it ends.

Who can I contact if I have any more questions?

Still have a question? Email our Early Careers team at earlycareers@scottishwater.co.uk. We're happy to help.

