

Trade Tests

Because Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing are practical occupations, part of the interview process will include what is known as a 'trade test' or 'skills test'. This is when you will be asked to demonstrate a practical treatment on someone in order for the company to view your practical skills and techniques. Usually this is done at a second interview after the company has first seen you, talked to you and felt that you could fit it as part of the team.

Trade tests can be a very nerve-racking experience but your nerves on the day are usually taken into consideration. Some employers will let you know beforehand which treatments or techniques you will be expected to carry out on the day; this is a much fairer system as it allows you time to prepare for the assessment, which in turn will help to calm your nerves.

Appearance and occupational standards required for trade tests

- Without doubt an immaculate appearance is essential.
- You need to wear a clean and ironed uniform.
- Your shoes should be comfortable, sensible and clean also.
- Your hair should be tied back neatly without any wispy bits hanging into yours or your client's face for Beauty work and styled skilfully for Hair work
- Your make-up should be subtle and not caked on!
- Nails should be natural, short, (not artificial) without nail varnish, unless you are applying for a job as a nail technician or hairdresser. In these cases it is acceptable.
- All jewellery including your watch should be removed for beauty.

There is no excuse for a sloppy appearance and the reality is that you will not be offered the job

Trade Test Checklist

It is easy to forget the simplest tasks when you are nervous so familiarise yourself with the treatment basics.

- Prepare your work area with enough cotton wool, tissues, towels, products and equipment that you will need, including a disinfectant solution for sanitising tools and a record card.
- Meet and greet the client with a big smile and friendly approach
- Introduce yourself
- Make a quick check of her medical history to ensure that she is suitable for treatment (even if she is a member of staff in the salon) and enter it onto a record card.
- Prepare her by giving her a gown and showing her to the couch or chair – help her onto the couch or chair
- If a gown is not available or suitable for the treatment, protect her clothing with a towel and couch roll
- Ask her if she is comfortable and warm
- Explain that you are going to wash your hands before you start
- Explain what you are about to do before starting the treatment
- Carry out the treatment with care and attention to detail
- Check occasionally with the client that she is still comfortable
- Keep your work area tidy throughout the treatment by throwing away waste immediately in a bin next to the work area and by replacing bottle tops straight away etc
- Don't use your couch as a trolley top, this only shows bad habits and could result in spillage.
- When you have finished help the client off of the couch, ask her how she enjoyed and check that she is satisfied - most importantly thank her for her time.
- Tidy up, wash your hands and return to your assessor for feedback.

Good luck!