

Ceramic Pottery Maker

Introduction

Ceramic pottery makers produce different types of pottery using both traditional craft skills and mechanised processes. Most pottery makers specialise in a particular job, for example, throwing or casting.

Also known as

- Craft Pottery Maker
- Potter
- Ceramist



Work Activities

As a Ceramic Pottery Maker, you will use a combination of hand and automated tools to make pottery products. Traditional hand tools are still used a lot, as this remains the most effective method. However, automatic tools are also often used as they speed up the process.

The most common traditional manufacturing process is 'throwing' a pot. You will throw a lump of clay, which you have kneaded, onto a wheel. This is shaped by hand and by the speed of the wheel.

Water is used to help the shaping process. Once the item has dried, and a finish applied, it is 'fired' in a kiln to improve strength.

As well as more traditional pottery products, clay is used to make many other items such as bricks, tiles and pipes. It is also widely used in the manufacture of high-tech products, such as computers, jet engines and lasers.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To become a Ceramic Pottery Maker, you'll need:

- physical stamina to help you knead the clay
- patience when moulding clay
- creativity and a good eye for detail and design, if you are making original items
- good hand to eye co-ordination
- some business knowledge if you run your own company

This job might not be suitable for people who have skin conditions, such as eczema.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £19,000
- With experience: £19,000 - £21,500

Hours of work

Ceramic Pottery Makers who work in a factory normally work 39 hours a week, which may involve shift work and overtime. Craftspeople may work full-time, but there may also be opportunities for part-time work.

Where could I work?

Employment is mainly in large commercial potteries. There is also scope for throwers and casters in small craft potteries.

Opportunities for Ceramic Pottery Makers occur throughout the UK.

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for Ceramic Pottery Makers to become self-employed. You may set up your own pottery, or share premises with other craftspeople.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised on all the major job boards, on Universal Jobmatch, and at Jobcentre Plus.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

You might not need any qualifications to get into this job. Practical ability is often more important to employers.

Some employers may prefer that you have a few GCSEs, or equivalent.

An Intermediate Level Apprenticeship is a great place to start.

Training

Training is generally on-the-job, firstly by observing an experienced worker to learn basic techniques. You will then advance to making simple shapes while under supervision.

The amount of time you spend training largely depends upon the technique you are learning and your ability. Some techniques, such as casting, can be learned in six to twelve weeks. Others, such as throwing or jiggering, can take much longer.

There are City & Guilds qualifications at various levels in Creative Techniques in Ceramics.

Courses in pottery are available at colleges throughout the UK.

Work Experience

Previous experience gained in the manufacturing industry would be really useful for this career.

Progression

Progression could be to supervisory positions. Many pottery makers become self-employed.

Qualifications

To get onto an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need at least 2 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English and maths.

Formal qualifications are sometimes not needed for entry to this work. However, some GCSEs including English, maths, design and technology (resistant materials), and manufacturing will be useful. Practical ability is often more important than academic qualifications.

Relevant vocational qualifications are available, such as:

- BTEC level 1 qualification in ceramics
- City and Guilds level 3 qualification in craft
- City and Guilds level 1, level 2, and level 3 qualifications in design and craft - 3D studies (ceramics)

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

Applicants with skills gained in the manufacturing industry, have an advantage.

Ability using your hands in a skilled way is important. Some artistic ability is needed for certain jobs.

Courses

Intermediate Level Apprenticeships in Ceramics Manufacturing are available.

Statistics

- 32% of people in this career work part-time.

Further Information

Professional institutions Professional institutions have the following roles:

- To support their members.
- To protect the public by keeping standards high in their professions.

For more information on the institution(s) relevant to this career, check out the contacts below.

Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
Tel: 0800 015 0400
Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 9178000
Email: info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
Website: www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships
- **City & Guilds**
Address: 1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2468
Email: learnersupport@cityandguilds.com
Website: www.cityandguilds.com
- **ScreenSkills**
Skills for the creative industries
Email: info@creativeskillset.org
Website: www.creativeskillset.org
- **Creative Choices**
Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**
Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts

Email: london@ccskills.org.uk

Website: ccskills.org.uk

- **Proskills UK**

Skills for process and manufacturing industries

Address: Centurion Court, 85b Park Drive, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RY

Tel: 01235 833844

Email: info@proskills.co.uk

Website: www.proskills.co.uk

- **Prospect4u**

Careers in manufacturing

Website: www.prospect4u.co.uk

- **Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)**

Address: 1 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5DB

Tel: 020 7451 7300

Website: www.iom3.org

- **craft&design**

Address: PO Box 5, Drifffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 8JD

Tel: 01377 255213

Website: www.craftanddesign.net

- **British Ceramic Confederation (BCC)**

Address: Federation House, Station Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2SA

Tel: 01782 744631

Email: bcc@ceramfed.co.uk

Website: www.ceramfed.co.uk

- **Studiopottery.co.uk**

Address: 13 Blunts Wood Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 1ND

Email: info@studiopottery.co.uk

Website: www.studiopottery.co.uk

- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**

Tel: 0800 028 4844

Website: ams.careerswales.com/

Related Careers

- Ceramics Technologist
- Glass Technologist
- Glassmaker
- Glass Designer