

SSFOT12 Product Developer

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
Functional area	Product Design and Development
Job role	SSFOT12 Product Developer
Job role description	Translates footwear design concepts into production-ready products. Coordinates sampling, technical specification refinement, materials sourcing, fit validation, costing alignment and production trials to ensure footwear products are commercially viable and manufacturable within quality, cost and timeline parameters.
Performance expectations	- Convert design concepts into manufacturable product specifications. - Ensure products meet cost, quality and performance targets. - Coordinate sample development and approval processes. - Align product development timelines with production schedules. - Resolve technical and construction challenges prior to bulk production. - Support continuous improvement in product performance and efficiency.
Specialisation	- Athletic and performance footwear development. - Fashion and lifestyle footwear commercialisation. - Safety and compliance-focused footwear development.
Application in other TCF sectors	Transferable to product development roles in leather goods, apparel and technical textile manufacturing sectors.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	- Develop detailed technical packs and production briefs. - Coordinate sample making and prototype evaluation. - Refine patterns, components and materials selections. - Conduct fit trials and performance testing.
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	• Collaborate with designers, pattern makers and production teams. • Monitor costing adjustments during development. • Approve final production specifications.
Critical work functions	• Balancing design intent with manufacturability. • Ensuring accurate technical documentation. • Managing development timelines and milestones. • Maintaining cost targets during product refinement. • Ensuring compliance with safety and performance standards. • Cross-functional coordination across design and production. • Minimising development-to-production risks.

3. Technical skills

Footwear construction expertise	Advanced knowledge of upper construction, lasting, sole attachment and finishing.
Technical specification development	Prepare comprehensive production-ready technical packs.
Material and component evaluation	Assess durability, performance and cost suitability of materials.
Pattern and fit refinement	Collaborate on adjustments to ensure optimal fit and comfort.
Cost analysis and bills of materials (BOM) management*	Develop and manage bills of materials aligned to margin targets.
Product testing coordination	Oversee performance and compliance testing processes.
Enterprise resource planning (ERP) and product lifecycle management (PLM) systems*	Use digital product lifecycle management tools.
Quality assurance integration	Ensure development aligns with QA standards and inspection protocols.

*Technical skills identified as emerging skills in TCF industry.

4. Generic Skills

Problem solving	Resolve construction and development challenges.
Communication	Coordinate effectively across design and production teams.
Organisation	Manage development timelines and documentation.
Attention to detail	Ensure accuracy in specifications and testing outcomes.
Learning	Adapt to evolving materials and manufacturing technologies.
Teamwork	Work collaboratively across departments.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• 3D virtual prototyping and digital sampling. • Advanced PLM integration. • Sustainable material lifecycle assessment. • Rapid prototyping technologies.
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	• Data-driven performance testing analytics. • Automation-ready product specification development.
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST40316 Certificate IV in Custom-Made Footwear or equivalent.
Advanced development	MEM50222 Diploma of Engineering - Technical or equivalent.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Possible job progression: Assistant Product Developer → Product Developer → Senior Product Developer → Product Development 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)	242232 - Industrial Designer.



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