



2023/24

ENTRY-LEVEL SALARY BENCHMARK

BARCELONA, LISBON & ATHENS
FOR LANGUAGES

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What will you find in this study?

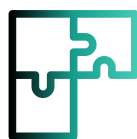
Building meaningful connections between international jobseekers and hiring companies via quality recruitment solutions, Blu Selection is a key player when it comes to hiring international profiles in multinational companies like BPOs, International Shared Services Centers, Global Business Hubs, Coworking Centers, IT or Finance start-ups based across Europe. Working on a large database highly specialised in these profiles, our consultants have a deep knowledge of international job markets, candidate pools, sourcing channels and expertise in the direct approach.

The entry-level talent acquisition trends in Barcelona and Lisbon have been evolving recently due to changed expectations in the candidate-driven market. To be followed by further studies on other job functions and seniorities, we are glad to share this brief salary guideline to shed light on the current market pay rate for the sectors that have the most volume of entry-level openings for foreign language speakers in Barcelona and Lisbon: Customer Service, Sales and Back Office.

Most Demanded Skills for Entry-Level Jobs in Barcelona & Lisbon



Language Proficiency



International Mindset



Customer Service



Methodology & Findings

- By entry-level seniority, we considered all positions that don't require any previous experience (approx. 85% of the roles included) and roles that require only 6 months to a maximum of 2 years of relevant experience (15%). For most of these positions, companies are looking for native language speakers with soft skills only while a few exceptions require previous experience in the sector or related fields or a certain education level.
- The language classification includes German, Dutch and Flemish, French, Nordic and other languages. By Nordic, we categorised Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Norwegian aligning with the classification of the job market. In Other languages, as our portfolio of different languages with a lower volume of positions suggests, we consider 15 languages including English, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Norwegian, and Russian. For non-native level language requirements, the levels are determined according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- For the job functions, we named 3 main categories that the companies continuously require entry-level employees. The Customer Service category consists of all "customer/client-facing" support roles including positions that originally fell under the Technical Support category but were combined here due to similarities in demand and salaries. For the Sales category, we have included different titles such as Sales Representative, Business Developer or Account Executive. Back Office, on the other hand, combines all support and administrative positions that are not client-facing.
- Regarding the salary benchmarks, the gap between minimum and maximum salaries might be larger in some cities and languages due to differences between company packages and market demands. Minimum salaries represent the base salary including the language bonuses but not the performance bonuses. For uncapped bonus packages, the maximum salaries have been calculated according to average team achievements.



1- Barcelona Entry-Level Job Market

Companies in Barcelona are in continuous need of international talents with native language skills to stay competitive in this growing business hub. Table 1 below includes the salary trends for different entry-level job functions. While salary packages between Customer Service and Back Office demonstrate a similar trend, the Sales function comes with a higher salary end due to the competitive salary and bonus trends within the market. Due to differences in native languages, the salaries vary according to the demand of the market for those language skills as well as bonus packages for different regional markets.

Requirements: While the majority of the Customer Service roles don't have any requirement for a Bachelor's or Master's degree, it can be beneficial for Sales and Back Office positions either as a mandatory requirement or to reach a higher salary package. English proficiency, on the other hand, is a mandatory requirement for almost all positions included in this study with a few exceptions. While a B2 level of English is acceptable for some positions, most language jobs require a C1 level to ensure fluent internal company communication and native-level language skills as listed.

Benefits: Due to the high expat population and competitive candidate market in Barcelona, the relocation package is not observed as a common benefit for the entry-level job market, however, some companies might help with paperwork organisation.

BCN	Customer Service			Technical Support			Sales Management			Administration & Back Office		
Native Language	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max
German	€22,000	€26,000	€30,000	€22,000	€26,000	€30,000	€30,000	€35,000	€40,000	€22,000	€25,000	€28,000
Dutch	€22,000	€26,500	€30,000	€22,000	€23,500	€30,000	€30,000	€35,000	€40,000	€22,000	€25,000	€28,000
French / Italian	€20,000	€25,000	€30,000	€20,000	€23,000	€27,000	€28,000	€33,000	€40,000	€20,000	€25,000	€28,000
Nordic	€22,000	€26,000	€30,000	€22,000	€26,000	€30,000	€30,000	€35,000	€40,000	€22,000	€25,000	€28,000
Others*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 1. Barcelona Job Market Salary Guideline per Job Function and Language

*Other native languages can vary in salary ranges - please contact us to know more

LISBON	Customer Service			Technical Support			Sales Management			Administration & Back Office		
Native Language	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max
German	€16,000	€19,000	€22,000	€16,000	€19,000	€22,000	€18,000	€21,000	€25,000	€16,000	€18,500	€20,000
Dutch	€16,000	€19,000	€22,000	€16,000	€19,000	€22,000	€17,000	€20,000	€25,000	€16,000	€17,500	€20,000
French / Italian	€14,000	€17,000	€20,000	€14,000	€17,000	€20,000	€15,000	€18,000	€25,000	€13,000	€15,000	€17,000
Nordic	€18,000	€20,000	€22,000	€18,000	€20,000	€22,000	€19,000	€22,000	€25,000	€16,000	€18,500	€20,000
Others*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 2. Lisbon Job Market Salary Guideline per Job Function and Language

*Other native languages can vary in salary ranges - please contact us to know more



2 - Lisbon Entry-Level Job Market

Hosting many top outsourcing companies, Lisbon became an attraction for expats with language skills by providing a vast amount of career opportunities. **Table 2** above includes the salary trends for different entry-level job functions. Salary packages in Lisbon show similar rates between job functions only with a slight difference in the higher end for the roles that are client-facing such as Customer Service and Sales. The salaries for different native languages vary according to the demand of the market for language speakers and bonus packages for different regional markets.

Requirements: For the majority of the entry-level roles, holding a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree is not a significant criterion with a few exceptions. On the other hand, a proficient English level is a requirement for most of the projects the companies hire for and a C1 level of English might stand as a criterion for a higher salary. Regarding the native languages, while for some positions, a B2 or C1 level is acceptable most of the positions require native-level proficiency.

Benefits: Some companies either include relocation support in their salary package or provide it extra. Depending on the demand for specific language speakers, a signing bonus might be added from €1000 to €5000 on top of the annual salary. While average on-target bonuses are added to salaries, extra bonuses might increase the final maximum. A lot of companies also offer housing and paperwork support instead of relocation payments.



3- Athens Entry-Level Job Market

The job market in Athens has a high demand for international talent. This trend is driven by the need for companies to remain competitive in Athens' rapidly growing business landscape

Table 3 below provides an overview of salary trends for various entry-level job functions in Athens. Compared to other markets the salary across different functions is relatively stable with a slightly higher salary for Sales positions. Also, the difference between the presented language skills is barely noticeable, which demonstrates a more or less equal demand for all languages for the job market in Athens.

Requirements: The entry-level positions in Athens and Greece in general do not require any specific educational background but previous experience in the field is often a big advantage. E.g. customer service or sales experience. One mandatory requirement is a very good level of English, while B2 can be enough for some positions many may require a C1 level of English to perform the job and communicate within the team, as well as the native language skills shown in the job description.

Benefits: Benefits vary widely across different jobs and employers. Relocation packages, health insurance and remote work across Greece are some of the most common benefits. Some positions even offer visa sponsorship for non-EU citizens.

ATHENS	Customer Service			Technical Support			Sales Management			Administration & Back Office		
Native Language	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max	Min	Avg	Max
German	€18,000	€19,000	€22,000	€18,000	€19,000	€22,000	€20,000	€24,500	€27,000	€17,000	€18,500	€20,000
Dutch	€18,000	€19,000	€22,000	€18,000	€19,000	€22,000	€20,000	€24,500	€27,000	€17,000	€17,500	€20,000
French / Italian	€15,000	€16,500	€17,000	€15,000	€16,000	€17,000	€16,000	€18,000	€25,000	€15,000	€16,000	€17,000
Nordic	€18,000	€19,500	€22,000	€18,000	€19,500	€22,000	€20,000	€24,500	€27,000	€17,000	€18,500	€21,000
Others*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 3. Athens Job Market Salary Guideline per Job Function and Language

*Other native languages can vary in salary ranges - please contact us to know more



Update: 2023 Q1 observations and 2024 salary predictions

According to the European Commission, the annual wages in the EU in Q1 of 2023 have increased by 5.3% compared to the same period last year. While in Spain it's recorded that the increase was close to 4.6%, in Portugal the change was higher than in the EU average with an increase higher than 6%. In line with our focus study on Business Process Outsourcing and Shared Service Centre company job functions, statistics show one of the highest increases in the wages observed in Administrative and Support Service Activities with an increase of 7.5%.

Over the past decade, the third and fourth quarter often shows an increase in labour costs. After the recovery of the pandemic, salaries are now higher than before with an ongoing upward trend. This is also in relation to the increasing inflation rates.

Both in Portugal and Spain, it has been observed that offering signing bonuses (which can be up to 25% of the annual salary) became a recurrent practice rather than an exceptional benefit offered in the seasonal peaks. In addition to that, many companies have either already updated their compensation packages or reviewing their budget for 2023/24, particularly for the market for German, Dutch, French and Nordic languages. Looking at our job portfolio we have noticed a clear increase in salaries which shows that the salaries are trying to catch up with the inflation rates in Spain (1.6%), Portugal (4.7%), and Greece (2.8%).

Mass tech layoffs transformed the labour market in the EU as well as in other markets by filling the pools with fresh talents, however, we don't expect any significant changes in the salaries for the job functions and locations we limit the focus of this study to. On the other hand, with the expectation of a 'recession' some international companies announced a hiring freeze for the last quarter of 2022. However, at the moment the business outsourcing industry doesn't seem to be affected by it in Europe. There is also good news for the Spanish labour market for 2023 which can help to stabilise the economic growth at a time of potential crisis. With the latest news on the Startup and Digital Nomad law approved by the Spanish Parliament, Spain is getting ready to be the EU centre of Startups from January 1st of 2023 and it is expected that this will impact the overall international labour market and create more tension on the salaries.



Do you have questions about working or hiring in Barcelona and Lisbon?

As Blu Selection, connecting multilingual jobseekers with international companies is what we specialize in and we are more than ready to help you with your next career move. Whether you are seeking a first working experience abroad or trying to catch an offer that will boost your career, we are here to answer your questions regarding the European labour market and mobility, particularly job opportunities in Barcelona and Lisbon for multilingual entry-level professionals.

To learn more about working or hiring in Barcelona, Lisbon and Athens, feel free to contact us.

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Contact Us



Pg. de Gràcia, 25, Barcelona



+34 931 24 44 90



contact@bluselection.com

