

Editor

Introduction

Editors deal with the business side of producing a publication. They select, review, arrange and prepare material before it is printed or published. Editors work in book publishing or for newspapers, magazines and journals, including online versions.

Also known as

- Publishing Editor
- Commissioning Editor
- Newspaper Editor
- Periodicals Editor



Work Activities

As an Editor, you will deal with the business side of producing a publication such as a book, newspaper, magazine or website. You'll then select, review, arrange and prepare material for it. You will also be responsible for the style and content, as well as identifying gaps in the market.

As an Editor who works in book publishing, you will spend a lot of your time reviewing and reading manuscripts. You'll select those that are suitable and then commission the authors to write them. You must monitor the progress of the author's work to agreed deadlines (or 'milestones').

Editors who work for newspapers or magazines might be responsible for the whole publication or a particular section, such as the sports pages.

You will decide which articles will be included and how they will be laid out. Depending on the publication, you might also review and select submissions or new article ideas from freelance writers.

Editors of some newspapers and magazines also write some items themselves, for example, for the opening or editorial comment article.

On large publications, there might be specialist Editors, for example, Picture Editors, Commissioning Editors and Production Editors.

As an Editor who deals with authors and freelance Writers, you will be responsible for negotiating contracts and creating clear briefs. This will include how much they will get paid, when they should have the work completed - and how long it should be.

You will also manage budgets and hire staff. You'll normally oversee the work of Sub or Copy Editors who are responsible for checking the written work for accuracy, spelling and grammar mistakes (or, there might be an in-house Proofreader), adherence to house style and potential legal issues.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As an Editor, you'll need:

- good planning and organisational skills
- excellent English language skills
- leadership and business skills
- excellent interpersonal and team skills
- creative skills to think up new ideas for the publication
- financial skills to manage budgets
- computer skills

- to be able to work to deadlines and remain calm under pressure

If you work for a specialist publication, such as a travel magazine or scientific journal, you need to keep up to date with any trends or developments in the area.

Editors working for online publications are likely to need web editing skills and knowledge of technologies and trends in social media.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £25,500 - £28,000
- With experience: £30,500 - £36,500
- Senior Editors earn £40,500 - £45,500

Profit-related bonuses are common.

Freelance Editors negotiate fees with individual Publishers. You can find a useful guide to freelance rates on the website of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Hours of work

Editors work office hours from Monday to Friday. However, you might need to work some evenings or weekends, especially as deadlines approach.

Where could I work?

Publishing companies employ Editors, either on an employed or freelance basis. These are either large organisations that cover a wide range of publications, or small, specialist firms that deal with just one or two publishing areas, for example, children's books or educational publishing.

Opportunities for Editors occur in towns and cities throughout the UK.

Self-employment

Editors can work as self-employed freelance Editors. There are also opportunities to work from home.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local, regional and national newspapers. There are also specialist job boards and recruitment agencies for the publishing industry. Also, many general job boards have an editorial or publishing jobs section.

Vacancies also appear on the 'Hold the Front Page' and 'Press Gazette' websites.

It's a good idea to build up a network of relevant contacts, as not all editing jobs are advertised.

Making speculative job applications can be useful in this industry.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Most entrants are graduates who have worked their way up from other jobs in publishing and journalism.

It might be possible to gain experience of a variety of editorial or publishing functions within a small company, where there are few editors to carry out all the editorial tasks.

The degree subject you choose is not usually important. However, if you want to work for a specialist publication, for example, a technical, medical or scientific journal, you are likely to need a related degree.

Training will mainly be on-the-job. Large publishing organisations often have structured on-the-job training schemes.

A great way to get into this career is through an internship. Take a look at our information article 'Internships', for more details.

If you would like some training, the Publishing Training Centre offer an introductory course in editorial skills: copy-editing and proofreading. At the end of the course, you will have the chance to achieve a PQB certification. The units you could be studying include:

- publishing workflows
- copy-editing and proofreading on screen and on hard copy
- BSI standard marks for proof correction
- copy-editing, proofreading and the difference between them
- discussion of pre-course exercise and any questions on the course
- what does a Copy-Editor do?
- copy-editing in different formats
- what does a Proofreader do?
- proofreading in different formats
- start to finish: other parts of the book

Check the website for dates and availability.

Other courses could be available in your area.

Progression

Progression is often to a larger publication or organisation. Some Editors become self-employed. Editors also can teach or train in aspects of publishing.

Work Experience

Previous experience working in a role such as an Editorial Assistant, Copy-Editor or Reporter would be really useful for this career.

Qualifications

Entrants are usually graduates. Entry can be possible with a degree in any subject, although editors of scientific, technical and medical publications usually need a degree in a subject relevant to the area.

For entry to a degree course in any subject, the usual minimum requirement is:

- 2/3 A levels
- 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above

However, entry requirements vary considerably among courses. Equivalent qualifications, such as a BTEC level 3 qualification and the International Baccalaureate Diploma, might be acceptable for entry - please check college/university websites very carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Skills/experience

Most entrants are graduates who have worked their way up from other jobs in publishing and journalism.

Relevant experience could be in a role as an editorial assistant, copy-editor or reporter, for example.

Courses

If you don't have the qualifications you need to enter a degree, you might be able to start one after completing a college or university Access course. You don't usually need any qualifications to start an Access course, although you should check this with the course provider.

Distance learning

The Publishing Training Centre (PTC) runs a course in Editorial Project Management by distance learning.

Funding

The PTC provides limited financial assistance for some of its short courses.

Further Information

Contacts

- **ScreenSkills**
Skills for the creative industries
Email: info@creativeskillset.org
Website: www.creativeskillset.org
- **Creative Choices**
Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**
Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts
Email: london@ccskills.org.uk
Website: ccskills.org.uk
- **Publishing Training Centre (PTC)**
Email: publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk
Website: www.train4publishing.co.uk
- **National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)**
Email: info@nctj.com
Website: www.nctj.com
- **The National Union of Journalists (NUJ)**
Tel: 020 78433700
Email: info@nuj.org.uk
Website: www.nuj.org.uk/work/careers/
- **Professional Publishers Association (PPA)**
Email: info@ppa.co.uk
Website: www.ppa.co.uk
- **Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP)**
Email: administrator@sfep.org.uk
Website: www.sfep.org.uk
- **London School of Publishing (LSP)**
Email: enquiries@publishing-school.co.uk

Website: www.publishing-school.co.uk

- **Women In Publishing (WiP)**
Website: www.womeninpublishing.org.uk
- **Publishers Association (PA)**
Email: mail@publishers.org.uk
Website: www.publishers.org.uk
- **journalism.co.uk**
Website: www.journalism.co.uk
- **Press Gazette: Journalism Today**
Email: pged@pressgazette.co.uk
Website: www.pressgazette.co.uk
- **Hold the Front Page**
Email: editor@htfp.co.uk
Website: www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk
- **NUJ Freelance Fees Guide**
Website: www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide/index.html
- **The Bookseller**
Email: bookseller@escosubs.co.uk
Website: www.thebookseller.com
- **Publishing Scotland**
Scottish enquiries
Email: enquiries@publishingscotland.org
Website: www.publishingscotland.co.uk
- **Society of Young Publishers (SYP)**
Email: sypchair@thesyp.org.uk
Website: www.thesyp.org.uk
- **Bookcareers**
Website: www.bookcareers.com
- **Inside Book Publishing**
Author: Giles Clark Publisher: Routledge
- **Chartered Institute of Journalists (CIJ)**
Tel: 020 7252 1187
Email: memberservices@cij.co.uk
Website: www.cij.co.uk

Related Careers

- Machine Printer
- Reprographics Assistant
- Print Finisher
- Screen Printer
- Sub-editor
- Editorial Assistant
- Proofreader
- Publisher
- Lexicographer
- 3D Printing Specialist