

Fabric Cutter

A fabric cutter uses a pattern and cuts out the pieces of fabric or other materials, such as vinyl, to be made into clothing or other textiles.

The Work

You could be:

- making sure work areas and equipment are clean
- deciding on the correct cutting method for the type of material
- preparing the fabric for cutting out by spreading it out in flat layers, smoothing out creases and checking the fabric for faults
- planning how much to cut from a piece of material so there is less waste
- placing the pattern on the fabric and marking round it
- cutting round the pattern using a computer controlled cutting machine, scissors or a special electric knife
- carefully cutting delicate materials by hand
- cutting as many as 150 layers of fabric at once, if you use a cutting machine
- storing fabrics correctly and checking stock levels.

Pay

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

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

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2025 the National Minimum Wage is £7.55 an hour for workers under 18, £10.00 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.21 an hour.

Pay is sometimes on a piece-rate system, so that the more items you cut out, the more you earn. With experience you may earn around £13 an hour. A cutting room manager can earn up to £40,000 with experience. You may be able to earn bonuses and work overtime.

Conditions

- You will work in the cutting room of a factory or workshop.
- The machines can be noisy.
- You will be doing a lot of bending, stretching and lifting. You will have to lift heavy rolls of fabric from stockrooms.
- You may use computer controlled cutting equipment and sharp tools.
- You may have to wear protective clothing.

Getting In

- You may get directly into a job with on the job training.
- You do not need formal qualifications but it may be helpful if you have an NC, NQ (SCQF Level 4-6) or HNC (SCQF Level 7) in a subject such as fashion design and production.
- You do not need formal qualifications to get into an NC or NQ course but for entry to the HNC, you normally need 1 or 2 Highers, or an appropriate NC or NQ.
- You may be able to get in through a Modern Apprenticeship, with training leading to SVQs at SCQF Levels 6 or 7.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good hand to eye coordination
- a steady, accurate hand, for cutting
- excellent attention to detail
- good IT and numeracy skills
- a good understanding of textile characteristics
- a methodical approach to work.

You need to be able to:

- work quickly and accurately under pressure
- follow instructions
- follow health and safety procedures carefully
- work as part of a team with others such as designers, machinists and technologists.

Training

Training is normally on the job.

Getting On

- With experience you may be able to move on to become a pattern cutter or grader.
- You might become a cutting room supervisor or manager.
- You might study further to become a tailor or dressmaker.

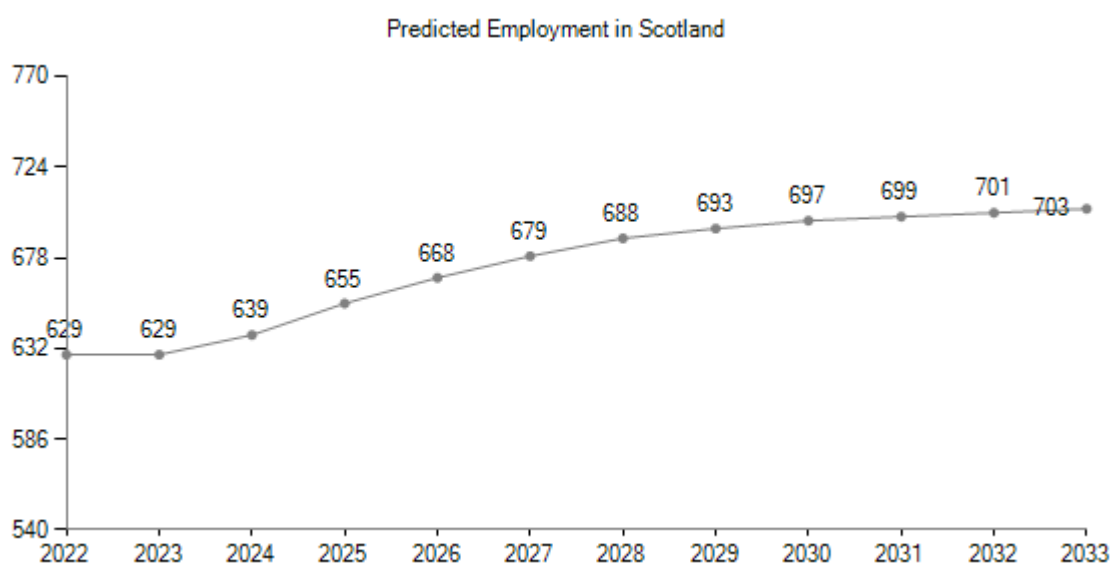
Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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