



BECOME A CERTIFIED MAKEUP ARTIST  
YOUR CAREER ROADMAP



# Become a Certified Makeup Artist **Your Career Roadmap**

You've loved makeup for as long as you can remember. You find inspiration everywhere, and are constantly trying out new looks and techniques. Now, you're ready to turn your creative passion into an exciting and rewarding career. So where to begin?

In this Career Roadmap, you'll find information on all aspects of a career in makeup artistry, including career options, salary ranges, tips on launching your freelance business, the role of certification, the perks and challenges of the job, and much, much more.

We hope you'll find this resource to be helpful as you consider your options and move one step closer to launching your dream career.



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# The Perks of Being a Makeup Artist

With a growing number of people pursuing a career in makeup artistry, you've got to wonder – why? Read on to find out what all the hype is about, and if a career in makeup artistry might be right for you.

## 1. Make people feel beautiful

For many, this is the best part of working as a makeup artist and the #1 perk. As a makeup artist, you'll be able to take your skills and use them with models and clients of any skin tone, maturity, face shape, or skin type. You'll make your clients both look and feel incredibly beautiful.

The right touch of makeup is often all it takes for someone to see their own beauty for the first time or all over again. The boost of confidence a skilled makeup artist provides can allow clients to walk through the world with their head held high. Confidence is a powerful thing! Making others feel good will, in turn, make you feel even better. It's a beautiful cycle – literally and figuratively.

## 2. Play and create

While the career of a makeup artist is definitely one filled with hard work, it's also one filled with play and experimentation. What happens when we mix this color with that color? What happens if I move my contour line up just a pinch? Part of perfecting your craft includes experimenting with the products you have and challenging yourself to push your skills further with each new client. Trends and products are always changing, and successful makeup artists never stop experimenting and playing with new techniques, products and looks.

## 3. Meet new people

Whether you're working with brides, theater actors, celebrities, or politicians – you're bound to meet some amazing people. Sure, you'll have those few grumpy clients, but you can also make long-lasting friendships and build up a list of loyal, repeat clients.



*"I have been fortunate to meet so many beautiful people. Makeup is a very intimate thing, so people tend to open up and share. I have had brides and models tell me the most amazing and sometimes inspiring stories about their lives. This is a beautiful career that really allows you to connect with people on a deep level."*

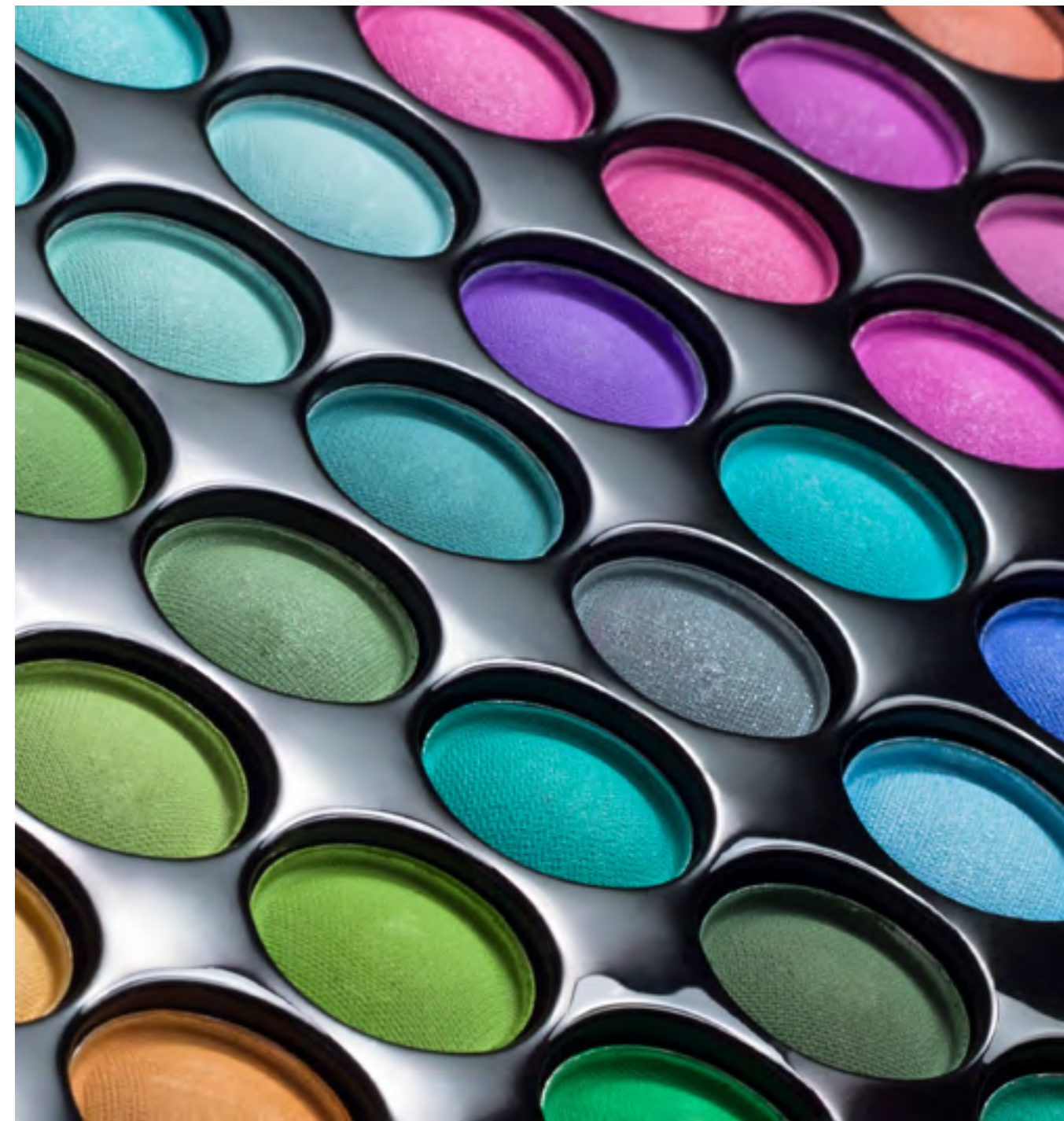
*-NATHAN JOHNSON, QC TUTOR AND CELEBRITY MAKEUP*



## 4. Make your own schedule

Makeup does not hold to a 9-5 schedule the way most other careers do. Every bride, event, and photo shoot will have its own call time. You can accept the jobs that work well with your schedule and refuse the ones that do not.

If you already have an existing full-time job, you'll be able to work around it. Most makeup gigs are booked for weekends, which would allow you to work another job during the week – at least while you're getting started. Makeup artistry is a fairly easy career to make a smooth transition over to; you can take on clients that match your available hours and set aside the additional funds to fully transition to your new career.



## 5. Get makeup discounts

Who doesn't love to save money? As a makeup artist, you can apply to countless makeup pro discount programs. In this way, you'll be able to build both your professional kit and your personal makeup collection with high quality products at a serious discount. Score!



## 6. Travel

Many makeup artists are asked to travel for work at least once in their career, and often their travel costs are reimbursed. This means you might get to travel to places and cities you've always wanted to visit, without spending a dime to get there. Many makeup artists travel for photo shoots, advertising campaigns, fashion shows, movies – you name it!



## 7. Receive recognition

As a makeup artist, you'll likely have the opportunity to work on editorial makeup projects. This means you'll be able to get your name into magazine credits! If a bride submits her photographs to a wedding photo website like Style Me Pretty or The Knot, you can also request that your name be credited there. This will do wonders for your exposure, reach, and portfolio. Plus, who doesn't like to feel a little famous every once in a while? Well-known makeup artists are often asked to write columns for major magazines, work with companies like Sephora, and even get their own TV shows or television segments. The possibilities are endless, so get your name out there!



## 8. Be part of the Glamour

Obviously the glamour of being a makeup artist and working in the backstage hustle and bustle is attractive. You might get to work backstage at New York Fashion Week for a major designer, or maybe you're working on a well-known television show with some of the world's hottest up-and-coming actors. Perhaps you're working for a major advertising company or well-known luxury brand. This type of glamour isn't easily accessible in many other careers, but goes hand-in-hand with those within the fashion and beauty industries.



## 9. Take it to the bank!

Makeup artistry is an industry that pays quite well. You can make a substantial annual income – especially if you widen your skill set and offer editorial, evening, and other year-round makeup services. Bridal makeup is one of the most well-paying services you can provide, but it can sometimes be limited to specific times of year and certain seasons.

If you get to work on the makeup team for a fashion show, television show, or for celebrity clients you'll be able to charge more, and will also have the opportunity to join an agency that will regularly book you work. For more on salaries, see page 14.

## 10. Keep evolving

As you now know, there is much more to makeup artistry than simply doing one kind of makeup application. The career of a makeup artist is one of great versatility. If you get tired of doing bridal makeup, change it up and pitch your editorial makeup services.

**There's always the chance to evolve, change, and switch gears. It's a thrilling ride that continually offers new experiences and opportunities.**





# Job Description of a Makeup Artist

While a career in makeup artistry comes with a lot of perks, it's also important to know that makeup artistry is hard work. The talented men and women who do the job on a daily basis know that a career in makeup artistry takes time, commitment, and constant skill improvement.

Many aspiring makeup artists wonder what it is exactly that a professional makeup artist does, and what sort of working conditions to expect. Read on to find out more about the day-to-day work of a makeup artist.



## Duties

A makeup artist's duties largely involve applying makeup. This could mean makeup for someone headed to their prom, a special event, or a wedding. It could be special event makeup, makeup for television, or makeup for photography. It could be makeup for fashion show models, performers, or character makeup for the theater.

At some point in your career, you may become a "Key Makeup Artist" or "Makeup Designer" and act in more of a designing or consulting capacity rather than doing hands-on applications. There are many different options available to you – which is fantastic, as it gives you more control over the future of your career.

## Working Conditions

The working conditions of a makeup artist are always changing, and can vary greatly from one job to the next. You could be set up in a hotel room to get a celebrity looking their best for a red carpet appearance. You could be asked to fly to a remote location for an on-location photoshoot and have to do makeup under the hot, hot sun. You could be travelling to a bride's home the morning of her wedding day. What you can bet on, however, is that there will be plenty of travel!

**You'll need to be able to manage your time well, work under pressure, and perform your best on a tight schedule.**

## Working Knowledge

As a makeup artist, you'll be the go-to person for product recommendations, advice, and makeup tips. It's expected that you'll be familiar with the most popular types of both pro and drugstore makeup, have a good understanding of application techniques, and know how to use different types of makeup – think: liquid foundation, powder foundation, cream foundation, etc.

You'll also need to understand basic color theory and have the ability to match skin tones with complementary colors. The same makeup will not produce the same results on all skin types, complexions, or skin maturities. Knowing how to create a personalized makeup application for each of your clients is essential, and will come from hands-on practice as well as theoretical training.



# Careers In Makeup Artistry

*By: Nathan Johnson, QC Executive Makeup Artist*

As far as diverse careers go, makeup may be one of the most versatile options available. There are more options available under the makeup scope than the vast majority of careers out there. Beauty is a billion dollar industry because no price tag can be put on the “feel-good” factor. Confidence is one of the greatest benefits that a professional makeup artist provides to clients.

## Working for a Top Cosmetics Brand

While many makeup artists work as freelance professionals, some choose to work for a major cosmetics brand like MAC or Sephora. In this position, makeup artists work with customers to select products, demonstrate proper application techniques and ultimately sell the makeup products to the customer.

Makeup artists looking to work for a top cosmetics brand need to have excellent customer service skills and a strong foundation in makeup artistry. To hear one makeup artist's experience of MAC Cosmetic's hiring process, check out “How To Get a Job as a MAC Makeup Artist,” by Jamie Smith.

## Freelance makeup artist

The most popular job available in the field of makeup is that of the freelance makeup artist. Within this category, there are nearly endless options.

Read on to explore some of these freelance options in detail.





## Bridal

If women only pay to have their makeup done one time in their lives, this is the time they will choose. A wedding is one of the most important days in a woman's life with thousands of photographs taken, so people tend to want to look their best. If you are an expert at bridal application, you can make an amazing living (even in a small town!)

## Theatre

Theatre makeup has its own specific criteria. The vast majority of the time, your job will be to design looks that allow the actors natural physical features and expressions to translate to the last audience row. A theatre can be huge, so it is necessary for eyes to look bigger and cheeks to appear rosier. Occasionally, there will be a character who requires specialty makeup, but the majority of the time, the makeup simply enhances the actors' existing features.





## Film and television

This diverse option will put you on the set of films, television shows and commercials. In most cases, it's about natural makeup applications that make people look like "enhanced" versions of themselves. Occasionally, a role may require aging or specialty applications, but normally this career is best for those who have mastered the art of the light hand. As an added bonus, this option will often give you the opportunity to work with celebrities.



## Runway

Working on the runway is fast-paced and fun. You'll be applying makeup on models in order to complement a designer's collection. If you are the key artist, you may also have the opportunity to design the makeup. Runway makeup applications affect the trends for the upcoming seasons and tend to be bold, exciting, or at the very least, provocative.



## Print

Working in print advertising provides many options. If you're shooting for a commercial ad, you're selling a product. If you think about familiar ad campaigns (excluding makeup ads), the looks tend to be quite simple so as not to be a distraction to the product itself. If you're shooting for fashion, you're selling a lifestyle or a brand image. In this case, you're not just focusing on the clothing, you're also focusing on the mood and the "feel" the garments are supposed to give off. If you're shooting for editorial, you're selling a story or communicating a theme.





## Red carpet and celebrity

These applications are the ones that get the most press. Celebrities are photographed and publicized. Their images travel the globe and become the most desired looks. As a makeup artist for celebrities who walk the red carpet, you may work with someone once, or you may work with them for years. It all comes down to your chemistry and your ability to create beautiful looks that compliment, but do not overshadow, their public persona.



## Costume makeup

This may not be everyone's first choice, but face painting and temporary tattoos can make a great part-time living. Whether you work at an amusement park or at children's parties, this can provide an income as you build your portfolio.



## Spa/Salon

So many job opportunities are available in spa and salon settings. Almost every spa and hair salon has a makeup artist consultant. That artist may be called on for a wedding, special occasion, or to provide lessons. Often in a spa, an aesthetics license will be required.

## Funeral home

Working in a funeral home can be very rewarding. When working in this capacity, it is your job to make the deceased appear as they did when they were living. This is work can bring a great deal of comfort and peace to loved ones.

### NOTE:

It's always important to check with licensing regulations in your area before starting out in your makeup career.



# Sample Career Path

Below is a sample career path of someone looking to establish themselves as a self-employed makeup artist:

## YEAR 1-2

Working as an assistant makeup artist for a more experienced makeup artist. You may take on side jobs as your skills improve.

## YEARS 6-8

Working as a senior freelance makeup artist, perhaps employing your own assistant at this point.

## YEARS 3-5

Working as a freelance makeup artist, building reputation, building client list.

## YEARS 9+

Employing more than one assistant or intermediate makeup artist, perhaps working for a cosmetics brand or as the key makeup artist, continuing to take on preferred projects (with more experience comes more choice)





# Makeup Artist Salaries

What can you expect from a makeup artist salary?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, makeup artists working in the United States earn an average annual salary of \$60,000. However, there is a wide pay scale for this occupation.

Most makeup artists reported yearly incomes between \$27,000 and \$89,000- that's quite a wide range to find within one occupation. This is largely because there are so many variables and different career paths for a makeup artist to choose from.

Here are a few factors that can affect a makeup artist's salary:

## Urban vs. Rural

Makeup artists in large urban centers have more opportunity to earn a higher living, compared to their rural counterparts. They have a larger pool of potential clients, more access to high-paying industries (like film and editorial), and generally a wealthier client base. Makeup artists working in New York City and the area surrounding it earn the highest average salaries- close to \$100,000. The second highest average salary for makeup artists is found in California, at \$73,000. However, with more opportunity in urban centers comes more competition – definitely something to consider.





## Salary by Industry

**Top Cosmetics Brand:** A great opportunity for makeup artists is to work at a beauty counter or under a major cosmetic label. This might not offer the creative freedom of freelance work, but it does offer a consistent salary, with the possibility of benefits and advancement as well. The average annual income for a makeup artist in this industry niche is \$35,000.

**Film or Television:** If you live in an area with a thriving television or film industry, a career as a makeup artist on the set of a television show or film company could be a very lucrative option. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, makeup artists working in film or television tend to earn the most on average: between \$60,000 and \$90,000.

**Theatre:** Makeup artists working in theatre and the performing arts earned salaries close to the national average; about \$61,000 per year. In this field, you have the potential to earn anywhere between \$45,000 and \$75,000, depending on your experience and skill level.

**Fashion or Celebrity:** Working at high-end fashion shows, for celebrities, or for a cosmetic brand's HQ could mean \$100,000 or well above.

## Experience and Skill

A makeup artist's earnings increase with their experience and skill level. Makeup artists who have been working in the industry for more than five years, or who have 10+ years of experience earn significantly more than beginner makeup artists, as they have cultivated their expertise, reputation and a loyal clientele base.

## Freelance vs. Employee

**Makeup artists often start as freelancers, and while it takes some time to fill up your schedule with new clients, this field offers the most freedom.** The potential earnings can vary greatly, depending on your experience, specialties, and whether you're pursuing makeup artistry as a part-time or full-time occupation. If you're working freelance, you are paid per hour or per project and can work more to make more, or work less and make less.

### NOTE:

The salary figures in the above article are current as of June 2015. Figures are intended as a guideline.

**SEE SOURCES HERE** 



# Jumpstart Your Makeup Artistry Career: Top 10 Tips

Building a career as a makeup artist is different than getting started in a lot of other industries. For one thing, most of the jobs you get will not be advertised online. When trying to get freelance makeup artist jobs, you need to get your clients to come to you. Here are our top 10 tips to get you started:

## 1. Buy the right tools

It's a bit of an investment to build a professional makeup kit, but it will be well worth the money when you're going into a job well prepared and with the tools you need to create beautiful makeup looks.

That means collecting a range of colors in eye shadows, lipsticks, blushes, and foundations that will suit a variety of different skin types and maturities-- a set of quality brushes are also a must. This will ensure that you show up to any job with the tools you need to do high-quality work.

## 2. Build a portfolio

In your free time, practice your artistry on friends or family members, take good quality photos of your work, and upload them online. Resist the urge to over-edit your photos or to apply a softening filter to the image. Your portfolio is supposed to represent what you can do.

Potential clients will be looking for clear examples of your past work, and will be left wondering about your real skills if the photos are overly edited.

For more tips on taking good makeup photos, [check out this article](#).

For a guide to building a professional portfolio, [see Appendix A](#).



### 3. Cultivate industry connections

Reach out to models and photographers who are looking for a makeup artist to help with a shoot. You might not get paid for your work (at first), but you will make valuable industry contacts and will probably get to keep the photos for your portfolio. Get creative when thinking of possible connections. Approach places like wedding and event venues, wedding planners, and hair salons, and ask to leave a stack of your business cards with each. The more professionals who know you're working in the industry, the more likely you are to be contacted when one of them is looking for a makeup artist.



### 4. Build your reputation through word-of-mouth

Talk to any successful makeup artist, and they'll tell you how important referrals are to their success. Don't underestimate the power of a spoken referral from your client to one of their friends. That one rave review might just be the thing that skyrockets your career.

A word of caution: When you're first starting out, make sure to take on work that matches your skill level and capabilities; the last thing you want is to do a poor job and damage your reputation. As your skills improve, you'll be taking on larger and more complex work, leading to more and more solid referrals.





## 5. Maintain a strong online presence

It's a good idea to get a professional Facebook page for your freelance business as a start so that you have quality portfolio pictures readily available for potential clients to view. Next, look into creating a website and linking it to various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. When you get business cards, be sure to include your social media links so potential clients can easily see your work.



## 6. Be clean and professional

Keep your products, tools and work area clean and sanitary at all times. A good quality brush cleaner is an absolute must for your makeup kit. Write yourself an expiration date on the package of each product when you open it and update your products regularly.

Dress to look the part: showing up with styled hair, beautiful makeup and a polished outfit (no matter how early the call) demonstrates that you care. **Your professional appearance will also help to set the client at ease and begin to establish their trust in you.**





## 7. Be friendly and approachable

The makeup industry is full of competitive professionals, which is why it's so important to put your best foot forward from the very start. Put a smile on your face and walk into every client meeting with a great attitude. This can make all the difference. Make sure the impression you make is a good one, and it will lead to rave reviews and referrals.

## 8. Job shadow

The best way to become acquainted with this fast-paced work setting is to seek advice from a fellow professional. Ask them how they began their career, and even inquire to see if they would be willing to have you shadow or assist them at their next job. You'll be surprised by how much you learn.

Just make sure the advice you get is coming from a seasoned professional who has your best interests in mind; we suggest contacting a makeup artist who works outside of your area (i.e. they're not in direct competition with you) and who has a few years of experience under their belt.



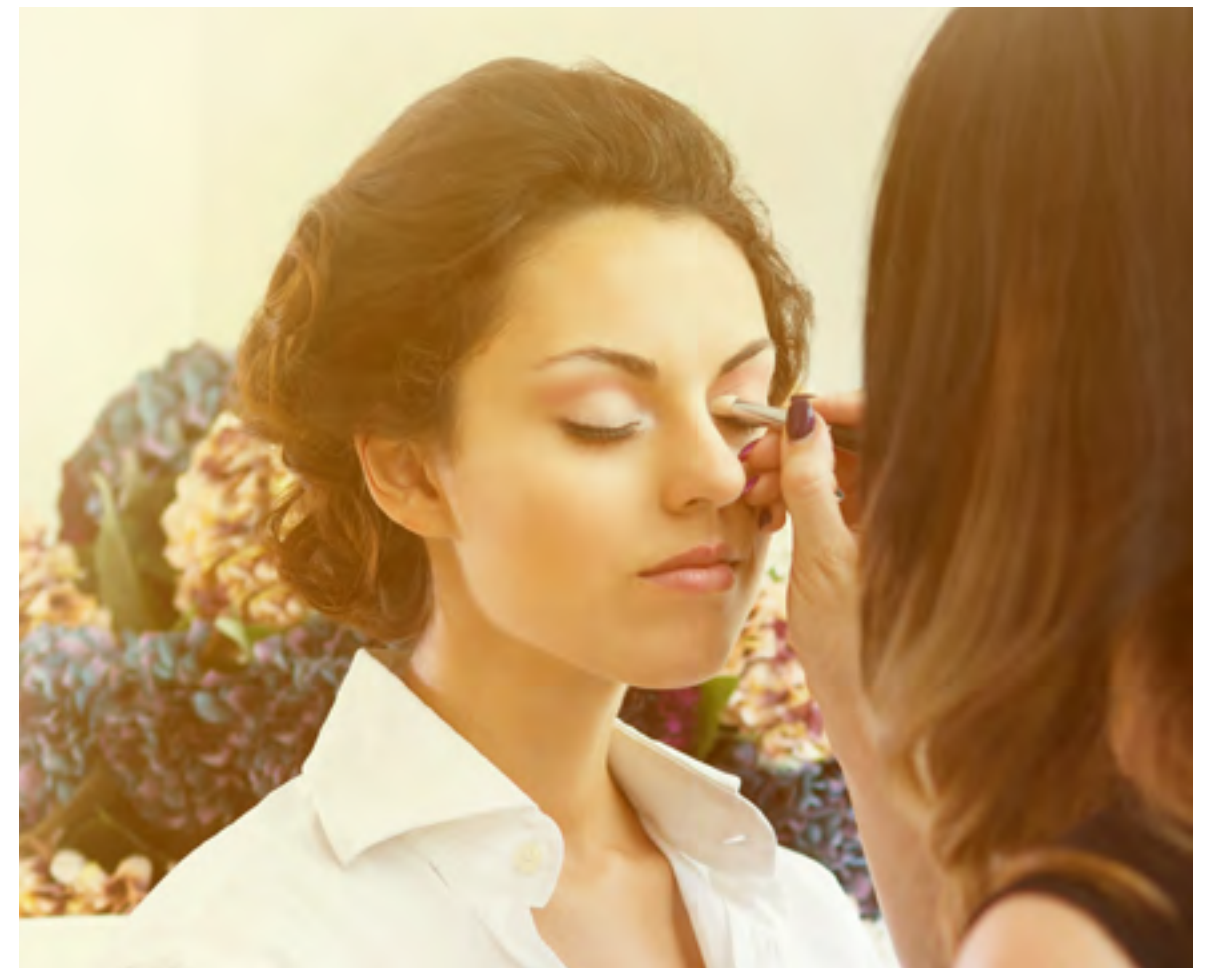


## 9. Stay current

In this dynamic field, it's important to keep up to speed with what's going on in the industry. Subscribe to beauty and fashion magazines, well-known blogs, and any industry-related publications. **Never stop looking for inspiration!**

## 10. Show that you care

Showing your clients that you genuinely care for them is important. The relationship between a client and their makeup artist can be a very personal one – even if it is brief. If you have a growing number of clients to keep track of, create client files. Jot down personal information about them that they've mentioned, and refresh your memory before your next meeting. Remembering small details really helps the client feel special and it will leave a lasting impression!



## In conclusion...

Starting off in the makeup industry can sometimes be a slow process, but once you get your foot solidly in the door, you'll find yourself working in a successful, fun, and rewarding career.



# Certification: What it means for your career


The certification requirements for a makeup artist vary based on region. In certain countries and states, you must have a cosmetology license to work as a makeup artist. Since cosmetology programs typically touch on makeup very briefly, most aspiring makeup artists find it helpful to also pursue makeup-focused training. Other regions require no certification or license to operate as a makeup artist. It's best to do your research in the area in which you're hoping to work to ensure you're well prepared and have all necessary documentation to get started – even as a freelance artist.

**Having a professional certification is a huge asset when launching a career in the makeup industry. Here's why:**

- ✓ Completing a certificate course will help you develop a **strong foundation of skills and knowledge in makeup artistry**. A well-rounded makeup education will give you the ability to create a variety of looks for different events, ages and skin types, and a thorough knowledge of color theory.
- ✓ Having a professional certification can help to **put new clients at ease** and establish their trust in your skills, especially if you don't yet have many years of experience under your belt.
- ✓ If your interest is in working for a top cosmetics brand, completing a professional certification course in makeup artistry can give you the **skills, practice and confidence** to navigate the hiring process, as well as signaling to a potential employer that you are more than just a makeup enthusiast- **you are a dedicated professional**.




# Education: Choosing an Online School



Are you considering enrolling in an online makeup artistry school? You can find a guide to choosing a good online school (and avoiding the bad apples) **here**.



If you're ready to take the first step towards a new career in makeup artistry, check out QC Makeup Academy's courses to find the one that matches your interests, experience and career goals.



**Have questions?** Our friendly support staff are happy to answer your questions and provide more information about QC Makeup Academy.

**Contact us today at:**

**1-800-267-1829**

**INFO@QCMAKEUPACADEMY.COM**

**QCMAKEUPACADEMY.COM**



# Appendix A: How to Build a Portfolio

If you're serious about getting involved in makeup artistry, you need a portfolio.

A makeup artistry portfolio is a compilation of your best work in a format that's easily accessible to others. They can be in physical (book) form, or online (which is more common today).

If you're trying to attract new clients, being able to show them examples of your past work will help them trust you a lot faster than a simple business card or website will. Surprisingly however, very few makeup artists take the time to create a good portfolio.

But if you're just starting out, how can you create a portfolio if you don't have any clients? Here are some tips to help you get started.

## Volunteer your time: give free makeovers!

If you don't have any paying clients (or your clients don't want to give you permission to photograph them), offer free makeovers to family, friends, and strangers. It's important to have a wide variety of faces and skin types in your portfolio. In exchange for your services, simply ask them for permission to photograph your work and use those photos in your portfolio.

While using friends and family is a start, go a step further and volunteer your services at community centers, school plays, etc. It's a great chance to practice your skills and gain some real-world experience as well!

### PRO TIP:

It's always a good idea to have your clients sign a release form allowing you to use photos of them in your portfolio. It takes just a few minutes and can save you many

## Use your course work

As part of your makeup artistry courses, you'll be asked to complete assignments on models (even if you use yourself as the model). Why not take the assignments you're particularly proud of, and display them in your portfolio!

You can even include your tutor's quoted feedback along with your work. This is especially valuable when your tutor is a well-respected professional makeup artist. Again, just make sure you have your tutor's permission first.

## Use isolated features

A portfolio doesn't have to feature fully-finished faces only. You can include close-up shots of eyes, lips, contouring that you've created, along with polished whole looks. Adding these individual pieces can accomplish two goals:

1. It allows the viewer to see your technical skills up close, and
2. It allows you to add to your portfolio more quickly than if you were to focus on full looks only.





## Keep it relevant

If you're a makeup artist, you probably have an area of focus or specialty you want to be known for. It could be high fashion makeup, everyday makeup, bridal makeup, etc. Whatever your focus, make sure it's reflected in your portfolio. If you're advertising your bridal makeup services, for example, images of theatre makeup won't help you get clients. Using pictures of beautiful bridal looks, on the other hand, will.

## Only the best will do

When building your portfolio, be ultra-critical of your work. Potential clients will use this to judge your abilities, and you don't want to give them any reason to go look for another source. You might work on 10 different looks or take 100 different pictures to find the one that's truly "portfolio worthy".

## Be honest

Never ever take credit for someone else's work. It'll come back to bite you in the end. It's okay to include a piece in your portfolio if you assisted in its creation, but make sure you indicate what your specific role was.

## Proofread... then do it again

Even though spelling and grammar skills have nothing to do with makeup skills... it's a testament to your professionalism. Think about it: If someone is willing to publish a piece that contains those kinds of mistakes, how careful are they truly going to be when applying a client's makeup?

Although you may not have much text in your portfolio, take some time to make sure your spelling and grammar are correct in your title and descriptions. If this isn't your strong suit, get someone else to look it over.

### PRO TIP:

Please don't rely on a mechanical "spell check". A pair of human eyes will catch errors that a computer will miss, guaranteed. Having another person (or several people) read over your portfolio is the best way to go!

## Keep it current

You should always keep updating your portfolio with recent work. As your portfolio grows, consider also removing some of your older or dated work samples and replacing them with more current ones. Having a higher proportion of recent work in your portfolio helps demonstrate that your skills are current.

## You should be online

It's not uncommon to have a printed portfolio, but these days you'll really need to have an online one as well. You don't have to be a web designer for this: you can easily find cheap online templates that you can use if you don't have the technical skills. Many social media platforms are highly visual mediums- think Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, and can be a good place to start in making your portfolio pictures readily available to potential clients.

If you like, you can get help developing your website from a local web designer. You can also check out this handy guide:

**Building Your Website: What You Need to Know!**





## Appendix B: Free Makeup Starter Kit and Makeup Discounts

At QC Makeup Academy, we want you to be prepared for your course and your career. That's why we help you get a head start on building a beautiful, professional makeup kit by offering a 5-piece Bonus Makeup Starter Kit to all new students enrolled in the Makeup Artistry and Master Makeup Artistry courses.

### Bonus Starter Makeup Kit



We also partner with top makeup vendors and suppliers around the world to get you the very best deals on your favorite makeup brands!

**Find out more about these special offers here:**

**“Bonus Makeup Kit Guide and Makeup Discount Offers”**





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# About QC Makeup Academy

*Launched in 2011, QC Makeup Academy is a part of QC Career School that has been certifying professionals for 30 years!*

QC is proud to offer quality online distance education world-wide. Over 1,000 students enroll in QC Makeup Academy's courses each year, and many of them go on to successful careers as makeup artists in the United States, Australia, the UK, Canada, New Zealand and in many other countries!

## Contact Us

**WWW.QCMAKEUPACADEMY.COM**

**EMAIL: INFO@QCMAKEUPACADEMY.COM**

**US & CANADA:** 1-800-267-1829

**UNITED KINGDOM:** 0800 066 4734

**AUSTRALIA:** 1 800 358 931

**NEW ZEALAND:** 0800 451 979

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