

Becoming a Makeup Artist: Do You Have What It Takes?

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Makeup Artist at Work - *vancouverfilmschool*

Everyone wants to be a part of Hollywood, but that doesn't mean that you have to be an actor. You can have a fun and fulfilling career as a makeup artist.

Get an Education

If you want to start a career as a film makeup artist, you need to do some work. There's more to a film makeup artist than simply making an actress look beautiful. Usually, the film makeup artist is required to do the work of a typical makeup artist plus create characters, including your favorite alien or monster.

The first step to becoming a film makeup artist is obtaining an education. You need to get either a makeup artist certificate or degree, which you can obtain from training centers like the Joe Blasco Training Centers or Los Angeles' Westmore Academy of Cosmetic Arts.

Education helps you learn the profession, but it also helps you build a portfolio. Just like acting and screenwriting, becoming a film makeup artist is not easy, and there's a lot of competition. So, you need to distinguish yourself from the crowd. And, a portfolio helps you with that. Practice on family and friends, and even make videos of your work to show that you can work with a variety of people. And, this may actually be your first step all the way around. Many film makeup programs are very competitive and only take a handful of applicants per year.

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Apply for Internships

Apply for internships as a makeup assistant. You probably won't get paid for this work, but the experience is much more important. You'll see what it takes to be a film makeup artist plus you'll establish contacts, which is what you need to get your foot in the door. In many professions, but especially the film industry, you need to make contacts.

Duties

Once you establish a career as a film makeup artist, you will have some standard duties. These include the following:

- **Interpreting the script:** The screenwriter describes what he wants, and then it is your responsibility to interpret this script and bring the concept to life.
- **Creating effects:** You need to stay on the cutting edge of makeup, and that means creating new blends or even making brand new types of makeup.

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- [Advice from Maura "Mo" Lewit](#)
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- **Managing a team:** If you are the head makeup artist, then you are responsible for all the other makeup artists on the film, and you need to know how to set up schedules, manage people and ensure that all your team in task.
- **Adding makeup to actors:** This is your main responsibility, but there's more to it than simply putting the makeup on. Actors sit in your chair for hours, which means that you need to establish a rapport with them. This helps keep them still and entertained, and not whining or complaining.
- **Inventory:** You need to make sure that all supplies are on hand. You are always on a deadline, and you don't have time to run out to the store every time that you're missing something. And, sometimes you can't even find your supplies locally.

Other parts of your job include working with a team and creating silicon, plastic and rubber pieces for things like aging people, changing their appearance or turning them into non-human creatures. You also need to create body effects like bruising and cuts. You also need to take into account lighting and try to reduce shadows on people's faces, and you need to enhance a person's overall features.

A film makeup artist's pay is extremely low, generally between \$30,000 and \$50,000 a year, and the hours are long. But, if you love what you do, and are dedicated, you can work your way up in the ranks.

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