Disc Jockey – DJ

DJs play recorded music for an audience, live at a venue or on the radio. They operate a wide range of technical equipment. They chat to the audience between tracks.

The Work

You could be:

- choosing a programme (set) of music and chatting with the audience as you go along
- using CD, vinyl or digital formats to play music live
- using multimedia equipment such as headphones or laptops with relevant music software to play and edit music live
- use different techniques like beat mixing, pitch control, scratching, cross fading, sampling and sequencing to give variety
- developing your own set style of music.

There are three types of DJ:

Mobile DJ

You could be:

- working at special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, parties or fundraising events
- picking music to suit the audience and occasion
- taking equipment to the venue before the function begins and setting it up
- playing music all evening, coordinating the lighting to fit the music, entertaining the audience between tracks, making announcements and playing requests
- dismantling and removing equipment at the end of the event.

Radio DJ

You could be:

- picking and playing a programme of music to suit regular listeners
- co-ordinating studio output: personal microphone, music output, phone lines, travel, weather, jingles, adverts and news
- making sure there is no dead air time by keeping up a steady, natural flow of chat, music or features
- planning the programme in advance, arranging topics for interview and listener phone-ins
- interviewing celebrities and the public on a wide range of issues
- interacting with the audience by phone and using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook
- ensuring a smooth handover between presenters, before and after the show.

Club DJ

You could be:

- appearing regularly at a particular club
- working out a set (programme) of music to suit the audience
- planning the set for maximum variety and effect to create the right atmosphere
- playing and mixing records, ensuring there is no gap in the music
- adding extra music of your own, using for example, drum machines or synthesisers
- creating your own mixes using short samples and working these into the set
- co-ordinating the music with any lighting effects.

Pay

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

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

At first some DJs do unpaid work to get experience. Most DJs are freelance and on average charge from around £300 to £800 a session, with some gigs for mobile DJs, such as weddings, paying £1,000 a session. Well-known, named DJs can charge more than this, and for those who achieve celebrity status (very few) earnings are far more. You would need to pay overheads out of your income, such as travel costs and equipment maintenance.

You usually have to buy your equipment out of your own money. If you receive bookings through an agent there will probably be a fee to pay.

Conditions

- **Radio DJs** work in small air-conditioned studios.
- **Club DJs** work in crowded places which may be hot.
- **Mobile DJs** work in various venues including halls, pubs and clients' homes. Again, the atmosphere is often crowded and hot.
- Depending on the venue and type of event you may work indoors or outdoors.
- In some cases, the noise level is very high and you should protect your ears.
- Working hours can be long and irregular and you work mainly in the evenings, at night or at weekends.
- Mobile and sometimes club DJs need their own equipment, music and transport.
- To begin with earnings may be low or non-existent. You might work freelance, with possible gaps between income and may need a 'day job' to make ends meet.
- You may have a regular slot as a radio or club DJ and as a mobile DJ some times of the year may be busier than others, for example weddings in summer and Christmas parties.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications, but it helps to have some subjects at National 4 or 5, particularly in English, Maths, Music Technology or a computing or technological subject.
- Technical training can be useful. There are full time NC (SCQF Level 6), HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF

Level 8) and degree courses (SCQF Level 9) in sound production, music technology or sound engineering.
- Mobile DJs must have a driving licence and it is also useful for other DJs.
- Mobile and club DJs mostly work in licensed premises, where you need to be 18 or over.
- The entertainment industry is a highly competitive field. Most DJs work freelance.
- Getting in depends mainly on personal contacts.
- Relevant experience is important. You may find work experience placements by contacting student, community or hospital radio stations, BBC Recruitment or RadioCentre.
- You should be able to provide prospective clients with a demo disc or digital file you have made yourself.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- a confident and extrovert personality, quick wit and ability to chat with strangers
- technical know-how — not only aptitude with the mixing equipment, but also knowledge of the latest music software developments
- knowledge of and a passion for a wide range of music, for example, rock, house, garage, dance, pop, jazz, or from particular periods such as the 90s
- alternatively a specialised knowledge of one or more types of music
- good co-ordination, timing and sense of humour to keep your audience interested
- creativity and a sense of rhythm
- the ability to work under pressure and think on your feet
- business and promotional skills if you are self-employed.

You should be:

- good at networking in order to get work
- punctual and well-organised
- enthusiastic, confident and full of stamina.

Training

- You may be able to study part time for qualifications in broadcasting or in music and audio technology.
- You can do short courses in DJ skills and mixing.

Getting On

- You need to get as much experience as possible in order to build up a reputation and get better paid and more high profile work.
- You can get useful experience by doing voluntary work on hospital or community radio. This may help you move on into longer or more lucrative contracts.
- There may be opportunities for experienced DJs to work abroad.

Contacts

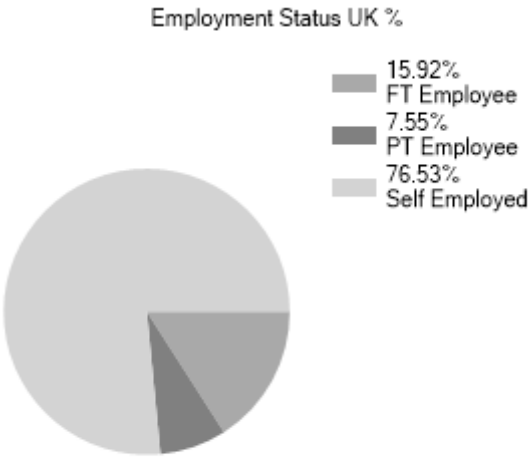
BBC Recruitment

Website: careers.bbc.co.uk
X: @BBCGetIn

Hospital Broadcasting Service
Tel: 0141 221 4043
Email: studio@hbs.org.uk
Website: www.hbs.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HBSGlasgow

Radio Academy
Email: info@radioacademy.org
Website: www.radioacademy.org
X: @radioacademy
Facebook: www.facebook.com/radioacademy

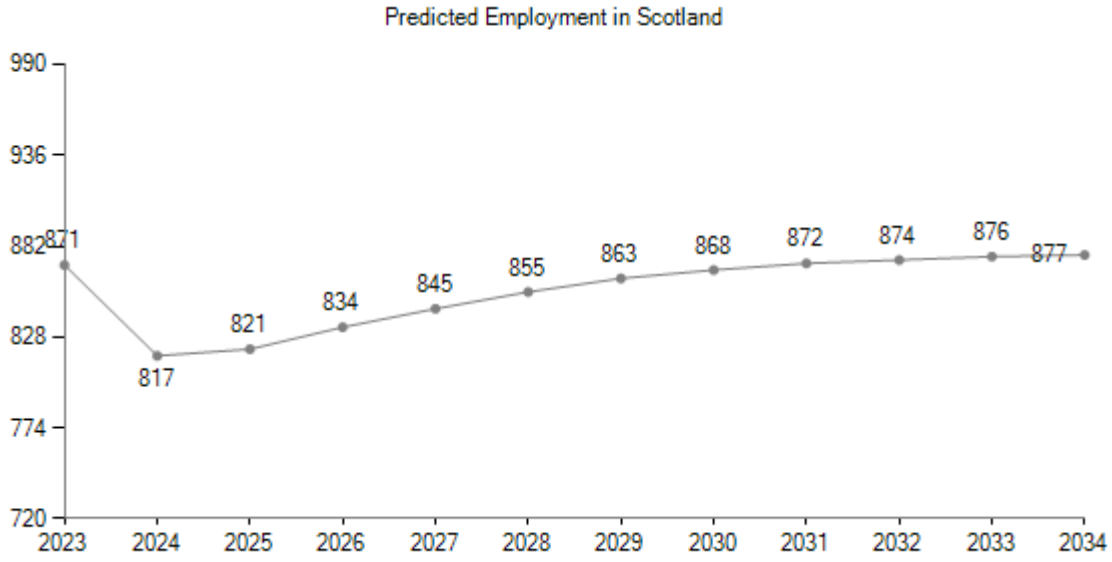
Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by LMI for All



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