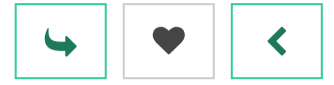


1 2 3

# Special effects (SFX) make-up artist



Special effects (SFX) make-up artists specialise in making other-worldly characters, or gore, look realistic in film or TV.



## What you'll do

Your day-to-day duties can include:

- applying make-up to performers
- creating prosthetics such as fake limbs or fake facial features
- making small models or mock-ups of what you will be aiming to create on the performers
- meeting with your Head of Department or other design teams to discuss the director's artistic vision
- travelling to film sets in remote locations
- touching up make-up throughout filming as weather and lighting conditions change

Record relevant activities you've already done on the [Activities tool](#) >

## Working hours and environment

You'll normally work freelance, which means you'll be given a temporary contract for each TV production or film you work on. This can mean some very busy periods, as well as some much quieter ones in between contracts. See our guide '[How to become self-employed](#)' for information on the advantages and disadvantages of being self-employed.

Working days can be long, and you'll need to be flexible. Filming can start very early in the morning or run late into the evening.

## Career path and progression

You could build your skills in other areas - like other physical special effects (such as making weather look realistic) or pyrotechnics - by attending more courses or training schools. You could then take on a flexible job title (e.g. Special effects technician and Make-up artist) depending on which project you are working on.

With experience, you could become a Head of Department on-set, managing other SFX make-up artists.

## Skills required

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You'll need:

- attention to detail / observation
- creativity / innovation
- problem solving skills
- artistic skills
- communication skills
- teamwork
- adaptability / personal effectiveness

Got evidence of these skills? Record your examples on the [Skills tool](#) >

## Entry requirements

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There are no set entry requirements. However, it's helpful to have a qualification in make-up, preferably theatrical or media make-up in this role. You could gain this through an apprenticeship.

Your progression is largely based on industry experience, so apply for entry-level roles in film and TV as an assistant or runner, to begin with.

You could build your skills by studying a special effects course at a film studio, like Pinewood or Elstree (UK), The Cinema Make-up School (USA), or Vancouver Film School (Canada).

It might also be useful to have a driving licence, so you can travel easily with your kit to remote filming locations.

## Related know-how guides

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Explore know-how guides related to this career:

- [Working in hair and beauty: an insider's perspective](#) >
- [Get on the ladder: hair and beauty](#) >

## Related courses

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Explore courses related to this career:

- [Careers in hair and beauty \(modern work experience\)](#) >

## Related university subjects

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These university subjects are related to this career; check out their profiles on the Subjects library:

- [Drama and Theatre studies](#) >
- [Film and Photography](#) >
- [Textiles and Fashion](#) >

## Related careers

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You may also be interested in:

- [Prop maker](#) >
- [Make-up artist](#) >
- [Costume designer](#) >
- [Set designer](#) >

## Explore

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Want to see what relevant education and training opportunities are available right now? Search here:

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#### Film and Photography at uni:

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[Ireland >](#)

#### Apprenticeships:

[UK >](#)

#### College / Sixth Form:

[UK >](#)

## Labour Market Information (LMI)

Median averages relating to the Special effects (SFX) make-up artist profession.

UK
  USA

### Jobs

Hairdressers and beauty therapists

**245,863**

 1,791 in your local area of Liverpool

#### Top 5 local areas

1	Essex	7,471
2	Kent	6,607
3	Hampshire	6,326
4	Lancashire	5,489
5	Hertfordshire	5,233

### Salaries

Beauty therapists

**£24,124**

 £18,520 in your region of North West

#### Top 5 regions

1	Scotland	£25,000
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2	Yorkshire and the Humber	£24,464
3	London	£23,736
4	South East	£22,000
5	East Midlands	£21,906

**Hours/week**

Beauty therapists

**37.4**

📍 30.8 in your region of North West

**Growth** 2020-2035

Leisure, travel and beauty professionals

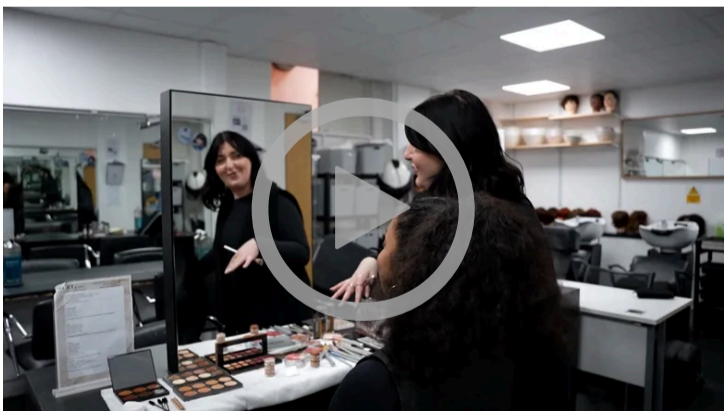
**-4.2%** ↓ 30,919 jobs

📍 -10.4% in your region of North West, an decrease of 7,632 jobs

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**Make-up artist** ❤️

Make-up artists style hair and apply makeup for clients attending special events or appearing on camera

[Read the profile >](#)



**Costume designer** ❤️

Costume designers are responsible for designing, making, and hiring costumes for everyone on a stage or screen production.

[Read the profile >](#)



**Actor** ❤️

Actors bring stories and characters to life on television, on the stage, in audiobooks, and in film.

[Read the profile >](#)