

Commissioning Editor

A commissioning editor is responsible for identifying new authors, books and other media products to be published.

The Work

You could be:

- carrying out research to identify new market trends
- reading manuscripts and deciding which to publish and which to reject
- negotiating payment and contract terms with the writer or literary agent
- monitoring the progress of publishing schedules to make sure that deadlines are met
- deciding which existing publications, known as the back-list, should be reprinted, revised or put out of print
- dealing with outside agencies and specialists, for example illustrators, printers and bookbinders
- preparing costings, projected sales and income for each publication
- organising book launches and signings
- liaising with marketing and sales departments for the promotion of publications.

Pay

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

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

Generally salaries in publishing at entry level can be around £20,000 a year, but improve as you progress. The average salary in the UK is around £33,000 a year.

Experienced commissioning editors may earn around £40,000 a year and above, but this will depend on the size of the company and how profitable it is.

Some publishers are self-employed and their pay is profit-related.

Conditions

- You will work in an office, but will have to travel to attend meetings with a range of business associates.
- You might sometimes travel abroad, for example to attend international book fairs.
- You will work office hours, but in reality you may have to work outwith these hours on a regular basis.
- Coming up to a deadline, your hours may be particularly long and irregular.
- You may have to meet targets, commissioning a certain number of titles each year.

Getting In

- Although there are no set entry requirements for this career, most commissioning editors have a degree.
- Entry to a degree course usually requires 4-5 Highers and some subjects at National 5, normally including a pass in English. Many courses ask for qualifications above the minimum.
- Increasingly, it has become more common for people with postgraduate qualifications in publishing to enter the industry. Postgraduate courses in publishing are available at Edinburgh Napier and Stirling Universities.
- You would usually start as an editorial assistant or other junior position. With experience you could progress to copy editor and then commissioning editor.
- Having contacts in the industry, for example by doing work placements, is an advantage.
- If you have a qualification or professional experience in a particular field such as law, science, technology or business you might get a job with a specialist trade journal.
- If you are managing a budget, you need good financial skills.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a good command of English
- excellent spoken and written communication skills
- negotiating skills
- good commercial judgement
- self-motivation
- knowledge of copyright and contract law
- research skills.

You need to be able to:

- manage and motivate staff
- manage several projects at the same time
- spot potential and new opportunities
- work to deadlines.

Training

- You would attend a variety of in-house and external training designed to develop your skills.
- Publishing Scotland and the Publishing Training Centre offer a variety of courses, both classroom based and by distance learning.

Getting On

- Vacancies can initially be part time and temporary.
- If you have a permanent contract you could move from a junior position to management.
- You could move from working on smaller publications to larger ones.
- You could start up your own publishing business.

More Information

Whilst the majority of opportunities are in London and the south east of England there are a number of publishers in Scotland. These include larger educational and smaller independent publishers, some of which specialise in Gaelic language. Publishing Scotland lists some of these on their website.

The Society of Young Publishers (SYP) is open to anyone working, or considering working, in the publication trade. They organise a range of events, publish a quarterly magazine and provide a jobs database for members. There is a branch in Scotland.

Contacts

Creative and Cultural Skills

Tel: 020 7015 1800

Email: info@ccskills.org.uk

Website: www.ccskills.org.uk

Website (2): ccskills.org.uk/careers

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/ccskills

Publishing Scotland

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/Publishing-Scotland

Publishing Training Centre

Tel: 020 8874 2718

Email: courses@publishingtrainingcentre.co.uk

Website: www.publishingtrainingcentre.co.uk

Twitter: @PTCBookHouse

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PTCBookHouse

Society of Young Publishers (SYP)

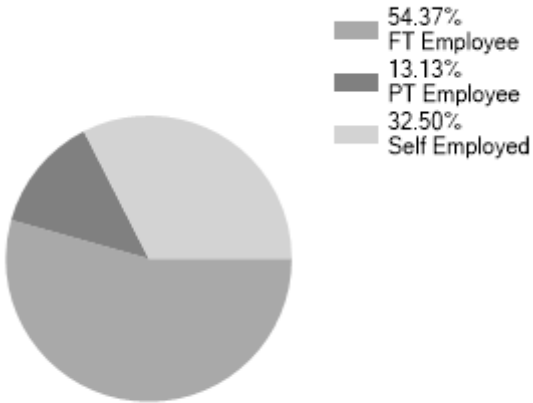
Website: www.thesyp.org.uk

Twitter: @SYPScotland

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thesyp

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

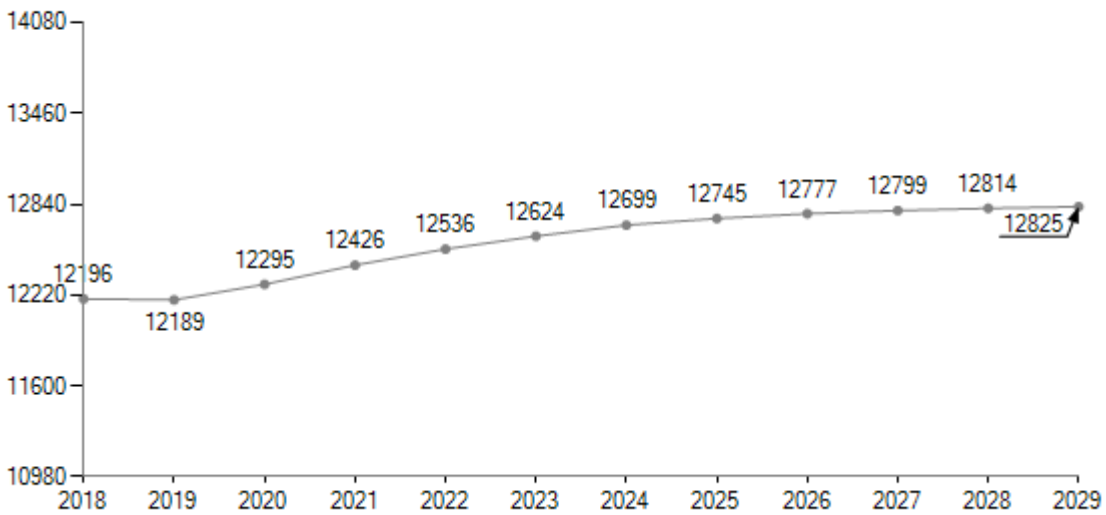


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)