

How to score that awesome Bar Job - Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

Bar hiring is fast and mostly informal. Venues hire on availability, attitude and whether you already hold the credential that lets you work — usually in that order.

This page is about getting in the door and standing out once you are there . For choosing between venues and getting your classification right, see five tips to help you secure the best bartender job . For the interview and trial specifically, see bartender interview questions and trial-shift tips .

1. Get your RSA before you apply

This is not a nice-to-have. You need it to serve alcohol in a licensed venue, and a venue with a shift to fill this weekend will take the person who already has one.

What "having it" means depends on the state, and the wrong document is a real risk:

| Jurisdiction | What actually counts | | --- | --- | | Victoria | Use a current Victorian RSA certificate. Eligible interstate holders can apply for free bridging: approved original training within three years, with the online-course residence condition. Specific exemptions apply at qualifying producer events. Victorian RSA Refresher every three years. | | New South Wales | Eligible temporary interstate workers can use approved interstate RSA. Permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements; eligible holders can use bridging instead of the full NSW RSA course. NSW competency card: five years. Interstate concessions have separate eligibility and certificate-age requirements. | | Queensland | Accepted where the evidence is a Statement of Attainment for the nationally accredited Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol course. An attendance certificate is insufficient. Valid RSA training generally has no expiry; training completed before 2002 must be replaced. | | Western Australia | Provide the RSA certificate showing completion of the nationally accredited course. An interstate RSA card alone is not accepted as evidence. Keep the RSA certificate as training evidence; approved-manager cards have separate renewal requirements. | | South Australia | Check provider approval and training date. Training from 1 November 2020 must be through a Commissioner-approved RTO. Earlier RSA training need not be repeated solely because of that approval change. No routine RSA renewal period stated in the cited CBS guidance; check applicable licence conditions. | | Tasmania | Interstate certificates can be accepted under the Commissioner's conditions. Requirements differ for employees and liquor licence holders; check the appropriate role. No RSA expiry date in the regulator's FAQ; an employer may request updated training. | | Northern Territory | Certificates from an RTO registered to deliver RSA are accepted, including interstate certificates. Check certificate age and the NT refresher requirements. NT guidance gives a three-year limit for interstate certificates and directs holders to a refresher; check current renewal guidance. | | Australian Capital Territory | Valid interstate RSA certificates are recognised, subject to the ACT's three-year currency limit and ACT-approved refresher requirements. Three years from course completion, then an ACT-approved refresher. |

Current regulator guidance: NSW , VIC , SA , QLD , WA , NT , ACT , TAS .

Two specific traps. In Victoria , if you finished a course but never completed the LCV Learning Hub pre-training survey, the Sexual Harassment and Assault: Recognise, Prevent and Respond module and the post-training survey, you hold a Statement of Attainment and not a Victorian RSA certificate. Since

1 December 2025 that module has been required to work in many Victorian licensed venues. In NSW , the card needs an in-person Service NSW appointment with 100 points of original identification , so allow time — it is not something you can produce on Friday for a Saturday shift.

In Victoria, an interstate RSA certificate generally cannot be used on its own. Eligible holders can apply for the free RSA Refresher bridging course to obtain a Victorian certificate. LCV requires approved original RSA training completed within the last three years and, for an online course, residence interstate or overseas at the time. Allow about ten working days for the application. LCV lists a specific exemption for interstate liquor producers at qualifying temporary or major events. Check the Victorian eligibility and event rules before relying on a certificate.

On timing: Victoria allows completion before you start supplying alcohol or within one month of first supplying it, Queensland allows 30 days from starting employment, and Western Australia 28 days with a copy to your employer. That is not a reason to apply without it. A venue choosing between two candidates will take the one who can start. Note also that 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 — so build that into your planning rather than expecting a document the same afternoon.

And RSA is not only a licensing matter. Inside the food and beverage stream SITHFAB021 is a formal prerequisite to nine units — SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB029 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB031 , SITHFAB032 , SITHFAB033 , SITHFAB034 , SITHFAB037 and SITHFAB039 — so clearing it early opens a large part of the stream as well as the shift.

Get food handling too if you can. Bar staff handling ice, cut fruit or unpackaged garnishes are food handlers under Standard 3.2.2A, many venues ask for it, and within the food and beverage stream SITXFSA005 is a prerequisite to nine units — SITHFAB022 clean and tidy bar areas, SITHFAB024 non-alcoholic beverages, SITHFAB025 espresso coffee, SITHFAB026 room service, SITHFAB027 serve food and beverage, SITHFAB035 silver service, and, together with RSA, SITHFAB023 Operate a bar , SITHFAB030 cocktails and SITHFAB034 table service. So the food safety unit gates exactly as many units as RSA does, and one inexpensive unit unblocks a lot. Keep the figure scoped to the food and beverage stream, because the same unit also sits in front of cookery and kitchen units elsewhere in the SIT package. See the food handling course .

2. Apply in person, at the right time

Bar jobs are still filled by walking in. The timing matters more than the CV:

Mid-afternoon , roughly 2 to 4pm. Not during service, not at close

Tuesday to Thursday. Nobody is hiring at 8pm on a Saturday

Ask for the manager by name if you can find it

Bring a short printed CV with your RSA details on it — the state it was issued in and the date

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

Online applications work, but a lot of venues fill roles before the ad closes, and the best ones often never advertise at all.

3. Target the right venues

A cocktail bar, a sports pub, an RSL and a night club want different people, and they sit under different awards. Be honest about which you fit.

If you have no experience, high-volume venues are the better entry point . They hire more often, train on the job, and give you the repetitions that build speed. Cocktail bars generally want people who already have those.

There is a structural reason to seek volume early. SITHFAB023 Operate a bar is assessed across three service periods including at least one peak, and SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails requires twelve preparations across three service periods. Peak shifts and a real drinks list are the raw material for both. A quiet bar with four taps and no cocktail menu cannot give you that experience however long you stay there. Note the sequence too: SITHFAB030 carries three prerequisites — SITHFAB021, SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005 — so the cocktail unit sits behind the bar unit rather than beside it.

Match what you offer to the venue:

| Venue | What they are actually buying | Award | | --- | --- | --- | | High-volume pub or tavern | Speed, composure under a peak, clean work, reliability on Friday and Saturday | MA000009 | | Cocktail bar | The six methods — blended, built, floated, muddled, shaken, stirred — and consistency across them | Depends on the premises | | Hotel bar | Systems discipline, function work, knowing a dry till from an open bar with a set limit | MA000009 | | Standalone restaurant bar | Wine, beverage and food matching, and table-service rhythm | MA000119 | | Wine bar | Wine depth and the confidence to give advice | MA000009 | | RSL, bowls or golf club | Members' service, functions, often a gaming room as well | MA000058 | | Night club | Volume and crowd management | MA000119 |

4. Be genuinely available

Availability is the single biggest factor in casual bar hiring. Evenings, weekends and public holidays are the shifts that need covering, and someone who can work Friday and Saturday nights is worth more than someone with better technique who cannot.

Be accurate. Overstating availability and then declining shifts is the fastest way to stop being rostered. On how much notice of a roster you can expect, the answer depends on the award covering the venue rather than on any national rule — the four awards below each set their own rostering and notice-of-change provisions, so establish which one applies and read its rostering clause on the Fair Work Ombudsman's site.

5. Treat the trial shift as the interview

Most bar hiring runs through a trial. What gets noticed:

Turning up early, in black, in non-slip closed-toe shoes

Asking where things are instead of guessing

Working clean — clearing and wiping as you go

Copying their method rather than yours. The accredited unit is assessed against the venue's organisational procedures and its own standard recipes, which is the same instinct

Handling glass and ice properly. You are a food handler at that moment

Staying visibly busy through quiet moments

Doing a handover at the end — what is low on stock, what broke, which customers were a problem. SITHFAB023 treats that as formal knowledge evidence, and almost no trialist does it

Competent and tidy beats flashy. Nothing in any assessment requirement mentions flair.

What actually gets you kept

Speed and consistency, not repertoire. Bars sell the same drinks over and over, and SITHFAB030 is assessed on consistent quality, volume and appearance using standard measures to commercial timeframes — which is a fair description of what a manager is watching for in your second week.

The other thing is handling refusal of service properly . Refusing an intoxicated patron early and calmly is a legal duty, and a manager watching you do it well will keep you. What distinguishes someone trained is knowing there are three distinct situations the unit requires a procedure for — customers in emotional or physical distress , customers with no food consumption during extended service of alcohol , and customers who appear to be under the effect of illicit substances or other drugs — and that the requirement is to refuse and assist , not just decline. The unit names the three kinds of assistance: connecting the customer with their designated driver or companions , offering food or non-alcoholic drinks , and organising or providing transport information .

Earlier than any of that, the unit expects you to read ordering behaviour . Performance criterion 2.3 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 to request more samples, ordering multiple or large samples, and ordering "triple shots" or extra-large drinks. Spotting those is what lets you intervene before a refusal is needed at all. See managing intoxicated patrons .

Beyond that, the things that make you hard to replace are mostly product knowledge and service judgement:

Beverage range. SITHFAB023 expects knowledge of mixed drinks, basic and popular cocktails, beers, fortified drinks, non-alcoholic beverages, spirits and wines

Customer preferences across brand, garnish, glassware, ice, mixers, strength and temperature — which is what lets you sell up without being pushy. See the art of upselling

Types of bar service. Cash drinks, dry till, inclusive packages, open bar, pre-set drinks, set limits. Function work is where the money is and where the mistakes are expensive

Coffee. A bar that also runs daytime trade values someone who can work the machine. SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee requires ten specified beverages on three occasions each, and we hold the SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation skill set — SITHFAB025 , SITXCCS014 , SITXFIN007 , SITXFSA005 — on our scope. See the barista coffee course

Cash and card handling. SITXFIN007 Process financial transactions is a core unit of SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) , not an optional extra

Wine, if the venue sells it seriously. RSA opens SITHFAB032 Australian wines and SITHFAB033 imported wines, and those two together with RSA are the three prerequisites to SITHFAB039 Manage the sale or service of wine — a four-unit sequence and the longest chain in the stream

See skills hospitality employees should have and how to deliver exceptional customer service in hospitality .

Know how you should be paid

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

| Award | Code | Covers | | --- | --- | --- | | Hospitality Industry (General) | MA000009 | Hotels, motels, pubs, taverns, wine bars, guest houses, resorts, casinos , caterers, accommodation | | Registered and Licensed Clubs | MA000058 | Not-for-profit registered clubs — RSL, bowls, golf, surf, sporting, community | | Restaurant Industry | MA000119 | Standalone restaurants, cafes, bistros, night clubs , reception centres, roadhouses | | Fast Food Industry | MA000003 | Takeaway, food courts, food sold mainly to be eaten away from the counter |

The two traps. MA000009 clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly states the hospitality award does not cover "clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation", so an RSL or bowls club is MA000058 ,

not the hospitality award. And a night club is commercial rather than a not-for-profit registered club, so it is MA000119 . Under MA000058 clause 4.3 a club has to be both registered and licensed under a relevant statute and operating on a not-for-profit basis for members and the community — so a privately owned venue with "club" in its name is not a club for award purposes.

Underpayment in hospitality usually comes from being classified too low , so know your level and check your payslip. The provision that matters most reaches across most of the industry: 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 that is the reference point for the whole structure. The fast food award MA000003 has no equivalent provision .

And you do not necessarily need the whole certificate. "Appropriate level of training" is defined three ways: 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 assessment by a qualified skills assessor as having at least equivalent skills; or , as at a specified date, having been doing the work of that classification for at least three months . If you have been doing the work, say so in those terms — it is the award's own language.

The fine print matters when you raise it. MA000009 and MA000119 (clause 18.1) require you to make use of the skills derived from those Certificate III competencies, so it is not automatic on completion. MA000058 (clause 18.3) omits "or higher" and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills. Dispute routes differ too: MA000009 clause 40, MA000119 clause 34, and for MA000058 referral to the Fair Work Commission.

One provision that is MA000009 -specific: the Introductory level lasts three months under that award, extendable by mutual agreement for up to a further three. Check the equivalent in your own award if you are elsewhere.

Each award sets its own loadings and penalty provisions for hours worked outside ordinary times, and they differ between the four. This page prints no rates, loadings or roster notice periods, deliberately — rates re-set every 1 July and the other provisions are award-specific. Use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool with the award code that applies to your venue, and read that award's own clauses. See superannuation, tax and payslips .

About us

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See the RSA page and the bartending course .

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

SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol

SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Queensland)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Western Australia)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (South Australia)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Tasmania)

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)

Do I need experience?

Not for high-volume venues. RSA and availability matter more, and neither Certificate III in Hospitality has entry requirements.

Is a CV necessary?

A short one, with your RSA on it — including which state issued it and when. Nobody reads a long one.

Should I do a cocktail course first?

RSA first, always, because it is the gate — and it is a literal prerequisite to the accredited cocktail unit, which also needs SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005. A course helps, and helps more if it carries a unit code. See why you should complete bartender education and training ([/news/why-you-should-complete-bartender-education-and-training/](#)).

How long until I am good?

Three to six months of regular service is the usual answer, and the structure of the units supports it: the accredited bar units are assessed across three, five or twelve service periods precisely because competence here is built by repetition rather than in a day.

How much notice of my roster should I get?

That is set by the award covering the venue, and the four awards that can apply to bar work do not answer it identically. Establish which award applies, then read its rostering clause on the Fair Work Ombudsman's site. No single national figure would be correct across all four, so this page does not print one.

What is the best time of year to look?

Ahead of the busy periods rather than during them. A venue staffing up for summer or for a function season is hiring in advance, and that is when a walk-in lands best.

I have no hospitality experience at all. Where do I start?

RSA, then food handling, then apply to high-volume venues mid-afternoon on a weekday. Those three steps cost very little and cover most of what an entry-level venue screens on — and between them the two units clear the prerequisites standing in front of most of the food and beverage stream.

Should I apply to a venue I have never been to?

You can, but going once first is worth an hour. "Why this venue" is a standard question and the answer is obvious when you have been there.

Do I need my own bar tools?

No. A speed opener, a lighter, a pen and good shoes. The venue supplies the rest, and under the accredited unit's assessment conditions a properly set up bar has to. See the essential bartender's toolkit (/news/essential-bartenders-toolkit/).

Is an RSL a good place to start?

Often yes — clubs run functions, members' service and frequently a gaming room, which is broad experience. Just know that a not-for-profit registered club sits under MA000058 rather than the hospitality award, with its own classification structure, so check the pay table for that award. Note that MA000058 does carry the same Level 4 qualification floor, so a Certificate III counts there just as it does in a pub.

Is a night club covered by the clubs award?

No, and this catches almost everyone. A night club is commercial, so it falls under MA000119, the restaurant award — which also carries the Level 4 floor.

I finished a Certificate III. How do I raise it?

Name the award first, then the provision. Under MA000009, MA000119 and MA000058, a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher used at work sets a minimum classification of Level 4. Because the hospitality and restaurant awards turn on whether you make use of those competencies, the strongest version is to say which of them the role actually draws on.

I have years behind a bar but no certificate. Does that count?

It can. The third limb of "appropriate level of training" covers having been doing the work of that classification for at least three months as at a specified date, and the second covers assessment by a qualified skills assessor as having equivalent skills. That is also the case for recognition of prior learning, which is a genuine assessment against the same evidence rather than a waiver.

What if the venue has gaming machines?

That is a separate requirement with a separate regulator and its own deadlines. In Victoria it is free government-delivered training accessed through RSG Online and venue-arranged sessions, and a nationally recognised SITHGAM022 does not satisfy it. Note too 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 — same machines, same units, different award, 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/).

Can I use an interstate RSA?

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>).

Is there such a thing as a certified mixologist to aim for?

No. There is no mixologist unit or qualification on the national register. SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB023 are the real credentials. See how long it takes to become a certified mixologist ([/news/how-long-does-it-take-to-become-a-certified-mixologist/](#)).

What comes after bar work if I want more?

Bar supervisor, then venue management through SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality — three of its nine core units are HR units — and SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management. Units you take now count toward both.