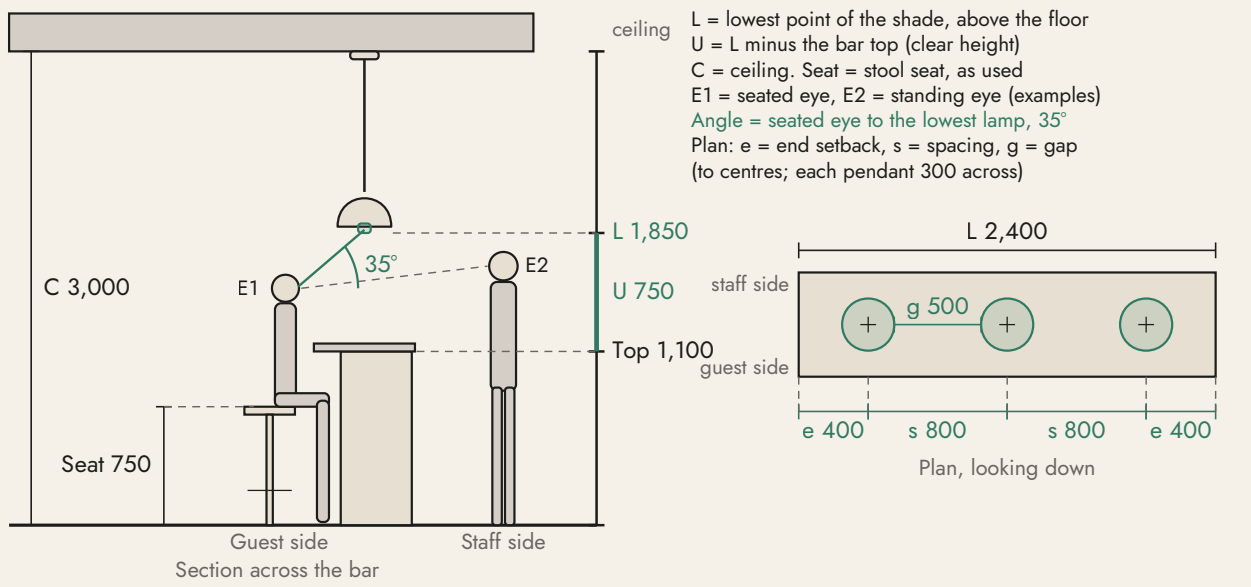
Pendants over *bars, tables and islands*

Height, spacing and glare for pendants over bars, tables and islands, in millimetres: the conventions, a check against eye heights, the spacing arithmetic and a drawing. A lighting designer sets the final figures.

AT A GLANCE

What	Figure	Status and basis
Dining table, one pendant: lowest point above the top	750 to 900 mm (1,495 to 1,645 above the floor at a 745 mm top)	Convention (UK guides; one gives 600 to 700 mm). Clears seated eyes by 155 mm or more
Counter or island with stools: lowest point above the top	700 to 900 mm (1,625 to 1,825 above the floor at a 925 mm top)	Convention (UK guides give 700 to 800 mm). Overlaps standing eye heights: judge on a mock-up
Bar with guests on stools: lowest point above the top	About 750 to 850 mm (1,850 mm or more above the floor)	Derived by us: tallest standing eye (1,753) plus 100 mm, to the nearest 50. No guide found
Banquette table; raised or lowered staff floor	As a dining table. Measure from the floor each person stands on	Seats compress, so mock up with the real seat
Diameter, one pendant over a table	1/2 to 2/3 of the table width	Convention. Several pendants: each smaller, no rule found
Spacing to centres, n pendants along length L	L divided by n (end setback half of that), or L divided by n + 1 (end setback equal)	Arithmetic. State which on the drawing. Gap between shades = spacing minus diameter
A bare filament lamp in view	Keep it out of a 30 degree zone above the line of sight (20 if frosted)	HSE HSG38 (1997), page 29: a workplace yardstick, not a rule for bars

Millimetres. Floor heights are from the finished floor; "above the top" is from the finished surface. Eye heights come from a US adult survey and are indicative.



A bar in section, with the example figures worked on this page in millimetres, and in plan with three pendants. The angle is from the seated guest's eye up to the lowest part of the lamp. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio, not to scale and not a design.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

HEIGHT OVER A BAR, COUNTER OR TABLE

Lowest point of each pendant (underside of the shade or lamp, whichever is lower) [1,850] mm above finished floor level on the guest side, [750] mm above the finished top at [1,100] mm. Datum: the floor the person stands on; state the staff-side level if it differs by [ ] mm. Cable or rod adjustable by [ ] mm so the height can be set against the installed top.

SPACING AND SETBACK

[3] pendants along the [2,400] mm length, spacing [800] mm to centres, end setback [400] mm from the end of the finished top ([equal bays / end setback equals spacing]). Shade diameter [300] mm, clear gap [500] mm. Set out from the [stool / booth] pitch of [ ] mm; no pendant over a joint in the top.

GLARE CONTROL AND DIMMING

Lamp [opal / frosted, not clear filament], not seen directly from seated eye height [1,500] mm or standing eye height [1,640] mm at the guest positions on drawing [ ]. Dimmable to [ ] per cent without flicker or visible colour shift on the [DALI / phase-cut] control. Maker to supply lamp type, output and photometric data.

MOCK-UP AND APPROVAL

One full-size mock-up of [a pendant] at the drawn height over a length of the finished [top / sample], viewed and photographed from seated and standing eye positions and across the [bar / table], dimmed to the evening scene, and approved in writing before production. Record approved heights and spacings with their datums on the shop drawing.

TERMS USED

Lowest point (of a pendant)

On this sheet, the underside of the shade or of the lamp, whichever hangs lower, measured from the finished floor. It is the figure checked against people's eyes.

Eye height (seated and standing)

The height of the eyes above the seat or the floor. The sheet uses a US adult survey: 698 to 860 mm above the seat when seated, 1,421 to 1,753 mm above the floor when standing.

Glare

Discomfort or reduced ability to see caused by unsuitable brightness or extreme contrasts (CIE e-ILV 17-22-098). Discomfort glare is discomfort alone, as from a visible lamp in a bar; disability glare makes things harder to see (HSE HSG38).

Exclusion zone

In HSE HSG38 (1997), the angle above the line of sight, 10, 20 or 30 degrees by lamp type, within which a bare lamp should not be seen. Workplace guidance, used here as a yardstick.

Veiling reflection

A reflection of a light source in a surface that masks what you are trying to see (HSE HSG38 glossary), such as a pendant mirrored in a polished bar top.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- HSE, Lighting at work (HSG38), second edition 1997, web version: read 5 Nov 2026: paragraphs 25, 94 and 95, exclusion zone table and Figure 18 (page 29), glossary. Workplace guidance.
- CIE S 017:2020 International Lighting Vocabulary (e-ILV): entries 17-22-098 and 17-22-102, read 5 Nov 2026.
- SLL Lighting Guide LG18, Lighting for licensed premises (2018): listing and contents read only; paywalled. Covers bars and restaurants.
- NC State Ergonomics Center summary of the 2012 US Army survey (ANSUR II): eye heights; US adults, indicative.
- British Standards and UK retail guides: no British Standard for pendant height, spacing or glare over bars, tables or islands was identified; the conventions are from retail guides read 5 Nov 2026, which are not authorities and disagree.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/pendants-over-bars-tables-and-islands. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.