

SSALT09 Leather / Suede Garment Repair and Alteration Specialist

Disclaimer

These Occupational Frameworks and Skill Profiles have been developed as workforce planning, occupational mapping and skills reference resources for the Australian textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry. They are intended to describe the typical functions, responsibilities, skills and capabilities associated with occupations across the industry.

These documents are not intended to replace or override industrial instruments or employment arrangements, including awards, enterprise agreements, employment contracts, position descriptions, classification structures, licensing or regulatory requirements, or other statutory obligations. Where differences arise, the relevant industrial, legislative or regulatory requirements take precedence. The Skill Profiles should be used as complementary reference documents to support workforce planning, career development, training and skills recognition.

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Clothing and Footwear Repairs and Alterations
Functional area	Clothing Alterations and Repairs
Job role	SSALT09 Leather / Suede Garment Repair and Alteration Specialist
Job role description	Provides specialist repair, alteration and restoration services for leather and suede garments. Responsible for structural reshaping, panel replacement, stitching repairs and surface restoration. Typically found in larger studios or enterprises offering advanced material specialisation.
Performance expectations	• Deliver durable and aesthetically consistent leather repairs. • Maintain garment structural integrity during alteration. • Match colour, grain and texture effectively. • Minimise visible repair impact. • Meet agreed customer timelines. • Maintain safe handling of specialist materials.
Specialisation	• Leather jacket reconstruction. • Suede garment reshaping. • Panel replacement and patching. • Lining replacement in leather garments. • Surface conditioning and restoration.
Application in other TCF sectors	Transferable to leather goods repair, saddlery, footwear production and artisanal leather workshops.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Assess leather or suede garment structure. • Determine feasibility of alteration or repair. • Disassemble garment panels where required. • Replace damaged panels or sections.
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	• Perform leather stitching and reinforcement. • Condition and refinish repaired surfaces. • Conduct final inspection and finishing.
Critical work functions	• Maintaining leather grain and colour consistency. • Ensuring structural durability of repairs. • Preventing material damage during stitching. • Accurate panel alignment and seam strength. • Managing specialist adhesives and tools safely. • Balancing aesthetic repair outcomes with structural needs. • Maintaining precision in cutting and shaping.

3. Technical skills

Leather construction knowledge	Understanding garment panel construction and seam types.
Specialist cutting techniques	Precision cutting of leather and suede.
Heavy-duty sewing machine operation	Use of industrial machines for leather work.
Adhesive handling	Safe use of leather adhesives and bonding agents.
Colour matching and finishing	Restoration and surface treatment techniques.
Panel replacement techniques	Structural rebuilding of damaged sections.
Cost estimation	Accurate pricing of complex leather repairs.

4. Generic Skills

Attention to detail	Maintain precision in leather handling and stitching.
Problem solving	Develop solutions for complex material damage.
Communication	Explain repair options and limitations clearly.
Manual dexterity	Perform precise cutting and stitching tasks.
Time management	Meet agreed deadlines for specialist work.
Customer orientation	Deliver high-value restoration outcomes.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Sustainable leather repair and reuse practices. • Repair of synthetic and vegan leather alternatives. • Digital job tracking systems. • Advanced material sustainability knowledge.
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST31022 Certificate III in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles.
Advanced development	MST40222 Certificate IV in Apparel and Fashion or equivalent.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Senior Alterations Specialist → Leather / Suede Specialist → Owner-Operator.
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 3.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 3.
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	399433 - Dressmaker or Tailor.



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