

SSLPR4 Leather Production Operator – Finishing

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Leather Production
Functional area	Leather Production
Job role	SSLPR4 Leather Production Operator
Job role description	Responsible for surface finishing of leather including drying, staking, plating, buffing and coating. Operates mechanical finishing machinery to achieve required texture, thickness and appearance.
Performance expectations	- Achieve production targets without compromising leather quality - Maintain correct machine settings and process parameters - Operate machinery safely within WHS requirements - Minimise defects, waste and rework - Ensure consistent preparation for downstream processes
Specialisation	May specialise in specific machinery or process stages.
Application in other Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) sectors	Transferable to textile finishing and industrial coating processes.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	- Operate drying equipment (toggle frames, vacuum dryers) - Operate staking and softening machines - Control buffing, sanding and plating machines - Apply spray finishes according to specification - Inspect surface quality and identify defects
Critical work functions	- Precise mechanical control of finishing machinery - Surface quality control and defect detection - Adjustment of machine pressure and feed rates - Safe operation of high-speed finishing equipment - Coordination with quality assurance teams

3. Technical skills

Drying equipment operation	Operate toggle drying frames, vacuum dryers or hang-dry systems.
Staking and softening machines	Control mechanical action to achieve desired softness.
Buffing and sanding machines	Adjust pressure and feed rate to refine surface without damaging grain.

Spray finishing equipment	Operate spray lines applying finishes consistently.
Machine safety compliance	Maintain guards, emergency stops and safe working practices.

4. Generic Skills

Teamwork	Works effectively within production teams.
Communication	Reports faults, quality issues and safety risks clearly.
Problem solving	Responds to process or machinery irregularities.
Learning	Builds proficiency in machinery setup and process control.
Initiative	Supports yield improvement and waste reduction.
Service / customer orientation	Understands impact of role on final leather performance and customer requirements.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Use of electronic work orders and digital production scheduling systems to confirm finishing specifications, batch sequences and priority jobs • Interaction with visual display units (VDUs) and touch-screen control panels on drying tunnels, spray lines and automated finishing equipment • Operation of semi-automated and automated spray finishing systems, including programmable spray robots and conveyorised lines • Understanding and application of new low-VOC, water-based and environmentally compliant finishing chemistries • Monitoring automated drying systems with controlled temperature, airflow and humidity settings • Increased precision in thickness, gloss and surface measurement using digital gauges and surface inspection tools • Greater traceability and batch recording requirements linked to customer specifications and export standards • Adaptation to lean manufacturing workflows and tighter integration between finishing, quality assurance and dispatch
-----------------	--

6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	No qualification.
Intermediate / trade-level development	No qualification.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Operator → Senior Operator → Team Leader → Production Supervisor
--------------------------	--

8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 2-3
-------------------------------------	---------------

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 4
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	Manufacturing Process Worker – Surface Finishing context.



Skills Insight is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.