

Wardrobe Assistant - Film, TV or Theatre

Wardrobe assistants help to select, assemble, maintain and make the costumes for actors in film, television or theatrical productions. They make sure that the costumes look authentic.

The Work

Depending on the type and size of production there are sometimes two wardrobe departments: the 'making wardrobe' department who research and acquire or create the costumes, and the 'running wardrobe' who organise and maintain the costumes and assist in the changes of costumes during the shoot.

You could be:

- searching specialist shops for clothes and accessories to hire or buy
- working to deadlines, helping the cutters to make up the costumes and adapting the costumes to fit by hand and machine sewing
- cleaning, ironing and steaming garments
- sometimes ageing and distressing garments to make them look dirty, old or worn
- looking after wigs and arranging for wigmakers to dress them
- packing and unpacking clothes, wigs and other accessories
- during performances, helping actors to change outfits quickly and doing any emergency repair work
- keeping photographic and detailed records of costumes and accessories such as shoes, jewellery, masks, crowns and headdresses used in each scene
- storing costumes and returning any hired items after the show.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates 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) website publishes the latest rates from the Advertising Producer's Association (APA) Recommended Crew Rates (July 2018).

- Minimum Basic Day Rate: £270.00
- Maximum Basic Day Rate: £314.00
- Basic Hourly Rate: £31.00.

Conditions

- You will go with the company on tour or on location, living away from home and possibly abroad.
- If you work for film or TV, your hours will be mostly regular, although days can still be long.
- In theatre, you will have daytime hours during the rehearsal periods, but evening and weekend work

during performances which can last for weeks.

- You might get several weeks off in between shows to make up for these long hours.
- You might work in the backstage of a theatre, film or TV studio or in temporary premises out on location.
- Work areas can be cramped and cluttered.
- Work may be on a short contract basis, lasting a few weeks or months, until a production is finished.

Getting In

You do not need formal qualifications for entry, but many employers require some subjects at National 4 or 5, or equivalent. As entry is competitive, one of the following relevant courses may be useful.

- The BA degree in Production Arts and Design at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) includes subjects in costume design and costume construction. To get in you need 3 Highers and present a portfolio or samples of practical work.
- The BA degree in Performance Costume at Edinburgh College of Art, at the University of Edinburgh. For entry you need 4 Highers at ABBB at first sitting and National 5 English. You need a portfolio. The college also offers postgraduate courses in Performance Costume.
- The minimum entry requirement for widening access applicants is: 4 Highers at ABBB by end of S6, with a minimum of BBB achieved in one year of S4-S6.
- The BA degree in Costume Design and Construction at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. For entry you need 4 Highers at BBCC including English, Drama or History and preferably Art and Design or Fashion and Textile Technology. You also need English and Maths or Applications of Maths at National 5.
- Some Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses in art and design include options in theatre costume design. For entry you usually need 2 Highers, preferably English and Art and Design, or a relevant NQ.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship. Entry requirements vary depending on the employer.
- You need good sewing skills.
- Experience in drama, such as involvement with student or amateur productions, is an advantage.
- Dressmaking or bespoke tailoring skills would be relevant.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good sewing skills and manual dexterity
- an eye for style and colour
- an understanding of fashion and period clothing
- attention to detail
- perseverance
- good people skills
- good communication skills.

You should be:

- interested in the performing arts and its history
- helpful, calm and tactful
- well organised

- inventive and flexible
- able to work as part of a team
- able to work quickly, to deadlines and stay calm under pressure.

Training

- If doing a Modern Apprenticeship, you would probably complete the Diploma in Theatre Operations: Costume and Wardrobe at SCQF Level 6.
- Training is on the job supervised by experienced staff.
- Training includes making garments from patterns, using sewing machines and studying styles and fabrics.
- The BBC sometimes runs a Design Trainee scheme, offering aspiring designers a 12-month contract in a junior design role. The scheme is funded by ScreenSkills, and recruits for set, costume, make-up and interactive design trainees. Check the BBC recruitment website for information.

Getting On

- There may be some openings in fashion houses as well as in entertainment.
- There are no formal barriers to moving from one sector to another (film, TV or theatre). As many posts are filled through networking, wardrobe assistants often remain in the sector which they first enter.
- With experience on the job and further skills, you may be able to move on to be a wardrobe supervisor or into costume design (see [Costume Designer](#)).
- Developing drawing skills and gaining qualifications may help you to get on.

More Information

The [Creative Scotland](#) website lists opportunities, both voluntary and paid, for working in the creative arts industry.

Young Scot and Creative Scotland operate the 'Nurturing Talent - Time to Shine Fund', which aims to support young people aged 11-25 and interested in developing creative or artistic skills. Both individuals and groups can apply for funding up to £1,000. For more information see the Young Scot website.

Take a look at [The Stage](#) online magazine for information on jobs. You can even download a Jobs and Auditions app for your iPhone. The Creative and Cultural Skills website has a careers section called Creative Choices which covers careers information, jobs and opportunities in the theatre.

Kozzii is a new costume and wardrobe industry magazine offering invaluable advice, news and feature articles. Visit their [website](#) or see them on Instagram (@kozziimag).

Contacts

Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT)

Tel: 020 7242 9200

Email: office@abtt.org.uk

Website: www.abtt.org.uk

Twitter: @theabtt

BBC Recruitment

Email: careers@bbchrdirect.co.uk
Website: www.bbc.co.uk/careers/home
Twitter: @BBCCareers

BECTU Scotland (Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union)

Email: info@bectu.org.uk
Website: www.bectu.org.uk
Twitter: @bectu
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BECTUOfficial

Creative and Cultural Skills

Tel: 020 7015 1800
Email: info@ccskills.org.uk
Website: www.ccskills.org.uk
Website (2): ccskills.org.uk/careers
Twitter: @CCskills
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ccskills

ITV Careers

Website: www.itvjobs.com
Twitter: @ITVCareers
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ITVCareers

ScreenSkills

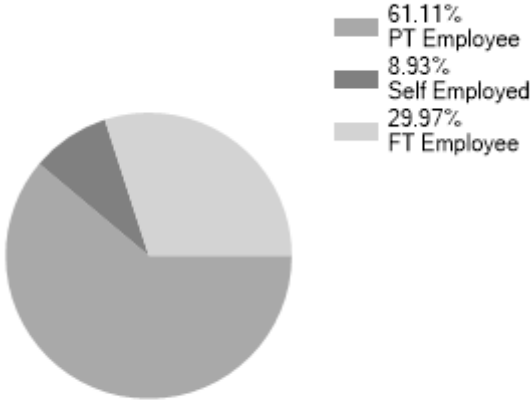
Tel: 020 7713 9800
Email: info@screenskills.com
Website: www.screenskills.com
Twitter: @UKScreenSkills
Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKScreenSkills

STV Careers

Tel: 0141 300 3704
Email: hr@stv.tv
Website: www.stvplc.tv/careers
Twitter: @WeAreSTV
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stvnews

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

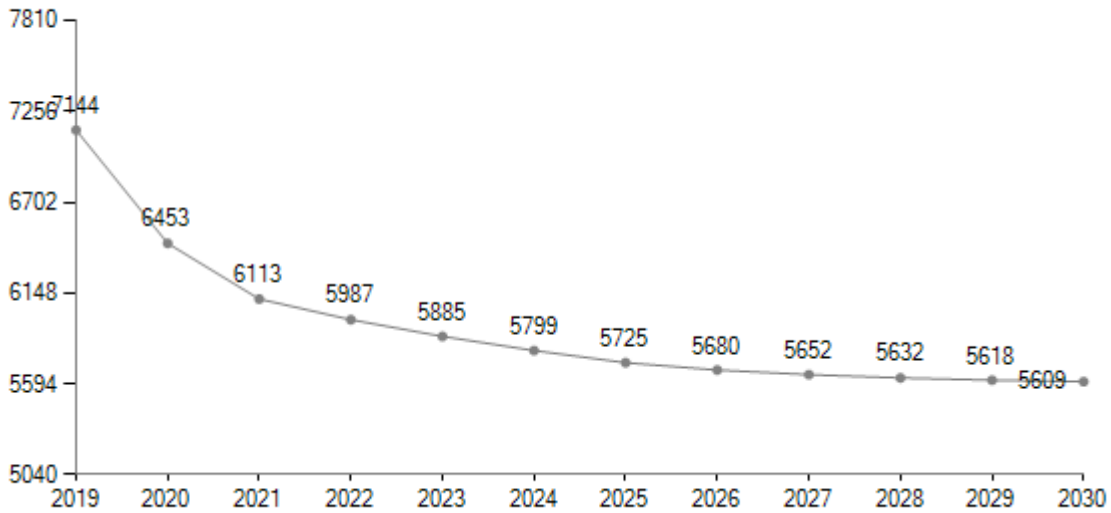


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)