

JOB DESCRIPTION

Role/Title: Props Carpentry Apprentice

Reports to: Apprenticeships Manager

Line managed by (Daily Basis): Head of Props/ Senior Props Technician

What is a Props Carpenter and what do they work on?

A Props Carpenter in the performing arts is responsible for making props including furniture, using timber and other materials. The designer produces a design consisting of drawings, a model, or sometimes just a reference. From this construction drawings are developed and using these, the props carpenters bring the design to life. The Props Carpenter will also become proficient at metalwork as often one piece of furniture will be made from both wood and metal.

At the Royal Ballet and Opera, a carpenter in the props department is multi skilled to make range of props; from detailed wooden furniture such as chairs and tables, to structural supporting pieces for the wider props team to work on. They also restore and repair props from our repertory of productions, some props being more than 40 years old. The props carpentry team must be skilled at interpreting designs and understanding materials that are suitable for realising the design. They must have an eye for detail, good problem-solving skills and an understanding of period styles and history.

What does a Prop Making department do?

Props makers contribute along with the set building team to bringing the Designer's vision to life – from interpreting their designs, turning them into three dimensional props that range in size and function, enabling the physical 'world' to come to life on stage. The props team work closely with other teams involved in the production process such as the stage management team, as props have to be practically suitable as well as visually effective.

The **Props Carpenter Apprentice** will work largely in in the Prop Making Department at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and will study on block release with the Building Crafts College in Stratford on an Architectural Joinery L2 and Craft Carpentry L3 pathway.

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- Learn to work in wood; to measure, cut, drill, join and fix wood and other construction components using moder and traditional methods.
- Learn to select the correct wood type for the job, gaining understanding of the qualities of different wood types.
- Learn how manufacture props to a high standard using carpentry and joinery techniques as well as use machines, power and hand tools safely and accurately
- Learn to read and interpret technical and construction drawings, to ensure accurate and durable props are made that realise the Designer's vision.
- Learn to draw up full size working drawings.

- Work closely with the props carpentry team and the wider members of the props making team to manufacture props.
- Undertake repairs and maintenance of props, sympathetic to the designer's brief, for revival productions to return them to the original design ensuring visual and structural integrity.
- Follow safety protocols and maintain a clean and organised workspace.
- Collaborate with team members to meet project deadlines and quality standards.
- Keep up to date with any new and improved ways of working and new theatre technology.
- Have a positive and responsible attitude to health and safety.
- Take responsibility for your own attendance, safe working, motivation, discipline and welfare.
- Submit learning logs and diaries to the Apprenticeships Team as required.
- Attend regular meetings with line managers and the Apprenticeships Team to review progress.

Purpose of the Apprenticeship

The Props Carpentry Apprenticeship is an opportunity to train in very specific skills for props making in the performing arts industry.

This Apprenticeship is a non-degree level, vocational training route. The role is a full-time position, and you cannot enroll 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.

This apprenticeship would be suitable for someone interested in structural, practical carpentry and building elements of world-renowned sets.

This apprenticeship is NOT suitable for those who wish to pursue a career in theatre design of any kind. The Royal Ballet and Opera do not offer design-based apprenticeships.

What is involved?

- The apprenticeship will be based at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and the Building Crafts College in Stratford, E15, where you will study for an Architectural Joinery L2 and Craft Carpentry L3 pathway.
- Part of the qualification will be achieved through the completion of a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how the relevant skills have been used in the workplace.
- College content will be delivered on block release from the workplace, usually in two or three week blocks.
- You will work 42.5 hours per week.
- The apprentice will be supported throughout the apprenticeship by a college tutor, RBO technical and production staff and by the Apprenticeships Team.
- The apprentice will spend time working on both opera and ballet productions

- There will be the opportunity to spend some work experience time at another theatre venue/ performing arts setting during the second year of the apprenticeship.

Who will you be working with?

- Props Carpentry Team
- Wider Props Team
- Other production teams
- Draughts people
- Stage Teams
- Health & Safety Team

Minimum essential requirements

- You must be **18 years old or over** on the 1 September 2025.
- You **must not** have completed a degree or equivalent level qualification in the UK or elsewhere (regardless of subject).
- You **must** have work authorisation for the UK.
- An interest in a career as a props carpenter/ metalworker in the performing arts.
- Some basic understanding or experience of carpentry and or metalwork or prop making.

What are we looking for in a Props Carpenter Apprentices?

- Interest in interior features, in particular period features and an interest in history and/or art history.
- Previous involvement in creating props or scenic elements would be desirable (this could be at school, college, youth club, local theatre or venue, or amateur dramatics group.)
- Previous woodworking experience (this could be at school, youth club, in a home project or a workplace etc.)
- Strong drawing skills
- Good at working in a team.
- An ability and enjoyment of working with your hands using various materials.
- A practical approach to problem solving.
- Good at practical, hands-on tasks.
- Punctual and good at managing your own schedule.
- Respectful and receptive approach to all health and safety requirements.
- Self-motivated to acquire new skills and knowledge.
- A helpful, positive and proactive approach.
- Physically capable of undertaking the requirements of the job including good spatial awareness. Reasonable adjustments will be considered as part of your application.

Note: This Job Description reflects the current situation. It does not preclude change or development that might be required in the future.

