

Engineering Operative

Engineering operatives work as part of a team to build a wide range of products such as cars, household goods, furniture, gadgets and industrial machinery.

The Work

You could be:

- following a diagram or set of instructions and adding parts (components) to a product in the right order
- fitting separate parts of the product together by hand or with tools
- using pliers, spanners and electric screwdrivers or specialist tools and equipment
- wiring and soldering components or gluing, bolting or screwing them together
- assembling the whole product in some cases, but only certain parts of the product in other cases
- using machinery such as lathes and grinders
- operating hand controlled and computer controlled machines
- quality checking components and reporting defects.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide, as 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 2025 the National Minimum Wage is £7.55 an hour for workers under 18, £10.00 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.21 an hour. Shift allowances, overtime and bonuses can increase your pay.

With experience and promotion this could rise to £16.00 an hour.

Conditions

- Working conditions can vary a lot depending on the type of product you are making.
- Factories can be clean and quiet or dusty, dirty and noisy.
- You may have to sit at a work bench, or stand in the same position all day.
- You may have to do heavy lifting and bending.
- You might have to work shifts including early starts.
- You will usually have to wear overalls and, in some industries, a head covering and protective glasses, boots and gloves.

Getting In

- You may not require formal qualifications, but some employers may ask for some subjects at National 4 or 5, particularly in English, Maths and science or technological subjects.
- You might enter through a Modern Apprenticeship.
- You may also have to sit an entrance test to see how good you are at working with your hands.
- Your colour vision may be tested if you are working with electrical wiring.

A wide range of manufacturing companies employ engineering operatives. However, the number of jobs may decrease as assembly operations become more automated or firms buy in ready assembled products from other countries.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- patience
- good practical skills
- excellent attention to detail
- strong computer skills.

You need to be able to:

- concentrate well on repetitive tasks
- work quickly and accurately
- follow instructions and diagrams
- work well with minimal supervision
- meet targets and deadlines.

Training

- Training would normally be on the job under the supervision of an experienced member of staff.
- You may be able to work towards SVQs at SCQF Levels 5 and 6 in a subject such as Performing Engineering Operations.

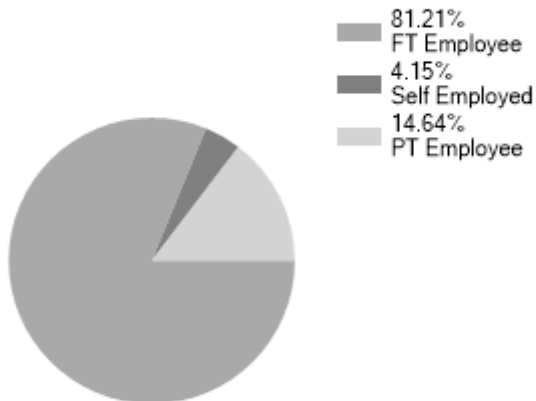
Getting On

- With experience, you may be able to get promoted to posts such as supervisor, chargehand or inspector.
- You may also be able to move to other jobs in manufacturing such as quality control.
- You might be able to go on to train as an engineering craft worker.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

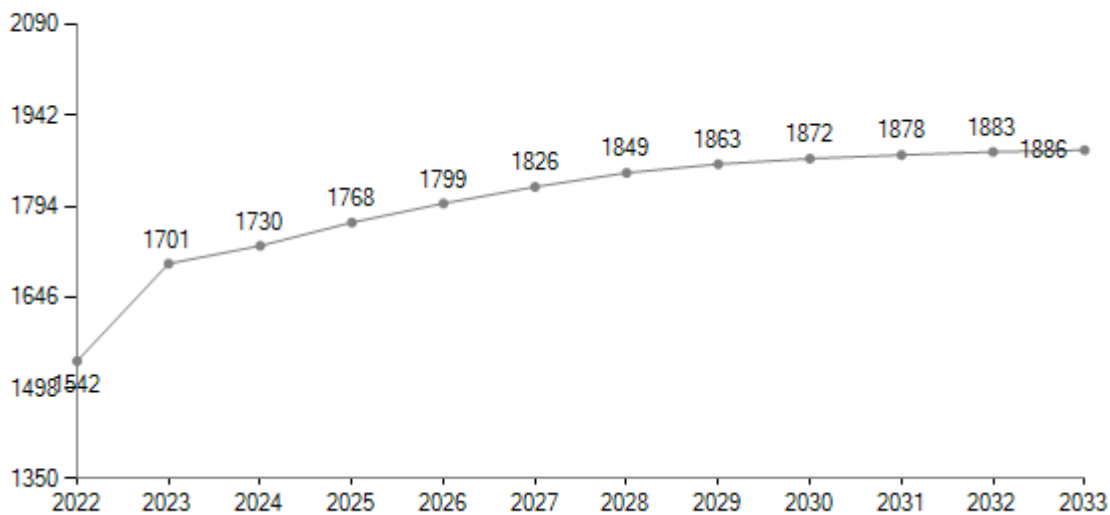


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)