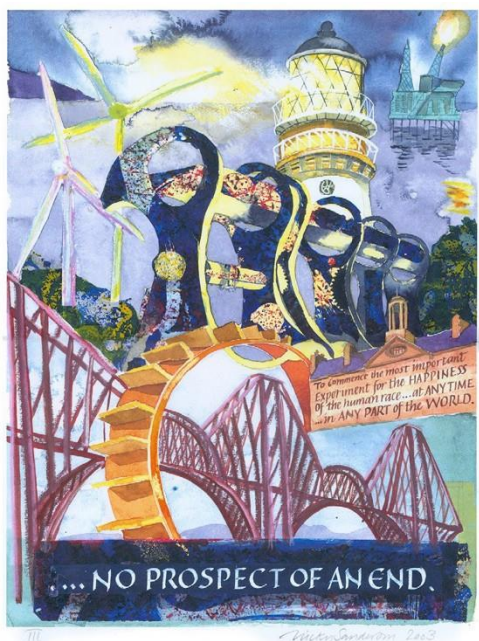
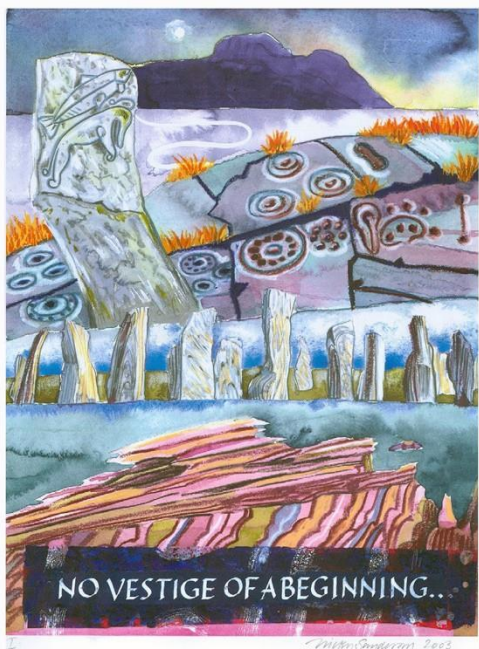


STGA Blue Badge
Tourist Guide Training

STUDENT PROSPECTUS

2023-2025



www.stga.co.uk

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Thank You For Your Interest!

We are delighted you are interested in joining the Blue Badge course with a view to becoming a successful qualified tourist guide in Scotland and a member of our organisation and family.

Our Organisation

The Scottish Tourist Guides Association (STGA) is the leading body for qualified professional tourist guides in Scotland. The STGA Blue Badge Training Programme builds on experience gained training guides in Scotland over the past six decades, and incorporates the most recent national, European and international standards:

- STGA Standards of Performance
- STGA Code of Conduct
- BS EN 13809: 2003 Definition of Tourist Guide
- CSN BS EN 15565: 2008 Standard Tourism Services

Our continual commitment to these standards is what makes our Blue Badge guides stand out as professionals in the Scottish tourism industry and ensures visitors have an unforgettable trip to Scotland.



About The Job

Upon successfully achieving your Blue Badge, you will be qualified and accredited to guide throughout Scotland, running your own business as a Scottish tourist guide.

This is a rewarding, varied and challenging career that sees you meeting people from all over the world and from many different walks of life. Different aspects of the job require you to:

- Research in-depth information for guided tours throughout Scotland.
- Plan and agree itineraries for guided tours throughout Scotland.
- Interpret the area for visitors.
- Lead tour groups or individuals in vehicles, on foot and at sites.
- Provide practical information, advice and assistance.
- Resolve emergencies and problems.
- Develop and maintain positive working relationships with clients, colleagues and visitors.
- Manage a small business and maintain appropriate records.

Blue Badge guiding is a people-orientated profession and the following attributes would be very advantageous:

Curiosity, enthusiasm, warmth and people skills, self-motivation, physical and emotional stamina, confidence, flexibility, clarity of speech and excellent communication skills.

Blue Badge Course Objective

Our objective is to train tourist guides to provide quality and professional services for the tourism industry throughout the whole of Scotland in accordance with the requirements of the STGA, its standards of performance, code of conduct and membership needs.

This comprehensive course is put together to recognise that a professional tourist guide carefully balances skills in interpreting history, culture and landscapes, customer service skills, first class organisational skills and a sound approach to tourism as a business.

Successful participants in this 18-month training programme will be eligible to take the STGA Accreditation Exam in Spring 2025. A pass in this examination will lead to the award of the Blue Badge.

Programme Outline

The 18-month STGA Blue Badge Training Programme will be delivered in **English** through three integrated modules:

Core Knowledge

Regional Studies

Professional Skills

The delivery of these modules will incorporate PowerPoint presentations, talks, seminars, (delivered online and in class), group work, individual presentations, practical training on walks, sites and in moving vehicles, online resources, study away-days, written and practical assessments as well as ongoing feedback and discussion. **Students are expected to be self-driven and take responsibility for their learning. The minimum requirement for self-directed study for this course is 1200 to 1600 hours.**

Regional Studies and Professional Skills will be delivered by active accredited Blue Badge tourist guides. Most have undergone training to become accredited trainers for the STGA, and some are also accredited trainers for the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA). Core Knowledge will be delivered by City of Glasgow College online/streamed sessions and through field trips and study away-days/familiarisation tours.

MODULES	COURSES	SUBJECTS	HOURS
CORE KNOWLEDGE	LAND	Geology	130 contact hours approximately. (The delivery of some Core Knowledge will be integrated with the delivery of Regional Studies and Professional Skills.)
		Natural History	
		Geography	
	PEOPLE	Archaeology	
		History	
	ARTS & CULTURE	Architecture	
		Visual Art	
		Literature	
		Music & Dance	
		Film, TV & Theatre	
		Languages	
		Lore & Custom	
		SOCIETY	
	Education		
	Law		
	Politics		
	Sports		
	Food & Drink		
	Scotland Today		
REGIONAL STUDIES	THE WHOLE OF SCOTLAND: Borders, South-West Scotland, Edinburgh, Lothian, Glasgow, Fife, Angus, Stirling, Trossachs, Argyll, Grampian, Central Highlands, Northern Highlands, Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland. Note: Field visits will be mainland Scotland only.		190 contact hours approximately in a classroom setting and in the field. This will be delivered through a mix of field trips, lectures and other activities including private study. (The delivery of some Regional Studies will be integrated with the delivery of Core Knowledge and Professional Skills.)
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	PROFESSIONAL ETHICS		120 contact hours approximately in a classroom setting and in the field. (The delivery of some Professional Skills will be integrated with the delivery of Core Knowledge and Regional Studies).
	GUIDING TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS		
	GROUP MANAGEMENT		
	BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS		
	FIRST AID arranged and completed by individual trainees in their own time. Students will need to provide evidence of a certificate prior to commencing the STGA Accreditation Exam.		



Learning Outcomes

Core knowledge learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a broad awareness of the disciplines informing and shaping knowledge of Scotland's archaeology, history, culture, arts and landscapes.
- Analyse and critically evaluate the debates on the natural and cultural identity of Scotland and deploy this knowledge clearly in an academic form as well as in a practical manner.
- Show the capacity to understand the chronological sequence of natural and social developments and make links across different domains of knowledge.

Regional studies learning outcomes

- Demonstrate the capacity to identify and explain the significance of various physical, archaeological, historical and cultural features of the different regions of Scotland.
- Understand the links across the different regions of Scotland through the knowledge and understanding developed in Core Knowledge.
- Interpret the physical and human landscapes and cities of Scotland through the knowledge and understanding developed in Core Knowledge.
- Apply the Core Knowledge to select appropriate information, make comparisons and develop themes for the detailed interpretation of the different regions of Scotland.
- Use the insights gained in Professional Skills to successfully interpret the different regions of Scotland with reference to the needs and understanding of different visitors.

Professional skills learning outcomes

- Select the most appropriate routes, sites, stopping places; show understanding of the various aspects of the area, the interests of the participants.
- Maintain an appropriate time schedule; have regard for the health and safety of both visitors and colleagues.
- Present an effective commentary: show understanding of the various aspects of the area.
- Deliver administrative measures for the running of a small business.
- Demonstrate an ability to work both independently and as a member or leader of a team.
- Demonstrate relevant management skills.
- Demonstrate a range of effective communication skills, including the ability to deliver a balanced, non-didactic tour.
- Understand how to develop and deliver different types of services as a professional tourist guide.
- Understand ethics, responsibilities and regulations affecting the work of a Scottish tourist guide.
- Construct a workable Tour Plan.

City Of Glasgow College Partnership

The STGA is delighted to be working in partnership with the dynamic City of Glasgow College (COGC) which shares our vision, our commitment to accredited learning and brings expertise in the latest technologies available for students. Core Knowledge sessions and assessments will be delivered and marked by COGC. Core Knowledge sessions will be streamed from 6pm on Wednesday evenings and we hope this will encourage students from around Scotland to join our Blue Badge course.

The content will be available online for some time after the initial streaming. The Wednesday evenings are an opportunity to interact with the lecturer to seek clarification, pose questions, and contribute to the discussion.

Successful completion of the college section will earn candidates an SCQF Level 7 City of Glasgow College Certificate of Scottish Studies which is independent of the STGA Course and can be used towards any future academic qualifications candidates may wish to pursue.

A Business Skills component will also be delivered by COGC to provide information on the establishment, management, and development of a business.

The Regional Skills and Professional Skills will be run by STGA. Throughout the course COGC and STGA will be working closely together to achieve our objectives and help you realise your goals.





Timetable

The Blue Badge Training Programme will run from the end of August 2023 to the end of February 2025 and continues throughout March and April 2025 with exam preparation, practice and the accreditation examinations.

Core Knowledge

COGC Core Knowledge sessions will be streamed from 6.00 pm on Wednesday evenings from September Year 1 to June Year 2.

The content will be available online for some time after the initial streaming, but the Wednesday evenings are the only opportunity to interact with the lecturer to seek clarification, pose questions, and contribute to the discussion.

Regional Studies/Professional Skills

Students will attend training sessions mostly on Saturdays and Sundays, 1 or 2 weekends per month over the 18-month period from August Year 1 to February Year 3. Some weekday training may occur but plenty of notice will be given.

There will be an extended October Programme (5 days, overnight stays likely) and a Summer Programme (July, 6 days with up to 5 overnight stays), and students should be prepared to attend extra classes towards the end of the course in preparation for the final exam.

Most STGA training days will run from 08.30 until 17.00 or 18.00. Assessments and days away can include extended days.

Students will meet in various locations throughout Scotland during the training programme. Some Professional Skills sessions may be delivered online.

The provisional timetable days of the training programme will be available by mid-November (see *Joining the Course*) with the full timetable issued in the spring before course commencement.

Final Accreditation Exams

STGA Blue Badge Accreditation Exams take place in the spring of Year 3.

The final STGA Accreditation Examination will be under the control and supervision of the STGA Board of Examiners and the STGA Training Manager. The STGA Board of Examiners is a separate and independent body from the training programme. This exam will be conducted in English, and competency in English will form part of the examination for non-native speakers.

Candidates who wish to guide in any other language will sit a similar examination in that language and in addition will take part in a one-to-one interview.

Approximately one month after the final examination, candidates will be informed of their results. Upon qualification, successful candidates will be eligible to join the STGA and to work as a Blue Badge Guide.

Joining The Course

Becoming a Blue Badge Guide for Scotland is a highly rewarding but also challenging experience. It is a big commitment from both sides and for this reason the selection process will run in several stages, allowing both potential students and STGA time to consider.

Numbers on the Blue Badge course are limited to a maximum of 36 and there are usually more than 120 applications. To assess potential and ensure that the limited places are offered appropriately, there is a selection process based on selecting candidates who:

- are absolutely committed to a future career as a professional tourist guide in Scotland
- are prepared to work substantial hours in the main tourist season (April-October)
- have the time and resources to commit to an intensive 18-month academic and practical course where students will be responsible for their own learning
- can demonstrate the skills and attributes required of a professional tourist guide

The stages of this process are shown below.

Stage 1	Completed application forms are reviewed and successful applicants invited to stage 2.
Stage 2	Remaining applicants will take part in 1 of 2 selection days. These involve individual presentations, group activities, giving and receiving feedback, and group discussions. Successful applicants will be invited to stage 3.
Stage 3	Individual online interviews. Each will be shaped by the contents of the application form and performance during the selection day. For some applicants, there may be a more focused approach on aspects such as English language competency, teamwork, communication skills, IT access and competence, ability to devote the time required for the course.
Stage 4	Offers of places.

Throughout the process, candidates will be assessed on essential skills, activities and professionalism. We look for:

- Professional manner and appearance
- Interest and concern for people
- Understanding of, and interest in, all things Scottish
- Ability to speak, understand and write in English to an appropriate level
- Teamwork.

Further details are available in the 2023 - 2025 Key Dates and Fees Document.



Training Programme Fees

Information on fees is published in the 2023 - 2025 Key Dates and Fees Document.

Training programme fees will be payable in full by mid-July in advance of the course start.

The course fee includes teaching and training on all timetabled dates, training materials, assessments, access to the Student Online Forum and to the City of Glasgow College streamed core knowledge sessions. The course fee does not include overnight accommodation as required throughout the course and exam preparation period. Students are responsible for organising and paying for any overnight accommodation required to enable them to attend training programme sessions, including October 2023 and July 2024 programmes, and assessments/examinations.

No refunds will be given if a student withdraws from the training programme (or any part of it), or for non-use of services provided, or if a student is required to leave the course due to misconduct or repeated failure to complete work to a satisfactory standard. The STGA reserves the right to cancel and refund all fees paid or to offer the programme at a higher fee if insufficient enrolments are received.

First Payment

The first payment (10% of course fee) will be required on accepting a place and to secure your place on the course.

STGA Student Membership

STGA Student Membership subscription will be included in the course fee. Student membership provides the necessary insurance that you will require during the training programme and gives you access to our network of guides and local branches.

STGA Blue Badge Accreditation Fees

The STGA Blue Badge external exams in March / April Year 3 are not included in the course fees. Students will be advised of the examination fees in advance of the exam period. The required First Aid certifications are also not included as many students have their First Aid certificate independently.

Students may wish to present for their STGA Blue Badge in an additional language to English which will require an additional language exam fee.



Assessments During The Training Programme

Students will take part in a variety of assessments throughout the training programme in order to work towards continual progression.

All assessments during this programme will be conducted in English. Students must therefore be competent and confident in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English.

MODULE	ASSESSMENT	FORMAT
Core Knowledge	4 written assessments, one on each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land People Arts & Culture Society 	These may take the form of 2,000- word essays or other written assessments.
Regional Studies	4 assessments covering Edinburgh, Glasgow, and 2 areas in different parts of mainland Scotland.	Commentary during a coach tour and at selected stops during a walking tour and/or within a venue such as a museum or cathedral.
	One 2-day & one 3-day Tour Plan	
	Online or in-person Interview/Viva	Questions on selected aspects of your Tour Plan
Professional Skills	Standard for every Regional Study assessment	Ongoing during practical and class work
	Standard for behaviour and attitude throughout the course	
Course Examination	Unseen written tests Maps/Regional Knowledge & food/drink questions	1-3 hour in class / via video link
	3-minute oral presentations	

Accreditation Levels

The STGA Blue Badge Course is benchmarked to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework SCQF Level 7 (Higher National Certificate equivalent).

Employment For Tourist Guides In Scotland

Blue Badge Scottish Tourist Guides are self-employed, freelance guides and work for a variety of clients including tour operators, cruise ship excursion organisers, conference organisers, corporate clients, public bodies and individual visitors.

For many, being a tourist guide and self-employed will bring new challenges and a new way of working. The job is varied, interesting and very rewarding but can be quite demanding. Our online information meetings will give you more information to help you understand the life and work of a guide. Our course will help you prepare for and manage challenges you may face.

One benefit of membership is a full-page online listing on the STGA website for every STGA full member. Our members receive over 90% of their work from personal contacts and are responsible for generating their own business. The majority of members develop good working relationships with various agents and benefit from repeat bookings. STGA also markets all its full members through industry contacts, government organisations, international trade fairs and promotional activities.

Benefits of STGA Membership

- The right to work as a Blue Badge Guide.
- Opportunities to work for companies that only employ qualified guides.
- Professional Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance through the STGA.
- Listing on the STGA website.
- Access to STGA online resources.
- Access to the Association's Continuous Professional Development scheme.
- Participation in activities organised by the STGA and its regional branches.
- Representation at all levels of the tourism industry in Scotland and beyond.
- Membership of the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG) and the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA).
- Marketing opportunities.
- Networking opportunities with colleagues who share their knowledge and experience.
- Advice and support on professional guiding matters from colleagues and through the board of directors, all of whom are active tourist guides.
- Kudos, through UK and world-wide recognition of the quality of a Blue Badge tourist guide qualification.

Contact

Enquiries about the course should be addressed to: info@stga.co.uk

The Scottish Tourist Guides Association



The STGA is the accrediting body and membership organisation for professional tourist guides in Scotland.

The STGA is a company limited by guarantee and has a voluntary board of directors.

STGA Membership:

- Ordinary Members (Blue Badge Guides) – qualified to guide throughout Scotland
- Regional Affiliates (Green Badge Guides) - qualified to guide in a specific operational area of Scotland
- Site Affiliates (Yellow Badge Guides) - qualified to guide in specific sites or on fixed routes
- Student Members.

The World Federation Of Tourist Guide Associations



Macau 2013 Declaration For Tourist Guides Around The World

1. WFTGA declares that its member tourist guides act as ambassadors of their countries and regions and as caretakers of their area's traditions, history, culture and environment.
2. WFTGA supports the definition of tourist guiding as an area-specific qualification, usually issued and/ or recognised by the appropriate authority. WFTGA believes that any person without a qualification is not competent to interpret and explain the cultural and natural heritage and specialities of that area.
3. WFTGA declares it is not ethical or appropriate for anyone to work as a tourist guide without having the above qualifications.
4. WFTGA declares that tourist guides are essential to the tourism industry and should be acknowledged as professionals by tour operators, tourism stakeholders and local and/or national authorities and be fairly compensated.
5. WFTGA and its member tourist guides stand by our declaration that "We are the Professionals" who work in the best professional manner to achieve high standards of service and contribute to society.