

START SOMETHING SPECTACULAR!

CAREERS IN TOURISM – TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICER

Tourist information officers provide travel and accommodation information to tourists, promote tourist attractions, and provide reservation services for sightseeing, accommodation and tours.

Tourist information officers are employed in a wide range of agencies in the tourism and hospitality industry, and in private and government organisations involved in tourist promotion, planning and development. Tourism officers can be involved in providing information on and promoting travel to the local area, the state and international destinations.

Duties and Tasks

A tourist information officer may perform the following tasks:

- answer questions from tourists, visitors, local residents and other tourism industry colleagues, over the counter or by phone
- make suggestions on tours, travel routes, accommodation and local attractions
- provide literature and information on local, interstate and international tours and places of interest, depending on where they are employed
- maintain literature and/or brochure stocks
- sell souvenirs and other merchandise
- discuss transport, accommodation and tour availability and cost
- arrange bookings and documentation for travel and accommodation and collect payment
- assist travel agents and tour operators in preparing itineraries for tourists
- undertake general clerical and office duties
- coordinate volunteer or part-time staff
- put together statistics concerning the number and nature of enquiries
- be responsible for overall presentation of the information centre.



Work Conditions

Tourist information officers have to be familiar with all the tour operators and the various attractions and services in their region. As part of an ongoing training, they may take part in industry familiarisations, going to hotels or motels to personally rate the accommodation.

The role involves actively promoting and selling particular services and products to customers.

This is a highly customer-focused role, which may involve dealing with people from a range of cultural background, dealing with difficult customers and resolving problems.

The job can be very busy with the arrival of large tour groups and during peak times of the year.

Personal Requirements

- enjoy working with people
- good interpersonal, communication and customer service skills
- good organisational skills
- comfortable working with computers
- good geographical knowledge

Education and Training

You can work as a tourist information officer without formal qualifications. You will probably get some informal training on the job. However, there are formal qualifications available, and these may assist you in gaining employment and advancing within the industry.

Certificate III in Tourism (Visitor Information Services) this certificate will provide you with the skills required to work as a tourist information officer

Other qualifications are available to help tourist information officers to move forward into other positions in the tourism industry, such as sales and marketing or management.

A highly desirable skill amongst tourist information officers is the ability to speak a second language.

Most people are expected to have a strong retail background or qualifications in hospitality and tourism.

Employment Opportunities

Job opportunities are dependent on the type of funding which is available to operate the centres. Some small tourist information centres are run on a voluntary basis or are self funded. Jobs in these centres are rarely advertised and are filled usually by word of mouth.

Employment opportunities in tourist information centres are limited, but may offer an entry point to the industry. With experience and sometimes further study, it may be possible to gain marketing and management positions.

Industry representatives advise prospective tourist information officers to gain as much work experience in the retail trade as possible and to complete relevant tourism courses. A lot of people start as casuals in the industry which can lead to contract employment. With time, tourist information officers can progress into managerial positions or may progress in the related field of tourism marketing.

For more information

Career Gateway www.careergateway.serviceskills.com.au	Career Gateway helps parents and career advisors, employers and students with career information.
Australian Job Outlook www.jobsearch.gov.au	Australian government website that provides information on job prospects, weekly earnings, type of work and other useful occupational information.
Wagenet www.wagenet.gov.au	The aim of this site is to help you find information about wages and conditions of employment.
Year 12 What Next? www.year12whatnext.gov.au	Australian government website designed to help Year 12 students plan their post school education and training
My Future www.myfuture.edu.au	Australian government website containing comprehensive career information.
My Hospitality www.myhospitality.com.au	Free Australian hospitality industry and trade directory, employment provider and information source