

Careers in the Northern Ireland Construction Industry



Construction - What is it?

The construction industry covers the design, construction and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure projects such as bridges, roads, tunnels, waterways, etc.

Construction boasts a wide variety of careers including skilled trades, IT, marketing, project management, design and much more.

Construction needs people with creative, technical, management and practical skills.

Whatever your role is in the industry, if it's as a bricklayer or plasterer, civil engineer, architect or construction manager, every team member is as important as the next. So whatever your talent is, you can be sure there's a career in construction for you.

Choose a career in construction and you won't be starting out on your own. You'll be joining a team of specialist people all working together to build a strong, long-lasting future. Join one of Northern Ireland's largest industries and you'll have chosen a career that's challenging, exciting and rewarding.

What do I need?

There are many ways you can get into construction, and the industry welcomes everyone from newcomers to people with some experience to career changers.

The skills and qualifications needed vary by occupation and range from apprenticeships and NVQs to HNDs, degrees and professional qualifications.

The majority of trades require a minimum NVQ Level 2 or above and professional occupations usually require a degree level qualification or equivalent.

Whether you go to college, learn on site, or go to university you'll obtain specialist training for your chosen career.

Your career in any area in construction will require commitment and enthusiasm.

Contact your local training provider, further education college or university for course information and entry criteria.

What are the Opportunities?

According to the Construction Skills Network Labour Market Intelligence Report¹ over the next five years to 2023 the demand for manual occupations in construction is projected to be greatest for Wood trades & interior fit-out, electrical trades and installation, plumbing and HVCA trades. However, there will still be reasonable demand for other trades such as painting and decorating, bricklayers and plasterers.

In terms of the professional and technical occupations, demand is strongest for roles in areas such as mechanical and electrical engineering, architects and architectural technicians, estimators and civil engineers. Also, non-construction professional, technical, IT and other office-based staff (excluding managers) in areas such as finance, marketing, administration and IT.

There will also be demand for other construction process managers in areas such as health and safety, environmental and transport and distribution.

Statistics from the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer July 2019² back this up stating that specialist construction activities and architectural and engineering activities are both in the top 15 workforce jobs growth for the period 2018-2028 and Civil Engineering is forecast to be undersupplied by just under 100 per annum in the same period.

With new emerging digital technologies such as Building Information Modelling, Drone usage and Augmented Reality/ Virtual Reality in construction there will be companies looking to recruit people with these skills.

Northern Ireland companies continue to win work both in the rest of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland increasing the need for a mobile workforce. Therefore, new entrants into the industry should be prepared to travel.

Current and Future Trends

Northern Ireland is projected to average an output growth of 0.8% a year over the 2019-2023 period driven by demand for social housing and steady output in private housing and housing repair, maintenance and improvement.

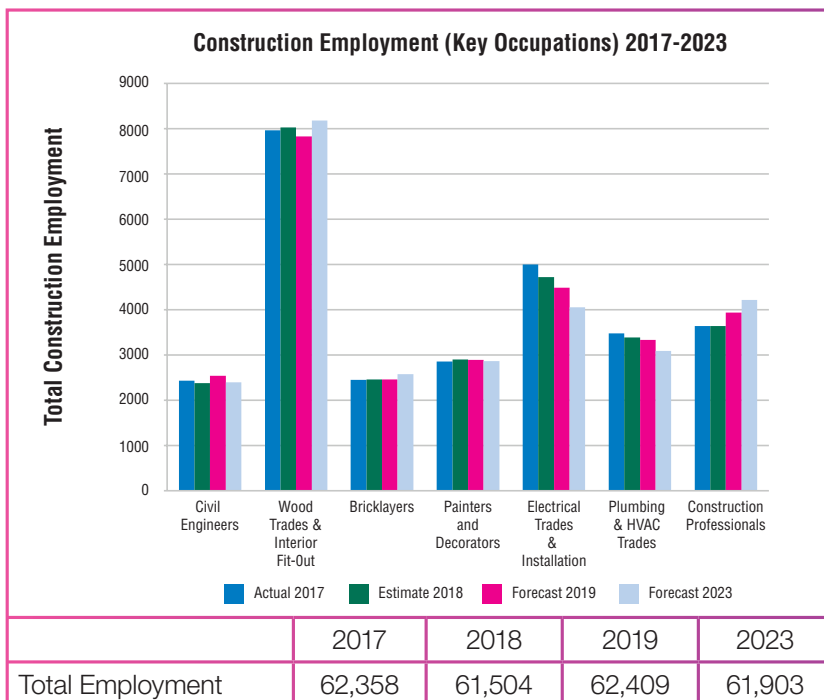
This leads to an annual average recruitment requirement of 500 for the same period and by 2023 employment is projected to be around 62,000 workers with slight increase in demand for managerial and professional occupations.

This data is based on an orderly exit or an extension period leaving the EU and so is subject to change should the reality of the situation differ¹.

Things to Consider

Working in construction you will:

- Make a real difference to the environment from city regeneration to ensuring essential facilities are available.
- Have access to a huge range of training and respected professional qualifications at all levels.
- Have opportunities to progress and/or travel and work throughout the UK, Ireland and/or further afield.
- Work in an environment that is constantly changing – you may spend some time working in the office and some time working outdoors.
- Obtain job satisfaction knowing that you helped build something that will last a lifetime or longer.
- Have the potential to become self-employed in your chosen occupation.



What are the Wages?

	Average Annual Gross Pay ³
Quantity Surveyor	£38,282
Architect	£49,116
Civil Engineer	£34,075
Bricklayer	£30,225
Joiner	£25,595

Above information correct at time of print.

What to do Next

Click on the following links for further information:

www.citbni.org.uk/careers.aspx

For more information on careers within the Northern Ireland construction industry.

www.goconstruct.org

'Go Construct' offers UK wide advice to people considering a career in the industry.

If you need help on choosing a career, going to college or university, training opportunities, or finding a job, contact the careers service:

Online: www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

Telephone: 0300 200 7820

The Construction industry presents work that is full of diversity and challenges; with the changing face of construction, it's a great time to be able to make a contribution. What you get out of a career depends on you.

How I did it...

Carla O'Kane, Architectural Technologist, Montgomery Irwin Architects

Carla has been in the industry for four years and works in a busy architectural practice.

Carla became interested in the construction industry by chance, when her family added an extension to their house. At first, she thought about interior design as a career but decided that she wanted more control over the building as a whole which led her to Architecture. Studying Art and Technology & Design at school were her preferences but unfortunately she was required to choose between the two at GCSE Level. Carla chose Technology but later regretted this as she thought she had ruined her chances of becoming an architect given that Art was required for the degree programme. Undeterred, Carla prepared and submitted an art portfolio which secured her an offer. Due to increased course demand and 'A' Level results the admission grades required for the Architecture degree were increased, so Carla decided to pursue a degree in Architectural Technology at Ulster University. This was a degree programme she had been encouraged to look at by one of the lecturers at a university open day she had attended.

As an Architectural Technologist Carla is able to manage a project from inception to completion. By taking the lead on the design of a project she can form a link between concept, innovation and realisation holistically, whereas an Architect is mainly concerned with the overall appearance of a building and the spaces created. Carla's job involves working on residential projects including new builds and extensions. This involves carrying out site surveys, dealing with planning and Building Control applications, and liaising with engineers, NI Water, SAP⁴, CDM⁵ Co-ordinators and Quantity Surveyors. She also drafts construction drawings for the builder which include floor plans, measurements, details of key areas, construction joints, detailing and indicative mechanical and electrical layouts. Carla is mainly office-based although she does get out on-site to monitor projects, particularly on larger builds.



Carla says "I really enjoy my job and get great satisfaction from it. I have the benefit of being involved in the entire process from start to finish and seeing how happy the client is at the end of it, especially when a challenging brief has been achieved".

Carla has worked on numerous projects across Northern Ireland including a £1.7 million private residential home complete with a pool, steam room, open plan kitchen and luxurious finishes. She was part of an extensive design team and responsible for submission of the planning application. She then developed construction drawings for tender and was heavily involved in responding to technical queries on site. This project gave her a realistic insight into project management and contract administration.

Carla has progressed to Chartered membership with CIAT⁶, this qualification allows her to practise on her own as a partner or director if she decides to set up her own business.

Daniel McBurney

20 year old Daniel McBurney from Banbridge, Co Down is currently studying NVQ L3 Wall & Floor Tiling in Southern Regional College (SRC), Greenbank Campus. Having achieved a medal in his trade at Skillbuild 2017 he had the opportunity to compete in the Skills Show UK competition and now is in training for the selection squad for the UK team for WorldSkills finals in Russia 2019. Speaking about his experience in the construction industry and why he followed the apprenticeship route he said, "I chose an apprenticeship because I enjoy working with my hands and I liked the idea of working in different locations such as shopping centres, bars, swimming pools and private housing. I also wanted a job I could work at when travelling as I would like to visit Canada and Australia after my apprenticeship is complete."

"I focused on Wall and Floor tiling because I enjoyed the basic course I did in the college and it allowed me to learn more about the trade and I also liked that it was both construction and design. I also wanted a job where I would be working towards the end of a project so it wasn't all based outside."

Daniel is completing his apprenticeship full time, based with his employer and attending the college one day per week. Speaking about his course Daniel said, "I like the course because we are always doing something different. I have learned to use all the equipment I need to use on site and I can tile complex design work as a result of my training at SRC. The college also sent me on work experience to Germany through the Erasmus project and the work I completed whilst there was used in my portfolio. My employer has supported me by allowing me the opportunity to work on my own now as I have developed my skills". Daniel is also now focused on training for the opportunity to represent Northern Ireland in the WorldSkills

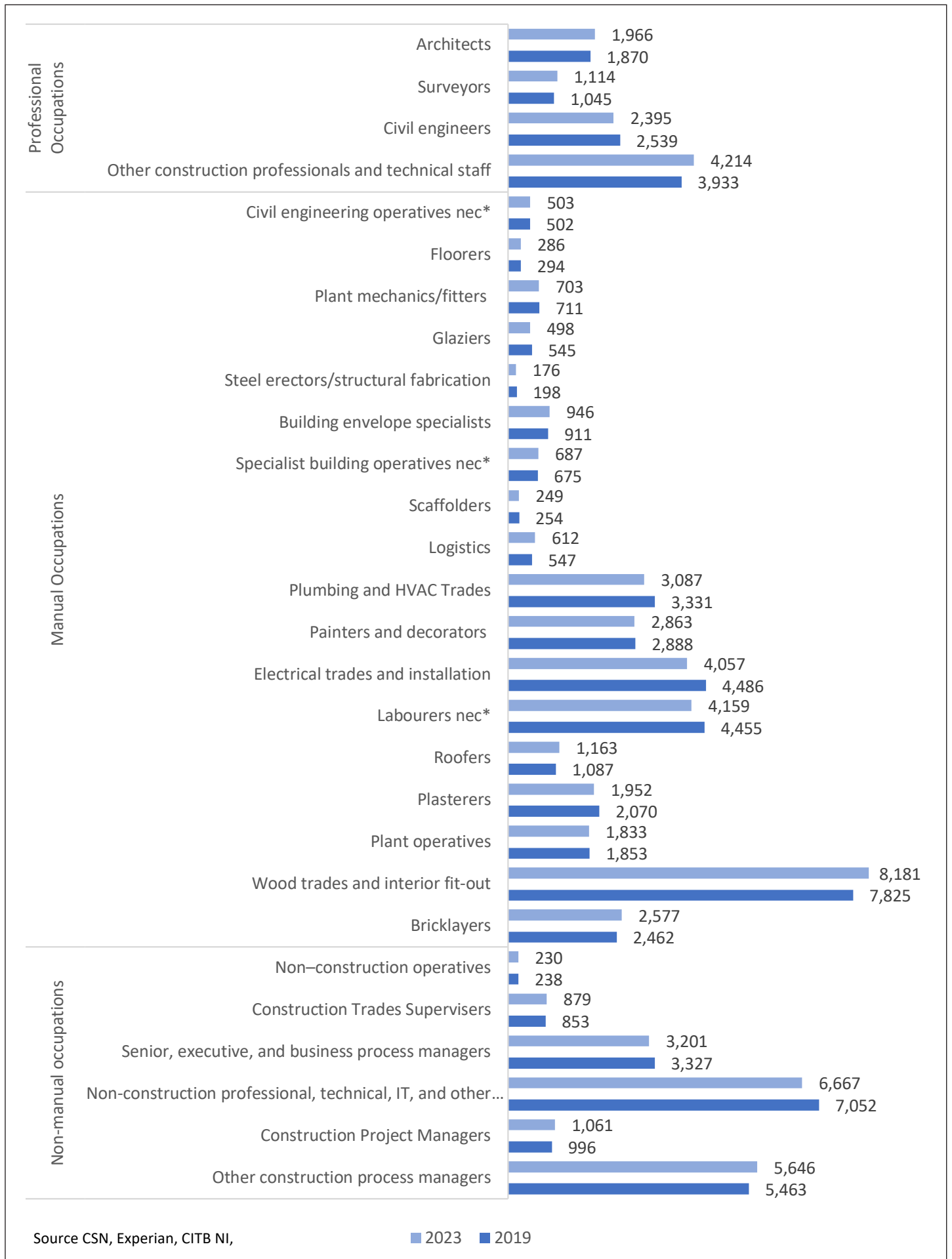
UK Team. Speaking about his training he said, "My training includes technical training set at international standards but also training at Loughborough University on how to deal with pressure, problem solving, physical fitness and media training also. This is one of the best things I have ever done and I have been given the chance to be the best through the guidance I have received at SRC and the support of my employer".



Did you Know?

1. Women are under-represented in construction, particularly within the trade occupations.
2. There is a GCSE in Construction & the Built Environment and is currently offered in 45 schools across Northern Ireland. Find out more <https://bit.ly/2kgdQmf>
3. There are careers in built heritage, sustainable construction and film and television set construction.
4. Modern construction develops and uses some of the latest technology including Building Information Modelling (BIM), Computer Aided Design (CAD) and even nanotechnology.
5. Many Construction Managers and other Professionals started their careers as apprentices.
6. Construction employs around 2.5 million people in the UK - that means that one in every ten jobs is in construction.

Total Employment by Occupation - Northern Ireland



Source CSN, Experian, CITB NI,

■ 2023 ■ 2019

Data Sources

1. Industry Insights Report UK 2019-23, Construction Skills Network (CSN), published February 2019
<https://citbni.org.uk/CITB/files/47/47f8badb-200e-4cb1-b2f7-fb0820fbc7d1.pdf>
Construction Skills Network Northern Ireland 2019-23 infographic
<https://www.citbni.org.uk/CITB/files/ed/edd5c4dd-0a16-49d7-8012-4f3db30a8e25.pdf>
2. Northern Ireland Skills Barometer Summary Report - July 2019
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Skills-Barometer-2019-Summary-Report.pdf>
Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2019 - Infographic
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Skills-in-Demand-Infographic.pdf>
3. <https://www.adzuna.co.uk/jobs/salaries/northern-ireland/quantity-surveyor>
<https://www.adzuna.co.uk/jobs/salaries/northern-ireland/architect>
<https://www.adzuna.co.uk/jobs/salaries/northern-ireland/civil-engineer>
<https://neuvoo.co.uk/salary/?job=Bricklaying>
<https://www.adzuna.co.uk/jobs/salaries/northern-ireland/joiner>
4. Standard Assessment Procedure - provides energy ratings for buildings
5. Construction Design and Management
6. Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

CITB NI
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