

SSFOT04 Footwear Designer

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	Footwear Production – Australia
Functional area	Product Design and Technical Development
Job role	SSFOT04 Footwear Designer
Job role description	Designs and develops footwear products from concept through to production specification. Responsible for translating market trends, brand positioning and technical performance requirements into manufacturable footwear designs, including upper design, material selection, construction details and collaboration with pattern makers and production teams.
Performance expectations	- Develop commercially viable footwear design concepts. - Ensure designs meet cost, quality and production requirements. - Align product development with brand and market positioning. - Produce accurate technical specifications and documentation. - Collaborate effectively with production and technical teams. - Meet product development timelines and launch schedules.
Specialisation	- Athletic and performance footwear design. - Fashion and lifestyle footwear design. - Safety and industrial footwear design.
Application in other TCF sectors	Transferable to product design roles in leather goods, apparel and accessories manufacturing sectors.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	- Research fashion, consumer and market trends. - Develop footwear design concepts and sketches. - Select appropriate materials and components. - Prepare technical design packs and specifications. - Collaborate with pattern makers and sample makers. - Participate in product testing and evaluation. - Support cost analysis and design modifications.
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Critical work functions	- Balancing aesthetics with manufacturability. - Ensuring design compliance with safety and performance standards. - Aligning product design with costing constraints. - Coordinating with cross-functional teams. - Meeting product launch timelines. - Responding to market feedback and trends. - Maintaining brand integrity in product development.
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3. Technical skills

Footwear construction knowledge	Understanding of upper construction, sole attachment and finishing techniques.
Material selection	Knowledge of leathers, synthetics, textiles and components.
CAD design systems*	Use digital design software for footwear development.
Technical specification development	Prepare accurate design packs and production briefs.
Pattern collaboration	Work with pattern makers to refine fit and construction.
Product testing awareness	Understand performance and durability testing standards.
Cost awareness	Design within defined cost parameters.
Trend forecasting	Interpret consumer and fashion trends into design concepts.

*Technical skills identified as emerging skills in TCF industry.

4. Generic Skills

Creativity	Generate innovative and market-relevant design ideas.
Communication	Present and explain design concepts clearly.
Problem solving	Resolve design and production challenges.
Teamwork	Collaborate with technical and production teams.
Learning	Adapt to evolving materials and technologies.
Initiative	Identify new product opportunities and improvements.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	3D footwear modelling and virtual prototyping. - Digital product lifecycle management systems. - Sustainable material selection and lifecycle analysis. - Advanced CAD/CAM integration. - Rapid prototyping and additive manufacturing awareness. - Data-informed design decision-making.
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST40316 Certificate IV in Custom-Made Footwear or equivalent.
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Advanced development	MST50122 Diploma of Apparel, Fashion and Textiles or bachelor's program in product design or industrial design or equivalent.
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7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Possible job progression: Assistant Designer → Footwear Designer → Senior Designer → Design Manager.
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 4-5.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 1.
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	242231 Fashion Designer.



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