

Royal Ballet and Opera Apprenticeships

What part could you play?

INFORMATION PACK FOR CANDIDATES

COSTUME PERFORMANCE APPRENTICE Technical, Production and Costume Department

Applications Close: 24th March 2025

1st Round Interviews: 26th May 2025

(online)

2nd Round Interviews: 16th June 2025

(in person)

Start Date: 1st September 2025 (tbc)



Welcome,

Message from Alex Beard, Chief Executive

Thank you for taking the time to apply for a role at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

Extraordinary, world-class performances of opera and ballet are at the absolute heart of our vision here at the Royal Ballet and Opera.

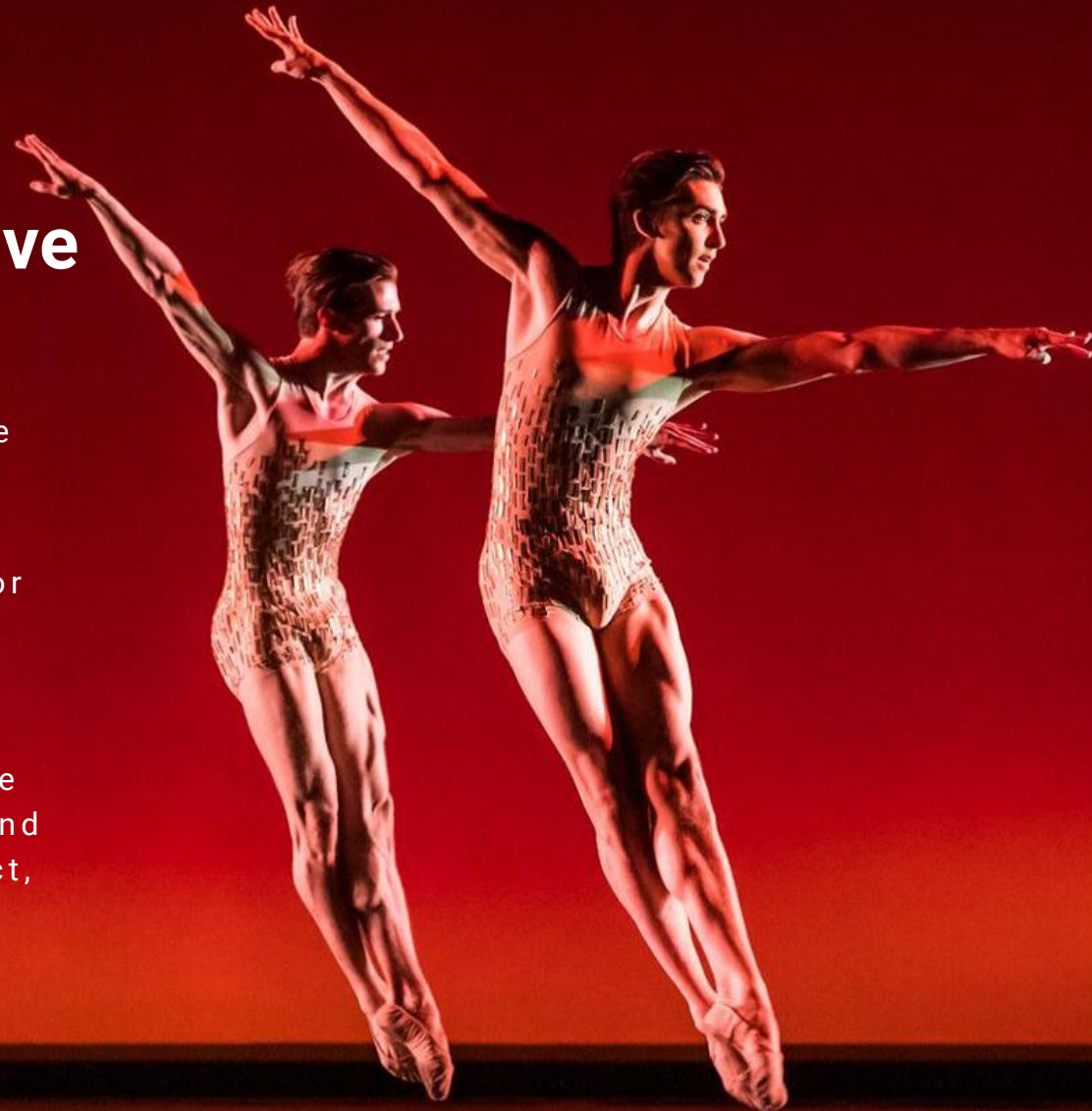
So, whether the audience is in one of our beautiful theatres in Covent Garden, watching around the globe in cinemas and online streaming, or taking part in learning and participation programmes up and down the country, we want as many people as possible to enjoy and appreciate these astonishing artforms.

None of this would be possible without the exceptional team of people who work here. People are centre stage of everything we do at RBO, and we built our culture on our core values: treating everyone with Respect, being Open in our mindset and approach, and striving for the Highest Standards in everything we do.

Everyone is welcome at the Royal Ballet and Opera, whatever your background or experience, and we look forward to your application.

Best of luck!

Alex



The Royal Ballet and Opera

The Royal Ballet and Opera is the UK's home of world-class opera and ballet. We are a cultural powerhouse, bringing together two world-class performing companies in one of the UK's leading arts institutions, supported by a cast of more than 3,000 employees, including technical staff, creatives, and freelancers.

Based primarily at the Royal Opera House in the heart of London's Covent Garden, with production and logistics sites in Thurrock and Aberdare, our work is enjoyed by audiences in our two theatres and globally through our streaming platform, cinema Season and company tours. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum linked programmes, specially designed to inspire creativity, widen access to the arts and diversify the future of opera and ballet. These sit alongside industry-leading talent development projects, regional partnerships, our Young RBO scheme, and a raft of daytime events, family activities, tours, exhibitions, and concerts in our Covent Garden home. We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2035.



Our Craftspeople



Every set, costume and prop that appears on the stage to create the spectacular worlds that help tell the stories of the Opera and Ballet is made by our highly skilled teams, these include:

- Scenic Carpenters
- Scenic Metalworkers
- Scenic Artists
- Props Makers
- Armourers
- Wig Makers
- Costume Makers

Behind the Scenes...



There are also teams of highly skilled people making the live shows happen; lighting experts, sound experts, stage build crews and flys and automation crews, on stage props, costume and make up teams.

These teams get the show up and running from rehearsal through to performance nights.

There are up to four different productions showing on our main stage in a week and a whole production can be stripped from the stage to make way for another in a matter of minutes.

As well as the teams who work directly on our performances, there is an army of people that support the day-to-day workings of the organisation.

These include:

- Visitor Experience
- Audiences & Commercial
- Learning & Participation
- Development, Advocacy & Public Policy
- Operations, Estates & Facilities
- Finance, Legal & Business Affairs
- Human Resources
- Information Technology

And we have Apprenticeships in these departments too!



Whatever the team, everyone who works at RBO has a passion for what they do and a shared interest in keeping this unique and brilliant theatre doing what it does best.

For that to continue into the future, we want to encourage fresh, passionate new talent into the building and our apprenticeship scheme plays a big part in that.

All departments across the organisation support the apprentices through their journey with us.

Apprentices at RBO get an authentic workplace experience in their specialist field and are fully integrated into the professional teams who are working on producing our live shows.



Where Do You Fit In?



We are interested in recruiting apprentices that first and foremost are curious, driven by working in a creative environment and are keen to learn new skills.

We don't expect our apprentices to be experts, but we do want people who foremost bring enthusiasm and willingness to learn from some of the best in the industry and who might teach us a thing or two!

We believe diversity is about making sure we can attract and develop talented people who bring more because of their different backgrounds, experiences, cultures and outlooks.

Recruiting and working with these talented people is just part of the work. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone believes they belong and can do their best work.

How Our Apprenticeships Work



RBO Apprentices are placed in a department relevant to their apprenticeship where they work as part of those teams across a working week that is regulated by the line manager in the department.

Apprentices are also supported by the Apprenticeships team to ensure each apprentice is happy in their placement and keep them on track throughout. The apprentices also support one another as a peer group; there are several opportunities to meet throughout the placements.

Apprenticeships are between one and four years in duration and have a mix of work and study. Each position is assigned a college that will support the qualification learning and a percentage of the working week of an apprentice is assigned for college work and study. This is either on day release, block release or remote learning.

As part of the Apprentice cohort you will join with other apprentices from the Royal Ballet and Opera taking part in events, training opportunities and activities to bring you together as a community.

You will be assigned a mentor in your department who can manage your work and progress.

You will have regular pastoral sessions with the apprenticeship team who also manage any practical needs of your qualification or employment.

The Apprenticeships Team also connect with your college to ensure you are on track.

Your college course may be online, day or block release but we allow you time in your working week to fit this in.

You will earn National Living Wage which will increase by 2.5% in your second year.



What Are The Perks?

As an RBO Apprentice you will earn the National Living Wage while you qualify.

You will have the opportunity to take part in other training on offer to staff to add to your wider skills.

You will also benefit from all the Royal Ballet and Opera Staff discounts and offers.

These include:

- Staff offers on performance tickets and access to general rehearsals
- Subsidised canteen and coffee bar
- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme providing 24-hour advice and counselling services
- Discounts on alternative and physical therapies provided in-house
- Discounted staff ballet, Pilates and yoga classes
- Discounts at the Royal Ballet and Opera Shop
- Concessions at a wide range of local Covent Garden shops, restaurants and gyms



Our Process

We operate a fair and open recruitment and selection process. Every role is open to all sections of society and we welcome your application, regardless of your sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, different physical ability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We particularly welcome applications from those who are from a global majority background and/or those who are disabled, as they are under-represented within the Royal Ballet and Opera. As a Disability Confident employer, we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the essential minimum criteria for our vacancies.

Take a look at [these case studies](#) to hear some past apprentice stories.

Look at the criteria carefully, please do not apply if you don't meet the basic criteria for example if you are studying/studied at degree level.

See our frequently asked questions if you would like to know more or email your questions to apprentices@roh.org.uk.



Costume Performance Technician Apprenticeship



What does a Costume Performance Technician do?

Theatre costume performance technicians, commonly referred to in the industry as 'wardrobe staff', are responsible for the care, maintenance and usage of costumes. Costume performance technicians are fantastic communicators, delivering the highest standard of artist care, they are responsible leading a team of dressers, as well as for the dressing of performers throughout rehearsals and performances.

What does a Theatre Costume Performance department do?

A theatre costume performance department (often known as the running wardrobe department) is responsible for ensuring that all costume elements are at the standard of the designer's specification for every performance.

Costume Performance Technician Apprenticeship



What does a Theatre Costume Performance department do? Cont'd

The department creates costume plots during rehearsals for a production then prepare and set costumes for every rehearsal and performance costumes are required for; including laundering, ironing, steaming, organising dry cleaning, repairing and are responsible for the smooth running of dressing during performances/rehearsals. After the final performance of a show, the department assists cataloguing the costumes and packs them ready for transportation to storage.

This apprenticeship is NOT suitable for those who wish to pursue a career in Costume Making or Costume/Fashion Design. The Royal Ballet and Opera do not offer design-based apprenticeships.

Purpose of the Apprenticeship

The Costume Performance Technician Apprenticeship is an opportunity to acquire practical skills as a costume performance technician, relevant to a career in costume performance or running wardrobe in the performing arts industries.

This Apprenticeship is a non-degree level, vocational training route. The role is a full-time position, and you cannot enrol in another course or get another job for the duration of the apprenticeship.

The Royal Ballet and Opera Apprenticeship scheme aims to create opportunities for, and support those who may not have had access to the arts and/or as an alternative route to a career in theatre for those who would face significant barriers to, have not embarked upon, or completed a degree course at university.

Applications are encouraged from candidates who are underrepresented in the Performing Arts and at the Royal Ballet and Opera including those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, low socio-economic backgrounds and disabled people.



What is Involved?



- The apprenticeship will be delivered by the costume performance department at the Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden and online college elements by Chichester College Group where you will work towards a Level 3 [Costume Technician – Stage and Screen Apprenticeship Standard](#).
- The apprentice will be supported throughout the apprenticeship by a college tutor, RBO costume staff and by the Apprenticeships Team.
- ☒ The apprentice will spend time working on both opera and ballet productions and will be required to work during evenings and weekends on performance and/or laundry calls. The working week is 42.5 hours.
- There will be the opportunity to spend some work experience time at another theatre venue, costume maker or commercial workshop during the second year of the apprenticeship.

What will you do in the workplace?

- Assist with the preparation of costumes for productions including laundering, ironing and repairing.
- Undertake setting and dressing plots for specified performers during performances and/or rehearsals.
- Contribute to the maintenance of the costume database and asset management systems, keeping costume notes and related information up to date including dressing plots and clear laundering notes.
- Develop strong working relationships with colleagues across Technical, Production and Costume department as a whole and in particular with performing artists.
- Have a positive and responsible attitude to health and safety.
- Maintain safe and tidy work areas, in the costume performance department and in performance areas.
- Gain familiarity with new and improved making/repairing techniques, materials or working practices.
- Participate in additional training as necessary.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties as requested by the relevant HOD or Apprenticeships Manager.
- Submit learning logs and diaries to the Apprenticeships Manager.
- Attend regular meetings with line managers and the Apprenticeships Manager to review progress.

Minimum Essential Requirements



- You must be **18 years old or over** on Monday 1st September 2025
- You must **not** have completed a degree or equivalent in the UK or elsewhere (regardless of subject)
- You must have work authorisation for the UK

What Are We Looking For in a Costume Performance Technician Apprentice?

- An interest in running wardrobe / costume performance in theatre.
- A basic understanding of fabrics, fibres and the various laundering/ironing methods associated with them.
- Basic sewing skills for routine alterations and repairs.
- Excellent interpersonal / communication skills.
- Good attention to detail.
- A helpful, positive and proactive approach.
- Good at working in a team.
- Punctual and good at managing your own workload.
- Self-motivated to acquire new skills and knowledge.
- Physically capable of undertaking the requirements of the job. Reasonable adjustments will be considered as part of your application.



How to Apply

Scroll to the bottom of the advert on the RBO website and click on 'Apply Now'.

Complete our simple application form - we promise it is not too scary.

If you have any access needs and would like to complete the form in a different format - please contact us on hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk.



Top Tips for Applications

- First and foremost, read through the relevant Job Description and Job Pack carefully. Answers to your most common questions are contained in the pack, as well as information about the Royal Ballet and Opera and our work.
- Check the location of the apprenticeship you are applying for and the college provider we partner with for specific course delivery. Not all roles are based at ROH Covent Garden, and you may be required to attend college in another location. You must live within a commutable distance to your place of work **and** study before embarking on (and during) the apprenticeship so please consider the travel commitments/relocating implications before applying. You must budget for living and travel expenses from your salary.
- Take time to prepare your answers to **demonstrate** how you fit the criteria – we receive hundreds of applications to our apprentice programme so if you want to make yours stand out, take the time to prepare and think about how your experience fits the criteria. Make sure you have watched our Apprenticeships video on our website to understand what we offer.
- Show us your personality! Apprenticeships are vocational training positions, and we are not looking for the final product. What we are looking for is passion, enthusiasm, and dedication. We want to hire apprentices who will bring fresh energy to the organisation and will be the future of their chosen fields.



- Tell us about you in your own words. Speak truthfully about your experience and interests. We can tell when applications have been written by third parties, keen parents or AI technology. We want to hear from you, about you, in your own voice.
- Try to use real life examples in your answers. Whether from school, college, your studies, work experience, volunteering, or personal life, show us how you have transferable skills and a passion relevant to the role you are applying for. We understand many applicants will not have practical work experience and that is ok! Think outside the box when applying life examples to the questions and helping us understand why an apprenticeship is the right route for you.
- If you have any access requirements when submitting your application, please contact hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk. We currently only accept written applications but if this format is not suitable, let's have a conversation about how we can support you. We are also happy to talk directly to support workers and job coaches.



Top Tips for Applications cont'd

- Apprenticeships are a form of vocational training. The standard we award for this apprenticeship is Level 3 which equates to a pre-degree qualification. **If you have completed a degree (even in a non-related subject) you are overqualified, and we will not be able to consider your application.** Therefore, please do not invest time and energy in your application as it will be sifted out and you will be disappointed.
- There is no upper age limit on ROH apprenticeships, and they can also be a route to retrain and get into a new industry. However, you must be at least 18 years old at the start of the apprenticeship.
- You are applying to an Apprenticeship position, this means you will be required to undertake a college course throughout the two-years you are employed and are expected to work hard to complete the course including attending seminars/teaching, to submit course work/assignments and to pass the assessment at the end of the course.
- Prepare your answers to our application form in Word/Pages and save somewhere locally before copying and pasting into the form to make sure you don't lose your work and have a record of your application answers.
- All applications are reviewed by a shortlisting panel which includes the Apprenticeships Team and Hiring Departments. Applications are anonymised so the panel will only see your answers to the shortlisting questions against a candidate number. They are not given any information about your name, age, location, or any other personal details. The only exception is if you declare a disability in your application.
- Therefore, it is vital that you provide us with the information you wish to represent you in the shortlisting questions!

Good Luck!