

## Optical Technician

Optical technicians make optical parts for scientific instruments such as microscopes and telescopes, lenses for spectacles and contact lenses.

### The Work

You could be:

- preparing customer prescriptions to the highest standard using the latest computer-controlled equipment
- shaping moulded glass or plastic for various lenses including spectacle lenses and contact lenses
- using lathes and other hand or machine tools to grind, smooth and polish the lenses
- making up complex lenses by hand – most simple lenses are made by machine
- making spectacle lenses the right shape for the frame and fitting them into the frame
- finishing spectacle lenses by glazing, or applying tints and polishes
- assembling and testing the instrument or pair of spectacles
- cleaning and maintaining equipment and machinery
- ordering stock.

### Pay

Pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for optical technicians in the UK tend to be around £15,000, rising with experience to £24,000 a year.

### Conditions

- You would work in a factory, workshop or laboratory.
- You usually work around 37-40 hours a week.
- It may be noisy.
- You'd wear a white coat and sometimes eye protection.

### Getting In

- You do not always need formal qualifications but some employers will ask for subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and science or technological subjects.
- You may get in through a Modern Apprenticeship or company training scheme.

You could work for a manufacturing company, a large prescription company, an optical firm or a small optician's practice.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to organise your workload
- interested in science and maths
- eager and willing to learn
- patient
- able to concentrate for long periods
- able to work as part of a team.

You should have:

- good communication skills
- a good eye for detail
- good practical skills
- numeracy skills
- good hand to eye coordination
- a steady hand.

## Training

- Training is on the job.
- You would study The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) qualifications.
- These include the Level 2 Award in Glazing Spectacles and the Level 4 Diploma for Optical Technicians.
- There are also the SQA accredited Certificates in Optical Care at SCQF Levels 5 and 7.
- These are distance learning courses that start in June and September each year.

## Getting On

- You may be able to move into a supervisory job.
- You may move into designing instruments.
- You could take further qualifications to become a dispensing optician.

## Contacts

### Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers

Tel: 020 7236 2932

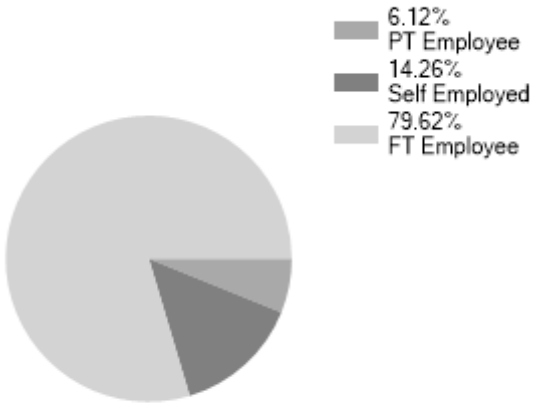
Website: [www.spectaclemakers.com](http://www.spectaclemakers.com)

Twitter: @spectaclemakers

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

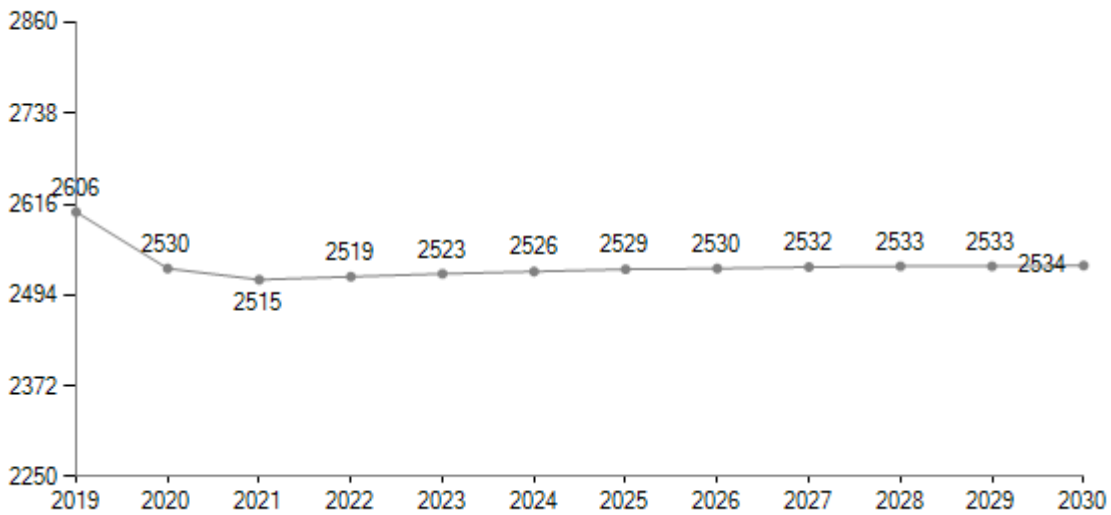


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)