

Makeup Artist

Bridal, editorial, film and special effects. A short diploma, a portfolio, and freelance income that swings with the season.

TYPICAL PAY

\$42,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$31k to \$62k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Salons, cosmetics counters, weddings, film and TV sets

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 10 to 12
Art and photography. Do makeup for friends, school plays and dance shows. Photograph everything.
- 2 Makeup school or self-taught** 6 to 12 months, or ongoing
CMU (College of Makeup Art and Design) in Toronto and Blanche Macdonald in Vancouver run full-time diplomas covering beauty, fashion, film and special effects. Many artists learn at a counter and from online courses instead.
- 3 Counter or salon job** 1 to 2 years
A beauty counter pays you to do faces all day. This is where speed and product knowledge come from.
- 4 Freelance and assisting** 1 to 3 years
Assist working artists on shoots and weddings. Take small paid jobs. Build a portfolio of 10 to 20 strong looks.
- 5 Specialize** Ongoing
Bridal, editorial, film and TV, or special effects. Film work usually means joining the union local in your city.

Pros and cons

- + Creative work you can photograph and show
- + Start within months
- + Flexible, freelance friendly
- Uneven income, busy summers and dead winters
- Early mornings and weekends
- Kit costs never stop

Optional boosts

Film and TV. Special effects and prosthetics. Bridal. Permanent makeup.

Good to know

Job Bank has no makeup artist page

Statistics Canada groups makeup artists with estheticians, electrologists, nail technicians and tattoo artists in one occupation code. The nearest Job Bank wage page is for permanent make-up art...

Toronto and Vancouver are film towns

Both cities host a large share of Canada's film and TV production. Set makeup there is union work with day rates, but getting in usually means years of assisting first.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Permanent make-up artist, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Estheticians and related, requirements by province

CMU College of Makeup Art and Design (Toronto)

Blanche Macdonald Centre (Vancouver): makeup programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/makeup-artist>



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