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Tech

SALARY GUIDE

FOR  
SCOTLAND IN  
2026

TECH SALARY GUIDE 2026

Executive Search & Recruitment Specialists

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# Looking to appoint exceptional talent to your team this year?

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In Scotland, competition is fierce, with companies across Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen vying for the best candidates.

A skilled but smaller candidate pool means Scotland-based companies must work hard to attract UK-wide and international talent, particularly for more specialised roles.



# Foreword

**Peter Dunn** | Associate Director  
Tech & Digital Recruitment at *Eden Scott*



Peter Dunn | Associate Director

This year, rapid advancements in AI and machine learning are influencing the tech sector's most in-demand roles. They're also shaping the way companies assess and reward talent.

The sector's focus has shifted, with many pivoting to build predictive models, deploy generative AI tools and scale autonomous systems – often with a focus on Python, Java and statistical modelling.

As a result, we're seeing a major increase in the demand for AI Engineers, Prompt Engineers and Machine Learning Operations Specialists. The appetite for AI talent isn't confined to the private sector; both the UK's strategic partnership with OpenAI and the development of national AI safety frameworks are responsible for a public sector hiring drive.

Salaries have increased in-line with demand: UK AI jobs are now compensated 21% higher than comparable roles without AI requirements and up to 58% higher for more specialised AI-focused roles.

Given the relative novelty of AI, our clients are shifting towards a skills-first hiring strategy, prioritising technical capabilities over formal qualifications.

Simultaneously, cybersecurity professionals, cloud engineers and data engineers are still in high demand as businesses modernise their infrastructure and move towards hybrid environments.

Emerging tech trends like low/no-code developments, edge computing and digital ethics are also informing hiring strategies this year.

As a result, new opportunities are being created across the UK, with key innovation hubs in Scotland including Glasgow and Edinburgh.

# Tech Market Trends

2026

Here are the trends are directly impacting hiring patterns, in-demand skillsets and salary expectations this year.

## → The tech market in Scotland

Scottish cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow both remain major hubs for tech innovation and talent, bolstered by Scotland-wide investment in fintech, health tech and public digital services.

In Scotland, startups, public-sector transformation programmes and multinationals expanding their regional coverage are fuelling demand for:

- Cloud Engineers
- DevOps / SRE
- Cybersecurity Analysts
- Data Architects

## → AI talent

**AI adoption** is now commonplace across most sectors, with finance, healthcare, public services and logistics organisations paving the way.

In-demand roles include:

- AI Engineers
- AI Consultants
- Prompt Engineers
- Machine Learning Specialists
- AI Product Managers

Demand for AI talent extends beyond the traditional tech firms, with non-tech sectors investing heavily in applied AI.

## → In-demand skills for 2026

### Programming languages

- Python
- Java
- R

### Tools

- TensorFlow
- PyTorch
- Open AI APIs

### Competencies

- Neural networks
- NLP
- Computer vision
- Model deployment

## → Changes in hiring behaviour

Skills-first hiring is rapidly replacing the requirement for academic degrees in AI and IT recruitment

Employers are placing higher value on practical experience, portfolios, project contributions (e.g. GitHub and Kaggle) over formal academic credentials.

## → Public and private sector alignment

The UK Government aims to solidify the UK's position as an AI leader through partnerships with OpenAI and the AI Safety Institute.

This increased investment has led to a public sector hiring drive.

This is having a trickle-down effect on hiring, with public and private organisations competing to attract the same tech talent.





# Recruitment strategy

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### ➔ Widen your net

Add bootcamps, online learning platforms and AI-specific forums to your regular list of candidate sourcing channels.

### ➔ Emphasise flexible/hybrid roles

Offering flexibility helps you remain compete in a tight market.

### ➔ Invest in upskilling initiatives

Faacing talent shortages, many companies are bolstering their AI capabilities through developing their existing workforce.

### ➔ Maintain market awareness

Ensure offers to candidates remain competitive through regular salary benchmarking and regional demand tracking.

Demand for AI, cybersecurity and cloud professionals is surging.

Hiring strategies must shift toward **skill-based sourcing, flexibility and long-term candidate engagement.**

Regional tech hubs – particularly those in Scotland – are key battlegrounds for digital talent, requiring a proactive, insight-led approach to talent acquisition.

# Tech Salaries

## IN SCOTLAND 2026

### → AI

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Head of AI	£80,000	£100,000	£120,000
AI Architect	£70,000	£95,000	£120,000
AI Consultant	£45,000	£55,000	£80,000
AI Engineer - Jnr	£25,000	£30,000	£35,000
AI Engineer - Mid	£40,000	£47,500	£55,000
AI Engineer - Snr	£60,000	£80,000	£100,000
AI Engineer - Lead	£70,000	£85,000	£100,000
AI Product Manager	£60,000	£70,000	£80,000
AI Research Assistant	£27,000	£31,000	£35,000
Cybersecurity Analyst	£45,000	£53,000	£70,000
Junior AI Developer	£27,000	£31,000	£35,000
Machine Learning Specialist	£50,000	£60,000	£80,000
ML Intern	£27,000	£31,000	£35,000
NLP Specialist	£38,000	£44,000	£50,000
Prompt Engineer	£50,000	£60,000	£80,000

## ➔ Cloud and infrastructure

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Application Support	£38,000	£45,000	£52,000
<b>Cloud Architect</b>	<b>£76,000</b>	<b>£86,500</b>	<b>£97,000</b>
Cloud Engineer	£63,000	£74,000	£85,000
<b>DevOps Engineer</b>	<b>£71,000</b>	<b>£82,000</b>	<b>£93,000</b>
DevOps Manager	£92,000	£103,500	£115,000
<b>First Line Support</b>	<b>£25,000</b>	<b>£28,500</b>	<b>£32,000</b>
Head of IT Services	£76,000	£88,000	£100,000
<b>Helpdesk Manager</b>	<b>£36,000</b>	<b>£42,500</b>	<b>£49,000</b>
Infrastructure Architect	£76,000	£87,000	£98,000
<b>Infrastructure Engineer</b>	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>£62,500</b>	<b>£70,000</b>
Infrastructure Manager	£68,000	£75,000	£82,000
<b>IT Manager</b>	<b>£60,000</b>	<b>£70,000</b>	<b>£80,000</b>
IT Support Manager	£52,000	£59,000	£66,000
<b>Linux Systems Administrator</b>	<b>£61,000</b>	<b>£63,000</b>	<b>£65,000</b>
Network Engineer	£49,000	£59,500	£70,000
<b>Network Manager</b>	<b>£61,000</b>	<b>£69,000</b>	<b>£77,000</b>
Second Line Support	£29,000	£33,000	£37,000
<b>Service Delivery Manager</b>	<b>£56,000</b>	<b>£64,500</b>	<b>£73,000</b>
Service Desk Analyst	£27,000	£30,500	£34,000

## ➔ Data science

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
BI Analyst	£47,000	£54,500	£62,000
<b>BI Developer</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£63,500</b>	<b>£77,000</b>
BI Manager	£71,000	£79,000	£87,000
<b>Data Analyst</b>	<b>£37,000</b>	<b>£46,500</b>	<b>£56,000</b>
Data Architect	£88,000	£103,000	£118,000
<b>Data Engineer</b>	<b>£52,000</b>	<b>£69,500</b>	<b>£87,000</b>
Data Scientist	£67,000	£77,000	£87,000
<b>Data Warehouse Developer</b>	<b>£59,000</b>	<b>£72,500</b>	<b>£86,000</b>
Database Administrator	£47,000	£55,000	£63,000
<b>Database Developer</b>	<b>£48,000</b>	<b>£57,000</b>	<b>£66,000</b>
Lead Business Analyst	£62,000	£71,000	£80,000
<b>Lead Test Analyst</b>	<b>£54,000</b>	<b>£63,000</b>	<b>£72,000</b>
Machine Learning Engineer	£70,000	£86,000	£102,000
<b>Senior Business Analyst</b>	<b>£57,000</b>	<b>£67,000</b>	<b>£77,000</b>
Senior Test Analyst	£50,000	£56,500	£63,000

## ➔ Development and testing

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Automation Test Analyst	£48,000	£57,000	£66,000
<b>Front End Developer</b>	£40,000	£52,500	£65,000
Front End Developer	£40,000	£52,500	£65,000
<b>Full Stack Developer</b>	£48,000	£62,500	£77,000
Java Developer	£49,000	£69,500	£90,000
<b>Java Script Developer</b>	£44,000	£55,500	£67,000
Manual Test Analyst	£39,000	£44,000	£49,000
<b>Mobile Developer</b>	£41,000	£54,000	£67,000
Net Developer	£46,000	£61,500	£77,000
<b>PHP Developer</b>	£42,000	£49,500	£57,000
Software Architect	£75,000	£88,000	£101,000
<b>Software Development Manager</b>	£73,000	£87,000	£101,000
Test Manager	£67,000	£77,000	£87,000
<b>User Experience Designer Developer</b>	£39,000	£53,000	£67,000

## ➔ Leadership

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Chief Architect	£93,000	£103,000	£113,000
<b>Chief Data Officer</b>	£103,000	£123,500	£144,000
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	£120,000	£144,000	£174,000
<b>Chief Information Officer (CIO)</b>	£108,000	£134,000	£160,000
Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)	£94,000	£123,500	£153,000
<b>Chief Technology Officer (CTO)</b>	£103,000	£123,500	£144,000
Head of Data	£65,000	£72,500	£80,000
<b>Head of IT</b>	£67,000	£79,500	£92,000
Head of Product	£83,000	£98,500	£114,000
<b>Head of Software Engineering</b>	£77,000	£90,000	£103,000
IT Director	£85,000	£103,500	£122,000
<b>Programme Director</b>	£93,000	£108,500	£124,000
Transformation Director	£103,000	£113,500	£124,000

## → Projects

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Business Analyst	£47,000	£59,500	£72,000
Delivery Manager	£72,000	£84,000	£96,000
PMO Analyst	£37,000	£43,500	£50,000
Product Manager	£68,000	£77,500	£87,000
Product Owner	£59,000	£70,000	£81,000
Programme Manager	£71,000	£76,500	£82,000
Project Manager	£59,000	£65,500	£72,000
Release Manager	£87,000	£97,000	£107,000
Scrum Master	£73,000	£83,000	£93,000

## → Sales

ROLE	SALARIES		
	LOWER END	TYPICAL	HIGHER END
Business Development Representative (BDR) / Sales Development Representative (SDR)	£25,000 base + OTE	£32,500 base + OTE	£40,000 base + OTE
Business Development Manager	£40,000 base + OTE	£55,000 base + OTE	£70,000 base + OTE
Head of Sales	£60,000 base + OTE	£80,000 base + OTE	£100,000 base + OTE
Director of Sales	£70,000 base + OTE	£110,000 base + OTE	£150,000 base + OTE
Chief Revenue Officer (CRO)	£100,000 + EQUITY	£150,000 + EQUITY	£200,000 + EQUITY

Need guidance on OTE and equity? Speak to the [tech team](#) directly.

### Startup salaries

Looking for startup tech salaries?  
Speak directly with *TalentSpark*,  
Eden Scott's startup division.



# Attracting tech talent this year...

It will come as no surprise that salary is a major deciding factor for applicants weighing multiple offers – above, we've outlined what typical tech sector salaries look like this year.

Salary is not the only thing motivating tech professionals, however.

Company culture, career development opportunities and wider perks can all help to attract impressive employees to your team.

For guidance on what makes a truly competitive offer, we recommend speaking directly with an *Eden Scott tech consultant*.

## **Our tech and digital team can provide tailored guidance based on:**

- The size and growth stage of your organisation
- Tech industry trends and market dynamics
- Talent supply and demand in Scotland and beyond
- Competitor compensation packages

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Whether you're ready to hire or just want some guidance on your recruitment strategy, get in touch – the *Eden Scott tech team* is happy to help.

**Contact us** to get started.

# Speak to a tech consultant

Ready to appoint a talented tech professional to your team, or need some advice before you hire?

Speak to an *Eden Scott tech consultant* today.



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