

Jewellery Designer

Jewellery designers create decorative items from their own designs using mainly precious metals and gemstones. They design pieces of personal jewellery or ornamentation either as a 'one-off', made in a small workshop for a particular client or for factory manufacture.

The Work

You could be:

- researching new ideas; taking photos, searching the internet or looking at other designers' work for inspiration
- using CAD software to design jewellery on computer
- working with a wide range of materials: gold, silver, platinum, brass, copper, plastic, wood, feathers, fabric, beads and gem stones
- using many different tools such as pliers, cutters, mallets, soldering torches, drills and polishing machines, or chemicals such as acids and staining agents
- using a wide range of craft techniques: soldering metal pieces together, engraving or etching images, making and casting moulds, setting stones or chasing metal (raising the surface using a press or hand tools)
- outsourcing work to craft specialists, such as having a mould manufactured for casting multiple items, or having expensive precious stones set in a ring
- finishing your item to a professional standard, such as smoothing a metal surface with fine emery papers and files, then using a polishing machine to give a highly polished finish
- keeping up to date with design trends and the latest techniques
- promoting or selling your work online, or at craft fairs, galleries or through a shop.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job
- the type of craft work you are doing.

Starting salaries for jewellery designers in the UK can be in the range of £18,000 to £22,000 a year. Experienced designers can earn up to around £50,000 a year. Many jewellery designers are self-employed or work freelance. They charge a fee, which varies depending on the item designed or made, and on their reputation. The better known they are, the more they can charge.

Conditions

- You would work in a studio, workshop or from your own home.
- Working conditions may be noisy or dusty in a workshop environment.

- You sometimes need to use protective gear such as gloves, goggles and an apron.
- You might have to work long hours, including evenings and weekends, to meet deadlines.
- You might travel to meet clients, or attend exhibitions, in order to promote and sell your work.

Getting In

- There are no formal entry requirements but most people have a qualification in art and design, specialising in jewellery design, 3D design or silversmithing.
- You could take an NC, NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6), HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or a degree (SCQF Level 9).
- You do not always need qualifications to get into an NC or NQ, although some courses may require up to 4-5 subjects at National 4 or 5. For an HNC or HND you need 1-2 Highers or an NC or NQ, and for a degree, usually 4 Highers including English and Art and Design.
- You normally need a portfolio of art work for entry to college or university.
- If you are very talented and have an extremely good portfolio, you might get into an HNC, HND or degree course with less than the normal minimum academic requirements.

For art school courses you need to apply through UCAS.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- artistic and naturally creative
- practical when using tools and materials
- accurate and attentive to detail
- knowledgeable about materials and working processes
- patient and adaptable – you may have to change designs to fit your budget or to meet your client's wishes
- able to work under pressure to meet deadlines
- aware of health and safety working procedures
- able to accept criticism of your work
- business aware, if self-employed.

Training

- You would continue to develop your skills and experience through on the job training if employed, or by attending further workshops or courses.
- [The National Association of Jewellers \(NAJ\)](#) has information on professional courses available.
- You could take a postgraduate course in jewellery design if your degree was in another art subject.

Getting On

- If you are working at assistant level in a design company, you could progress to producing designs for others to make.
- You could set up your own company, making and selling the items you design, or employ others to produce your designs.

- You could design for manufacturers on a freelance basis.
- Getting work is competitive so promoting yourself and building up a network of contacts is important to establish yourself if you are working freelance.
- There are fewer opportunities for promotion if you work in a small craft workshop.
- You may also do other jobs such as teaching or running a craft shop, to supplement your income.

More Information

For more information on creative careers see [Discover Creative Careers Finder](#)

Contacts

Crafts Council

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Website: www.craftscouncil.org.uk

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

Gemmological Association of Great Britain

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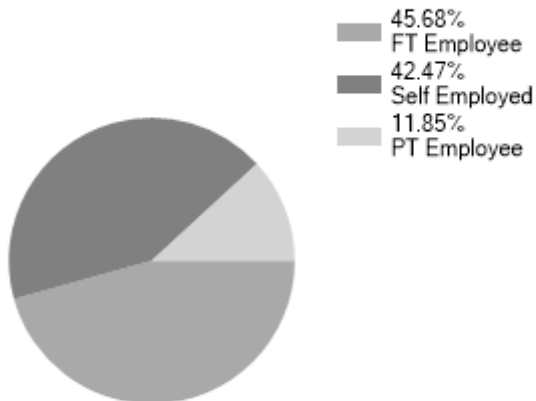
Website: www.gem-a.com

X: @GemAofGB

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GemAofGB

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

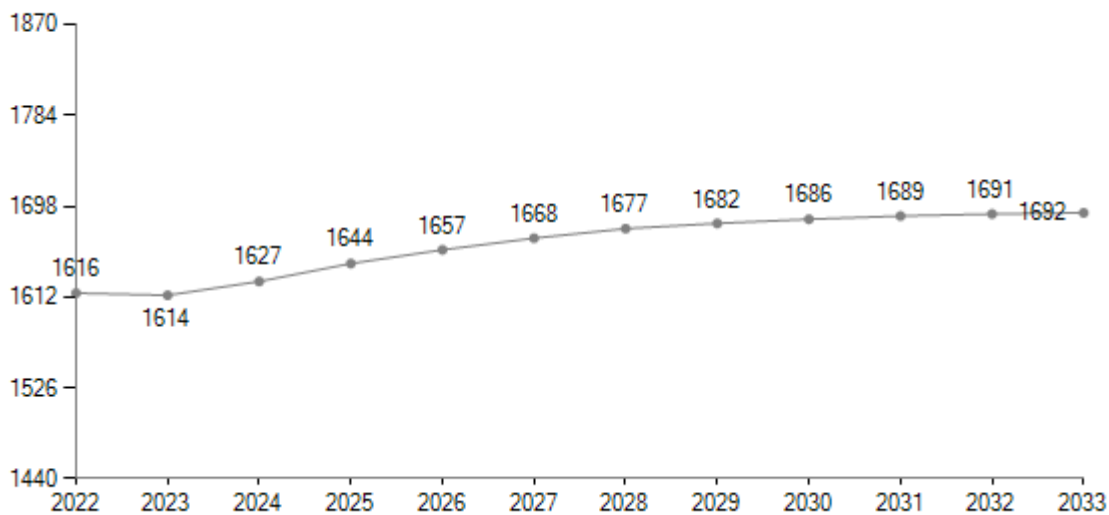


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)