

Scotland's Offshore Wind Skills Priorities and Action Plan

Powering Progress Together



November 2025

Ministerial Foreword

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Scotland's future prosperity will be built on renewable energy, with offshore wind at its centre. It offers a once-in-a-generation chance to drive economic growth, foster innovation and create high quality jobs across the country.

Offshore wind is already delivering real and lasting benefits to communities across Scotland. The Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm is a clear example, combining the generation of clean electricity with project investment in the Highlands and Moray. Since becoming fully operational in 2019, it has had the capacity to power up to 450,000 homes at any one time, created long term skilled jobs with up to 90 personnel now safely operating the wind farm, established a long-term operations and maintenance base at Wick Harbour, and provided £6 million in community benefits.

Over the next decade, the sector can support thousands more skilled roles, from the hands-on work of building and maintaining turbines and offshore structures, to the engineering and design of the systems that keep them safe, efficient and connected to the grid. These careers can inspire young people, provide security for families and open new opportunities for those moving into the sector as part of a just transition.

Realising these opportunities means building on and expanding the excellent training provision already in place as well as testing out innovative new approaches. We need to continue to work in partnership across private and public sectors to ensure that we have enough people with the right skills at the right time to realise the benefits we all want to see.

Earlier this year, the Scottish Government convened the Offshore Wind Skills Short-Life Working Group with industry and public sector partners to identify the priority job roles for the sector, agree a common set of objectives, and commit to additional actions to be taken forward from now into 2026/27. This plan marks the first step in a long-term, coordinated programme of joint work to position Scotland as the world's leading destination for developing the offshore wind workforce of the future.

Introduction

Scotland's offshore wind sector is expanding as it mobilises to deliver a potential project pipeline of over 40 GW. This creates a step-change in demand for people with the necessary skills at the same time as other parts of the energy system are undergoing significant transition.

We have a strong base on which to build. Significant work has already been undertaken by government, our colleges and universities, the wider public sector, sector skills bodies and industry partners to develop the skills needed for the energy transition. For example:

- The Oil and Gas Transition Training Fund is supporting workers to retrain and move into new opportunities.
- The new Energy Transition Skills Hub in Aberdeen is providing clear pathways and resources for those looking to reskill.
- The industry-led Energy Skills Passport is helping workers identify how their existing training can support pathways into key offshore wind roles.
- The National Energy Skills Accelerator is delivering advanced, industry-aligned training to meet future demand.
- An Offshore Wind Skills Programme is being delivered by the college sector in 2025/26 to create regional training hubs.

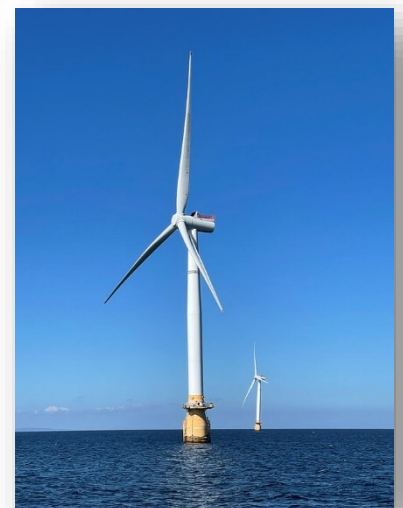
However, the speed and scale of offshore wind development means an additional focus on skills is required to enable project delivery, anchor supply chain opportunities in Scotland, maintain investor confidence and ensure that local communities benefit directly from the economic opportunities of offshore wind including secure, fair and rewarding work.

To respond to the scale of this challenge, the Scottish Government convened the Offshore Wind Skills Short-Life Working Group in February 2025 bringing together representatives from industry, the public sector and trade unions.

The members of the Group are: Scottish Enterprise (SE), Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE), South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE), Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council (SOWEC), Scottish Power Renewables, Energy Transition Zone Ltd. (ETZ), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Colleges Scotland, Energy Skills Partnership (ESP), Universities Scotland, The Highland Council and Scottish Union Learning (SUL).

The Group had a clear remit to:

- Identify the most pressing priority job roles in terms of likely demand.
- Set a clear direction for the longer term by agreeing a common set of objectives.



- Agree additional early actions that could be taken from now until the end of 2026/27 which deliver against both the identified priority job roles and the agreed-longer term objectives.

This priorities and action plan is the result.

Identifying Priority Job Roles

The Offshore Wind Skills Short-Life Working Group considered evidence from a variety of sources and agreed to focus collective action on the following immediate priority job roles, with particular emphasis on regions where demand will be greatest:

- **Installation & Maintenance Electricians** - install and maintain electrical systems that connect turbines to the grid.
- **Metal Working Production & Maintenance Fitters** - assemble and maintain the structures that support turbines and offshore platforms.
- **Wind Turbine Technicians** - build, operate and service turbines throughout their lifecycle.
- **Mechanical Design Engineers** - design the components and systems that allow turbines and supporting infrastructure to function safely and efficiently.
- **Engineering Technicians** - provide hands-on technical support across construction, operations and maintenance.
- **Electrical Engineers** - design, test and oversee the electrical systems that transmit power from offshore wind farms to homes and businesses.
- **Marine and Waterways Transport Operatives** – operate the vessels needed for constructing and maintaining offshore wind farms

A key source of data considered was the [2025 Wind Industry Skills Intelligence Report](#). That report also confirmed that demand will be highest in Aberdeen and the North-East, the Highlands and Islands, and Tayside, Central, and Fife. However the scale of demand means that large population centres in Scotland must also be considered as important sources of skilled labour.

Skills demands shift over time as offshore wind projects move through the lifecycle from development (5 to 10 years) to construction (2 to 4 years) and then to operation and maintenance (up to 35 years). This creates a clear need for a pipeline of skilled workers that not only meets immediate construction requirements but also sustains the workforce for decades of operation. Many of these roles will require several years of training and experience, therefore action needs to be taken in advance of when demand peaks.

It is notable that many of the priority roles identified are also essential to the delivery of Scotland's electricity grid build-out and are in demand across other sectors, including renewables, such as onshore wind and solar. For example, engineering and electrical roles already account for nearly 30% of clean energy job vacancies

advertised across the UK.¹ As such, a focus on these priority job roles will likely impact positively beyond the offshore wind sector.

The agreed priority job roles are based on current data and evidence and will be reviewed and refined as new data emerges, ensuring there is consensus regarding demand and that we respond to evolving workforce needs.



¹ [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity: Assessment of the clean energy skills challenge - evidence annex](#)

Objectives

The following six objectives, agreed by the Short-Life Working Group, reflect the key themes and priorities for building Scotland's offshore wind workforce and set the direction for the longer term. All actions going forward need to deliver against one or more of these objectives.

1. Increase the supply of a skilled workforce with the technical and professional capabilities essential for meeting both current and future demands of Scotland's offshore wind sector, with a focus on critical skills and those that offer strong value for money and contribute significantly to economic impact.
2. Strengthen alignment between industry, further and higher education and other providers to ensure training provision reflects the needs of the offshore wind sector and leads to employment while supporting initiatives that align with available funding opportunities from both public and private sectors.
3. Expand access to relevant training in key regions - which meets the needs of young people entering the sector, career changers and those who require upskilling - to meet forecast offshore wind workforce demand.
4. Diversify the offshore wind workforce by addressing structural barriers to inclusion and supporting targeted pathways for underrepresented groups.
5. Support a just transition of workers from related sectors, particularly oil and gas, into the offshore wind sector.
6. Promote sustainable employment for individuals both within and between sectors.

Priority Actions

In addition to work already underway, **industry and public sector partners have committed to delivering the following twelve actions in 2026/27** as agreed by the Short-Life Working Group. These actions are a first step towards addressing the priority skills needs identified and achieving the wider objectives set out above.

1. Level 5 Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship

Who? The Scottish Funding Council (SFC), working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and others.

What? Will scope and cost the creation of a new Level 5 Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship.

Why? To explore the possibility of opening up new pathways into engineering apprenticeships at entry level. The intended outcome is that more learners, from a wider range of backgrounds, have clear and accessible routes into the significant number of engineering related careers in the offshore wind industry.

When? June 2026

2. 'Work Ready' Programmes And The Offshore Wind Sector

Who? Colleges Scotland working with the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), industry, Energy Skills Partnership (ESP), local authorities and others.

What? Will increase the number of places on the existing college based ECITB 'work ready' programme, and any other similar initiatives developed by relevant sector skills bodies, to better deliver for the offshore wind sector. The programme supports people from under-represented groups, including those not in education, training or employment and people with experience of the justice system, to get a suitable SCQF level 5 engineering qualification and to enter employment.

Why? To ensure that 'work ready' individuals get more guaranteed interviews with employers in the offshore wind industry with live and suitable vacancies, while strengthening offshore wind employer links to 'work ready' programmes, with the result that offshore wind job opportunities are more accessible to those in society who stand to benefit most.

When? In 2026/27

3. Cross Skilling Programme For Oil And Gas Workers

Who? ECITB working with Colleges Scotland, ESP and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.

What? Will increase the number of places on their cross-skilling programme for Wind Turbine Technicians which recognises the existing skills and experience of individuals leaving carbon-intensive industries such as the oil and gas sector, and provides additional training and qualifications to enable them to also work in the wind sector.

Why? To support more experienced and valued oil and gas workers who wish to cross skill and take up employment opportunities in wind, strengthening the wind sector workforce while further supporting a just transition.

When? In 2026/27

4. Scottish Wind Technician Education Centre

Who? Ayrshire College and Energy Innovation (a Norwegian Training, Education, Research and Development Centre).

What? Will establish a strategic partnership to set up a leading hub for Scotland in Global Wind Organisation (GWO) accredited training and wind technician education.

Why? To expand capacity and capability in a priority job role across both offshore and onshore wind to support a pipeline of GWO qualified technicians to meet industry demand.

When? A formal agreement is in development, with initial training modules scheduled for delivery in 2026.

5. Relevant Courses On Offer In Scottish Universities

Who? SFC, working with Universities Scotland.

What? Will review existing provision, including upskilling courses, across Scottish universities which could offer pathways into the identified offshore wind priority roles.

Why? To quantify existing, relevant courses, in the same way as has been done previously in relation to the college sector, in order to have a better understanding of existing provision, so it can be built on to meet projected industry demand.

When? December 2026

6. Central Recruitment Information-Sharing System

Who? SDS, working with industry and others.

What? Will design a model for a potential central recruitment information-sharing system with offshore wind sector employers, learning from the existing Pre Approved Talent Scheme in place for the manufacturing sector.

Why? To ensure that candidates who are unsuccessful in applying for offshore wind apprenticeships, internships or graduate entry roles are signposted to other relevant opportunities, including with SMEs, to prevent talent being lost from the sector.

When? By June 2026

7. Industry Training Programmes And Facilities

Who? The Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council (SOWEC) working with Scottish Renewables and offshore wind sector employers.

What? Will undertake an audit of current industry training programmes and facilities.

Why? Industry already plays a valuable role in training and developing their workforce and this action is intended to fill an identified knowledge gap, with the intended outcome being to identify any opportunities for collaboration with others in order to meet increasing demand.

When? March 2026

8. 'Industry In Residence' Programme

Who? SOWEC, together with Colleges Scotland, Universities Scotland and others.

What? Will create an 'Industry in Residence' programme structure and identify a lead academic partner to undertake a pilot programme which, if impact and benefit is demonstrated, could provide a template programme to be scaled up.

Why? To explore ways in which we can deepen partnership working between industry, colleges and universities to ensure that course content reflects offshore wind industry requirements. The intended outcome is that a scalable, costed model of training provision which is better aligned with industry needs is developed, while staff and students gain greater knowledge and awareness of the sector.

When? December 2026

9. Competency Routes For Priority Occupations

Who? The Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC), working with SOWEC and industry partners.

What? Will identify gaps in competency routes for priority occupations and assess where apprenticeship pathways, modular learning, or short-term upskilling solutions could be developed.

Why? To map where skills shortages exist in key offshore wind occupations in order to build an evidence base on priority pathways to competency that can inform the development of future training and apprenticeship solutions.

When? December 2026

10. Diversity And Inclusion

Who? SOWEC, working with organisations with expertise in promoting equality such as Equate Scotland, and industry partners.

What? Will set out in a communication to its members, advice on how best to implement the soon to be published OWIC Diversity & Inclusion best practice guide in a Scottish context.

Why? To identify practical ways in which industry can tackle underrepresentation and attract a broader range of people into the sector that better reflects Scotland's population to support the sector's growth.

When? July 2026

11. Internship And Work Based Opportunities

Who? SOWEC, in partnership with offshore wind companies, Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland.

What? Will undertake work to determine a model for increasing the number of internship and work based opportunities in the offshore wind sector.

Why? To explore ways to expand access to high-quality, practical experience that supports entry into offshore wind careers, helping to build and retain a more diverse and skilled workforce.

When? October 2026

12. Additional Opportunities For Those In Maritime Industries

Who? Energy Skills Partnership, working with Scottish Government.

What? Will undertake an analysis to determine potential demand for targeted training that supports marine users to access additional offshore wind opportunities and, should there be sufficient demand, design provision to meet it.

Why? To support those working in maritime industries who wish to cross skill in order to access additional employment opportunities created by the offshore wind sector, while the sector benefits from an experienced, skilled and adaptable workforce.

When? June 2026

Conclusion

Ensuring we have enough people, with the right skills to deliver Scotland's offshore wind opportunity cannot be achieved by Scottish Government, the public sector, industry or our local regions acting alone. It demands sustained, delivery-focused collaboration, supported by clear governance and robust evidence. The establishment of an Offshore Wind Skills Programme will provide the mechanism to do just that.

By setting out priority roles, shared objectives and committing to collective early action, we have come together to create a foundation that a future programme can build upon with confidence and a strong basis for shaping future funding and investment decisions.

This joint priorities and action plan is a practical, collective commitment to act now, and a statement of intent that Scotland will build a workforce capable of delivering on its offshore wind ambitions and securing lasting benefits for generations to come.

References

Strategic Context

[Scottish Government \(2022\) *Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation*](#)

[Scottish Government \(2024\) *Green Industrial Strategy*](#)

[Scottish Government \(2023\). *Post-School Education, Research and Skills - Initial Priorities*](#)

[Scottish Government \(2025\) *Programme for Government 2025-26: Building the Best Future for Scotland*](#)

[UK Government \(2024\). *Clean Power 2030: Action Plan: A New Era of Electricity*](#)

[UK Government \(2025\) *Clean Energy Jobs Plan*](#)

Key Evidence and Data Sources

[Offshore Wind Industry Council \(2025\) *Wind Industry Skills Intelligence Report 2025*](#)

[Scottish Government \(2024\) *Offshore Wind Focus Paper*](#)

[Skills Development Scotland \(2024\) *Career Opportunities in Scotland Across Offshore Wind Brochure*](#)

[Offshore Wind Industry Council \(2023\) *Offshore Wind Skills Intelligence Report 2023*](#)

[Opergy \(2025\) *Energy Skills Intelligence Hub*](#)



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