

Publishing

Version 9.17

Contents

Introduction and industry developments	2
Where is the publishing industry based?	2
What roles exist in publishing?	3
How do I find out about careers in publishing?	4
Work Experience	5
Finding advertised vacancies	5
The hidden job market	6
Skills for publishing	7
Postgraduate study and short courses	8
Temping Agencies	9
Books and journals in the Careers Service	9
Websites	9
Events	10

Introduction and industry developments

Traditionally, the publishing industry has incorporated all forms of print media, including journals, books, magazines, databases, directories, business media, newspapers and more. However, online publishing has come to play an increasingly significant role in the sector in recent years and a large number of digital publishers have emerged. (See the UK Association of Online Publishers for more information at www.ukaop.org.uk)

For most traditional publishers, online content has now become as important as their print media, and content such as digital magazines and multimedia and, e-books are now commonplace. In addition, most publishers will now engage with their audiences through social media like Facebook, blogs and Twitter. Some publishers even operate online community sites where writers can post their unpublished work and others can read and comment on it, such as HarperCollins' Authonomy website www.authonomy.com

Where is the publishing industry based?

Geographically, the UK publishing industry is heavily concentrated in London, Oxford and the South East, with clusters of publishing houses in Edinburgh and other cities. In Manchester, the main publishers include:

- **Graduate Prospects**
A publisher of careers publications and online careers resources.
www.prospects.ac.uk
- **Manchester University Press**
An academic book publisher.
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk
- **Excel Publishing**
A large business-to-business publisher.
www.excelpublishing.co.uk

- **Carcenet**
A literary publisher specialising in poetry.
www.carcenet.co.uk
- **Comma Press**
A literary publisher specialising in short stories.
www.commapress.co.uk

In the North West generally, there are also a number of small, independent publishers, and information can be found at www.publishingnorthwest.co.uk.

What roles exist in publishing?

Typical entry-level roles for graduates include:

- Editorial assistant
- Production assistant
- Marketing executive
- Publicity assistant
- Rights assistant
- Graphic designer
- Sales executive
- Social Media assistant

Detailed job profiles and case studies for various roles in the publishing industry, including information about typical responsibilities, qualifications and skills required, salaries and vacancy sources can be found at:

- www.prospects.ac.uk
- http://creativeskillset.org/creative_industries/publishing/job_roles

MYTH: “Editorial work is all about reading manuscripts and lunches with authors. The main quality necessary in order to get in is a love of books.”

This is a common misperception of editorial work which, while it does include reading manuscripts, also involves (depending on the level) project management, researching trends, sales forecasting and day-to-day administrative tasks. Employers in the publishing sector say that while having a love of books is great, graduates also need to understand that publishing is a business like any other and show that they possess commercial awareness.

Even if you think you really want to work in editorial, do check out other areas such as production, publicity, marketing and rights as well, as these can often be just as rewarding, but as they tend to be less well-known, vacancies in these areas often attract fewer applications.

How do I find out about careers in publishing?

The following sites offer useful careers information:

- **Creative Skillset** - the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media provides information on careers in publishing, including job profiles and links to training and course providers.
http://creativeskillset.org/creative_industries/publishing
- **The Publishing Training Centre**
Provides some really useful careers information and training courses for the publishing industry.
www.train4publishing.co.uk/
- **The Publishers Association**
Provides some useful Career profiles, as well as vacancies and a list of large publishers which offer internships.
www.publishers.org.uk

Work Experience

Getting some work experience in a publishing company is usually a prerequisite to getting your first graduate job in publishing. Work experience and internships in publishing companies can vary in length from a day or two of work shadowing, to a few weeks or even months. Some publishers may even offer students 1 day per week over a period of a couple of months or more to fit around your timetable. A few short periods of work experience amassed over a couple of years while you're at university can be as useful as one long internship, so try to be flexible about what you are prepared to do.

Because publishing is such a competitive sector, the majority of work experience opportunities are unpaid. To understand your rights and avoid the risk of being exploited, see our 'Employment rights' web pages.

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/paytax/employmentrights/

Many entry-level publishing jobs involve a lot of admin work, and employers often ask for office experience, so getting a part-time job in an office as a student or doing admin temping work when you graduate can make it easier to get that first publishing role.

Working in a book shop can also be a great way of getting experience for publishing and is still a fairly common route into the sector.

Finding advertised vacancies

- **The Careers Service's vacancies on CareersLink**

www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink

- **The Bookseller**

A weekly trade magazine for the publishing industry (also available in our Careers Library)

www.thebookseller.com/jobs

- **The Guardian**

Publishing vacancies can be found in the newspaper on Mondays and

Saturdays.

<http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/media/publishing>

- **Bookcareers.com**

Independent careers consultancy specialising in the book industry. As well as advertising vacancies, bookcareers.com allows you to upload your CV to the site for employers to view.

www.bookcareers.com/job-seekers

- **Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies**

This well-known publishing course provider lists jobs and work experience opportunities on its website.

<http://publishing.brookes.ac.uk/>

Some publishers advertise vacancies on their own websites and/or on Twitter rather than on job sites, so

- Develop a list of publishers that you're interested in working for and check their websites regularly for opportunities
- Follow publishers on Twitter.

The hidden job market

Most work experience opportunities and many entry-level graduate jobs in publishing companies are never formally advertised, so combine applying for advertised vacancies with identifying publishers you are interested in, check their websites and send a tailored CV and covering letter ideally to a named person (ring them if necessary). If you are patient and resilient (it's normal to get a few 'no replies' and flat rejections along the way), this approach can be very effective indeed, as long as your applications are high quality and well-targeted. For information about how to write speculative applications, see our 'The Job search guide', available from the Careers Service, or online at:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/networking

Are there any publishing graduate schemes?

There are now very few formal graduate schemes for publishing and those that do exist tend to run on a fairly ad hoc basis and only take a handful of graduates each year. By far the most common route for graduates into publishing is an entry-level 'assistant' role.

Be flexible

One experienced publisher told us that they recommend graduates take a job in publishing if it comes up, even if it is not in the area you want to work in, as there is a lot of internal moving around and many job opportunities come once you are actually in an organisation. Also don't just focus on the 'big name' publishers, as competition can be fierce and experience with a small publishing house can often provide a really effective way to learn the business at the start of your career.

Skills for publishing

In addition to the transferable skills sought by most graduate recruiters (good communication skills, organisation skills, the ability to work under pressure and manage one's time effectively etc), key skills for publishing include:

Writing, editing and proofreading

For editorial and marketing roles in particular, evidence of your ability to work with text (outside academic writing) is important. Consider writing for the Mancunian and other publications that welcome contributions from students, or start your own blog. A high level of attention to detail and good spelling and grammar is important for editorial jobs especially, and some publishers will test this as part of the recruitment process.

See our 'Journalism and Broadcasting' Starting Point guide for further ideas, available in the Careers Service and online at:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints

Digital skills

As the internet becomes an increasingly important platform for most publishers to both deliver content and market themselves, employers increasingly look for graduates with basic web skills and an interest in social media. Having even a smattering of some of the following (in addition to a reasonable knowledge of Microsoft Office, internet and email) can be a valuable addition to your publishing-focussed CV:

- HTML and XML
- CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
- Content management systems
- Dreamweaver
- Experience of using blogging software
- Experience of using Twitter (beyond following celebrities!)
- InDesign, Photoshop and Quark

If you want to teach yourself basic web skills, w3schools.com offers free online tutorials which are suitable for the non-techie.

www.w3schools.com

Postgraduate study and short courses

Doing a Master's in publishing is not essential, as work experience is the most important thing, but it can be useful as it demonstrates your commitment to publishing and also gives you an excellent understanding of all aspects of the industry and the job functions involved.

Search for postgraduate publishing courses here: www.findamasters.com

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders also has a list of publishing courses in higher education:

<http://sfep.org.uk/pub/train/publcourses.asp>

Temping Agencies

Temping through an agency (especially if you are in London) can be a great way to get your first job in publishing and it can open the door to something more permanent. Relevant agencies for the publishing industry include:

- **Inspired Selection**
www.inspiredselection.co.uk
- **Media Types**
www.media-types.co.uk

See also:

- **Agency Central**
Allows you to search for recruitment agencies linked to a specific sector.
www.agencycentral.co.uk

Books and journals in the Careers Service

- Inside Book Publishing, Routledge
- Directory of Publishing 2011, Continuum
- Benn's Media 2011, Wilmington Business Information Ltd
- The Bookseller – a weekly journal for the publishing industry

For further resources on publishing check out the online careers library:
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library

Websites

- **Women in Publishing**
This organisation works to promote the status of women in publishing and offers useful networking opportunities. Student membership is available.
www.womeninpublishing.org.uk

- **The Society of Young Publishers**

This society holds careers events and an annual conference. Again, student membership is available and it can provide valuable networking opportunities. There is also now a sub-group for the North and Midlands, which meets regularly and organises bi-monthly events.

www.thesyp.org.uk

- **Equality in Publishing**

An organisation funded by the Arts Council which aims to promote equality in the publishing industry. The site provides information about careers in publishing as well as courses and vacancies. You need to register (no cost) to access the site content.

<http://equalityinpublishing.org.uk/>

- **Periodical Publishers Association**

Trade association for the UK magazine and business media industry. They also accredit courses in magazine publishing and journalism.

www.ppa.co.uk

Events

The Careers Service usually runs a 'Careers in Publishing' event at least once a year. Check our events listings (and sign up for email alerts) via CareersLink:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink

This publication is copyright The University of Manchester and may not be produced wholly or in part for commercial or non-commercial purposes without prior permission