

Musical Instrument Technician

Introduction

Musical instrument technicians design and make musical instruments. Most technicians also carry out repairs, maintenance and restoration work. It is usual for technicians to specialise in particular instruments, such as strings or fretted instruments, keyboards or woodwind.

Also known as

- Instrument Technician, Musical



Work Activities

As a Musical Instrument Technician, you will design, make, repair, maintain and restore musical instruments. As the work is highly skilled, it is usual to concentrate on a particular type or group of instruments.

Typical specialisms include keyboards, strings or fretted instruments, woodwind, brass, percussion or electronic instruments. You could specialise still further by concentrating on reproducing and restoring vintage or even antique instruments.

The work varies according to the particular instrument being made. In order to make a new instrument, you'll design an instrument according to a customer's requirements. You will use your drawings and plans to help them cut, shape and put together materials such as metal, wood and plastic.

Other tasks include:

- advising clients on the care and handling of an instrument
- finding faults in instruments
- replacing or repairing damaged parts
- tuning the instrument

Musical Instrument Technicians usually work in a workshop. Here, you will use a variety of hand and machine tools, and measuring devices. You might sell the instruments that they make.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To become a Musical Instrument Technician, you'll need:

- an ear for tuning and an appreciation of music
- to be an accurate worker with a good eye for detail
- practical skills
- strong powers of concentration
- to be patient, because some work can be difficult and can take a long time to finish

Business skills will be useful, if you become a self-employed Technician.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £20,500 - £21,500
- With experience: £23,000 - £27,500
- Senior Musical Instrument Technicians earn £30,500

Hours of work

Musical Instrument Technicians usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. Working hours for self-employed Technicians may be irregular, depending on how much work you have. Late finishes and weekend work may be required from time to time, especially as deadlines approach.

As a self-employed Musical Instrument Technician, success largely depends on the your skilled reputation.

Where could I work?

Employers are manufacturers and repairers of musical instruments. However, many of these are small craft enterprises employing one or two people.

Opportunities in workshops in towns and cities throughout the UK.

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for experienced Musical Instrument Technicians to work independently as self-employed Craftworkers, working from home or from studios or workshops.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers' websites, and on Find a Job (www.gov.uk/jobsearch).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

There are no set entry routes into this career. Craft skills are often more important than academic study.

Courses related to music, or working with wood may also be useful for entry.

Training

In some cases, it may be possible to train with an employer and learn on-the-job.

Many entrants to this career train by attending a full-time specialist college course usually lasting two or three years.

Course Instructors are usually professional Musical Instrument Technicians. Courses cover topics including:

- music theory
- acoustics
- instrument design
- technical drawing
- instrument history
- restoration

The National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers (NAMIR) website has a list of course providers.

BTEC offers level 3 qualifications in music technology.

Work Experience

This is often an attractive career for people with craft experience and an interest in music.

The ability to play a wide range of musical instruments is usually required. A practical background using your hands, eg, in restoration or historical conservation work, is useful for this career.

Progression

Progression can sometimes be to supervisory or managerial positions. Many people in this career become self-employed.

Qualifications

Entry requirements for courses vary widely, depending on the type of course you choose. Check college and university websites for the very latest information.

A keen interest in music along with craft skills may be requested for entry to courses and employment.

For entry to a BTEC level 3 qualification in music technology, you will usually need:

- 4 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above

Relevant work experience is also acceptable for entry.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

This is often an attractive career for people with craft experience and an interest in music.

The ability to play a wide range of musical instruments is usually required. A practical background using your hands, eg, in restoration or historical conservation work, is useful.

Courses

Colleges will usually consider applications from candidates who do not meet their usual entry requirements. You should check the admissions policy of individual colleges.

Relevant short courses are available via part-time study.

Further Information

Contacts

- **ScreenSkills**
Skills for the creative industries
Email: info@creativeskillset.org
Website: www.creativeskillset.org

- **Creative Choices**
 Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
 Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
 Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**
 Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts
 Email: london@ccskills.org.uk
 Website: ccskills.org.uk
- **London Metropolitan University**
 Address: 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB
 Tel: 020 7423 0000
 Website: www.londonmet.ac.uk
- **Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM)**
 Tel: 020 7629 4413
 Email: membership@ism.org
 Website: www.ism.org
- **BPI: British Recorded Music Industry**
 Tel: 020 7803 1300
 Email: general@bpi.co.uk
 Website: www.bpi.co.uk
- **Association of Musical Instrument Repairers (NAMIR Ltd)**
 Tel: 07957 844707
 Email: contactus@namir.org.uk
 Website: www.namir.org.uk

Related Careers

- Medical Illustrator
- Design Assistant
- Fashion Designer
- Graphic Designer
- Artworker
- Metal Engraver
- Visual Merchandiser
- Commercial Illustrator
- Signmaker
- Ceramics Designer
- Footwear Designer
- Furniture Designer
- Product Designer
- Vehicle Designer
- Interior Designer
- Jewellery Designer
- Packaging Designer
- Textile Designer
- Costume Designer
- Theatre Designer
- Picture Researcher
- Technical/Scientific Illustrator
- Model Maker
- Picture Framer
- Designer
- Illustrator
- Artist
- CGI Artist
- VFX Artist
- Nostalgist

