

## 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, this may be online
- 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, 6 or 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 \(TI\)](http://www.textileinstitute.com).

## 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.

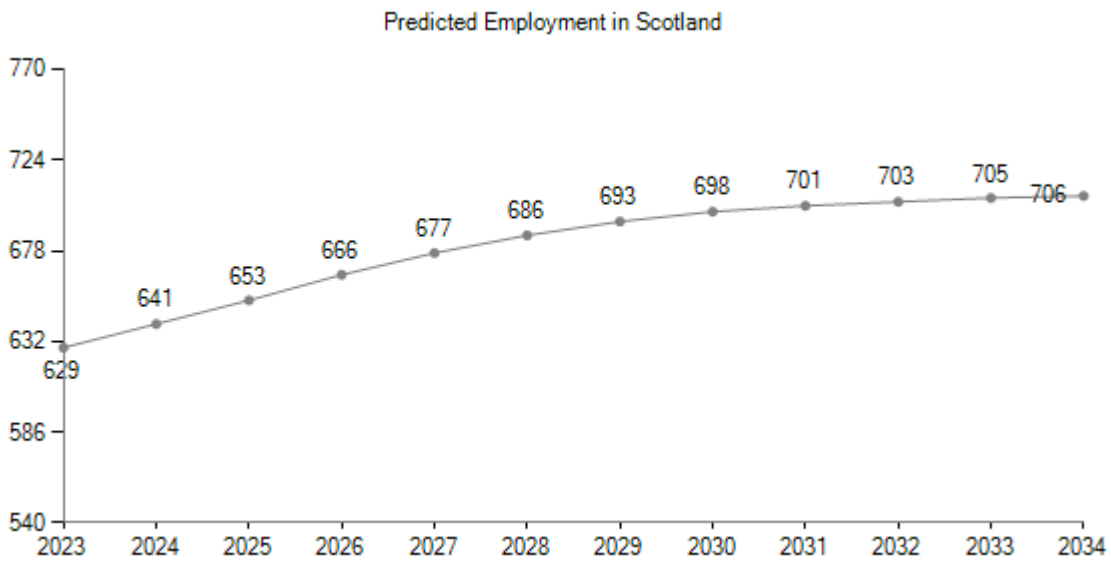
## Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)