

Five Tips To Help You Secure the Best Bartender Job - Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/news/five-tips-to-help-you-secure-the-best-bartender-job/>

Details:

Getting a bar job is mostly about holding an RSA and being available. Getting a good one — a venue you want to work at, with hours that suit and people who train you — takes more deliberate choices.

This page is about choosing and negotiating . If you want the standing-out-at-a-specific-venue version, see how to score that awesome bar job ; for the interview and trial itself, see bartender interview questions and trial-shift tips .

Keep growing after the RSA

The original job guide recommends learning from experienced bartenders, finding a mentor, improving customer service, helping the team and keeping a record of new skills. A mentor can show you how a venue handles a rush, a complicated order or an unhappy guest; colleagues are also the people you rely on when service is busy. Note concrete examples of training, responsibility and good service for your resume. Describe what you actually did, rather than claiming a credential or promotion you have not earned.

Those habits make you a stronger applicant, but they do not guarantee the "best" job. The five steps below help you choose a venue and test whether its hours, training and pay fit your goals.

1. Decide what "best" means for you

Venues are not interchangeable, and the trade-offs are real. Note that the award column matters as much as the other two, because it decides your pay table.

Venue type	Teaches you	Hours	Award
High-volume pub or tavern	Speed, resilience, working a peak service period	Late, weekend-heavy	MA000009
RSL, bowls, golf or sporting club	Members' service, function work, often gaming	Broader daytime spread	MA000058
Cocktail bar	Technique and product depth across the six methods	Late	Depends on the premises
Hotel bar	Systems, service standards, function work	More regular	MA000009
Standalone restaurant bar	Wine, beverage and food matching	Earlier finishes	MA000119

Night club	Volume, crowd management	Very late	MA000119
Casino	Systems discipline, high-volume service	Around the clock	MA000009

A venue that trains you is worth more early on than one that pays marginally better. Speed and product knowledge compound; a small hourly difference does not.

One structural point worth weighing. SITHFAB023 Operate a bar requires assessment across three service periods including at least one peak , and SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails requires twelve preparations across three service periods . A venue that gives you real peak shifts and a genuine cocktail list is a venue where you can actually build toward those units. A quiet bar with four drinks on the list cannot give you that experience no matter how long you stay. Note the order the register imposes on that pair, too: SITHFAB030 requires SITHFAB023 as one of its three prerequisites, so operating a bar comes before cocktails rather than alongside them.

2. Arrive with more than the minimum

RSA is the entry requirement, so it does not distinguish you. What does:

Food handling. Bar staff handling ice, cut fruit or unpackaged garnishes are food handlers under Standard 3.2.2A, and many venues ask for it. It is also a prerequisite — SITXFSA005 is required before SITHFAB022 , SITHFAB024 , SITHFAB025 , SITHFAB026 , SITHFAB027 and SITHFAB035 , and together with RSA before SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 , and together with RSA and SITHFAB023 before SITHFAB030 — so getting it early unblocks nine other units in the food and beverage stream

Nationally recognised units rather than a certificate of attendance. SITHFAB021 is checkable on training.gov.au against your USI. A non-accredited course is not, and a manager who knows the industry can tell the difference at a glance

In New South Wales, the competency card itself , not just the training certificate. The card is what authorises you, and it needs an in-person Service NSW appointment with 100 points of identification, so it is not something you can produce at short notice

In Victoria, the RSA Certificate of Completion , not just the Statement of Attainment. If you never finished the LCV Learning Hub stage, you do not have one yet

RSA itself is worth holding for the same structural reason, not only the licensing one: SITHFAB021 is a prerequisite to nine units in the stream — SITHFAB023 , 029 , 030 , 031 , 032 , 033 , 034 , 037 and 039 — exactly as many as the food safety unit gates.

We hold several relevant skill sets on our scope of registration, and they are worth knowing by name because each one produces a Statement of Attainment that credit-transfers later:

Skill set	What it builds
SITSS00071 Responsible Service of Alcohol	The licensing unit
SITSS00068 Food Handling	The prerequisite that unblocks the bar units
SITSS00075 Beverage Advice	SITHFAB021 , beers, spirits and liqueurs, Australian wines, food and beverage matching
SITSS00094 Sommelier	Adds imported wines and managing the sale or service of wine
SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation	SITHFAB025 plus customer service, transactions and hygiene

SITSS00070 Hospitality Compliance	SITHFAB021 , SITXFSA005 , SITXFSA006
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Those units credit-transfer into SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality or SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) . Neither has entry requirements. SIT30722 is the one to look at if you are set on front-of-house restaurant work, because it makes RSA and cash handling core rather than elective.

If you already have years behind a bar, ask about recognition of prior learning at the pre-training review before enrolling. RPL is a genuine assessment against the same evidence, not a waiver, but it is a real pathway and RTOs are required to offer it.

One identity check worth making before you pay anyone. Training is sometimes marketed under a business name rather than the RTO's name, and that is legitimate as long as it is on the public record. We operate under several registered business names belonging to the same legal entity, COMPLETE HOSPITALITY TRAINING (VIC.) PTY. LTD. , ABN 27 006 947 262 — among them Victorian Bar School and Ready Serve Achieve Melbourne , both registered from 6 March 2018, alongside The Coffee School, Coffee School by CHT, Melbourne Barista and Alchemy Institute of Australia. So a bar or RSA course offered under one of those names is the same RTO, 3722. You can confirm any provider's business names yourself on the Australian Business Register, and the RTO code on training.gov.au. If a name checks out on neither, that is the signal to stop.

3. Go where the good venues actually look

Good bars fill roles through people they know before they advertise. So:

Become a regular somewhere you want to work, and be recognisable

Ask staff, not just management. They hear about openings first

Walk in mid-afternoon , Tuesday to Thursday. Never during a service period

Follow the people, not the venue. Bartenders move, and take teams with them

Be specific about what you can do. "I have RSA and food handling, I have done twelve cocktail preparations across three service periods for the accredited unit, and I am comfortable on a dry till" is a different conversation from "I'm keen"

See securing work after education .

4. Make the trial count

Most hiring runs through a trial shift, and the things that get noticed are unglamorous: arriving early, working clean, asking where things are rather than guessing, copying the venue's method rather than yours, and staying visibly busy in the quiet.

Two things separate strong candidates.

Handling a refusal well. Refusing an intoxicated patron early and calmly is a legal duty, and a manager who watches you do it properly will keep you. The unit requires you to refuse professionally, state the reason, and assist — and it names which kinds of assistance: connecting the customer with their designated driver or companions , offering food or non-alcoholic drinks , and organising or providing transport information . It also names three distinct categories to have a plan for: customers in emotional or physical distress, customers who have eaten nothing during extended service, and customers who appear affected by illicit substances or other drugs.

Better still, know the signal that comes earlier. Performance criterion 2.3 of the unit is to identify erratic drinking patterns as an early sign of possible intoxication, and it names them: mixing a wide range of drink types, drinking quickly and in quick succession, ordering more than one drink for their own consumption, repeatedly returning for more samples, and ordering "triple shots" or extra-large drinks.

Those are visible at the point of order, before anything is visible in how a person looks. See managing intoxicated patrons .

Doing a proper handover at the end. SITHFAB023 treats handover as formal knowledge evidence — current customer information including drink preferences and customer problems , beverage quality issues, and stock requirements. Almost no trialist does this, and it takes ninety seconds.

5. Know your worth before you negotiate

Which award covers the venue is decided by the premises, not your job title . There are four possible destinations, not two, and each covers its industry to the exclusion of any other modern award , so exactly one applies.

Award	Code	Covers
Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020	MA000009	Hotels, motels, pubs, taverns, wine bars, guest houses, caravan parks, ski lodges, resorts, casinos , caterers , accommodation, plus restaurants operating in or in connection with those premises
Registered and Licensed Clubs Award 2020	MA000058	Not-for-profit registered clubs — RSL, bowls, golf, surf, sporting and community clubs
Restaurant Industry Award 2020	MA000119	Standalone restaurants, cafes, bistros, night clubs , reception centres, roadhouses
Fast Food Industry Award 2010	MA000003	Takeaway, food courts, and food sold mainly to be eaten away from the point of sale

The two traps. Clubs are not MA000009 — clause 4.4(d)(i) of that award expressly excludes "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation", which makes clubs the one industry the hospitality award carves out by name. And night clubs are not MA000058 , because a night club is commercial rather than not-for-profit.

What counts as a club has a two-part test under MA000058 clause 4.3: registered and licensed under a relevant liquor, gaming, associations incorporation or corporations statute, and established and operating on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of members and the community. The second limb does the real work. MA000058 clause 4.4 also expressly covers bar attendants and stewards in a club on a football ground, cricket ground, golf course or sports ground.

Being classified too low is the most common cause of hospitality underpayment, and here is the provision that matters most.

Under MA000009 , MA000119 and MA000058 — three of the four awards — a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of Level 4. In MA000009 and MA000119 , Level 4 is the reference point for the whole classification structure, reached by an apprenticeship, the appropriate trade test, or an appropriate level of training , which includes that Certificate III. The fast food award MA000003 has no equivalent provision .

"Appropriate level of training" has three limbs, and this is the part to read before you negotiate. An employee has it if they have completed a training program meeting the training and assessment requirements of a qualification or one or more appropriate units of competency from a training package;

or have been assessed by a qualified skills assessor as having at least equivalent skills; or , as at a specified date, had been doing the work of that classification for at least three months . A partial set of units counts. So does assessed experience. So does time doing the job.

That is a floor, not a suggestion, and it applies whether the venue is a pub, a standalone restaurant or a registered club. Three distinctions worth keeping straight, because this is a pay entitlement:

MA000009 and MA000119 (both at clause 18.1 , adult rates) require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those Certificate III competencies. It is not automatic on completion, so be ready to say which competencies the role draws on.

MA000058 (clause 18.3) omits the words "or higher", and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills.

If it is disputed, the routes differ: MA000009 clause 40 , MA000119 clause 34 , and for MA000058 referral to the Fair Work Commission .

Two further provisions are MA000009 -specific rather than industry-wide. The Introductory level, for untrained new entrants who do not yet demonstrate Level 1 competency, lasts up to three months under that award, extendable by mutual agreement for up to a further three — six months is the ceiling . And under clause 13.5 , a junior employee working as a liquor service employee must be paid as an adult at the classification rate for the work performed, rather than the reduced junior percentage. If you are in a club or a night club, check the equivalent provisions in that award.

Ask what level you would start at, and then check it on your payslip. Asking is not rude; it signals you know how the industry works. This page prints no dollar rates, loadings or roster notice periods by design. Award rates re-set every 1 July, and loadings, penalty provisions and rostering clauses differ between the four awards — so a single figure would be wrong for a large share of readers. Use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool with the award code that actually applies to your venue, and read that award's own rostering and penalty clauses. When you ask a venue about the roster, the useful question is what the award requires as a minimum and how shifts are allocated in practice. See superannuation, tax and payslips and working hours, rosters and public holidays .

The longer game

Bar work leads somewhere if you want it to: bartender, bar supervisor, then venue management through SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality — three of whose nine core units are HR units , which tells you plainly that it is the supervision qualification — and SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management , whose core includes SITXGLC002 Identify and manage legal risks and comply with law .

Units you take now count toward those, and a partial set still produces a Statement of Attainment for what you passed. Certification has to be issued within 30 calendar days from the completion of the assessment , once you have completed the product and paid all agreed fees. See the Certificate IV in Hospitality and how far a hospitality qualification can take you .

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 . The legal entity is COMPLETE HOSPITALITY TRAINING (VIC.) PTY. LTD. , ABN 27 006 947 262 , ACN 006 947 262 , an Australian private company.

See the RSA page , the bartending course , the food handling course and the essential bartender's toolkit .

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SITHFAB023 Operate a bar

SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails

SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Queensland)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (South Australia)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Australian Capital Territory)

Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)

Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)

Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)

Unique Student Identifier (USI) requirements for RTOs

Should I take the first offer?

If you need income, yes, then move once you have experience. But check the award and the classification before you sign rather than after.

Do cocktail bars pay more?

Not inherently. What differs between venues is the award, your classification, and how much of your work falls in the hours your award loads. A high-volume late-night venue can out-earn a cocktail bar at the same classification.

How do I get into a venue with no ads?

Be a regular, ask the staff rather than management, and walk in mid-afternoon on a weekday. Never during a service period.

Is experience or attitude more important?

For entry-level, availability and attitude. Technique is trainable, and neither Certificate III in Hospitality has entry requirements.

What single credential makes the most difference?

RSA, because it is the gate — and because it is itself a prerequisite to nine units in the stream. After that, food handling, because it is inexpensive, commonly asked for, and a prerequisite to nine of the units in the stream. For pay specifically, a completed Certificate III, because that is what triggers the Level 4 floor.

How much notice of my roster should I get?

That is set by the award covering the venue, and the four awards above do not answer it identically. Establish which award applies and read its rostering clause on the Fair Work Ombudsman's site. We print no single figure because none would be correct across all four.

Does it matter which state I trained in?

An RSA Statement of Attainment is a national training record, but permission to serve alcohol depends on the destination's rules. NSW permits eligible temporary interstate workers; permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements, using bridging where eligible. Victoria offers bridging to eligible interstate holders. SA applies approved-provider rules to training from 1 November 2020, with earlier training not required to be repeated solely for that change. QLD and WA require suitable national RSA evidence. Tasmania distinguishes staff from licence holders; the ACT and NT have local currency and refresher requirements. Check the regulator before your first shift. See RSA recognition by jurisdiction (*/rsa/*), NSW's rules (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/liquor-and-gaming/training/rsa-bridging>) and SA's rules (<https://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/sections/LGL/RSA-approved-providers>).

I have five years behind a bar and no certificates. What is the fastest route?

RSA for whichever state you are in, then ask about recognition of prior learning for the bar units at the pre-training review. RPL is real assessment, so be ready to demonstrate the performance evidence, but it exists precisely for your situation. Separately, note the third limb of "appropriate level of training" above — three months doing the work of a classification counts toward it in its own right.

In what order do the bar units actually have to be taken?

SITXFSA005 and SITHFAB021 first, because they are the only two units in the stream with no prerequisite of their own that the rest depend on. Then SITHFAB023 Operate a bar, which needs both. Then SITHFAB030 cocktails, which needs all three. Bar cleaning, non-alcoholic beverages, espresso coffee, room service, serve food and beverage and silver service each need SITXFSA005 alone, and table service needs SITXFSA005 plus RSA.

Should I mention that I do not have a cocktail background?

Yes, honestly, and say what you do have. A venue hiring for a high-volume pub does not need twelve cocktail methods; a venue hiring for a cocktail list does, and will find out in the trial anyway.

What should I ask about pay without sounding difficult?

"Which award covers the venue, and what classification would I start at?" Two questions, both entirely normal, and the answers tell you most of what you need.

Is a club a different award?

Yes, and this is the most commonly published error in the field. A not-for-profit registered club — RSL, bowls, golf, surf, sporting, community — sits under MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs Award, because MA000009 expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation. A night club, by contrast, is commercial and sits under MA000119. All three of those awards

carry the Level 4 qualification floor.

My venue calls itself a club but it is privately owned. Which award?

Probably MA000009 or MA000119 depending on the premises, because the MA000058 definition requires the venue to be operating on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of members and the community. A commercially owned venue using "club" in its trading name is not a club for award purposes.

I am moving from a pub to a golf club, same job. Does my pay change?

It can, because the award changes from MA000009 to MA000058 and each has its own classification structure and pay table. What does not change is the qualification floor — both awards set a minimum classification of Level 4 for a relevant AQF Certificate III used at work, so do not let anyone tell you the certificate stops counting when you cross the car park. Check both awards on the Fair Work Pay and Conditions Tool before you accept.

The course is advertised under a different name from the RTO. Is that a problem?

Not necessarily. Registered business names are public, so you can check. Our registered business names include Victorian Bar School and Ready Serve Achieve Melbourne, both belonging to the same legal entity and the same RTO, 3722. What matters is that the name resolves to a real entity on the Australian Business Register and that the RTO code checks out on training.gov.au.

Can I hold two bar jobs at once?

Commonly done, and casual work makes it practical. Check both rosters against each other, note that RSA currency and food handling travel with you rather than with the venue, and be aware the two venues may sit under different awards. See [does bartending in Australia offer flexible working arrangements \(/news/does-bartending-in-australia-offer-flexible-working-arrangements/\)](#).

What if the venue has gaming machines?

A separate requirement with a separate regulator. In Victoria it is free government-delivered training accessed through RSG Online and venue-arranged sessions, with its own module deadlines. Worth knowing that gaming work in a pub or casino sits under MA000009 while the same work in an RSL, bowls or sporting club sits under MA000058 — and both carry the Level 4 qualification floor. See [how to get a bar and gaming licence \(/news/how-do-i-get-my-bar-gaming-license/\)](#).