Article: Hair and Beauty

Summary

This article covers the following jobs:

- Beauty Consultant
- Beauty Therapist
- Hairdresser
- Image Consultant
- Make-up Artist
- Nail Technician
- Spa Therapist
- Wigmaker.

The job descriptions are only a brief summary. It is recommended that you do further research on jobs that interest you.

Hair and make-up

If you want to work in hair and make-up, you'll need a range of skills - creativity, being good with your hands, stamina (you might have to work long hours) and the ability to get on with people.

Wigmaker

Wigmakers make wigs and hairpieces for their clients. Wigs can be used for fashion or therapeutic (health) reasons, in theatre, television or film, and in the legal profession.

Human hair or artificial material is used to make most wigs (horsehair is used for legal wigs) and chemicals might be used to colour them or create other effects. The hair is made into a wig by attaching it to a fine mesh or silk.

Some people specialise in the fitting or the styling and cleaning of wigs. They are called posticheurs and are often hairdressers without wigmaking experience.

Some wigmakers specialise in making hairpieces (toupees) for men. Most of these are made of real hair, so the toupee must be skilfully coloured and cut to blend in with the existing hair.

To become a wigmaker, you can do a wigmaking course at a college or train on-the-job, either with a wig manufacturer (opportunities are limited) or as an assistant to a theatrical/television/film wigmaker.

Hairdresser

Hairdressers carry out a variety of treatments on people's hair. The customer usually has an idea of how they want their hair to look, and the hairdresser gives them advice on whether the style will suit them or not.

When the hairdresser and customer have agreed on the style, the hairdresser works out which treatments they need to carry out to achieve the required look. They usually wash and condition the customer's hair first.

They might then simply need to cut and blow-dry or straighten the hair, or they might do other treatments. Some of these can completely change the look of a person's hair, for example, perms, extensions and colouring techniques.

Hairdressers often specialise after training in cutting either women's or men's hair and learn different skills depending on their speciality. To become a hairdresser, you train in the workplace with day-release to college, or you could study full-time at college.

Make-up Artist

Make-up artists do the hair and make-up for people in television, film or on stage. In television news and chat shows, most of the people only need 'corrective' make-up. This means tidying up their hair and putting some foundation on, so they don't look pale under the studio lights.
For drama and film productions, make-up artists use a wider range of techniques. They might need to make someone look older than they really are, or as if they have an injury or illness. For dramas set in a particular period in history, the make-up artist tries to re-create the look of that time.

To become a make-up artist, you need to train in hairdressing, beauty therapy or make-up and then follow a specialist training programme. Entry to this job is very competitive.

Beauty

The beauty business is booming. It’s not just about make-up; beauty salons offer a wide range of treatments, which need trained staff to carry them out.

There are good prospects in this type of work if you’re prepared to work hard and can get on well with people. Self-employment is a possibility.

Beauty Therapist

Beauty therapists carry out facial and body treatments to improve people's personal appearance. They decide on the treatment by talking to the client first.

Sometimes the treatment takes several sessions over a period of a few weeks. An example is electrolysis - a method of removing unwanted hair using an electric current. Other clients might only want a one-off session - being 'made-up' for a special occasion such as a wedding, for example.

Other common treatments include face and body massage, leg waxing, eyebrow plucking and ear piercing. Beauty therapists are usually expected to be able to carry out a range of treatments, which require a steady hand and a patient attitude.

Some beauty therapists also train in alternative therapy techniques, such as aromatherapy (massage using fragranced oils) and reflexology (massage of specific points on the feet).

There are no strict minimum academic requirements but some courses require GCSEs and sometimes an A level (or equivalent). Science subjects are preferred. Training is through a relevant college course.

Nail Technician

Nail technicians offer a range of nail (hand or foot) treatments to customers.

Some of the treatments they offer include:

- applying nail extensions and doing repairs
- applying nail art techniques
- trimming and polishing nails
- conditioning the skin around the nails
- giving hand, foot or arm massages
- strengthening nails
- giving treatments to stop people biting their nails.

If a customer wants nail extensions, the nail technician first checks the customer's nails to make sure they are healthy. The nail extensions are put on top of the natural nails using chemicals.

Once the extensions are in place, they can be painted or pierced with small jewels. They can also be painted in specific designs, such as stripes or flowers.

To enter this career, you would normally take a college course.

Spa Therapist

Spa therapists provide a wide range of beauty treatments and health therapies that focus on the healing effects of water.

Some of the therapies and treatments include:

- hydrotherapy (involves moving and exercising in water)
• flotation (weightless floating in either a pool or tank)
• jacuzzi (a whirlpool tub with underwater jets that massage the body)
• steam baths and saunas
• salt or sea-water pools
• mud chambers or applying mud to the body
• body wraps, scrubs and massage
• facials, manicures and pedicures.

Spa therapists first find out from the client what type of treatment they want. They then explain what it involves. The treatment offered can depend on what the client wants to get out of it; for example, it might be for pure relaxation or to improve a particular health problem.

Spa therapists also prepare and clean the spa environment, and set up and shut down water, temperature and spa facilities.

To become a fully qualified spa therapist, you would normally take an NVQ Diploma in Spa Therapy at level 3.

**Image Consultant**

Image consultants help people to make the most of the way they look, so they feel good and confident about themselves. They also show people how to create the right impression by the way they talk or behave, for example.

The image consultant analyses the client's image, including:

- how they dress
- their overall personal appearance
- their hair, eyes and skin tone
- their face and body shape.

Following this, the image consultant explains and advises which styles, colours and patterns of clothing suit them the most, taking into account their personality, budget and lifestyle.

The image consultant looks through the clothes in the client's wardrobe, and advises them which items suit them and which don't. They might also take them out on shopping trips to buy new clothes, and to put together different outfits for them.

As well as how a person looks, the image consultant also advises on how they come across to other people, through their verbal communication (such as their use of grammar and vocabulary) and non-verbal communication (for example, the way they stand or walk).

Training to become an image consultant is available from a number of providers, some of which are recognised by the Federation of Image Professionals International (FIPI).

**Sales**

Cosmetic companies have specialist salespeople who demonstrate and sell their products to the public. You'll need good knowledge of the products and the ability to remain enthusiastic for an eight-hour shift. You should be able to cope with the pressure to reach sales targets.

**Beauty Consultant**

Beauty consultants sell make-up and other cosmetic products for a cosmetic manufacturer. They are usually based in a department store, or a large branch of a chemist's shop where the cosmetic company has a counter.

They learn all about the different products that their company makes, so that they can advise customers on the product that would suit them best. If someone comes into the shop looking for some eye shadow, for example, the beauty consultant shows them the different colours that they have in stock and advises the customer which shade they think goes with their colouring.

Sometimes a customer will want a consultation. This is where the beauty consultant gives advice on all aspects of make-up, often doing a full makeover for the customer, so they can see the effect that different colours have on their appearance. Many beauty consultants also sell perfume, skincare products and gift items.

There are two main entry routes; some beauty consultants are qualified beauty therapists, while others have sales skills.
Further Information

Contacts

- **The British Association of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology (BABTAC)**
  Address: Unit 1, Ambrose House, Meteor Court, Barnett Way, Gloucester GL4 3GG
  Tel: 01452 623114
  Email: enquiries@cibtac.com
  Website: [www.cibtac.com](http://www.cibtac.com)

- **Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority (Habia)**
  Address: Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Sky Business Park, Robin Hood Airport, Doncaster DN9 3GG
  Tel: 0845 6123555
  Email: info@habia.org
  Website: [www.habia.org](http://www.habia.org)

- **National Theatre Wales (Welsh Enquiries)**
  Tel: 029 2035 3070
  Email: info@nationaltheatrewales.org
  Website: [nationaltheatrewales.org](http://nationaltheatrewales.org)

- **Wales Screen**
  Website: [www.screenwales.com](http://www.screenwales.com)

Related Careers

- Beauty Therapist
- Wigmaker
- Hair Stylist
- Tattooist
- Beauty Consultant
- Nail Technician
- Body Piercer
- Spa Therapist
- Image Consultant
- Make-up Artist
- Salon Assistant
- Salon Manager