Previsualisation Artist

A previsualisation (previs or pre-viz) artist uses 3D computer graphics to plan and create animated scenes to help plan what action scenes in films or computer games will look like before final production.

They may also be called previz animator, previs lead or previs modeller.

The Work

You could be:

- discussing a script with a director and deciding what locations are to be used for each sequence, and their look, style and feel
- working from a 2D storyboard created by a concept artist or Storyboard artist to interpret the script, and create draft scenes to be animated
- creating a set of digital assets (source art), such as characters, objects, lighting and camera angles, or re-using ones already created
- staging scenes by working out the scale, angle and timings, and how characters or objects are to move in it (motion blocking), and maintaining continuity of shots
- mapping out visual effects (VFX) in the scene for the VFX department to use as a guide
- editing and bringing all the elements together (compositing) and rendering the final animations at various angles, creating shots and sequences
- making changes and editing the scene based on input from the director
- producing a final camera polish and shot layout at a quality close to the final for shooting
- working with the VFX department to help them keep a consistent style in their work.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates vary, depending on:

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

Starting salaries tend to be between £26,000 and £29,000 a year. With experience salaries could rise to between £42,000 and £51,000 a year, sometimes more.

Freelance workers will have variable salaries based on how much work they get and the length of time they work on a production.

Conditions

- You would usually work in an open plan office or studio, or for some posts, remotely from home for some days of the week.
- You would spend most of your time sitting at a computer.

- If you work freelance you would be expected to have your own equipment at home.
- You would be collaborating with the film director, the production management team and would report to the VFX supervisor.
- You work standard office hours, but you will be expected to work overtime to meet deadlines, including weekends.

Getting In

Most entrants have a relevant degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) in a subject such as 3D animation, film making, computer aided design, graphic design, multimedia or film studies.

- Entry is competitive and many previsualisation artists will already have experience from working in another role, for example, as an environment artist.
- You will need a good show reel of animated work for entry to courses and jobs.
- You could get in by starting off as a runner in the art department, and learning how the job works.
- For entry to a degree course you need 4-5 Highers, normally including English and Art and Design.
- You could start out by taking an HNC (SCQF Level 7) or HND (SCQF Level 8) course in animation, and gaining entry to a degree course later. Entry requirements for HNC and HND courses are usually 1-2 Highers.
- Glasgow Caledonian University, the University of the West of Scotland, and the Universities of Dundee and Edinburgh offer animation and computer animation related degrees.
- A relevant postgraduate qualification may be helpful. Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow School of Art and the Universities of Dundee and Edinburgh run 3D animation courses.
- Entry may be possible without formal qualifications, but you would have to show your talent and dedication through your own work demonstrating your art and IT skills.
- You will need to be proficient in using 3D animation software such as Autodesk Maya or 3D Studio Max, and photo and video editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, Premiere and After Effects.
- Knowing how to use computer game engines such as Unreal Engine is also a distinct advantage.

You could work as an employee or a freelancer for visual effects studios, broadcasting companies, advertising agencies or computer games companies.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- a creative imagination for the story telling aspects of shots and sequences
- excellent IT skills for using 3D animation, video editing and visual effects software
- basic editing skills, for overall rendering and compositing of scenes, and video
- excellent organisational skills - regarding workflows and meeting deadlines
- an understanding of cinematography, such as storytelling, camera angles and lenses, and action and staging and lighting techniques.

You need:

- a good eye for composition

- excellent knowledge of 3D skills such as modelling and shading
- good communication skills
- to be able to work well within a team
- a flexible attitude, to learn new skills and workflows.

Training

- The **National Centre for Computer Animation** at Bournemouth University runs postgraduate specialist courses.
- There are many specialist online courses for 3D animation and previsualisation that you can take to improve your skills and knowledge.

Getting On

- With experience you might move on to be a director.
- You may want to move onto another department role, for example, in VFX, animation or compositing.
- You could be working as a freelancer, moving from project to project. This can open up opportunities to working abroad as well as working on larger productions.

More Information

The previsualisation process stage is vital for live motion and animated productions, and are usually done months, or even years, before a production is released. Creating the whole production in 3D can highlight potential problems to storyline or acting, and can save productions a lot of time and money. It's quicker to establish various camera angles on computer before they're shot, and many scenes can be put together to see which best works in a sequence. To find out more visit What is Previs — The Art and Process of Previsualization in Film (studiobinder.com)

Contacts

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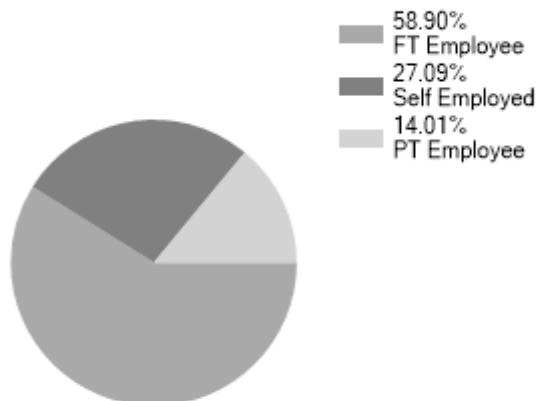**ScreenSkills**
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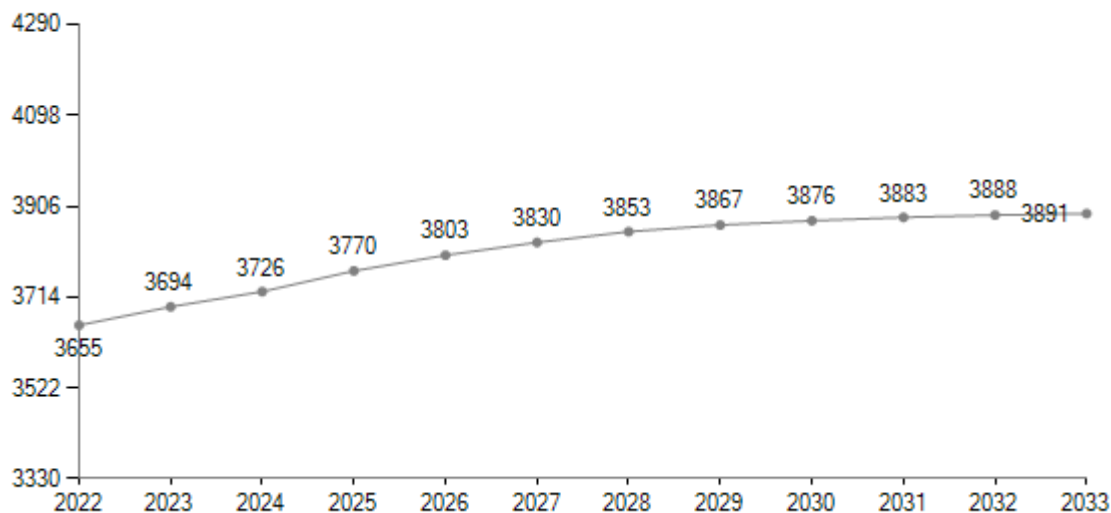
Statistics

Employment Status UK %

58.90%
FT Employee
27.09%
Self Employed
14.01%
PT Employee

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