

Copy Editor

A copy editor works on pieces of text (copy) for publication, ensuring it is free from errors, reads well and meets the house style. They usually work on books but may also work on journal or magazine articles.

The Work

You could be:

- proofreading and correcting spelling and grammar
- checking for factual errors, perhaps using the internet
- ensuring the meaning of the text is clear and well written
- consulting the author about any queries on their original copy
- amending copy and rewriting where necessary
- ensuring there is consistency in the style of the copy (house style)
- checking for legal issues, such as copyright or libel
- working with the artists to make sure the illustrations match up with the text.

Pay

Salaries for editors in publishing vary widely. The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

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

Starting salaries are usually around £25,000 a year. With experience this can rise to around £34,000 to £40,000 a year.

Freelance copy editors can set their own rates; the current recommendation by the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (CIEP) is a minimum of £30.75 an hour for proofreading and £35.75 an hour for copy editing (March 2025 rates).

Conditions

- You would carry out work on a computer and on printed (hard copy) documents.
- You would often work under pressure to meet deadlines.
- Hours are normally flexible.
- Sometimes you might be able to work from home.
- You might travel occasionally to meet clients.

Getting In

- There are no standard entry requirements, but most editors have a degree. Any subject is acceptable, but

publishing, journalism, media and English are particularly useful.

- If your degree is in a different subject you can do a postgraduate course in publishing.
- HNC (SCQF Level 7) and HND (SCQF Level 8) courses in journalism are available at Glasgow Clyde College (Cardonald Campus) and the City of Glasgow College.
- Undergraduate (SCQF Level 9-10) and postgraduate (SCQF Level 11) degrees in journalism are offered by Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow Caledonian, Robert Gordon, Stirling, Strathclyde and West of Scotland universities.
- Entry to a degree course usually requires 4-5 Highers and 2 subjects at National 5, normally including English. HNCs and HNDs require 1-3 Highers plus some subjects at National 5. Many courses will ask for entry qualifications above the minimum.
- Publishing postgraduate courses are available at Edinburgh Napier and Stirling universities.
- You would usually start as an editorial assistant or other junior position before progressing to copy editor.
- Having contacts in the industry, for example by doing work placements, is an advantage.
- If you have professional experience in a particular field such as law, science, technology or business, you might find work with a specialist trade journal.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent written English, with knowledge of the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar
- the ability to assess writing quality and an instinct for good written style
- good communication skills and a tactful approach
- an enquiring mind
- good concentration and focus
- good IT skills
- the ability to work under pressure and maintain high standards
- a practical and organised approach
- excellent attention to detail.

Training

- Training is on the job through employers' own training schemes.
- Publishing Scotland runs short courses.
- The Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (CIEP) also provide training and professional membership.

Getting On

- Although in general entry is very competitive, there is a shortage in certain fields, for example science editing.
- There are also openings for those who can read and write a community language, such as Gaelic, Polish or Urdu.
- Because of the development of online publications there are new opportunities for copy editors.
- In small publishing companies promotion prospects may be limited. Editors may have to move among

different firms to gain advancement.

- Larger publishing organisations may be able to offer more structured career prospects.
- Becoming a member of the CIEP and appearing on their directory can be a career advantage.

Contacts

Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading

Tel: 020 8785 6155

Email: membership-enquiries@ciep.uk

Website: www.ciep.uk

X: [@The_CIEP](https://twitter.com/The_CIEP)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EditProof

Publishing Scotland

Tel: 0131 228 6866

Email: enquiries@publishingscotland.org

Website: www.publishingscotland.org

X: [@PublishScotland](https://twitter.com/PublishScotland)

Publishing Training Centre

Tel: 020 8874 2718

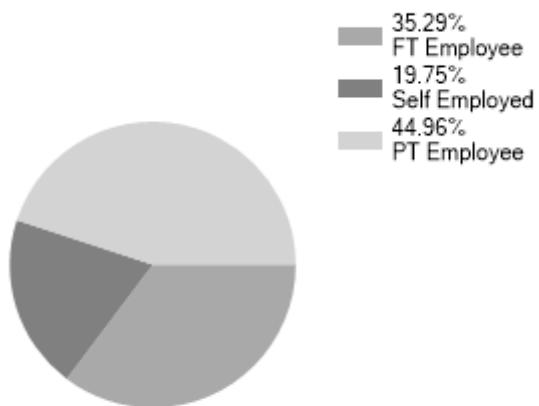
Email: courses@publishingtrainingcentre.co.uk

Website: www.publishingtrainingcentre.co.uk

X: [@PTCBookHouse](https://twitter.com/PTCBookHouse)

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

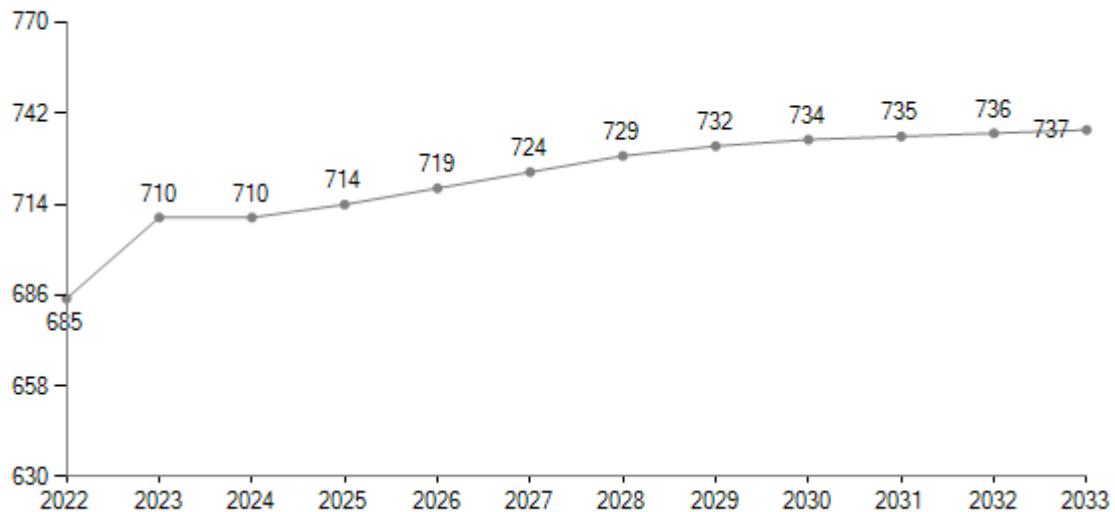


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)