

SSNST07 Textile Finishing Operator

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	Natural and Synthetic Textile Manufacturing
Functional area	Technical Textile Production
Job role	SSNST07 Textile Finishing Operator
Job role description	Operates and supports textile finishing machinery and processes used to enhance the appearance, functionality, durability and performance characteristics of textile materials within the natural and synthetic textiles sector of the TCF industry. This role is identified within the Technical Textile Production function of the Natural and Synthetic Textile Manufacturing Occupational Framework as an emerging occupation. The Textile Finishing Operator is responsible for carrying out textile finishing operations that transform raw or partially processed fabrics into finished materials suitable for commercial, industrial and technical applications. The role supports finishing operations across a broad range of textile products including apparel textiles, furnishing fabrics, industrial textiles, technical textiles, filtration systems, transport textiles, protective materials, medical textiles and advanced engineered textile systems. The Textile Finishing Operator works with natural fibres such as wool and cotton and synthetic materials including polyester, nylon, acrylic, polypropylene and blended technical fibres. The role requires operation of specialised textile finishing systems including washing, drying, heat setting, calendaring, coating preparation, chemical finishing, flame-retardant treatment, water-repellent finishing, antimicrobial treatment and surface enhancement processes. The position requires detailed understanding of textile behaviour, fabric construction, finishing chemistry, machine setup, process control, curing conditions, tension management and quality requirements. Operators monitor finishing consistency,

	dimensional stability, colour performance, handle, appearance and technical functionality to ensure products meet customer and technical specifications. The Textile Finishing Operator works closely with textile technologists, production supervisors, maintenance technicians, quality personnel and process specialists to maintain operational efficiency, minimise defects and support continuous improvement across textile finishing operations. The role also contributes to sustainability initiatives, water and energy reduction practices, process optimisation, troubleshooting and advanced textile manufacturing capability development.
Performance expectations	• Producing finished textile materials that meet technical, functional and aesthetic specifications. • Operating textile finishing machinery safely and efficiently. • Maintaining consistency of textile appearance, handle and performance characteristics. • Minimising finishing defects, contamination and process waste. • Supporting effective machine setup, calibration and process control. • Monitoring curing, drying and finishing performance throughout production. • Supporting compliance with safety, environmental and quality procedures. • Maintaining traceability and production documentation. • Contributing to productivity, sustainability and continuous improvement initiatives.
Specialisation	Textile finishing systems, textile chemistry, thermal finishing, chemical treatment processes, coating preparation, fabric enhancement systems and advanced textile finishing operations.
Application in other TCF sectors	Technical textiles, apparel textiles, industrial textiles, furnishing textiles, medical textiles, automotive textiles, filtration systems and advanced textile manufacturing.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Operating textile washing, drying, heat setting and finishing machinery. • Preparing fabrics, chemicals and finishing materials for processing. • Monitoring temperatures, curing conditions, line speeds and process parameters. • Applying specialised finishing treatments including water repellency, flame retardancy and antimicrobial finishes. • Conducting visual and technical inspections of finished textile materials. • Identifying finishing defects, contamination and process inconsistencies. • Adjusting machine settings to maintain finishing quality and production efficiency. • Performing routine cleaning, calibration and basic maintenance activities. • Recording production, quality and traceability information.
-----------	--

	Following workplace safety, environmental and operational procedures.
Critical work functions	- Ensuring finished textiles meet technical, functional and appearance specifications. - Maintaining dimensional stability, fabric integrity and finishing consistency. - Preventing finishing defects, contamination and process failures. - Supporting efficient workflow across textile finishing operations. - Maintaining safe operation of chemical, thermal and finishing systems. - Supporting compliance with technical, environmental and customer standards. - Maintaining traceability and documentation integrity. - Contributing to operational reliability, sustainability and advanced manufacturing capability.

3. Technical skills

Textile finishing operations	Operating washing, drying, curing and finishing machinery.
Textile chemistry	Understanding finishing chemicals, treatments and textile reactions.
Machine setup and adjustment	Adjusting process parameters for finishing quality and efficiency.
Thermal and curing systems	Monitoring drying, curing and heat-setting processes.
Technical quality control	Inspecting finished textile performance and appearance.
Process monitoring	Identifying faults and maintaining production continuity.
Basic maintenance	Performing cleaning and routine machine servicing.
Documentation and traceability	Maintaining production and quality records.

4. Generic Skills

Attention to detail	Maintaining finishing quality and process consistency.
Communication	Working with supervisors, technicians and production teams.
Problem solving	Resolving textile finishing and process issues.
Teamwork	Supporting integrated textile manufacturing operations.
Time management	Meeting production schedules and throughput targets.
Adaptability	Working across multiple textile finishing systems.
Reliability	Maintaining consistent operational performance.
Professionalism	Following operational, environmental and safety standards.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Sustainable textile finishing and low-water processing technologies. • Smart textile finishing systems and functional surface treatments. • Industry 4.0 integration in textile finishing operations. • Digital process analytics and predictive maintenance systems. • Advanced chemical treatment systems and nanotechnology finishes. • Energy-efficient curing and thermal processing technologies.
-----------------	--

6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	No skill set or qualification.
Advanced development	No skill set or qualification.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Textile Production Assistant → Textile Finishing Operator → Senior Finishing Operator → Production Team Leader → Production Supervisor.
--------------------------	---

8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	Level 2-3.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 4.
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	7314432 Textile or Footwear Production Machine Operator.



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