



How to choose a hair and make-up course that is right for you

With so many establishments to choose from, finding the right college, university or private make-up school is a huge decision.

Whether it be a make-up career in fashion & beauty, film & TV, theatre or commercials it is important you choose a course that provides the best experience to get you ready for your future ambitions.

The cost of studying a hair and make-up course can be hugely expensive, with some students leaving university with £60,000 worth of debt, so it is important you find the one that is right for you.

If establishments are making claims that you will be ready to work on a film set in 4 weeks, or working on celebrities in 6 weeks, you need to consider whether this sounds genuine.

Most professionals working in the industry have taken years to reach the positions they have, starting out as a trainee, and will still happily attend training to discover new products or techniques. It really is a lifelong dedication to training and development.

Here are some points to consider when looking for somewhere to study. Please use them as a tool to support your choice.

You may not find a course that has everything you want but this guidance will hopefully help you make a more informed choice.

Tutors

- Ask questions about the tutors; if you are being taught by recent graduates or people who are not experienced in the area of make-up you want to work in, you may not receive the standard of education you are expecting.
- Are the tutors currently working, or have they recently worked, in the industry you want to make your career in?
- Do they have the knowledge of the most up-to-date products that are used?
- Do they have an understanding of the protocols and practices in the industry to pass on to you?
- Does the course have guest lecturers who come in for masterclasses that are currently working in the fashion, beauty or editorial area you are interested in?
- Will you learn new techniques of make-up which change every season in the fashion and beauty world?

Theory vs Practical

- Understanding make-up and hair theory is important; knowing what colours and styles apply to different periods is key.
- It is also a very practical industry to work in, so it is more essential you spend time hands-on, practicing how to set and style hair and apply make-up.
- Will you be given opportunities to apply make-up on a variety of skin tones? You will need to understand the difference in skin tones and know how to choose the appropriate make-up to correct skin discolouration etc.

Hair

- Hair is a huge part of being a make-up artist in film, TV and theatre and any good foundation course will provide you with an introduction to the skills of cutting and styling. Most courses should include basic barbering and period hairstyling as part of the curriculum.
- The standard of skills you will need will not be acquired without further in-depth training and development and will require a commitment to practicing and finding opportunities in cutting and styling, outside of any foundation course.
- Ensure you find time to understand and practice with all different hair types including European, Asian and Afro-Caribbean, as you will be expected to be able to work with all types of hair.
- You may want to consider undertaking a separate hairdressing/barbering course before starting a make-up course, or alongside it, as a lack of formal hair cutting training will make a difference in a competitive industry.
- If you have experience in a salon this will greatly assist you in progressing in your career.

Special Effects

- Products that are used in this area of the industry are constantly being improved and new ones developed. Is your tutor a specialist in this area and working in the industry? Check who they are and do your research about them.
- Have the tutors worked on film or television productions? What area do they specialise in? Casualty effects, creature creation?
- There are specialist SFX schools in the UK. If you want to pursue a career in this area research whether it would be more beneficial to attend one of these rather than a general foundation course.

Wigs

- Preparing hair to go under a wig, fitting and styling wigs are essential skills in film, TV and theatre.
- A foundation course should teach an introduction to these; however the required standard of styling wigs is superior to what will be taught on a course of this level.
- Finding short courses and opportunities to practice fitting and styling wigs will be necessary to reach a good standard and show your commitment to learning to potential heads of departments.
- Making wigs from scratch is more often taught on separate courses. If you want to pursue wig-making as a career, research the specialist courses and tutors.

Alumni

- How many former students have gone onto successful careers?
- Ask the establishment for names of these graduates so you can research what they have done and their path into the industry.
- They may also come back to talk to current students; make sure you attend any of these sessions to potentially make a contact for the future.

After-care

- Does the organisation have connections with potential employers/organisations within the area of the industry you want to work in and can they put you in contact with them?
- Ask how long after you graduate are you likely to find work at entry level?
- Find out how you can be proactive until you get your “first break” (for example face-painting, fashion shoots, corporate events etc.)

Have a look round

- Make sure your look round the facilities offered and ask lots of questions before you make a decision.
- Talk to previous students if possible; ask about the standard of teaching and future work opportunities.

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK QALIFICATIONS	FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND	CREDIT AND QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR WALES	NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR IRELAND
SCQF LEVEL 11 MASTERS DEGREE, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	LEVEL 7 MASTERS DEGREE, POST GRADUTE DIPLOMA, NVQ LEVEL 5	LEVEL 7 MASTERS DEGREE, NVQ LEVEL 5	LEVEL 9 MASTERS DEGREE, POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA
SCQF LEVEL 10 BACHELORS DEGREE WITH HONOURS	LEVEL 6 BACHELORS DEGREE WITH HONOURS, GRADUATE DIPLOMA	LEVEL 6 BACHELORS DEGREE WITH HONOURS, GRADUATES DIPLOMA	LEVEL 8 DEGREE WITH HONOURS, HIGHER DIPLOMA
SCQF LEVEL 9 BACHELORS DEGREE	LEVEL 6 BACHELORS DEGREE	LEVEL 6 BACHELORS DEGREE	LEVEL 7 BACHELORS DEGREE
SCQF LEVEL 8 HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND), SVQ LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5 FOUNDATION DEGREE, DILOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND)	LEVEL 5 FOUNDATION DEGREE, HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND)	LEVEL 6 ADVANCED CERTIFICATES, HIGHER CERTIFICATES
SCQF LEVEL 7 HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (HNC), SVQ LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4 HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (HNC)	LEVEL 4 HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (HNC)	LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE, LEAVING CERTIFICATE
SVQ LEVEL 3, SCQF LEVEL 6, NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (NC)	NVQ LEVEL 3, GCSE AS AND A LEVEL	NVQ LEVEL 3, GCSE AS AND A LEVEL	LEVEL 5 CERIFICATE
SVQ LEVEL 2, SCQF LEVEL 5	NVQ LEVEL 2, GCSE GRADES A-C	NVQ LEVEL 2, GCSE GRADES A-C	LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
			LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE

Climbing the education ladder

On top of finding the right hair and make-up course for you, if you are moving between regions of the UK to undertake further study it can be difficult to understand where your current qualifications stack up against their counterparts from other countries in the UK particularly if you are coming from a further education or higher education course. This table has been assembled to help you understand what your next step in terms of academic level is. The level of study you wish to achieve is limited only by the courses available within your chosen subject area.