

SSAPP43 Milliner / Hat Maker

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	Apparel production
Functional area	Manufacturing - Sewing and Assembly
Job role	SSAPP43 Milliner / Hat Maker
Job role description	Designs, constructs and finishes hats and headwear using a combination of traditional handcraft techniques and modern production methods to meet design, functional and aesthetic requirements. In apparel production—particularly in fashion, bespoke and specialty manufacturing—the Milliner / Hat Maker works with a variety of materials, shapes and embellishments to produce high-quality headwear, ensuring fit, durability and design accuracy aligned with brand and customer expectations.
Performance expectations	- Producing hats and headwear that meet design specifications and quality standards. - Maintaining precision in shaping, stitching and finishing. - Selecting appropriate materials, trims and components. - Ensuring structural integrity and durability of products. - Meeting production timelines for bespoke or batch work. - Minimising material waste and defects. - Maintaining consistency in craftsmanship and finish. - Adapting designs for production or customer requirements. - Following workplace safety and production procedures. - Supporting efficient workflow in small-scale or specialised production.
Specialisation (optional)	Bespoke millinery, fashion headwear, theatrical/costume design, structured hat making, embellishment and finishing.
Application in other TCF sectors	- Apparel production supporting fashion and accessory manufacturing. - Textile production supporting structured fabric product development.

	• Costume and theatrical production supporting specialised headwear. • Uniform and workwear production supporting functional headwear. • Promotional and branded merchandise supporting customised hats. • Luxury and bespoke manufacturing supporting handcrafted products. • Creative industries supporting design-led textile products.
--	--

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Interpreting design briefs and specifications. • Selecting materials such as felt, straw, fabric and trims. • Blocking, shaping and forming hat structures. • Cutting, sewing and assembling components. • Applying trims, linings and decorative elements. • Fitting and adjusting hats to required sizes. • Inspecting finished products for quality. • Maintaining tools, equipment and workspaces.
Critical work functions	• Ensuring accuracy of shape, fit and structure. • Maintaining high standards of craftsmanship and finish. • Preventing material damage during shaping and assembly. • Meeting customer or production requirements. • Maintaining consistency across products. • Supporting efficient workflow in small production environments. • Adhering to safety and handling requirements.

3. Technical skills

Pattern and design interpretation	Reading and applying headwear design specifications.
Material handling	Working with felt, straw, fabrics and structural components.
Blocking and shaping techniques	Using moulds and steam to shape hats.
Sewing and assembly	Constructing hats using hand and machine sewing techniques.
Finishing and embellishment	Applying trims, linings and decorative elements.
Tool and equipment use	Using millinery tools and equipment safely.
Quality control	Inspecting finished products for defects and accuracy.

4. Generic Skills

Attention to detail	Ensuring precision in shaping, stitching and finishing.
Manual dexterity	Handling materials and tools with accuracy.
Creativity	Applying design concepts and aesthetic judgement.

Time management	Meeting production or client deadlines.
Problem solving	Adjusting designs and resolving production issues.
Communication	Working with designers, clients and production teams.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Using digital design tools for headwear development. • Integrating traditional craft with modern production methods. • Applying sustainable materials and processes. • Supporting small-batch and on-demand production models. • Using digital pattern development tools. • Combining manual and automated production techniques.
-----------------	--

6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST20722 Certificate II in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles or equivalent.
Advanced development	MST30316 Certificate III in Millinery or equivalent.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Production Assistant → Milliner / Hat Maker → Senior Milliner → Production Supervisor → Designer or Production Manager.
--------------------------	---

8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 2-3
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 3
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	399433 Dressmaker or Tailor. OSCA specialisation: Milliner



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