

Wood Machinist

As a wood machinist you prepare wood for the construction and manufacturing industry as well as DIY stores. You make products such as floorboards, banisters, skirting boards, doors, window frames, kitchen units, fencing and flat pack furniture. You may also make the individual parts of desks, tables and chairs.

The Work

You could be:

- using sawing machines, mortice machines, moulding machines, routers (which cut complex shapes), planes and drills
- using computer numerically controlled (CNC) machinery
- calculating how much wood you need and selecting the right kind
- using computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM) techniques
- reading and understanding technical drawings
- making jigs and templates for each task
- cutting and shaping wood
- treating wood with preservatives
- cleaning and servicing machines and sharpening or replacing blades.

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.

Experienced machinists can earn up to £20 an hour.

Conditions

- You may work indoors or outdoors in a sawmill or timber yard.
- Workshops and factories are generally well ventilated with extractors to minimise the dust, but conditions may be still dusty and noisy.
- You would wear protective clothing, goggles, ear protectors and a dust mask with filters.
- The work can be physical, involving bending and stretching.
- You would need to lift heavy pieces of wood (although robotic equipment lifts the heaviest pieces).
- Equipment may be hazardous including sharp blades and dangerous machines (which must have safety

guards).

- You would generally work 40 hours Monday to Friday, but overtime and weekend work may be required.

Getting In

- There are no formal entry requirements but English and Maths at National 4 or 5 would be useful.
- Some woodwork experience would also be helpful.
- You may get in through a training scheme such as a Modern Apprenticeship which may lead to SVQs at SCQF Level 5 or 6.
- You may start as a site labourer or timber yard assistant to gain experience.

There are usually vacancies for trained and experienced wood machinists. Employers include timber yards, sawmills, construction firms and furniture manufacturing companies.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- practical
- good at maths for taking measurements and making calculations
- mechanically minded
- able to follow health and safety rules
- good at concentrating
- able to work quickly and accurately
- able to work both on your own and in a team
- good at working with your hands
- able to follow technical instructions closely.

Training

- Training is usually on the job.
- You may attend day or block release classes at college. This could lead to SVQ Wood Machining (Construction/Sawmilling Extrusion) at SCQF Level 6.

Getting On

Once you have experience and qualifications you may move on to be a:

- supervisor
- manager
- onsite joiner
- shopfitter.

Contacts

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

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GoConstruct

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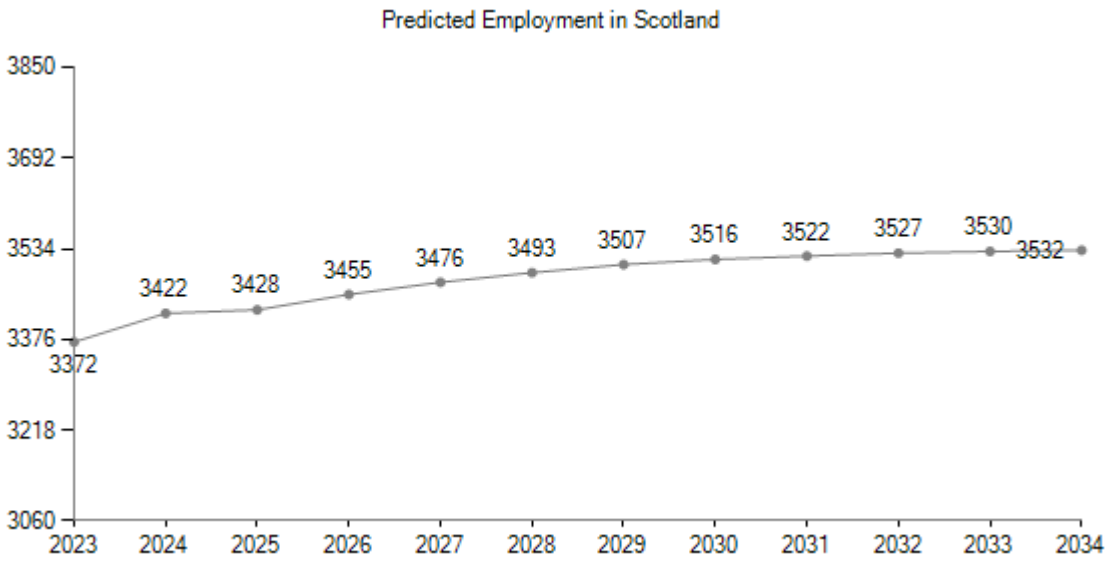
Facebook: www.facebook.com/goconstructuk

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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