

Working to encourage careers in tourism and hospitality across the region

VENTURENORTH

Careers, Skills & Development Resources



Careers Ambassador Toolkit

Iona McLachlan

JOINT OWNER
North Coast Water Sports



Since the age of 12 my life has always revolved around surfing, so after school I got the qualifications needed to become a surf instructor. I surf coached around Scotland and saved up enough money to travel the world. I fell in love with travelling but realised

THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND WILL ALWAYS BE HOME.

So once I returned, me and my partner, Finn, started our own surf school based at Dunnet beach. I taught myself everything I could about running a business and **I'm still learning something new everyday.** The Caithness Chamber of Commerce and HIE have given us lots of support which has really helped us to expand and grow every year. North Coast Watersports quickly proved a success and we're blown away by the amazing response from our customers.



What do you LOVE most about your job?

Running a business and surf instructing is **super rewarding** for me. I get to share what I love with others. And my office is mostly in the ocean.



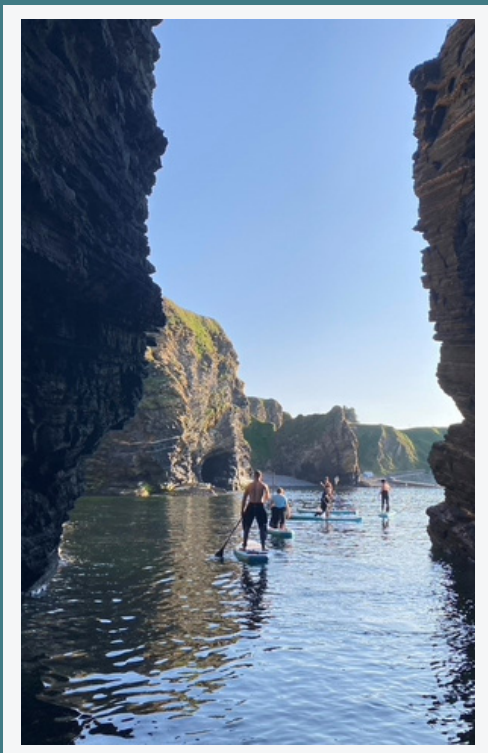
WHAT SORT OF LIFESTYLE HAS YOUR CAREER IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY LET YOU LEAD?



I'm very grateful for the lifestyle my career is allowing me to live. The work is very seasonal so I work lots through the Summer and then have lots of free time in the Winter so I can travel and focus on surfing myself.

NO 2 DAYS ARE THE SAME...

We could be teaching a surf lesson anywhere along the North Coast one day, then paddle boarding around the cliffs at Dunnet head the next, and then supporting a film production with our RIB. The constantly changing weather conditions and people add to our varied days aswell. We meet lots of incredible people and seeing how happy being in the sea makes everyone is such a special thing.



What would you say to someone looking to start a career in the industry?

“

JUST DO
WHAT YOU
LOVE”

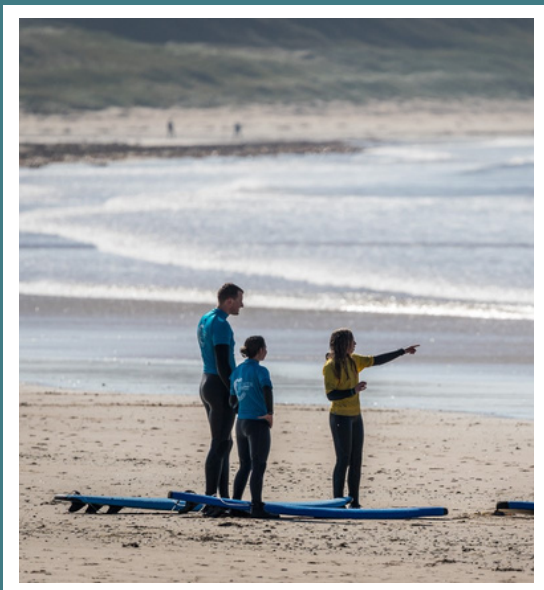
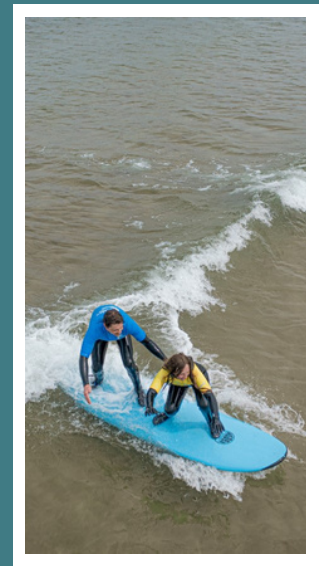
That **passion** is what will help you have a career that you really enjoy. Getting a qualification that allows you to teach that passion can get you work all over the world.



What is one of the most challenging things about your career?

The unpredictable, sometimes crazy weather is probably the biggest challenge. I spend most of my free time checking the forecast charts and sometimes have to reschedule or cancel & refund bookings. We're regularly out in the sea in the wind and the rain but I think that makes it all a bit more exciting.

YOU'RE OUT THERE EMBRACING THE ELEMENTS!

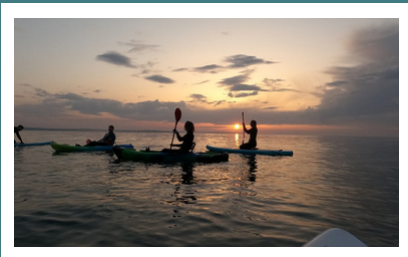


What MOTIVATES you most about your job?

Seeing the positive impact water sports can have on peoples lives really motivates me, and giving tourists more reasons to stop and appreciate our amazing home. I think encouraging slow tourism is really important.

what is the funniest thing that has happened to you while working in the tourism industry?

Seeing the endless wipeouts from our customers in the surf & paddleboard lessons always makes me laugh.



What do you love most about living and working in CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND?

Caithness and Sutherland are such special places. The landscape is so varied, isolated and there's so much potential for adventures. Although tourism is growing here - which is great for the economy - it's still overall very quiet so you can enjoy lots of beautiful locations all to your self. I feel living here there is a good balance of being somewhere very rural but there's also enough civilisation. The main towns have all the amenities a town really needs, and there's **great local communities supporting lots of different interests.** For me the biggest draw overall is the waves. World class waves regularly roll into these shores!

