

Make-up Artist

Make-up artists apply make-up and style hair for performers on television, film or theatre. They also research and design make-up and hair styles and create special effects for dramatic productions and fashion shows.

The Work

You could be:

- discussing with the producer, the director and the lighting manager what effect they want you to achieve
- doing straightforward make-up and hair styling for television presenters and members of the public
- applying full make-up and hair styling to actors appearing in plays and films
- applying make-up for fashion models before photoshoots and shows
- adding scars and bruises, preparing false beards and wigs or using plastic and latex to alter an actor's appearance
- researching on the internet for styles of past periods or other cultures and applying these to actors for historical or international dramas
- keeping records and taking photos to make sure that make-up is consistent between film shoots
- attending the set with the performers, standing by during scenes and touching up make-up between takes
- cleaning equipment and keeping the premises tidy.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

[The Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union \(BECTU\)](#) lays down guidelines for pay rates for make-up artists working on different kinds of productions based on a 10-11 hour day. Some examples are below.

Pay for 10-hour day across all levels of TV or Film productions (latest rates published as at 2023).

- Trainees can earn from £130.00 to £176.00 (TV) or £140.00 to £220.00 (Film) a day.
- Juniors can earn from £180.00 to £270.00 (TV) or £210.00 to £308.00 (Film) a day.
- Experienced hair and make-up artists can earn from £320.00 to £440.00 (TV) or £360.00 to £462.00 (Film) a day.
- Key hair and make-up artists can earn from £330.00 to £462.00 (TV) or £380.00 to £484.00 (Film) a day.

Conditions

- You work mostly indoors in dressing rooms, make-up departments, television studios or film sets.
- You may also work outdoors on location in all weather conditions.

- You do a lot of standing and bending while you work.
- You have to work long and flexible hours, including evenings, weekends and public holidays.
- You may work for two companies at once, leading on occasion to very long working days.
- If working on location, you may have to travel a lot and perhaps spend periods living away from home.

Getting In

- Most make-up artists first take either a relevant full time course, or a traineeship in hairdressing or make-up artistry.
- There are full time courses in hairdressing and make-up artistry at various levels: NC (SCQF Level 6), SVQ, HNC (SCQF Level 7) and HND (SCQF Level 8).
- Several colleges offer an HNC or HND in Make-Up Artistry for Film, TV and Theatre or Fashion Make-Up. Entry ranges from 1-2 Highers plus 3 subjects at National 5 or relevant NC or HNC qualifications.
- Experience in make-up work for amateur dramatics or even for school or college productions is useful.
- You need to gather practical experience and build up a good portfolio of work to show employers. Most work is gained through contacts in the industry.
- A full driving licence is very useful and sometimes essential.
- People with allergies or sensitive skin may find that certain hair and make-up products cause skin irritation.

There are jobs in fashion, editorial, theatre, television and in film and video production companies. Most make-up artists working in the UK are freelance and competition for jobs is intense.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent knowledge of make-up and hair styles and techniques
- good manual dexterity and a steady hand
- a good understanding of skull anatomy and facial muscle structure
- knowledge of relevant health and safety regulations and procedures
- good networking skills for making contacts.

You need to be:

- artistic and creative
- confident, patient and diplomatic
- able to work under pressure to meet deadlines
- flexible and adaptable
- able to communicate naturally with everyone you work with
- organised and able to plan ahead
- able to work as part of a team, and on your own.

Training

You normally start a trainee level, working your way up to assistant level. It takes some years of solid work

experience and learning before becoming a fully trained make-up artist.

Getting On

- Most make-up artists work on a freelance basis and are paid by contract or project. Some work for theatre, television or film companies.
- There may be promotion opportunities for those working on long term productions, such as chief make-up artist. Otherwise, artists improve their prospects by working to the highest possible standards and building up their reputation.
- You are likely to specialise in a particular discipline, for example film or fashion.
- You could move into lecturing at further education colleges.
- There may be opportunities overseas.

More Information

Most jobs for make-up artists are in or around London. Most Scottish make-up artists are based in Glasgow or Edinburgh and travel throughout the UK, and sometimes overseas. Look for vacancies in the [Mandy](#) website as well as in trade journals such as **Broadcast** and **Stage, Screen and Radio Magazine**.

Contacts

Habia (Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority)

Tel: 01302 774926

Email: info@habia.org

Website: www.habia.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HabiaUK

ScreenSkills

Tel: 020 7713 9800

Email: info@screenskills.com

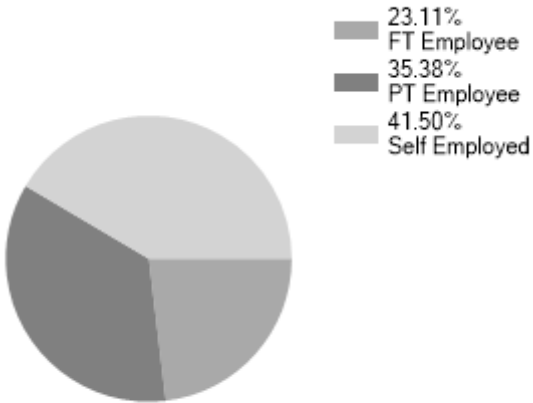
Website: www.screenskills.com

X: [@UKScreenSkills](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKScreenSkills

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

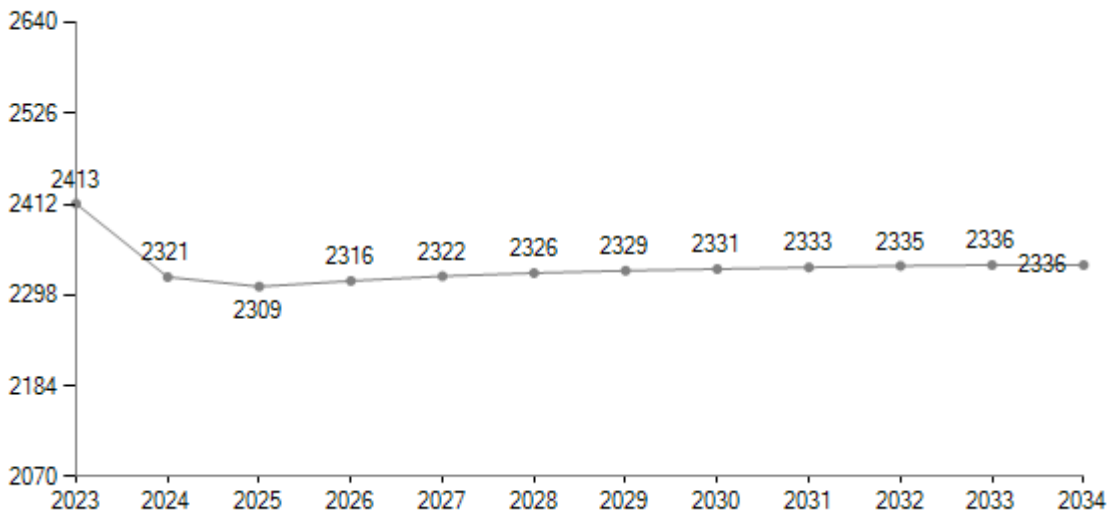


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)