

Footwear Manufacturer Apprenticeship: Information for New Entrants





WELCOME

(downloadable guide for employers to share with potential new recruits on the entry level footwear manufacturing apprenticeship)

The British footwear manufacturing industry has a global reputation for the highest quality. We support the pursuit of excellence in our traditional craft skills whilst also embracing innovation and technology. There are around 30 larger footwear manufacturers in the UK and around 80 smaller specialist footwear making businesses, with many more people making parts of footwear in small enterprises. Together they make almost 6 million pairs of shoes, boots and trainers every year, from ladies' fashion to the very highest quality bespoke men's shoes, through to trainers and slippers. Over half of the footwear made in the UK is exported around the world thanks to our reputation for high quality design and production.

Exports are rising and firms want to produce more footwear in the UK, so have come together to create a new, nationally accredited, entry level apprenticeship scheme. The full details of the training can be found here

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/footwear-manufacturer/>

What are my career options ?

Some footwear manufacturers choose to stay in production, becoming more and more skilled in a specific area, hand-crafting or using machinery to create the very highest quality product. A very rewarding career for a maker. Others progress to team leadership, management and beyond. Either way, this apprenticeship in Footwear Manufacturing is a great earn-while-you-learn entry point to a wonderful industry with a great future.

How do I apply?

Firms and colleges advertise vacancies. If you know a shoemaker or footwear manufacturing company in your area, don't be afraid to apply directly to see if they have, or are considering a vacancy.

College Contacts

Many of the larger firms are concentrated around Northamptonshire.

Northampton College: colin.needle@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

North West England: adrian.roscoe@westlancs.ac.uk

South West England: Bridgewater College are recording interest. Further details will follow when available

London : Capel Manor college are recording interest. Further details will follow when available.



A little more information

Making footwear is a complicated business with many processes involved.

In larger firms, a Footwear Manufacturer will generally not make a whole shoe or boot at their workplace but will contribute to some of the required processes. It takes time to develop specialist skills in our industry. Regardless of which production methods your employer uses, all footwear manufacturers undertaking this apprenticeship will know and understand the end-to-end process of how to manufacture a piece of footwear. Completion of this apprenticeship will give you both industry experience and knowledge, making you very employable and on your way to becoming a specialist.

You will be very much part of a team. You could find yourself reporting to team leaders, supervisors or owners. You will also deal with production colleagues. In smaller firms, footwear manufacturers may also have contact with clients and designers.

Footwear manufacturers may work in a small-scale operation contributing to the production of specialist, orthopaedic (which means there is a medical use alongside style and comfort) or bespoke/personalised footwear, through to larger factories with extensive teams and departments, usually producing larger runs of the same piece of footwear.

Footwear Manufacturers work quickly and accurately using hand tools, technical equipment and machinery - with clear instructions of course, for each piece of footwear within agreed timescales and to the required quality standard. They have great attention to detail and quality and are ever mindful of health and safety both of themselves and colleagues. It really is a team effort.

