

## Personal Assistant

Personal assistants work closely with senior managers and executives, supporting them and carrying out a range of tasks for them. They help managers to make the best use of their time by dealing with administrative tasks. They are also known as PAs.

### The Work

You could be:

- reading and replying to emails and postal mail and taking phone calls for your manager
- deciding which matters to deal with yourself and which to pass on to your manager
- managing the diary, making appointments and booking travel tickets and accommodation
- organising meetings or conferences, booking rooms and arranging refreshments
- accompanying your manager to meetings and welcoming the people attending
- preparing papers for meetings and IT equipment for presentations and making sure copies of all papers are sent to the right people
- taking minutes at meetings, typing them out afterwards and sending them to all who were present
- collecting information, doing research and writing reports.

You could also be:

- managing an office, supervising clerical staff
- dealing with budgets and accounts
- buying or hiring new office equipment, updating computer systems or arranging office moves.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for personal assistants in Scotland tend to be in the range of £18,000 to around £26,000 a year. With experience this can rise to over £35,000 a year.

### Conditions

- You would work at a desk in an office.
- Your basic hours would normally be Monday to Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm.
- However, you may have to travel to meetings, possibly in other parts of the country.
- Your hours could then be long, including evenings and weekends.
- You might have to spend some nights away from home.
- You would usually work for people who have very demanding jobs and who are often under pressure.

Some of that pressure could also affect you.

## Getting In

- You are unlikely to get into this job straight from school.
- You might be able to work your way up from an administrative or secretarial job, with part time study for an SVQ in business and administration or a similar subject.
- You could take an NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6) or an HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or a degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) in administration or business before applying for a job.
- There are often no formal entry requirements for an NC or NQ, but you need 1-2 Highers for an HNC or HND and 4-5 Highers for a degree.
- You need previous work experience in an office.
- You must have good IT skills including word processing and spreadsheet packages.
- It may help if you can speak another language.

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- confident with good judgement
- reliable, trustworthy and loyal
- able to use your initiative
- flexible and adaptable
- able to remain calm under pressure and deal with the unexpected
- discreet, as you may have to deal with confidential information.

You need:

- excellent written and spoken communication skills
- a good understanding of English grammar, spelling and punctuation
- excellent computer and administrative skills
- good organisational skills
- a good memory, particularly for names and faces
- a professional attitude to your work.

## Training

- Much of your training will be on the job.
- This may include attendance at short courses in company policy, procedures and office systems.
- Depending on the nature of your work, you may attend other courses such as managing budgets, new computer software or time management.
- If you do not already have an HNC or a degree in relevant subjects, you could study for one part time while you are working.
- [The Institute of Administrative Management](#) (IAM) provides a continuing professional development (CPD) programme for their members.

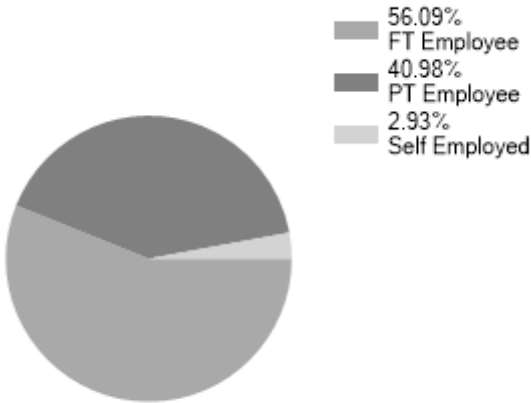
## Getting On

- You might become personal assistant to a more senior executive, or to a managing director, perhaps in a larger company. You could be called an executive secretary.
- You might be able to move into general administration and become an office manager.
- It is sometimes possible to move to another role in the organisation and develop your career in a different direction.
- Some personal assistants with substantial experience work freelance or on a self-employed basis, as virtual assistants, working for various employers online from home.

## Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

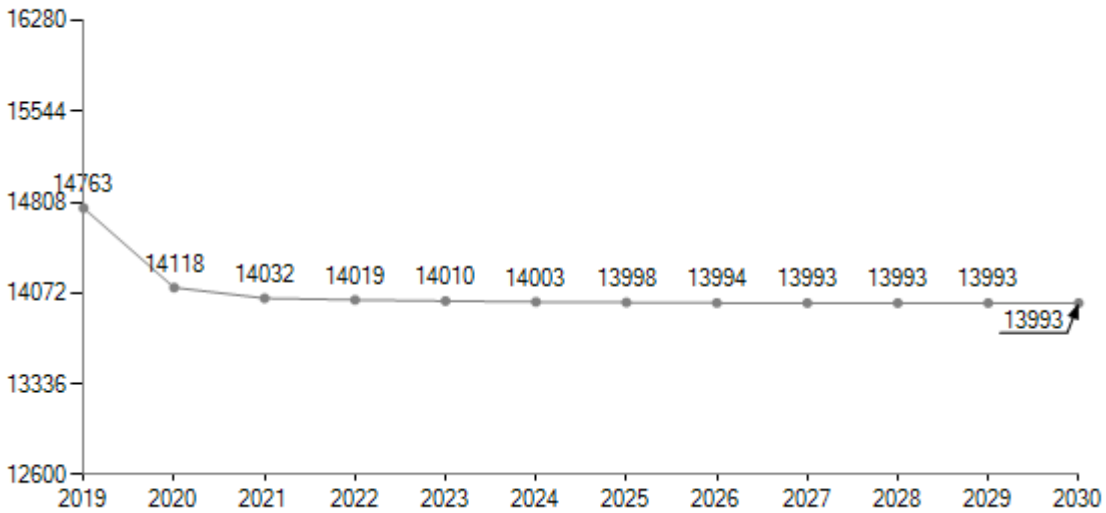


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)