



MUSICIAN

JOB DESCRIPTION

For most musicians, music is not so much a career as a lifelong passion. To succeed, you need natural ability, dedication, and a lot of practice. Musicians may need formal training, especially in classical music or composition, but many are self-taught. Their earnings come from performing, recording, or writing music, either alone or as part of a group or an ensemble.



SALARY

Orchestral player ★★☆☆☆
Successful music artist ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Competitive industry • Mostly part-time and freelance work, although full-time roles in military bands and large orchestras available • Internet has changed the industry's business model

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Music • Entertainment • Songwriting and composition • Performance arts and culture



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A degree is not required, but you must be able to either sing or play an instrument, and to perform to a very high standard.



LIFESTYLE Rehearsals and recordings in a studio, or live performances during gigs and tours, can involve long hours. Schedules are highly irregular.



LOCATION Musicians may work in a recording studio, theater, school, or even a church. If touring, international travel may be required.



THE REALITIES This is a hugely competitive field. Performances can be tiring and stressful, whether live or in a studio.

CAREER PATHS

A musician's future depends partly on the genre of music chosen. If you play in an orchestra, your chances of becoming a soloist are low; if you play in a popular group, you could achieve huge, but often short-lived, commercial success.

AMATEUR Playing in a local band or orchestra and taking music classes will help you develop your skills, give you exposure to an audience, and may help you start a professional career in music.



GRADUATE If you study music at college, you will gain an understanding of theory, history, and technique. A music degree is not a guarantee of success as a performer, but it will give you access to other parts of the music business.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **ARTS ADMINISTRATOR** Supervises activities and events that promote the arts in theaters, museums, galleries, and music festivals.
- ▶ **MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MAKER/REPAIRER** Uses specialized skills to create new instruments or repair ones that have been damaged.
- ▶ **MUSIC TEACHER** Gives music lessons to people of all ages and abilities. Music teachers can teach students in a college, school, or private center, or tutor individuals at home.
- ▶ **MUSIC THERAPIST** Uses music creatively to help adults and children address social, emotional, or physical problems. Music therapists hold sessions in a variety of settings with people of all ages and social backgrounds.

SKILLS GUIDE



A high level of musical ability and the confidence to perform before an audience.



Dedication and motivation to practice and rehearse for several hours every day.



The ability to work closely with other musicians in orchestras, and sound recordists in studios.



Excellent social skills and the ability to self-promote in order to find paid work.



Attention to detail and perfect timing, especially when performing with other musicians.

POPULAR MUSICIAN

Plays pop, jazz, or another contemporary musical genre. Only a few achieve great success, but many more make a living playing in informal settings, such as small venues, bars, restaurants, and at events such as weddings.



CLASSICAL MUSICIAN Performs live or in recordings as part of an orchestra, in a smaller ensemble, or as a soloist. Skill in playing more than one instrument can improve a musician's prospects.



CONDUCTOR Interprets musical scores, and uses a baton or hand gestures to give musical or artistic directions to performers. Some classical musicians undergo further training to become conductors in orchestras and ensembles.

MUSICIAN As a musician, you can work in various roles—as a performer on stage, in the theater, or as a session musician, working as a temporary member of a group in a recording studio or at a live performance. Many trained musicians become music teachers or work with record companies.



COMPOSER Creates original music for artists and orchestras, as well as for TV and film soundtracks, computer games, and advertising jingles.