

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.

Salaries in general can range from between £23,000 to 33,000 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 (SCQF Level 4-6), HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) and degrees (SCQF Levels 9-10). 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

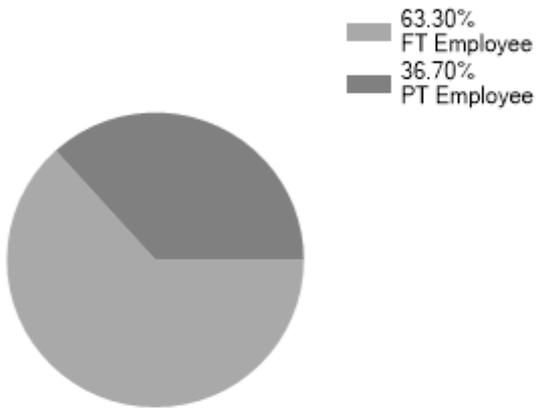
your reputation and developing your portfolio.

- 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

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.