Model Maker

Model makers design and make three dimensional (3D) scale models (or mock-ups) to see what something will look like or for testing purposes. This could be for a building such as a new shopping centre or a new product such as a mobile phone. They may also make models to illustrate scientific ideas or for special effects for film or television.

The Work

You could be:

- discussing the requirements with the designer or client including the budget and deadlines
- working from drawings, photographs, computer graphics or detailed technical specifications to create 3D objects
- using computer-aided design (CAD) and other specialist software
- working with materials such as plaster, wood, metal, clay, plastic, fibreglass and resin
- using hand tools, electronic equipment and techniques such as making and casting moulds, laser cutting, soldering and 3D printing
- making the model smaller (for instance a bridge) or larger (for instance a molecule) than the actual thing
- making an illustrative model, with or without detail and colour
- making a working or mechanical model with moving parts
- modelling the surrounding area in an architectural model to show how a building fits in to its surroundings
- taking photographs of completed models and submitting them for approval.

You might specialise in architectural modelling, product modelling (there is some overlap with the job profile for a Product Designer) or visual effects modelling (also see the job profiles for Prop Maker and Scenic Artist).

Pay

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

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

Salaries for model makers in the UK can start at around £23,000 rising to around £28,000 a year. Experienced model makers can earn up to £40,000 a year or more. However, many model makers work freelance. They charge a fee, which can vary depending on the work and their reputation. In some cases, income is not high. The better known they are, the more they can charge.

Conditions

- You might work for a specialist model making firm, a design company, a manufacturing firm or a civil engineering company. Alternatively, you may be self-employed and work on a freelance basis.
- You would work in a laboratory, studio or workshop.

- The working conditions may be noisy and dusty.
- Some of the materials you would use may give off unpleasant and dangerous fumes.
- You might have to wear protective clothing, gloves and a mask.
- At times, the hours can be long and irregular, and some evening and weekend work might be needed to meet deadlines.
- Sometimes you may have to travel to meet clients.

Getting In

- There is no single entry route. There are modelmaking courses at various levels, but you might also get in after taking a general design course, such as 3D or product design.
- City of Glasgow College offers an NQ in Modelmaking for TV and Film (SCQF Level 6) and an HND in 3D Design: Modelmaking for the Creative Industries (SCQF Level 8).
- For the NQ you need 2 subjects at National 5 from English, Art and Design, Design and Manufacture or Product Design. You need a good portfolio of work.
- For the HND you need 1 Higher from Art and Design, Design and Manufacture or Graphic Communication plus English at National 5; or NQ Modelmaking for TV and Film. You also need a good portfolio of design work.
- There are no degree courses in modelmaking in Scotland, but there are some in 3D design and product design. In England, degrees are available in modelmaking or with a specialist option in the subject.
- Computer-aided design (CAD) skills are useful.

Much of the work for model makers is in and around large cities, particularly London and the south of England.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- imaginative, creative and practical
- patient and accurate, with an eye for detail
- confident and persistent
- able to understand plans and technical drawings
- able to find new ways of doing things
- able to visualise and think in 3D
- able to work calmly under pressure
- able to work to deadlines.

You need to have:

- an interest in design and technology
- good hand skills
- drawing and IT skills
- good communication skills
- a methodical approach
- the ability to work on your own as well as in a team
- awareness of health and safety.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job with your employer.
- You would continue to develop your skills by attending relevant part time courses and training opportunities.

Getting On

- You may move on to be a senior model maker or a team leader.
- You may become self-employed, working on a freelance basis for advertising firms, engineering companies, architects, designers, museums and film and television companies.
- There are some job opportunities overseas for model makers, especially if you are working for a firm that operates internationally.
- By taking additional qualifications, you may be able to move into another design area.

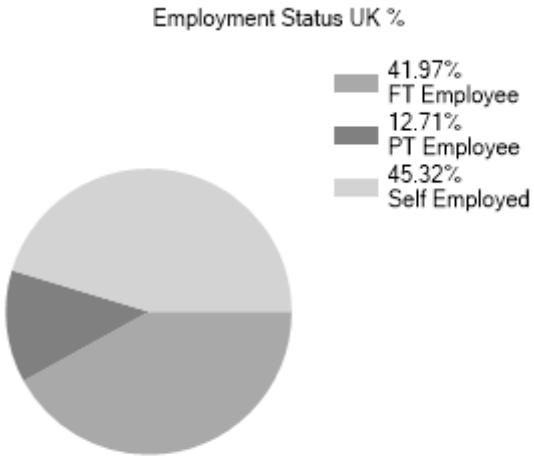
More Information

For more information on creative careers see Discover Creative Careers.

Contacts

Design Council
Tel: 0207 4205200
Website: www.designcouncil.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/DesignCouncil

Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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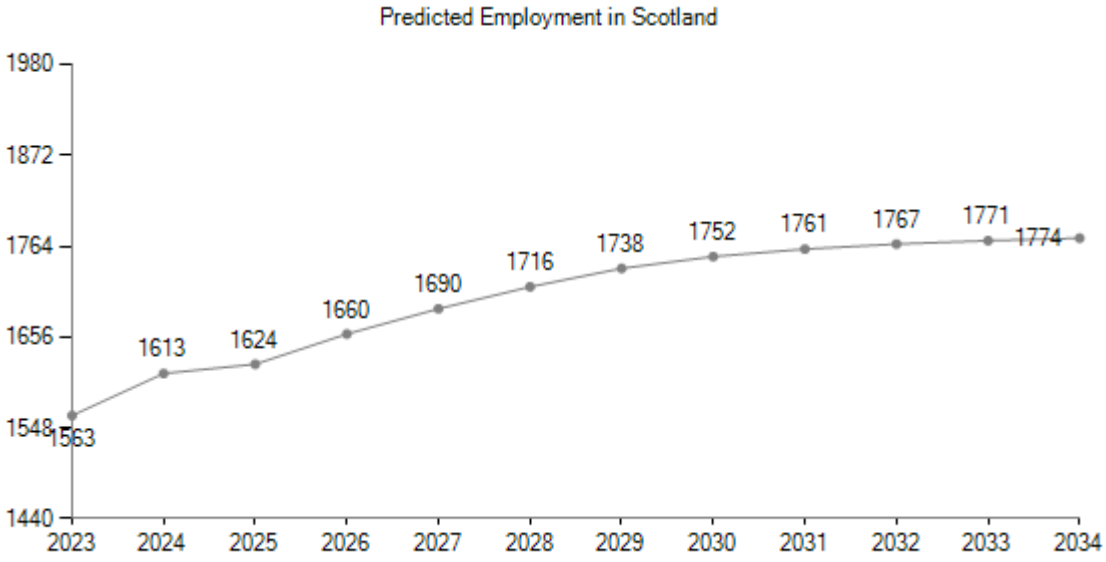

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