Fabricator or Plater

Fabricators or platers cut, shape and join heavy sheet metal. This is then used in the building of large structures such as tanks, oil rigs, power stations and the hulls of ships. (Those who work with thin sheet metal are called Sheet Metal Workers).

The Work

You could be:

- reading and interpreting technical drawings
- marking out the lines for cutting, drilling or shaping the metal plate
- operating equipment (mostly computer controlled) to cut the metal
- shaping and forming the metal, using large machines such as rollers and presses
- drilling or punching holes in the metal or cutting it
- moving the plates into position for assembly, using chains, cranes and hoists
- assembling the parts into a structure, usually by welding it, but sometimes using bolts and rivets
- finishing off the assembly, using tools like grinders and polishers to smooth the surface.

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.

A Modern Apprentice may start on the National Minimum Wage (NMW). The apprentice rate, for those aged under 19 or aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship, is £7.55 an hour (1 April 2025). Some employers may pay their apprentices more.

Salaries might start at around £25,000 rising to around £35,000 a year. Experienced fabricators can earn £40,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- You would work on outdoor construction sites in all weathers or in very large workshops
- You might work offshore on an oil or gas platform, where weather can be cold and rough.
- You would have to take great care to avoid accidents with machines or when working at heights.
- You would have to wear suitable protective clothing, such as boiler suits, ear protectors, safety visors or goggles, gloves and hard hats.
- In some cases you would work normal hours, but in some companies shift work may be required. There may be regular overtime.

Getting In

- You could enter through the Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship (FA), which you can start in S5 and study at school and college. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually need 3 subjects at National 5 including English and Maths. Some colleges also ask for Physics.
- You might enter though a Modern Apprenticeship.
- Employers' requirements vary, but most expect applicants to have relevant subjects at National 4 or 5, including English, Maths and science or technological subjects.
- You may also have to sit an entry test to see how suitable you are for this type of work.
- If you work in the construction sector you must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and possibly a Client Contractor National Safety Group (CCNSG) Passport Scheme or equivalent to work on site. You will need to pass a health, safety and environment test to qualify for this scheme.
- If you work offshore you would undergo specific training, such as the Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training Certificate (BOSIET).

Fabricators or platers are employed by engineering and construction firms. You can find jobs advertised on the internet, such as the Universal Jobmatch website, and at your local Jobcentre Plus office.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- practical and technical ability
- good hand skills
- an accurate and methodical approach
- good concentration and attention to detail
- a good level of fitness for lifting and moving heavy items
- an awareness of health and safety issues.

You need to be able to:

- read and interpret technical drawings
- measure and calculate sizes
- picture the end product
- work outside in all weather conditions
- work at heights.

Training

- You would usually complete SVQs in a relevant area, such as Fabrication and Welding Engineering at SCQF Levels 5 and 6.
- For senior jobs, you may need to do further specialist training.

Getting On

- After experience you may be able to gain promotion. Promoted jobs include foreman or forewoman, trainer, inspector and manager.

- There may be opportunities to work on construction projects abroad.

Contacts

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)
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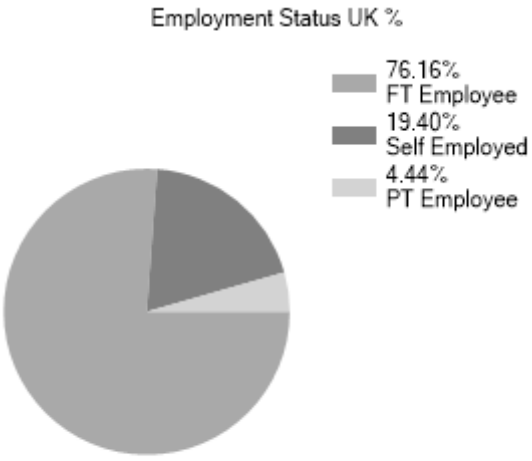
Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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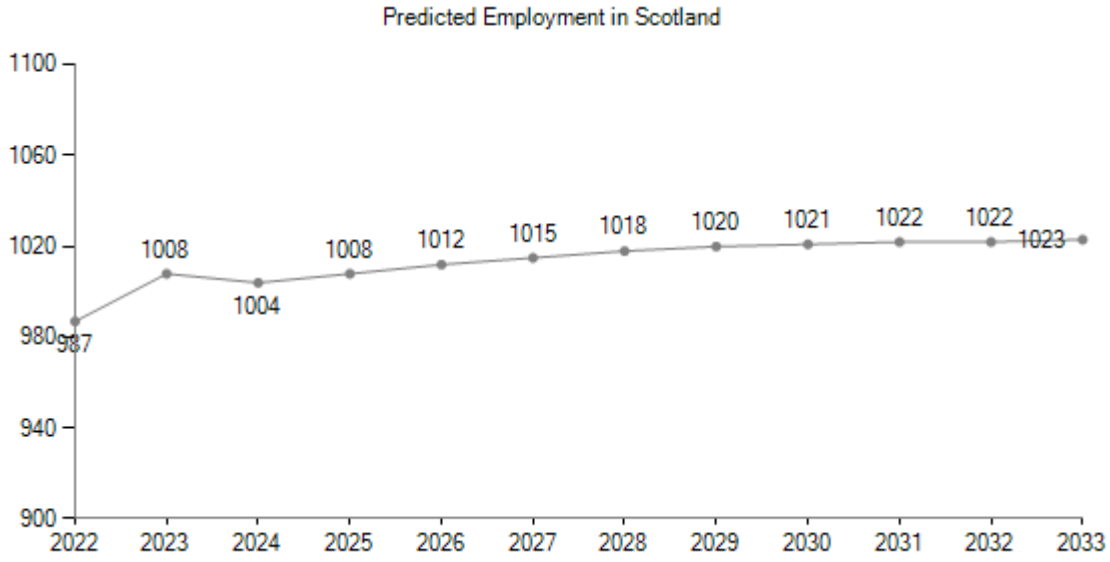

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