

Production Assistant

A production assistant (PA) helps the producer and carries out the administrative tasks necessary for planning and putting on a television programme or film production.

The Work

You could be:

- handling communication between the production office and other departments, such as sound and wardrobe
- booking studios, equipment, technical crews, hotels and catering
- cueing (setting up) pre-recorded material to run
- assisting with the preparation of publicity materials
- assisting the producer during live broadcasts to ensure timing is right
- assisting cast members, for example driving them around and running errands
- typing and sending out scripts and schedules and taking notes during meetings
- dealing with the budget and payment of expenses
- dealing with paperwork for copyright and licensing.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries vary, depending on:

- whether you are in film or television
- whether you are freelance.

Starting salaries for PAs are in the range of £18,000 to £20,000 a year. An experienced PA may earn around £25,000 to £35,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- You would work in a studio, an office or on location, possibly on an outside broadcast (OB).
- Your working hours will be long and irregular – the media business is 24/7.
- You sometimes have to travel to attend meetings, or to go on location.
- You might be away from home for days at a time.
- The work can be demanding and pressurised.

Getting In

- Many production assistants nowadays have a degree or HND in a subject such as media studies, but good IT skills, and experience and contacts in broadcasting, are more important than educational qualifications.
- You could build up useful experience by getting involved in community or hospital radio or student films and projects.
- The BBC offers taster days and work placements (for those aged 18+) at certain times of the year. You can

get more information and register online through the [BBC Website](#).

- A driving licence may be required.
- There are a few vacancies in television: national, regional, cable and satellite. Most jobs are in the South East of England, but there are sometimes jobs in Scottish cities. Entry is very competitive.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- creative
- quick and efficient
- well organised
- able to do several things at once
- good at working in teams
- able to work under pressure to meet tight deadlines
- good at communicating
- resourceful and resilient
- confident and assertive.

You should have:

- a genuine interest in the television or film business
- attention to detail
- energy and stamina
- good problem solving skills
- good admin and IT skills.

Training

- Training is mainly on the job.
- ScreenSkills provide lists of relevant courses on their website.
- The BBC offers a 12-month Production Trainee Scheme. If you get a place, you work on four different placements on programmes across the UK. See the [BBC Careers](#) website for details. Check the websites of other television companies for similar schemes.
- Channel 4 offer a 14-month Production Apprenticeship. See their [4Talent](#) website for details.
- The BBC Academy also have several courses on their site which may be relevant.
- The National Film and Television School website also lists courses which may be appropriate.

Getting On

- You usually start in local news and current affairs programmes and go on to more expensive ones like dramas.
- In big organisations you can seek promotion to senior PA, production co-ordinator or production manager.
- You can also become a floor manager, vision mixer, researcher, or producer.
- The number of job opportunities in broadcasting involving community languages, including Gaelic, Urdu

and Punjabi, is increasing.

- As well as applying for advertised jobs you can always use your networking skills and contact companies direct.

More Information

If you are aged 18 or over you may be interested in [The Network](#). The Network is held each year alongside the TV Festival in Edinburgh. If selected you would attend for four free days of masterclasses and workshops which will provide you with the skills, knowledge and contacts to start a career in TV. You can usually apply in early spring.

Trainee Finder is ScreenSkills flagship new entrant programme which offers paid work placements across a range of roles in film and TV. Recruitment will usually begin around September of the year before placement. Find out more and apply online by visiting the [Film Trainee Finder website](#).

Contacts

4 Careers

Website: careers.channel4.com/4skills

X: [@Channel4Skills](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Channel4Skills

BBC Academy

Website: www.bbc.co.uk/academy

ScreenSkills

Tel: 020 7713 9800

Email: info@screenskills.com

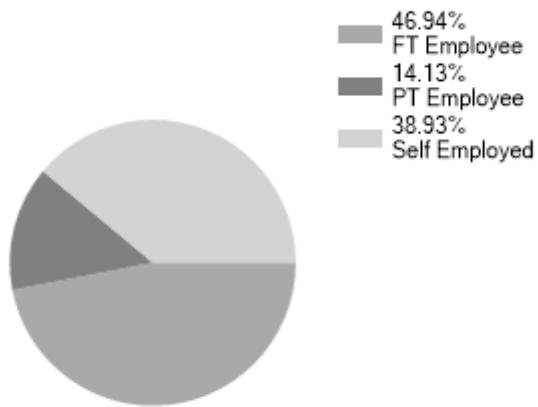
Website: www.screenskills.com

X: [@UKScreenSkills](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKScreenSkills

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

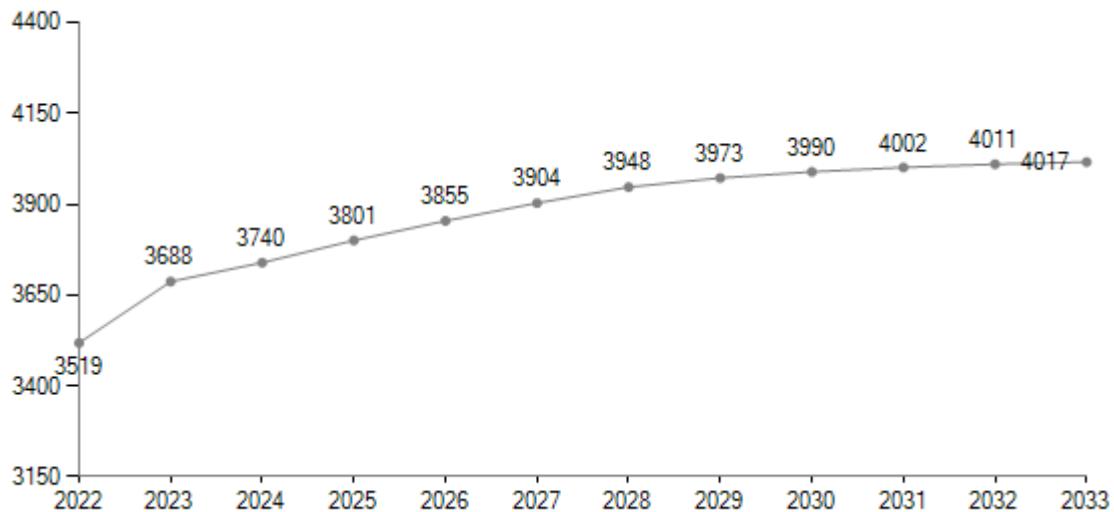


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)