



Career of the week

Hairdresser

Hairdressers and barbers cut, shave, colour and style customers' hair.

Average salary (a year): £19,500 (starter) to £30,000 (experienced)

Typical hours (a week): 37 to 40 week (you could work evenings/weekends)

You can get into this job through:

College

You could take a college course that will give you some of the skills and knowledge you'll need to start in this career.

Courses include:

- hairdressing
- barbering
- women's and men's hairdressing

You may be able to combine these courses with other subjects like make-up and nails.

Specific courses you could take to become a hairdresser include:

- Level 1 Diploma Intro to the Hair and Beauty Sector
- Level 2 Diploma in Men's & Women's Hairdressing
- Level 3 Diploma in Hairdressing

Entry requirements

You may need:

- A minimum of one GCSE at grade 4 or above, good communication skills and a passion for hairdressing
- Level 1 Diploma in Hairdressing or three GCSEs at grade 4 or above for a Level 2 qualification
- You must hold a level 2 qualification in hairdressing and be working in a salon at least one day a week for a Level 3 qualification.

Apprenticeship

You could do an apprenticeship to get into this job, for example:

- Hairdressing Professional Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship
- Barbering Professional Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship
- Creative Hair Professional Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship

These apprenticeships can take between 1 and 2 years to complete.

Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- some GCSEs, usually including English and maths, or equivalent, for an intermediate apprenticeship.
- 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent, including English and maths, for an advanced apprenticeship.

Work

You might be able to start work as a trainee hairdresser or barber and learn on the job.

Your employer would expect you to take a part-time course to get qualifications, either at a college or in their own training school.

You may also be able to work freelance and rent space in a salon or barbershop, though you'll usually have to supply your own equipment.

Skills and knowledge

You'll need:

- customer service skills
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- the ability to work well with your hands
- active listening skills
- excellent verbal communication skills
- the ability to work on your own
- to be flexible and open to change
- the ability to learn through your work
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages confidently

Day-to-day tasks

As a hairdresser or barber you could:

- talk to customers and discuss styling ideas
- wash, cut and style hair
- apply colours, tints, braids and hair extensions
- trim and shape beards and moustaches
- finish jobs using hair products
- order stock, take payments and make appointments

Working environment

You could work in a salon, at a client's home, at a health spa, at an adult care home, on a cruise ship or in a barbershop.

Your working environment may be physically active.

Career progression

With experience you could:

- become a senior stylist, barber or salon manager
- open your own salon or barbershop
- get qualified to train or assess student hairdressers or barbers
- work freelance and rent space in a salon
- use your skills as a hair professional in the theatre, film or television industry