

Photographic Stylist

A photographic stylist, or media stylist, helps the photographer set the scene for a photograph or shoot (set of photographs) to capture the mood, style and atmosphere that the photographer wants. They normally specialise in a particular area such as fashion, food or interior design.

The Work

You could be:

- studying the brief (instructions) which the photographer provides – the brief might be very specific or provide a lot of scope for ideas
- doing research for a shoot: this could be for an advert in a catalogue, a magazine feature on home interiors, a range of different meals for a cookery book, a publicity shot for a fashion show
- sketching your ideas, either by hand or using a computer, to show others such as the art director and scene builders
- choosing props and finding out where you can hire, borrow or buy them – including clothes for models or unusual items such as fake snow
- keeping a stock of regularly-used items such as vases, cushions, sunglasses and other common accessories
- in food photography, preparing and displaying meals so they look fresh and appetising, using tools such as water sprays, tweezers and a blow torch
- arranging the set and discussing lighting effects with the lighting technicians, and making sure everything is in the right place
- keeping up to date with the latest trends.

Pay

Freelance stylists earn a fee for each project, and nothing between projects. Pay rates for employed stylists vary, depending on the size of company or agency.

- Hourly rates may average around £25 an hour.
- Rates for a photographic stylist would start at around £200 a day for creating photographic displays, rising to around £400.

Salaries in general can range from between £20,000 to 30,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would work both indoors and outdoors.
- When indoors, you could be working in a studio, office or on a stage or set. Outdoors you could be anywhere as required by the project.
- You might have to travel a lot and spend overnights away from home.
- If you work for a large employer you may work regular office hours.
- In other cases, you would arrange working hours to suit the client, and they are often irregular and long, including evenings and weekends.

- You may have short intensive periods of work, with unemployment in between.
- You have to climb ladders, shift furniture, bend and carry props around and work with paint and glue.
- You must meet strict deadlines.

Getting In

- Entry to junior posts is very competitive and you need sound artistic training.
- There is a wide range of courses, at different levels, in art and design subjects, including NC, NQ, HNC, HND and degrees. Courses in fashion, clothing or textile design or photography or visual merchandising may be particularly relevant.
- For food photography, you should take a cookery or home economics course first, since you need cooking skills.
- You do not always need formal qualifications to get onto an NC or NQ, although some courses may require up to 4-5 subjects at National 4 or 5. For an HNC or HND you need a minimum of 1-2 Highers or NC or NQ, and for a degree, usually 4 Highers. Other subjects may also be specified for particular courses.
- For art and design courses, you also need to present a portfolio of work.
- Studying for a relevant Foundation Apprenticeship in S5 and S6, such as Creative and Digital Media, can provide work experience and may be accepted in place of a non-essential Higher for entry to a degree course. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually require some subjects at National 5 including English and Maths.
- Afterwards, the main thing is to make contacts and to get existing or previous customers to recommend you to others. You might start by helping on a voluntary basis in projects at college, and go on to working as an assistant to a photographer.
- A driving licence is useful and may be necessary.

For art school courses you need to apply through UCAS.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- artistic, creative and imaginative
- knowledgeable about photography and lighting
- well organised and able to work calmly under pressure
- practical and good with your hands
- patient, with good concentration
- good at negotiation and networking
- good at communicating with people at all levels
- able to meet deadlines and manage a budget
- confident, determined and self-motivated.

Training

Training is mostly through experience, on the job.

Getting On

- Personal contacts are important in building up your reputation and getting work.
- You must have a strong portfolio to show to prospective employers and clients.
- Most photographic stylists work freelance; progress means getting bigger contracts, through building up your reputation and developing your portfolio.
- If you work for an agency you might get promotion to head stylist, art director or designer.
- You could move into consultancy work.
- After you have experience, you might want to move into a related job such as display, merchandising or exhibition work.

Contacts

Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)

Tel: 020 7357 8088

Email: info@csd.org.uk

Website: www.csd.org.uk

Twitter: [@csdminerva](https://twitter.com/csadminerva)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/chartereddesigners

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](https://twitter.com/CCskills)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ccskills

Design Council

Tel: 020 7420 5200

Email: info@designcouncil.org.uk

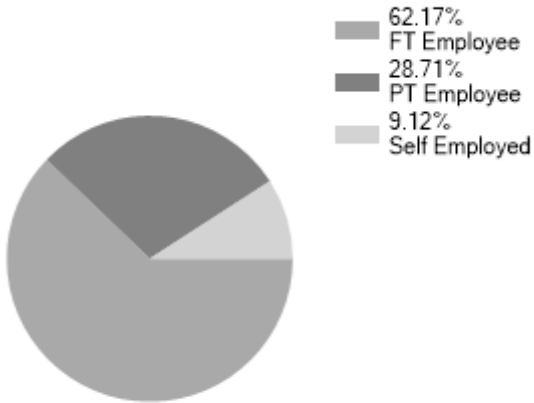
Website: www.designcouncil.org.uk

Twitter: [@designcouncil](https://twitter.com/designcouncil)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DesignCouncil

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

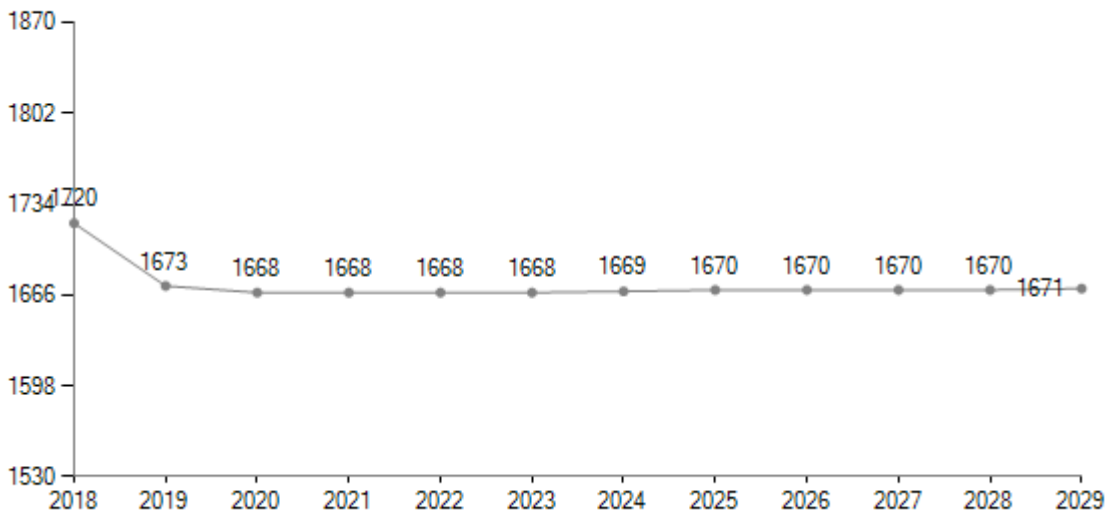


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)