

Fashion Designer

Fashion designers create designs for clothes, accessories and shoes. They may design a wide range of goods or specialise in particular areas.

The Work

You could be:

- designing a wide variety of items or specialising in one area, such as children's clothing, sportswear, accessories or wedding dresses
- researching next season's trends in fashion, colour and fabric choice
- drawing designs by hand and by computer-aided design (CAD) or graphics software such as Illustrator and Photoshop
- considering the costs of fabrics and manufacturing for mass production
- selecting fabrics and trims to make up samples of clothes
- supervising dressmakers who make the samples
- producing specification sheets or design packs for manufacturers to follow and making sure designs are produced accurately
- presenting designs and samples to clients and in-house departments such as finance and merchandising
- designing clothes for individual customers or clothes for sale in large numbers in high street stores.

Pay

Pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for design assistants in the UK tend to be around £18,000 a year rising to around £30,000 a year with experience. Senior designers can earn around £45,000 or more, with top designers earning over £85,000 a year or more.

Some fashion designers work freelance. They charge a fee, which varies depending on the work and their reputation. The better known they are, the more they can charge. A very few do earn very high incomes.

Conditions

- You would work in a studio or workshop.
- You might either work alone or as part of a team of designers.
- You might have to travel to meet clients and fabric manufacturers, and to visit trade shows, fashion shows and exhibitions.
- You might have to work long hours, including evenings and weekends, when preparing for exhibitions, meetings and deadlines.

Getting In

- You usually need a degree in fashion design or in art and design with an option in fashion. It's also possible to enter with a relevant HND (SCQF Level 8), available at several colleges.
- For entry to an HND you need 1-2 Highers or a relevant NC or NQ (SCQF Level 4-6). For entry to a degree course you need 4-5 Highers, normally including English and Art and Design.
- You also need a good portfolio of designs. It helps to include garments you have made.
- If you are very talented and have an exceptionally good portfolio, you might get into college or university without the necessary Highers.
- You could start by taking an NC or NQ (formal entry requirements not always needed) or a HNC (1-2 Highers for entry) in similar subjects. This might get you a job, perhaps as a pattern cutter or design assistant, or lead on to an HND or degree.
- Ability to use specialist fashion computer aided design and graphics software is helpful.
- Pattern cutting and sewing skills are useful.
- Work experience, paid or unpaid, is very useful.

For art school courses you need to apply through UCAS.

Entry to this career is very competitive. Most jobs are in the London area. You may find jobs advertised in the press, particularly the fashion press. There are specialist recruitment agencies which might help you find a job.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- artistic, creative and imaginative
- ambitious, confident and willing to work in a competitive business
- adaptable, as you may have to alter work to suit the client's requirements
- able to accept criticism of your work
- interested in, and good at spotting, fashion trends
- able to work in a team.

You need to have:

- practical and technical skills, such as drawing, sewing and pattern making
- an eye for detail
- a good eye for colour, design, shape and texture
- an understanding of the different properties of fabrics and how they can be used
- good communication and presentation skills
- excellent organisational skills
- networking and negotiating skills to liaise with individual clients and manufacturers
- an understanding of production methods
- good business sense.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job with your employer.
- You may attend conferences, seminars and specialised courses to keep up to date with the latest trends and developments.
- The Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) runs training programmes.

Getting On

- If you work for a design studio or clothing manufacturer you could become a senior designer.
- You might move on to be a manager, in which case you would do less design work.
- You could move into fashion marketing, quality control or buying.
- After gaining enough experience, you might work freelance, designing for manufacturers, working on short contracts or producing your own collections.

More Information

- Very few fashion designers work in haute couture ('high fashion') firms or produce their own collections, or earn the high incomes reputedly associated with the job.
- Most work for clothing manufacturers and design for the mass market. With changes in technology, designer ready-to-wear products can be available on the high street in a few weeks.
- There can be opportunities to work abroad.
- For more information on creative careers see [Discover Creative Careers Finder](#)

Contacts

Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)

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Website: www.csd.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/charteredocietyofdesigners

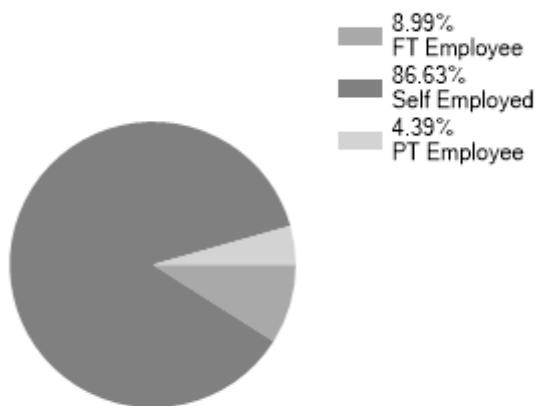
Discover Creative Careers Finder

Website: discovercreative.careers/#

X: [@CreativeCareer5](#)

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

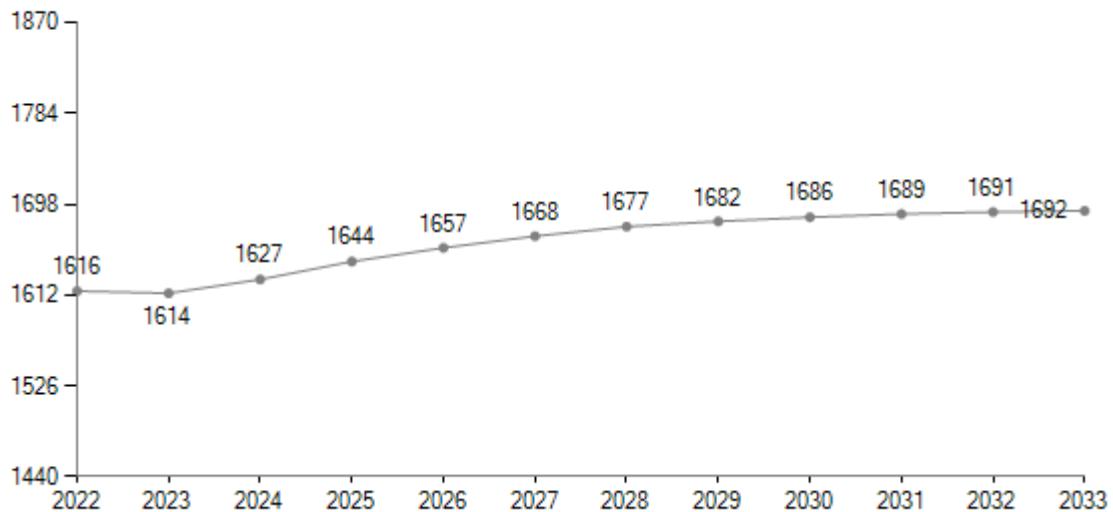


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)