

Pattern Cutter or Grader

Pattern cutters work from fashion designers' plans to make the templates used for making garments. **Pattern graders** take the patterns made by pattern cutters and produce scaled up and scaled down versions, to produce the same garment in different sizes.

The Work

You might specialise in either cutting or grading, or both.

As a **pattern cutter** you could be:

- working from drawings of clothing designs
- referring to a library of patterns to find a pattern which you can adapt
- cutting cardboard pattern pieces for each part of the garment
- using a flat cardboard 'block' which can be altered
- draping and fitting fabric to tailors' dummies and cutting a pattern from the fitted pieces
- using specialist computer programmes to make pattern pieces and templates
- alternatively draw your patterns by hand (some cutters prefer this)
- attending fittings of the prototype garment and consulting with designers and garment technologists about final changes needed.

As a **pattern grader** you could be:

- taking patterns made by a pattern cutter and producing scaled up or scaled down versions, enabling the garment to be reproduced in different sizes
- tracing an outline of the pattern on a digitising table so that the computer can use the data to adjust the size and proportions
- using a scanner to trace the pattern outline, which the computer can scale to size
- sending copies of the different pattern grades to the manufacturer for them to produce finished garments in the sizes they require.

Pay

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

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

Pattern cutters and graders start around £25,000 a year. Experienced cutters and graders can earn in the region of £30,000. Multi-skilled cutters and graders working for companies making specialist or luxury clothing may earn up to £40,000.

Conditions

- You would normally work 37-40 hours a week.
- You would work in a factory or studio.
- If working in a factory, it might be noisy.
- You would be bending and stretching throughout the day.

Getting In

- It will be helpful if you do an NC (SCQF Levels 4-6), HNC (SCQF Level 7) or HND (SCQF Level 8) in a subject such as fashion design or fashion technology.
- Some employers may prefer you to have a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) in fashion.
- You do not need formal qualifications to get into an NC course, but you need 1 or 2 Highers for entry to HNC or HND.
- For entry to a degree you normally need 4-5 Highers.
- You may be able to get in by doing a Modern Apprenticeship in Fashion and Textiles Heritage at SCQF Levels 5 or 6/7.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent practical skills
- good communication skills
- computer skills
- an interest in fashion
- excellent attention to detail.

You should be able to:

- draw and interpret other people's drawings
- use maths to measure and calculate accurately
- work under pressure
- meet deadlines
- work well with others
- work accurately for long periods.

Training

- All new employees receive on the job training.
- If you are training on a Modern Apprenticeship you would do on the job training and study block or day release classes at college.
- You might also continue your professional development through courses offered by the Textile Institute (TI).

Getting On

- With experience, you may move on to become a senior pattern cutter or grader, manager or designer.
- You could find work in the UK and abroad with designer labels, high street fashion retailers, clothing factories or cutting and grading firms.

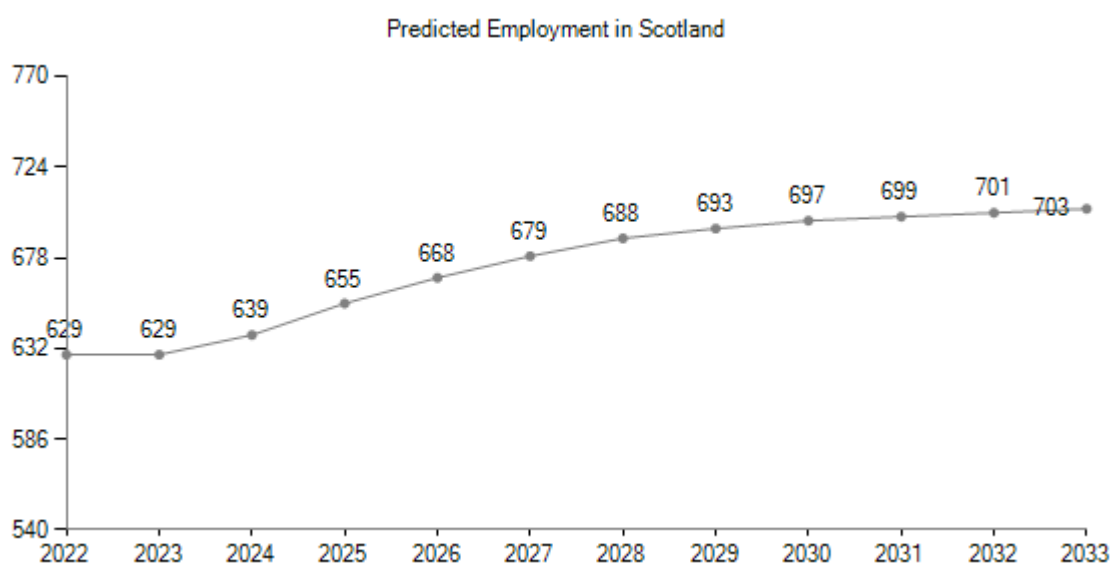
Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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