

Sewing Machinist

A sewing machinist uses electronic or computerised sewing machines to stitch pieces of fabric together to make clothes, upholstery or other items. Fabrics can range from thin silk to industrial canvas or leather.

The Work

You could be:

- making all or part of a garment or other fabric items such as curtains
- following instructions for each sewing job
- using a range of machine programs and machines, such as overlockers, hemmers and bar tackers, to carry out a range of tasks and produce different finishes
- guiding the material through the machine, correcting any mistakes as you go
- altering machine settings to suit the type of material and finish required
- checking that a finished article matches the pattern instructions
- oiling and cleaning your machine
- working with designers and pattern cutters to make up samples of new styles for buyers.

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.

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

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour.

You may sometimes be able to earn bonuses. You may be able to work overtime at a higher rate.

Conditions

- You would work around 38-40 hours a week.
- You usually work in a factory or workshop. You might also work from your own home.
- You will spend most of the day sitting down.
- The work can be repetitive.
- Conditions can be noisy.
- You will have to meet deadlines for orders.
- You may have to work shifts and sometimes do overtime.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications.
- You may have to do a test on a sewing machine.
- Some machine sewing experience is helpful, and may be necessary.
- You may be able to get in through a Modern Apprenticeship which may lead to Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) at SCQF Level 5, or direct entry to a job.
- You might also consider an NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6) in fashion or fashion design and manufacture.

What Does It Take

It helps if you have:

- patience
- good practical skills
- an interest in fashion and design
- the ability to concentrate for long periods of time.

You need to be able to:

- work accurately at speed
- follow instructions
- work closely with colleagues and supervisors
- work under pressure to meet deadlines.

Training

- Training is usually on the job through the employer's training scheme.
- You may begin work in a special training section until you are skilled enough to work in the main factory or workshop.
- If you are training on a Modern Apprenticeship you would do on the job training and study block or day release classes at college.

Getting On

- With experience you may be able to move on to become a supervisor, garment examiner or sample machinist.
- You might also be able to move into quality control, staff training, management or be self-employed.

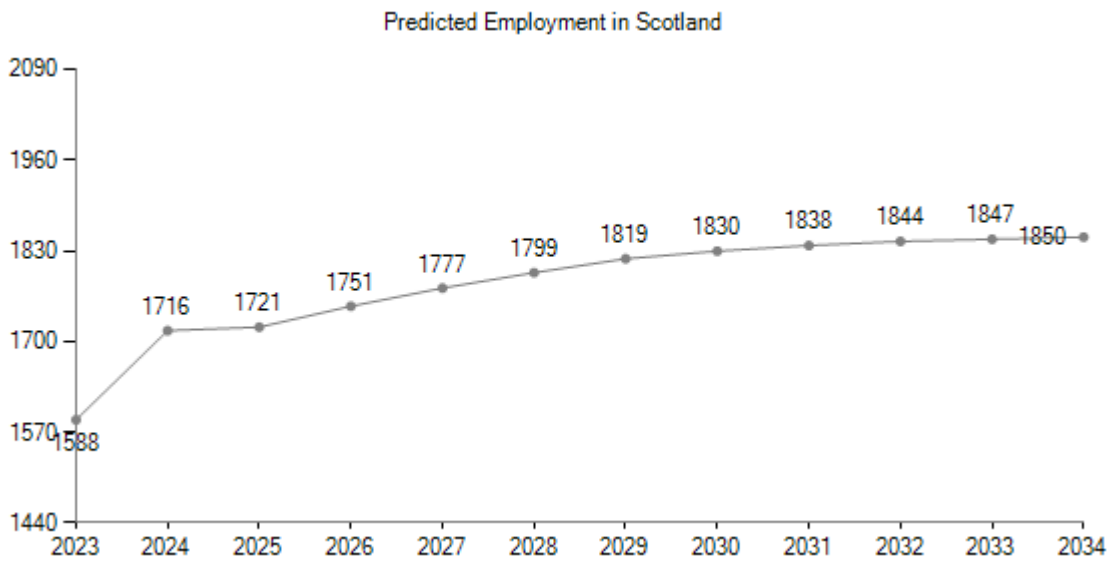
Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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