



2025

Finance Recruitment Report

**Insights for HR & Talent
Acquisition Leaders in
Scotland - Summer 2025**

Message From Our Talent Acquisition Manager

Welcome to the Summer 2025 Finance Recruitment Report. This mid-year update highlights key hiring trends from Q2 and offers forward-looking guidance for finance recruitment in Scotland. At Ceres Financial Talent, we believe insight-led hiring is central to strategic HR planning.

Inside, you'll find market data, expert commentary, and real case studies – all designed to help HR and Talent Acquisition professionals attract and retain top finance talent. We hope this report provides practical, actionable insights to support your hiring goals for the months ahead.



“Flexibility, purpose, progression – the 2025 finance talent drivers.”

**Denise Black
Talent Acquisition
Manager**

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Executive Summary

The finance talent landscape in Scotland is evolving fast. Despite economic headwinds, demand for qualified finance professionals remains high – but so do candidate expectations. Hybrid working, competitive salaries, and clear career development are no longer “nice to haves” – they’re the baseline. This Executive Summary distils the key hiring trends from 2025 and provides practical guidance for HR and talent acquisition professionals on how to stay ahead in an increasingly candidate-led market.



Hiring remains strong despite uncertainty

Finance and accounting recruitment in Scotland remained resilient through the first half of 2025. Over half (58%) of finance leaders planned to grow their permanent teams, while many turned to contractors to cover skill gaps. In-demand roles are often filled within days, underlining the pressure to act quickly.



Skills shortages are driving competition

The ongoing talent gap in accountancy and finance is intensifying demand for professionals with expertise in data, automation, and compliance. Core roles like financial control, accounting, and FP&A remain top priorities, fuelled by transformation projects, ESG, and regulatory pressures.



Salaries and benefits are under pressure

Almost half of employers have raised salaries to attract or retain talent, yet 48% still struggle to meet expectations. Candidates are increasingly confident, with many seeking 20% pay bumps – though 43% say job security now matters more. Competitive compensation and stability are essential.

Executive Summary (cont.)



Candidate expectations have evolved

Flexibility, career growth, and supportive cultures are now must-haves. 76% of finance professionals prefer hybrid work, and Ceres' own survey shows most are satisfied with their roles – but want more clarity on career progression. Over 60% plan to move roles within two years, typically for better development.



Strategic hiring is essential

To win top talent in 2025, employers must move fast, offer hybrid options, and benchmark pay accurately. Salary alone won't secure candidates – clear development paths and efficient, engaging hiring processes are critical. The final section of this report shares practical strategies and success stories.



AI and automation are reshaping finance teams

Finance functions are increasingly integrating AI tools and automation into routine processes – from invoice processing to financial forecasting. This shift is changing the types of roles in demand and the skills required. While some transactional roles may decline, there's rising demand for finance professionals who can work alongside technology – blending analytical thinking with digital fluency. Employers investing in tech-savvy talent today will be better positioned for the future.

Top Tip

Speed is strategy. In-demand finance candidates are often off the market in under 7 days. Streamlining your hiring process can be the difference between landing top talent and starting over.

Market Overview: Q2 2025

Hiring Demand in Scotland

Despite broader economic uncertainty, hiring in the Scottish finance market remained strong throughout the first half of 2025. Over half of employers (58%) intended to grow their permanent finance teams during H1 2025, and nearly as many increased interim and contract hiring to plug critical skill gaps. This dual-track approach reflects a continued need for agility and resilience across industries – with many organisations maintaining lean permanent teams but bolstering capability with on-demand expertise.

Sector-Specific Insights

Hiring momentum was particularly strong in sectors undergoing digital transformation or navigating tighter regulation – including financial services, manufacturing, energy, and real estate. Core functions such as accounting (53%), financial control (41%), and FP&A (30%) topped the list of roles in demand. At the same time, ESG reporting, audit, and compliance are emerging as priority areas, driven by regulatory scrutiny and stakeholder pressure for transparency. Even the public and third sectors remain active, often competing for the same in-demand skillsets.

Skills Shortages and Interim Trends

The accountancy profession continues to face a well-documented skills shortage. The pandemic's impact on training pipelines is still being felt, while demand for hybrid skill sets (financial knowledge + tech or data expertise) is accelerating. Professionals with experience in data analytics, cloud-based finance tools, and AI integration are in high demand – but in short supply. As a result, we're seeing a rise in contract and interim placements, often at a premium, as companies look to bridge capability gaps or steer through systems transformations. For some roles – such as interim Financial Controllers or ERP project leads – contract rates have increased by 10–20% over 2023 levels.

💡 Quick Stat 💡

76% of Scottish finance professionals prefer hybrid work models, but 51% are still in full-time office roles – signalling a major gap between employer policy and candidate expectations. (Source: The Accountant)

In-Demand Skills & Trends

Key Functions in Demand

Hiring across finance and accountancy continues to focus on strengthening core functions. In Q2 2025, employers' top priorities remained Accounting (53%), Financial Control (41%), and Financial Planning & Analysis (30%). These roles are fundamental to maintaining financial integrity, meeting reporting deadlines, and providing the strategic insights businesses need to navigate uncertain markets. Payroll, treasury, and finance leadership roles also continue to see sustained demand, particularly in growing sectors such as manufacturing, tech, and professional services.

Emerging Roles: Tech & ESG in Finance

Alongside traditional roles, the demand for hybrid skill sets is rising. Finance professionals with technical capabilities – including data analytics, systems migration experience, and AI fluency – are being snapped up by firms pursuing automation and digital transformation. Equally, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) reporting is moving from a 'nice to have' to a business-critical function. We're now seeing new finance-aligned positions emerge, such as ESG Analysts and Sustainability Reporting Leads, with strong growth expected in these areas into 2026.

As the finance function becomes increasingly future-focused, candidates who can blend financial acumen with digital tools and strategic insight are commanding a premium.

What We're Seeing in Scotland

Across our Scottish client base, we're seeing a sharp increase in demand for commercially-minded finance professionals who can bridge the gap between traditional reporting and forward-looking business insight. Roles in FP&A, systems-focused finance analysts, and ESG-savvy accountants are particularly hot. In today's market, it's not just about technical proficiency – it's about adding value and driving change.

Salary Benchmarks

Finance salaries in Scotland remained on an upward trajectory through Q2 2025, with inflationary pressures and high competition continuing to push offers higher across all levels. Entry-level roles such as Assistant Accountants are now typically earning £30k–£40k, while at the senior end, Financial Controllers and Finance Directors are commanding salaries between £70k and £125k+, depending on industry and organisation size.

Interim pay also remains robust, often attracting a 10–20% premium due to the flexibility and urgency these roles demand. Experienced interim FDs and FCs are commonly securing £500–£800 per day.

The salary ranges outlined below provide a useful benchmark for employers looking to remain competitive and attract top finance talent in the second half of the year.

Role Level	Typical Job Titles	Salary Range
Entry-Level	Assistant Accountant, Junior Analyst	£30,000 – £40,000
Mid-Level	Management Accountant, Finance Analyst, Financial Accountant	£40,000 – £60,000
Senior-Level	Financial Controller, Finance Manager	£60,000 – £90,000
Leadership	Finance Director, CFO	£90,000 – £125,000+
Interim Roles	Interim FC, FD, Project Accountant	£400 – £800 day

Candidate Expectations 2025

As finance professionals gain more bargaining power in a competitive talent market, their expectations have become more nuanced and values-driven. In 2025, employers must go beyond salary to attract and retain top candidates – with flexibility, growth, and wellbeing now core parts of the decision-making process.

Flexibility Is the New Normal

Hybrid working is now the default expectation, not a perk. 76% of finance professionals prefer a hybrid model, and many will walk away from otherwise strong offers if flexibility isn't part of the deal. Organisations mandating full-time office presence risk narrowing their candidate pool significantly – particularly for roles that can be effectively delivered remotely. At Ceres, we've seen numerous candidates accept slightly lower offers in return for a better work-life balance.

Growth and Promotion Clarity

Ambition remains high across the profession, but a lack of visible career progression is a top reason people leave roles. Candidates want clear paths to advancement – whether that's through structured development plans, mentoring, or leadership training. Our 2025 survey found that promotion transparency was the most commonly cited area for improvement by finance staff across Scotland. Employers who communicate career progression clearly are far more likely to secure and retain high-potential talent.

Total Reward and Wellbeing

Pay still matters – but candidates are looking at the full picture. Benefits such as pensions, private healthcare, flexible holidays, and wellbeing support all play a role. Mental health in finance is an emerging concern: 52% of finance professionals report ongoing work-related stress, so employers who actively promote wellbeing will stand out. Supportive cultures and practical initiatives (like mental health days or wellness budgets) can tip the balance for candidates choosing between offers.

Career Mobility and Mindset Shift

Today's finance professionals are mobile – and intentional. Over 60% expect to change roles within two years, often seeking faster growth, better flexibility, or a shift in industry. Linear careers are becoming less common, with professionals open to side moves or sector changes that align with their personal and professional goals. For employers, this means every hire must also be a retention strategy.

Strategic Recruitment Tips

To help you attract and retain top finance talent in a competitive market, here are 7 actionable strategies your team can apply immediately.

Accelerate the Hiring Journey

Streamline decision-making to avoid losing candidates to faster-moving competitors. Pre-book interviews, empower hiring managers, and reduce decision delays – speed matters more than ever.

Lead with Flexibility

Hybrid and remote working are now expected, not exceptional. If roles can't be remote, offer alternative flexibility like compressed hours or core working blocks. It can be the deciding factor for candidates.

Know the Market, Match the Pay

Use current benchmarks (see previous section) to shape realistic salary ranges. Where base salary lags, offer added value: bonuses, paid training, or lifestyle perks. Candidates are better informed and less likely to negotiate down.

Promote Progression Early

Clarity on growth is key. Outline a career path at interview stage, and communicate promotion criteria internally. Upskilling and professional development matter – candidates join for the role, but stay for the roadmap.

Tap into Overlooked Talent Pools

Think beyond the obvious CVs: consider returners, career changers, or industry crossovers with upskilling potential. Contract and interim hires also offer agility – especially in transformation periods.

Retention = Reputation

High staff turnover harms your brand. Focus on internal engagement: regular check-ins, pay reviews, development planning, and recognition. A loyal team becomes your biggest recruitment asset.

Partner Strategically

Leverage specialist recruiters (like Ceres) who understand your niche, move fast, and bring pre-qualified talent to the table. Avoid wasted time on unsuitable candidates or underpowered job ads.

Our Talent Solutions

Specialist Finance Recruitment – Permanent | Interim | Executive Search

At Ceres Financial Talent, we help you hire with confidence. Whether you need a permanent Finance Manager, an interim Financial Controller, or a discreet executive search for a future CFO, we've got you covered.

We focus exclusively on roles in:

- Accounting & Financial Reporting
- Audit & Risk
- FP&A & Commercial Finance
- Tax & Compliance
- Finance Leadership

Our Expertise in Scotland

We're based in Edinburgh and operate across the Central Belt and wider Scotland. Our local knowledge, deep talent networks, and insight-led approach mean we understand the unique recruitment challenges faced by organisations in this region, and we move quickly to deliver.

We support employers of all sizes, from high-growth scale-ups to listed corporates, through a range of specialist services, including:

- Executive Search & Headhunting
- Interim & Project-Based Appointments
- Market Mapping & Competitor Intelligence
- Embedded Talent Partnerships
- Salary Benchmarking & Workforce Planning Advice

Whether you're hiring for a permanent leadership role or exploring the market for hard-to-find skills, we're well-positioned to help across Scotland.

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Sources & Methodology

The insights presented in this report are drawn from a combination of original research and external market intelligence. At Ceres Financial Talent, we base our guidance on a blend of quantitative data from recent placements, qualitative feedback from clients and candidates, and our daily conversations with finance professionals across Scotland. These real-world insights give us a front-line view of emerging trends, expectations, and behaviours in the recruitment market.

To supplement our own research, we also reference the following trusted sources throughout the report:

External Sources:

- Robert Half 2025 Salary Guide
- ACCA Global Talent Trends 2025
- ICAEW Career Insights 2025
- LinkedIn UK Job Market Updates – May 2025.
- Indeed 2025 UK Hiring Trends Report
- Vacancysoft UK Finance Labour Market Trends – Jan 2025
- eFinancialCareers Hiring Trends Q1 2025
- Michael Page UK Salary & Job Outlook 2025
- GAAPweb In-Demand Finance Jobs 2025
- ICAEW: Five In-Demand Skills for Accountants in 2025

Internal Sources:

- Ceres Financial Talent Placement Data (Q1–Q2 2025)
- Candidate Feedback Surveys (2025)
- Quantitative and qualitative data on career satisfaction and job-seeking
- Client Case Studies (2025)
- First-hand examples of recruitment challenges and solutions implemented by Ceres.

For any questions about this report or to request tailored insight for your organisation, please contact us at:

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