

Stonemason

A stonemason uses a range of stone, including sandstone, limestone, granite and marble, to construct new buildings and monuments and to restore old ones.

The Work

There are two types of specialist stonemasons – **banker masons** (who cut, shape and carve blocks of stone in a workshop) and **fixer masons** (who use the blocks of stone to construct and repair buildings).

As a **banker mason** you could be:

- measuring and marking outlines on a block of stone from the quarry, ready for cutting to shape using hand and power tools
- using traditional hand tools (chisels, mallets, levels, trowels) and modern power tools to shape (dress) the stone
- checking angles are correct
- using templates and drawings as a guide
- shaping complex mouldings and patterns by machine or carving columns and decorative cornices by hand
- giving the stones a variety of surface finishes
- specialising in work such as headstones for graves, garden ornaments or fireplaces.

As a **fixer mason** you could be:

- reading the architect's plans while on site
- understanding the load-bearing aspects of structures such as arches and bridges
- laying the stones and using mortar or cement to fix them in place
- fixing new cladding to the outside of a structure, using wire or metal bolts
- using mechanical hoists or block and tackle to lift the heavier stones.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

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

There is a minimum wage for apprentices in Scotland. As of June 2019 the Building and Allied Trades Joint Industrial Council (BATJIC) rates for a 4-year apprenticeship based on a 39-hour week are:

Year 1 – £200.46

Year 2 – £266.37

Year 3 – £334.23

Year 4 – £353.73 (with SVQ Level 2).

Please note these rates may vary if the Apprentice is 21 years old or over and has completed the first year of their apprenticeship. National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) will apply.

With experience your salary would rise to around £19,000 to £35,000 a year. Self-employed professionals earn more than those in full time employment.

Conditions

- Banker masons work mainly in a yard or workshop, fixer masons work mostly out on site.
- You will be outside in all weathers, more so as a fixer mason.
- You work at heights on scaffolding and ladders, especially as a fixer mason, and there is lots of standing and heavy lifting.
- There could be lots of noise and dust.
- You wear protective gear: goggles, ear protectors, hard hat and sometimes a face mask.
- You often work overtime in summer, but have shorter hours and lay-offs in winter.
- You might have to travel to different sites and sometimes live away from home.

Getting In

- The normal entry route is through a Modern Apprenticeship with an employer.
- You do not always need formal qualifications, but some subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and a science or technological subject are helpful.
- You usually have to sit an aptitude test as part of the application process.
- Alternatively you could study for a PDA in Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Masonry Structures at SCQF Level 6.
- You could also enter this profession after gaining practical experience on site as a labourer.
- A driving licence is useful and sometimes essential.
- You should be fit, strong and agile.
- You must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or equivalent to work on a building site. You must pass a health and safety test to qualify for this scheme.

Look for work with contractors, stonemasonry firms, monumental masons and with firms or organisations involved in restoring old, sometimes historic, buildings. Agencies such as Historic Environment Scotland or the National Trust for Scotland recruit apprentice stonemasons for various locations across Scotland. Apprenticeships last between 3 and 4 years. Check their websites for details.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- practical and creative skills
- an awareness of safety issues
- good maths skills for measuring
- a sense of responsibility
- stamina for heavy lifting

- a head for heights if working on site
- patience and an eye for detail.

You need to be able to:

- read building plans and drawings
- work on your own or as part of a team.

Training

- Training during an apprenticeship is mainly on the job with off the job training at college.
- You would work towards SVQ in Stonemasonry (Construction) at SCQF Level 6.

Getting On

- With experience you can apply for a supervisory job.
- You might specialise in a particular type of work – perhaps carving headstones, or restoring ancient monuments.
- You might move into self-employment.

Contacts

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Tel: 0344 994 8800

Email: scotland.apprenticeships@citb.co.uk

Website: www.citb.co.uk

Twitter: @CITB_UK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/citb.uk

GoConstruct

Website: www.goconstruct.org

Twitter: @GoConstructUK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/goconstructuk

Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

Tel: 0131 668 8600

Website: www.historicenvironment.scot

Twitter: @HistEnvScot

Facebook: www.facebook.com/historicenvscotland

Scottish Building Apprenticeship and Training Council (SBATC)

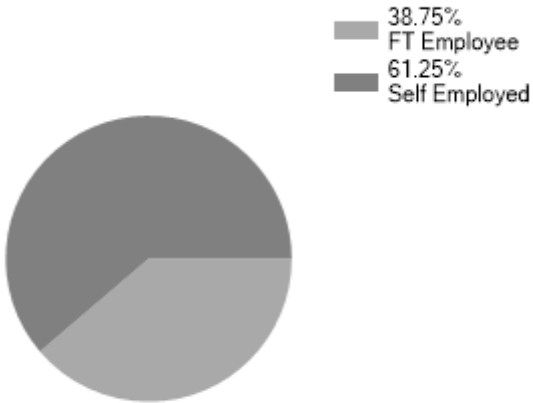
Tel: 0131 556 8866

Email: registrar@sbatc.co.uk

Website: www.sbatc.co.uk

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



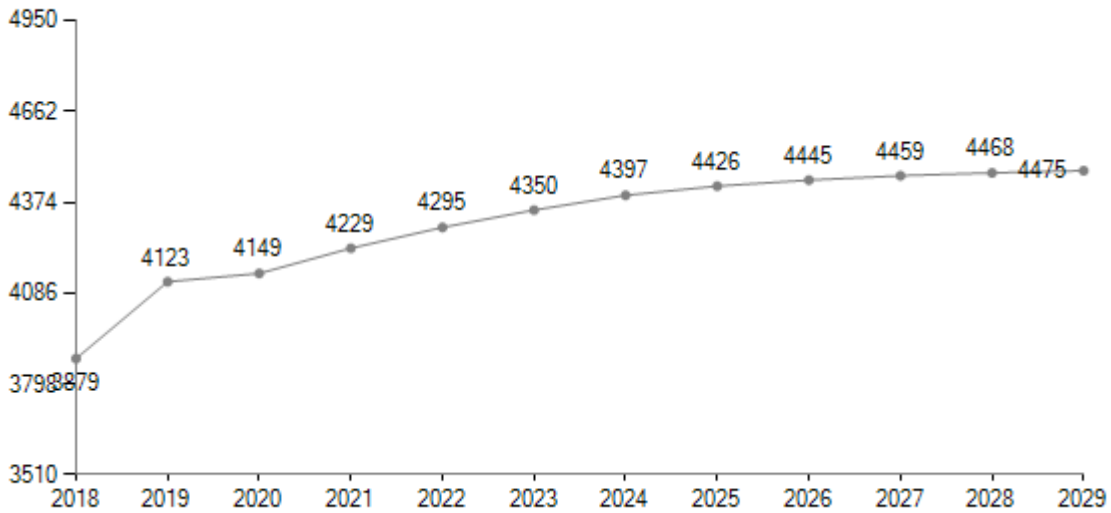
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	0.33%

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)