

Print Finisher or Bookbinder

A print finisher carries out the last part of the printing process, trimming the pages and binding them into hardback or paperback books, journals or brochures. A few craft bookbinders bind and decorate books by hand. The work is also referred to as post-press.

The Work

You could be:

- setting up the mechanical guillotines to cut the printed pages, hundreds at a time
- setting up various other machines, loading the printed pages and adjusting the controls
- watching the machines as they fold, trim, collate, perhaps laminate the pages and bind them with staples, stitching or glue
- stopping the machine if a problem arises, and either dealing with the problem or getting help
- unloading and stacking the books ready for distribution
- cleaning the machines and doing minor maintenance.

As a specialist craft bookbinder you could be:

- binding certain limited editions of books by hand using specialist tools and sewing pages together
- decorating books with marbled endpapers, gold lettering or edging
- restoring antique books, cleaning the pages, repairing the binding and using fine leather and papers to match the originals.

Pay

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

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for and whether you are self-employed
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries might be around £20,000 a year. Skilled print finishers can earn around £25,000 to £30,000 a year. A self-employed bookbinder working from home might charge from £20 to £60 for book repairs and binding. For restoration this could be a lot more, depending on the value of the book and the amount of damage.

Conditions

- You will probably work in a factory.
- The factory will be noisy and might be dusty although there should be ventilation. You may have to wear a mask and ear protectors.
- You may need to lift and carry items.
- You might work shifts, including evenings and weekends.
- If you are a craft bookbinder you might work in a factory, workshop, library, museum, or from home.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful. Many employers look for English, Maths and a science or technological subject at National 4 or 5.
- You may be able to get in by doing a Modern Apprenticeship in Print Industry Occupations. You normally train on the job and work towards SVQs at Levels 5 and 6.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- good with your hands
- aware of health and safety issues
- able to work with machinery
- good at measuring and counting
- precise, with excellent attention to detail.

If you are a craft bookbinder you should be:

- artistic
- good at communicating with customers
- business-minded
- knowledgeable about and interested in books.

Training

- Training is mainly on the job.
- You can work towards SVQ Post-press at SCQF Levels 5 and 6.

Getting On

- You could work for a printing company, or for a company specialising in print finishing. There are opportunities later to become a supervisor, or move into print administration or operations production management. You might even become self-employed.
- If you work in a small company you may have to move to get promotion. Some bookbinders move into teaching the trade at college.

Contacts

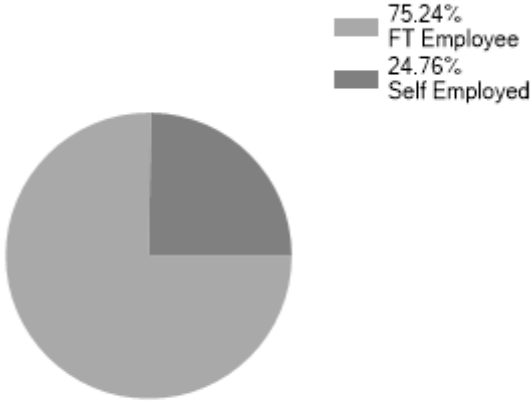
British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF)

Email: hello@bpif.org.uk

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

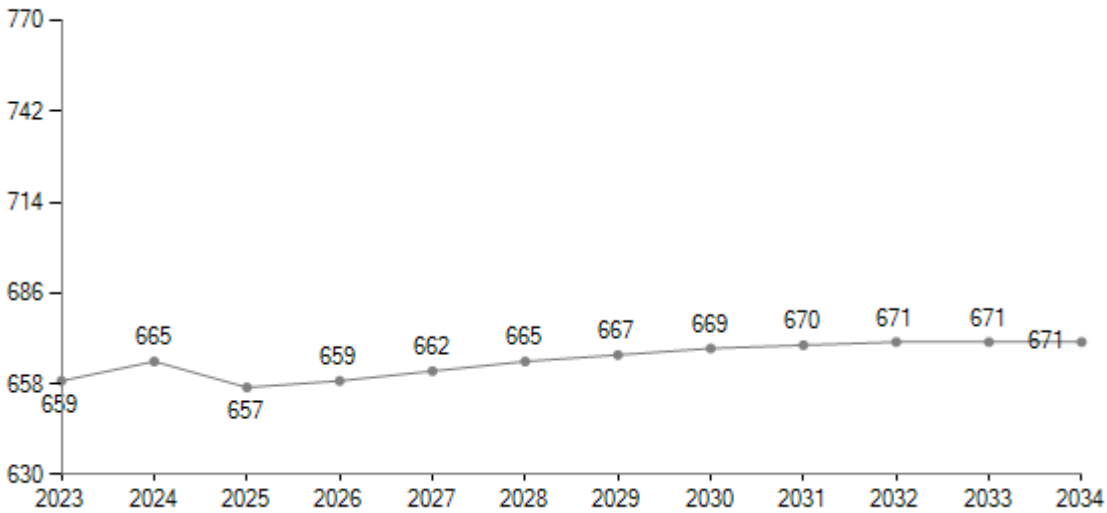


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)