

So, where could a career in Drama and the Arts lead me?



Actor

What does an actor do?

An actor takes on a role in a performance, and pretends to be a character. You'll use your voice, body and costumes to become the role you are playing. You'll need to be highly creative and have a good memory for lines.

An actor could be working in television, film, radio or theatre

You may end up working on a traveling production or a long running drama. It's a varied job role that often requires hard work and long hours. It's also highly competitive.

Most actors have an agent and a 'show reel' of work which leads to being invited to audition for casting.

Starting salary: Varies depending on role

What do I need to do to become an actor?

Most actors study drama at a university or conservatoire.

You'll have to go through an audition or casting call before taking on a specific job.

To get on to a relevant degree or diploma you may need 5 GCSEs A-C, including maths and English and at least two A levels. A level drama or theatre studies is desirable, but not essential. The most relevant vocational course would be a BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts.

Related skills

- Attention to detail
- Communication
- Creativity
- Discipline
- Physical fitness
- Teamwork
- BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts

Related subjects

- Drama, music, and performing arts
- English
- Media studies



Barrister

What does a barrister do?

Barristers represent clients and solicitors in court and through legal proceedings. Barristers translate their client's case into a legal argument. You'll need excellent communication skills as well as a flair for public speaking to be a barrister.

As well as arguing a case, you'll also advise clients and solicitors on the strength of the case.

Most barristers are self-employed and work with other barristers in partnership in chambers, so you'll also need good administrative and numeracy skills.

Starting salary: £40,000 up to £200,000

What do I need to do to become a barrister?

- approved law degree – known as a qualifying law degree – at class 2:2 or above
- or a degree at 2:2 or above in any other subject, followed by a postgraduate Common Professional Examination (CPE) or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)



Related skills

- Administration
- Business management
- Communication
- Interpersonal skills
- Numeracy £40,
- Patience
- Problem solving
- Time management

Related subjects

- Drama, music, and performing arts
- English
- History

Costume designer

What does a costume designer do?

Costume designers are in charge of the look and creation of costumes and outfits used in television, film and theatre productions. As a costume designer, you may be designing and making unique costumes, or you may be putting together outfits from off-the-hanger items of clothing. You'll need to be creative with an excellent eye for detail.

You may be directly employed by a production company or be self-employed working as a freelancer. You'll be working on set, which could be at a studio or out on location. You'll usually be leading a team of people in a costume department, so will need good leadership skills.

Creating the look for a production on budget is another important skill, so good financial planning is important.

Starting salary: £20,000 - £35,000

Related skills

- Attention to detail
- Communication
- Creativity
- Financial planning
- Leadership

Related subjects

- Art
- Design technology
- Drama, music, and performing arts

What do I need to do to become a costume designer?

There are no specific qualifications to become a costume designer. However, having a degree in costume design or a related subject is highly desirable.



Stage manager

What does a stage manager do?

You would make sure live stage performances run smoothly. You would organise all practical and technical aspects of rehearsals and shows, and make sure all crew and performers are in the right place at the right time.

You and your team would:

- organise rehearsals
- work with staff to plan wardrobe, set design, scene changes, sound and lighting
- manage the props budget and organise props and set dressing
- keep the 'prompt copy' of the script, which notes the performers' positions on stage, script changes, and the props, lighting and sound needed for each scene
- liaise with theatre managers and front-of-house staff
- supervise the 'get in' and 'get out' – the times when sets and equipment are set up before the show and taken down afterwards
- give cues for the performers to go on stage
- cue the technical crew for sound and lighting effects

Starting salary: £22,000 – in excess of £45,000

What do I need to do to become a stage manager?

- Level 4 HNC Diploma in Performing Arts (Production)
- foundation degrees and degrees in theatre practice, technical theatre or stage management

You'll often need practical backstage experience to apply for a course.

Alternatively, you may be able to move into stage management after training as an actor or by working your way up through backstage work.

Related skills

- Attention to detail
- Communication
- Financial planning
- Interpersonal skills
- IT
- Leadership
- Organisation

Related subjects

- Drama, music, and performing arts

Television/film producer

What does a television/film producer do?

Producers look after the business side of television, film, or video production. They organise people and resources involved in marketing and distribution in the TV and film industry. Day-to-day operations include:

- researching new ideas for projects
- discussing and agreeing projects with financial backers, and managing and monitoring budgets
- assessing scripts
- organising film shoots and schedules, and checking and approving locations
- recruiting support staff and technical teams, including the director and camera crew
- holding regular meetings to discuss characters and schemes involved in the project
- ensuring compliance, such as with health and safety and copyright laws
- negotiating marketing and distribution with TV broadcasters

Starting salary: £40,000 – in excess of £60,000

What do I need to do to become a television/film producer?

Academic route

- GCSEs (A – C) or equivalent
 - HND or A levels
- Degree, ideally media-related

Vocational route

Creative industry apprenticeships in broadcast and post-production

Alternative route

broadcast production apprenticeship.

You will need to get experience, develop a track record in the industry, and gain a detailed understanding of the technical processes involved in TV and film production, including camera, lighting, sound, and editing

Related skills

- Business management
- Communication
- Creativity
- Financial planning
- Leadership
- Organisation
- People management
- Teamwork
- Technical ability
- Time management

Related subjects

- Business studies
- Design technology
- Drama, music, and performing arts
- English
- Media studies



Arts administrator

What does an arts administrator do?

Arts administrators cover a range of functions to ensure the smooth running of projects for organisations such as community arts groups, theatre companies, art galleries, museums, and the public sector. The type of work can involve marketing, administration, gaining sponsorship and funding, and managing performers.

You could be involved in:

- arranging arts and dance projects and events
- securing venues, arranging performances, catering, and security
- organising publications to promote events and activities
- marketing, managing social media, websites, and advertising
- planning and managing budgets
- developing new projects and partnerships
- ensuring legal compliance
- writing management reports

Starting salary £20,000 up to £60,000

Related skills

- Administration
- Business management
- Communication
- Customer service
- Financial planning
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- Organisation
- People management
- Problem solving
- Teamwork
- Time management

Related subjects

- Art
- Business studies
- Drama, music, and performing arts
- English
- History
- Media studies

What do I need to do to become an arts administrator?

Academic route

- Degree, diploma, and/or certificate in arts administration, art history, a business-related qualification, English and literary studies, performing or visual arts, or design

Vocational route

- Community arts apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Cultural and heritage venue operations apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Live events and promotion apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Music business apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Sound recording, engineering, and studio facilities apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Technical theatre apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Advertising and marketing communications apprenticeship (levels 4 and 5)

Set designer

What does a set designer do?

As a set, production or stage designer, your work will begin at the start of the production planning process, and end on the opening night or when filming begins. You'll create the design ideas and sometimes delegate the practical work to others. In this job you're likely to:

- study scripts and discuss ideas with the director
- communicate your ideas to costume, make-up, props and lighting designers
- research historical, contemporary or futuristic details to get the right look for the production
- sketch design ideas to produce a 'storyboard', showing what the sets will look like scene by scene
- build and photograph scale models
- oversee set building and decoration

In theatre, you might work alone or with an assistant. In TV/film, you may manage a team that can include art directors, assistant art directors, storyboard artists and model makers.

Starting salary: £20,000, most work freelance

Academic route

- Arts-related HND or degree

Vocational route

- Creative and digital media apprenticeship

Related subjects

- Art
- Design technology
- Drama, music, and performing arts

What do I need to do to become a set designer?

Many new set designers have an arts-related HND or degree. Several universities, colleges and drama schools offer courses in theatre design, performing arts (production) or design for film and television.

Other useful subjects include:

- interior design, fine art, 3D design, architecture

You may still be able to get into this job without a degree if you can demonstrate you have a high level of design skill and creative vision. You might start as a designer's assistant or prop maker in the theatre, as an art department trainee, or runner in film and TV. You can then start to work your way up to become a designer as you develop experience and get industry contacts.

Whatever your qualifications, you should find practical experience and build a portfolio of your design work to show to potential employers.

Get relevant experience by getting involved in:

- student theatre or film, local amateur or community theatre, low-budget independent films, experimental or 'fringe' theatre

You may be able to get into this job through a creative and digital media apprenticeship.



Dancer

What does a dancer do?

Dancers use movement, usually to the accompaniment of music, to express emotions and tell stories. There are a variety of different types of dance you can specialise in from ballroom to ballet. As a dancer you will usually be doing choreographed (pre-planned) routines, though there are some forms of free-form dancing where you will need to improvise.

To be a dancer you will need to have good rhythm and timing. You need to be enthusiastic and work hard. You also need to be able to focus and concentrate.

Starting salary: Varies depending on the role

Related skills

- Teamwork
 - Physical fitness
 - Creativity
- Discipline

Related subjects

- Drama, music, and performing arts

What do I need to do to become a dancer?

There's no specific route into becoming a dancer, though you do need to train and practice. To get the job you'll also have to audition. You may consider training independently, or you could apply to go to a conservatoire to study dance.

Many professional dancers train at a vocational dance school, with an intensive three-year degree or diploma or a one-year postgraduate course in professional dance or musical theatre.

To get on a relevant degree or diploma you may need five GCSEs A-C, including maths and English and science, and at least two A levels. There are no specific subjects required but relevant ones would include dance and drama.

The most relevant vocational course would be a BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts.



Theatre Producer

What does a theatrical producer do?

Producers raise finances, book theatres, negotiate and issue contracts, and manage how the budget is spent. They organise and manage technical, stage management, and workshop functions, and are responsible for ensuring a successful project all the way through to the first live performance.

Day-to-day operations include:

- agreeing projects with financial backers
- scheduling rehearsals and performances
- holding regular meetings with directors, creative teams, and artists
- ensuring legal compliance such as copyright law, insurance liability, royalties, payroll, and tax
- securing rights to future production for film and television

Starting salary: £37,000

What do I need to do to become a theatrical producer?

There are no specific qualifications required, however a degree or HND in a media-related subject will really increase your chances of work, or you can get into the industry by taking an apprenticeship. You will need to get experience, develop a track record in the industry, and gain a detailed understanding of the management and technical processes involved in theatre production.

Academic route

- GCSEs (A – C) or equivalent
- HND or A levels
- Creative apprenticeship
- Degree (media or theatre-related)

Vocational route

- Technical theatre: lighting, sound, and stage apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Live events and promotion apprenticeship (levels 2 and 3)
- Broadcasting technology degree apprenticeship (Level 6)

Related skills

- Business management
- Communication
- Creativity
- Financial planning
- Leadership
- Organisation
- People management
- Problem solving
- Teamwork
- Time management

Related subjects

- Business studies
- Drama, music, and performing arts
- English
- Media studies

