

Tailor or Dressmaker

Tailors and dressmakers make and sometimes alter clothes to fit individual customers. Tailors mainly make jackets, suits, trousers, kilts and coats. Dressmakers make skirts, dresses, shirts and other outfits.

The Work

You could be:

- measuring the client and discussing the choice of style and fabric
- working out the cost of the garment
- making a paper pattern using a stencil or computing software and laying it out
- marking the fabric round the pattern and cutting out the pieces
- tacking the pieces together, fitting the garment to the client and making any adjustments needed
- sewing the garment by machine
- hand finishing the garment (adding trimmings and fastenings)
- pressing the garment
- altering or repairing existing garments.

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 salaries are around £20,000 - £23,000 a year. With experience this can rise to around £38,000 a year. In haute couture (fashion houses producing exclusive designs for private clients), tailors' and dressmakers' salaries can exceed £50,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would work around 37 to 40 hours a week.
- You would be based in a workshop, in a shop or work from home.
- Conditions may be noisy.
- You might have to travel to meet clients.
- Part time work is available.
- You would need to work quickly to meet deadlines.
- You have to bend and kneel to measure and do fittings.
- You spend long periods of time sitting or standing.

Getting In

- You do not necessarily need formal qualifications, but some people study related courses at college or

university, such as fashion, fashion design and manufacture, and textiles.

- These courses could be NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4 - 6), HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or degree (SCQF Levels 9-10).
- Experience of sewing would be helpful.
- You may be able to get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Fashion and Textiles Heritage or direct entry to a job with on the job training.

Although the vast majority of clothing is sold off-the-peg, there is a small but steady demand for bespoke tailoring (clothes made to measure for an individual client). Many employers specialise in areas such as traditional Asian wear, kilt outfits or bridal and evening wear.

What Does It Take

You need:

- an eye for style and detail
- excellent sewing and pattern cutting skills
- an interest in textiles, design and fashion
- patience and tact
- accuracy and neatness
- skill in working with your hands
- good customer service skills.

Training

- You may be able to train on the job through the employer's training scheme or through day release or evening classes.
- If you do a Modern Apprenticeship, you will complete SVQs in Fashion and Textiles Heritage, which has a number of pathways at SCQF Levels 5, 6 and 7.

Getting On

You may find work with a clothing manufacturing company, a fashion house or a shop. With experience you might move on to: self-employment, management or work in production or sales.

Contacts

UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT)

Tel: 020 7843 9460

Website: ukft.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKfashionandtextile

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.