

Musical Instrument Technologist

Musical instrument technologists repair, adjust and may make musical instruments. They normally specialise in one area such as pianos, stringed instruments such as violins or guitars, or brass and woodwind instruments, such as trumpets and flute.

The Work

You could be:

- working with materials like wood, metal, plastic or fibreglass
- using hand or machine tools such as lathes, to cut, bend, shape and polish materials
- repairing an instrument damaged by heat, damp or an accident, for example, repairing a crack in a violin
- restoring an old instrument to its original condition in both sound quality and appearance
- applying finishes to instruments such as varnish or polish
- fitting electronic units such as guitar pickups
- servicing instruments, including dismantling, cleaning, polishing and replacing any worn parts
- constructing modern or replica period instruments.

For the work involved in piano tuning see the [Piano Tuner](#) job profile.

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.

Many musical instrument technologists are self-employed and income can vary, depending on how much work they get and how well they can build up a reputation. Fees that they charge for servicing can vary between £60 and £500 or more, depending on the complexity or size of the job.

Conditions

- Some musical instrument technologists work from their own homes, but many work for manufacturing or repair companies in workshops or factories.
- Hours of work will vary depending on where you work.
- Factory and workshop hours are usually regular.
- There may be glue, fumes and sawdust.
- If you are self-employed, you may have to work irregular hours.
- You may have to sit or stand for long periods.

Getting In

- There are very few courses in Scotland.
- Glasgow Clyde College offers an NQ in Stringed Instrument Making (SCQF Level 5/6).
- They also offer an HND course in Stringed Instrument Making and Repair (SCQF Level 8). For entry you need NQ Stringed Instrument Making or other relevant national qualifications at (SCQF Level 6).
- Some employers may offer apprenticeships with part time study.
- The work is very skilled. For building, repairing and tuning instruments, you need good hearing and a natural ear for music, as well as musical knowledge.
- You will need experience in woodwork, metalwork and be able to read technical drawings.
- Knowledge of basic electronics is helpful.
- The ability to play a musical instrument is useful but not essential.
- A driving licence may be useful.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- a good ear for music, both pitch and quality
- accuracy and precision
- good practical skills
- patience and good concentration
- excellent attention to detail
- willingness to learn new skills
- good communication skills
- good problem solving skills
- business skills if self-employed.

Training

- Training is normally on the job after an initial qualification.
- You would usually work with experienced instrument makers or repairers.

Getting On

- This is a small profession and opportunities are good for skilled musical instrument technologists.
- Many musical instrument technologists are self-employed.
- [The Institute of Musical Instrument Technology](#) offers an accreditation scheme. This could be helpful if you are self-employed.
- You may be able to work abroad.

More Information

The Creative and Cultural Skills website has a careers section called [Creative Choices](#) which covers careers information, jobs and opportunities in music.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

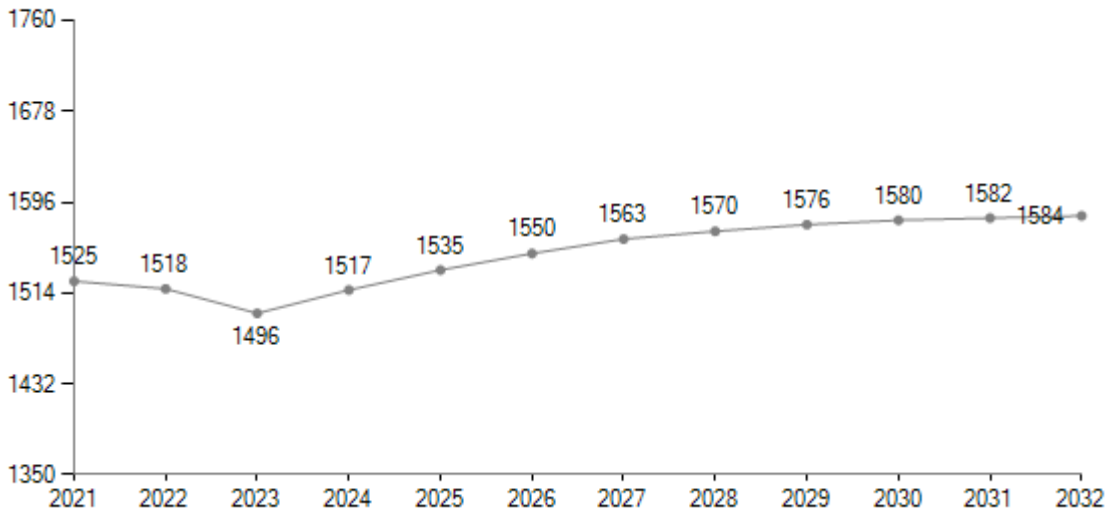


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)