

## Indexer

Indexers put together searchable lists or terms for all kinds of media, so users can easily find the information they need. The indexer selects significant words or phrases from the text and puts them in alphabetical order.

Indexers work with all types of media including books, magazines, reports, technical manuals, leaflets, films, DVDs and websites.

### The Work

You could be:

- reading the material to find out what it is about
- selecting significant words or phrases from the text and putting them in alphabetical order
- finding suitable terms for the concepts and ideas in the document
- organising the index so that users can easily find what they are looking for
- cross-referencing related topics
- indexing photographs, diagrams and other illustrations
- using specialist software to format, sort and print
- specialising in a particular subject matter, such as technology or law
- keeping up to date with your specialist field.

### Pay

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.

The Society of Indexers (SI) recommends rates from £25.90 an hour or approximately £2.90 per page or £7.80 per thousand words. (Rates from December 2019).

If you are an experienced indexer working on specialised texts you can usually charge well above these minimum rates.

### Conditions

- As an indexer you will probably be self-employed and work from home.
- You may have to work long and unsocial hours to meet deadlines.
- You must have a computer and good internet access.
- You might need to spend some time at clients' offices.

### Getting In

- There are no set entry requirements, but many indexers have a degree or an equivalent qualification.
- If working in a specialist area such as science or law, a relevant degree may be useful.
- You must have a very high standard of spelling and grammar.
- You need keyboard and computer skills.
- If you want to specialise in one area for example law, medicine or science, you must have detailed and up to date knowledge.
- Indexing is usually a second career, often using experience from another field.
- The Society of Indexers (SI) offers a workshop for beginners, which may help you decide if you would like to work as an indexer.
- Many indexers are self-employed and to start with you may have to combine indexing with another part time job, such as proofreading or copywriting (see [Copy Editor](#) job profile).

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- analytical and objective
- accurate and methodical
- well organised
- self-disciplined
- flexible and adaptable
- willing to keep up to date with new developments.

You need to be able to:

- quickly read and understand text and spot any errors
- concentrate for long periods
- pay good attention to detail
- run a small business successfully
- market your services
- meet deadlines
- get on well with clients and editors.

## Training

- The SI runs a distance learning training course, 'Training in indexing'.
- It is made up of 4 assessed units each needing 40-50 hours of study. Most people take 1-4 years to complete it. After passing the 4 formal tests you must index a complete book or document of your choice and 3 online tutorials.
- When you complete the whole course you become an Accredited Indexer (AI). Many editors look for an AI when they commission work and AIs often get higher fees.
- After gaining experience, the SI encourages AIs to become Fellows of the SI (FSocInd). The SI offers courses and workshops to help you achieve this.

## Getting On

- It takes time to set up as a freelance indexer. The SI runs workshops to assist new entrants.
- Work may not be regular at first until you increase your client base.
- You need to be persistent to get enough work to be a full time indexer.
- The SI advises you to allow about 2 years for setting up an indexing business. To start with, you may have to combine indexing with another job.
- Producing accurate work on time will help you to get more commissions.
- Indexers with specialist knowledge in areas such as law, medicine, finance and science are likely to be in greatest demand.

## Contacts

### **Society of Indexers**

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Email: [admin@indexers.org.uk](mailto:admin@indexers.org.uk)

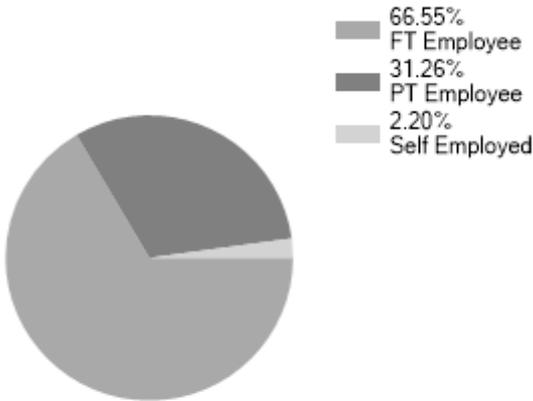
Website: [www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk)

Twitter: [@indexers](https://twitter.com/indexers)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SocietyofIndexers](https://www.facebook.com/SocietyofIndexers)

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



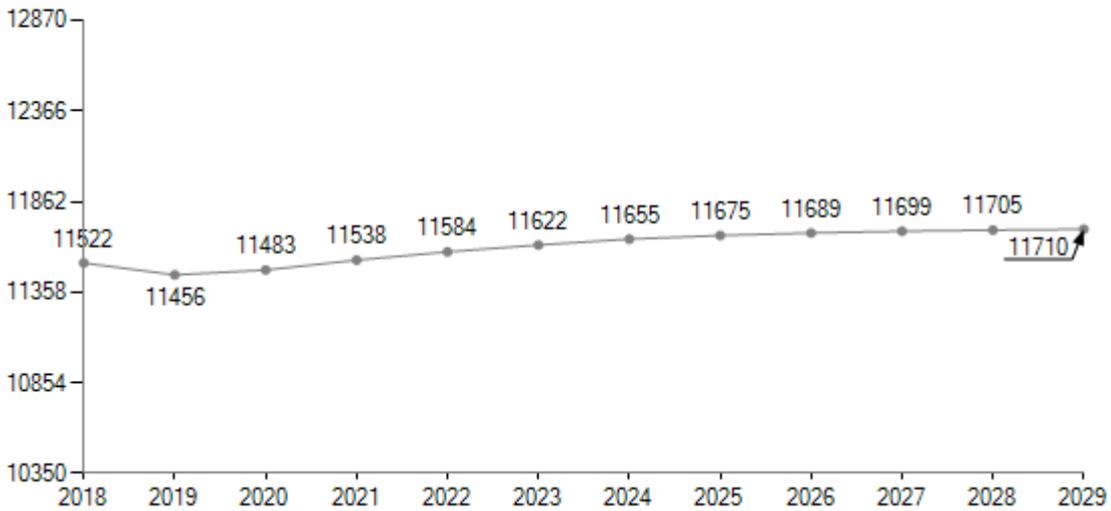
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	0.06%

LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



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