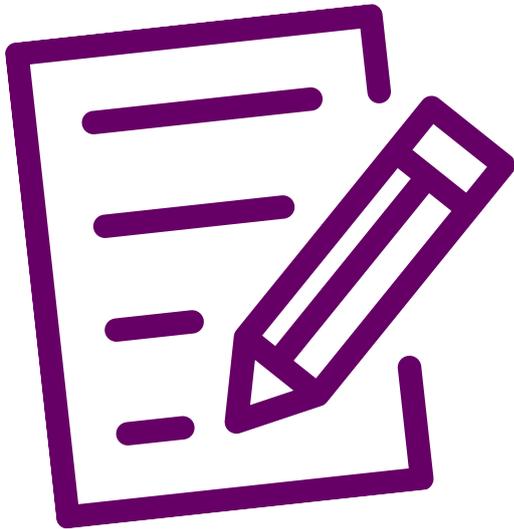


Getting into...

Publishing and Journalism



Working in Publishing or Journalism is a popular career choice, so make the most of your time at university to build your skills and experience to boost your chances of success.

Having a good understanding of the industry and awareness of the different options available will help you find opportunities and impress employers.

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Exploring Your Options

In this section we will be talking about the types of roles that exist within these industries, and where you might expect to work. There will be many roles and employers that we don't cover here, but these are some popular examples that you can use as a starting point when exploring your options.

Typical areas in Publishing

Editorial (highly competitive)

An editorial job is related to the publication of articles and other written content. Several types of editorial jobs play a role in the publication process, from writing and editing to the ultimate publication of finished content. **Example jobs include:** Editorial Assistant or Copywriter.

Production

Production publishing vacancies are the most technical jobs in the publishing industry, involving typesetting, printing and binding. **Example jobs include:** Reprographic Assistant or Printing Assistant.

Marketing

Involves the marketing of products to buyers or to distributors (for example book stores). **Example jobs include:** Marketing Executive, Digital Marketing Assistant or Communications Assistant

Sales

Responsible for presenting and selling products and services. You are generally responsible for generating leads and meeting sales goals. **Example job includes:** Sales Support Executive.

Rights

Work on ensuring publishing rights for books and related products, so that the publishing company maximises its profit. **Example job includes:** Publishing Rights Assistant.

Entry level jobs (jobs that don't require much experience) may use different titles, but will often include 'Assistant' like in the above examples.

Typical areas in Journalism

Sub-Editor

Responsible for checking the written text of newspapers, magazines or websites before anything is published.

Features Editor

Features editors oversee specific sections in a publication. This kind of role would usually require substantial experience within the industry.

Newspaper Journalist

Responsible for researching and reporting the news in newspapers and online.

Magazine Journalist

Magazine journalists research and write news articles and features for a variety of publications.

Digital/Online Journalist

A contemporary form of journalism where editorial content is distributed via the Internet, as opposed to publishing via print or broadcast.

The above areas also act as job titles, but you might also have a job title just as 'Reporter' or that highlight a particular specialism, such as 'Data Journalist'. Having a love of writing doesn't necessarily make Journalism the best industry for you. You will need to find great stories that people will engage with, and often take photos and videos to accompany a story.

Typical employers

Small and medium enterprises (SME)

The majority of graduates go on to work for an SME, which is an organisation with fewer than 250 employees. Don't limit your options by only thinking about working for the big brands. Working in a smaller company, you might have multiple responsibilities (e.g. for design and marketing) and gain insight and experience in a range of areas. SMEs don't always advertise graduate roles or work experience opportunities, so you'll need to be proactive to find them. See the networking and speculative application sections in this guide for further details.

There are huge number of niche and specialist magazines and publishing houses, so you may be able to find organisations where you can combine your knowledge and interests, e.g. publishing houses that focus on writing by refugees, feminist writing, or focus on a particular genre. Most publications are created for the business community (known as B2B) and they exist within any profession you can think of.

Larger organisations

There are some journalism and publishing graduate schemes, however most graduates enter these sectors through direct entry roles. Working your way up in an organisation is common, as

starting in junior roles can give you an insight into how an organisation and the wider industry works, enabling you to build valuable networks and apply for interesting roles that are advertised internally.

In larger organisations, there may be roles related to publishing and journalism across a variety of industries – not just within media or arts organisations. Responsibilities could include producing brochures or monitoring social media, and could be for external audiences or for internal staff. Think about your interests, and look for roles within industries that suit them (e.g. if you have an interest in cars you could work in a car manufacturer’s communications team).

Freelancing

Freelancing as a journalist when you are a new graduate is hard, as you are less likely to have the network and portfolio to generate sufficient work. You will need to be motivated and resilient, and know that there is often a lack of steady income. You will essentially be running a small business (the business being you), so you will be responsible for everything from accounts to marketing. Freelancers will often supplement their income with regular paid part time work whilst they build their portfolio and client base.

Freelancing in Publishing is increasingly common within editorial and proofreading, with editors searching platforms like LinkedIn to find freelancers. However, bear in mind the challenges of freelancing as a new graduate. (Consider joining the [Chartered Institute of Editors & Proof Readers](#) and/or the [Editorial Freelancers Association](#))

Find out more about typical roles and employers within these industries on the Prospects’ [Media](#) page.

Getting Industry Ready

In this section, we will talk about the kinds of skills and experiences employers might be looking for within Publishing/Journalism, and how you can go about gaining them yourself. What employers are looking for will vary depending on the role, but below is a general overview of key areas you might like to think about. It is important to always read the job description carefully to see exactly what the job responsibilities are, and what skills and experiences are required.

What employers want

Qualifications

Previous relevant work experience and passion for the industry are highly valued by employers. To work in Publishing or Journalism you don't need to have a specific degree, rather you need to be able to explain how your skills and experience (including those gained from your degree) are relevant. This being said, degrees in science or law areas are normally required if you are looking to enter scientific/legal publishing or journalism.

A masters is not usually required, however as competitive industries it may give you an advantage with some recruiters. A masters is not a substitute for work experience (where you develop skills in a professional environment) and will not guarantee you a job. If you are considering a masters, look for courses recommended by professional associations (e.g. [NCTJ](#) and [PPA](#)), that have strong links with employers and a placement option.

Don't feel you have to take a course straight after your undergraduate degree. Gaining further experience first can be an excellent way to test whether it is the right career for you. You can also use industry experience to find out which (if any) qualifications are valued most by employers in the area you are looking to work in. Professional associations run short courses to boost your CV, network and explore the subject before committing to a longer and more expensive course.

Skills

Here are some key skills many employers within these areas are looking for when hiring graduates. As was mentioned before, it is important to always read the job description carefully to see exactly what the job responsibilities are, and what skills and experiences are required for that particular role.

Digital skills

For example, an understanding of search engine optimisation (SEO), web page design & desktop publishing will be beneficial.

Prioritisation

You will often need to prioritise news and information that meets the needs of your audience, as well as prioritise your own work load.

Attention to detail

Being able to identify errors in both your work and the work of others before it is published.

Good research skills

Being able to identify news stories (in the case of journalists), or even sales and marketing opportunities.

Interpersonal skills

You will often be working or interacting with others from different walks of life, as well as colleagues across a variety of teams.

Commercial awareness

In Publishing and Journalism you need to know what is going to be of interest to the public and what will sell. This is called commercial awareness. A common mistake graduates make when applying for jobs is to only talk about the books or articles they like. You need to understand the market – what is selling well or going to be read and why – and be able to think objectively i.e. not just from your personal taste, to understand what is a commercial success. This knowledge will allow you to make informed decisions in the workplace, and also proves your interest and enthusiasm for the role and company.

How to gain relevant skills and experiences

Use your time at university to develop the skills required by recruiters in this sector, e.g. admin and digital skills. Remember part time work, volunteering and involvement in clubs and societies can be opportunities to do this - organising a large event can be valuable in developing your planning and organisational skills; fundraising can demonstrate your initiative, creativity and ability to persuade others.

Build your online presence

Create Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts to start building your own social media presence. You can use platforms like Twitter as a professional forum for having discussions, to gain recognition and for your own personal PR!

Follow organisations who interest you and people working in the industry. A good place to start is with your favourite journalist, publication or publishing houses (work experience or intern opportunities will often be advertised via social media). Examples include [@BBCcareers](#), [@GuardianCareers](#) or [@PRHCareersUK](#).

Write

Write, write and write some more! You can write for a Queen Mary student media outlet, a newsletter or blog for a particular department/club or contribute articles to external magazines and websites. This will help you build up a body of work, build a network of contacts and develop your writing ability. Make sure you save all your published work, and ideally have a portfolio (such as a blog or website) publicly available to showcase your experience.

Events

Attend [careers events](#) (on campus or across London) to gain advice and insight into the industry and make contacts – both speakers and participants - who you can add to your network.

Societies and clubs

As well as the Queen Mary student media outlets mentioned above, you can join an external organisation such as the [National Union of Journalists](#) or [Society of Young Publishers](#) as a student member. This gives access to a range of resources and events.

Volunteer

Volunteer for a charity to look after their blog/brochures/social media. This can be a useful way to gain initial experience in this competitive area. QMSU has a [volunteering page](#) where you can learn about opportunities in and around Queen Mary.

Short courses/teach yourself a skill

Digital skills (e.g. coding, tweeting, building websites) are highly sought after in this industry, so taking a short course or teaching yourself a new skill can help you to stand out from the crowd. A short introduction to journalism, proofreading, photography, video, digital content or desktop publishing for example could be useful.

How can Careers and Enterprise help you?

There are a number of ways Careers and Enterprise can help you build skills and prepare for applying for opportunities.

Appointments

We run one-to-one appointments with expert career consultants who can talk to you about a variety of topics including your CV and applications, as well as give you career guidance and advice surrounding making career decisions. You can also book [Practice Interview appointments](#) to test your skills, for when you have an upcoming interview

Events

We hold a range of [careers events](#) throughout the year where you can learn more about an industry, network with employers and find out what people look for in a graduate.

Programmes

If you are looking to develop your skills, Careers & Enterprise is home to the [Aspire Programme](#): Queen Mary's Student Career Development Programme. These programmes take place alongside your degree, allowing you to gain vital employability skills to add to your CV, as well as raise your commercial awareness. *Please note: Eligibility requirements apply*

Online Resources

Our bank of [online resources](#) is a great place to go for careers support. We have guides (such as this one), templates for things like CVs and applications, as well as tools that you can use to build or improve a CV ([QM CareerSet](#)), practice for a psychometric test ([Graduates First](#)) or practice for a video interview ([ShortlistMe](#)).

Make the most of work experience opportunities

1. Discuss your expectations with the employer at the start, so you have the same understanding of what the experience will involve.
2. Always be polite, motivated and interested. Work experience can involve boring tasks, but being flexible, helpful and willing to get involved will make a good impression.
3. Be inquisitive and learn everything you can about the way the organisation works. How do they hire? What key skills are they looking for? What are the main issues affecting the organisation at the moment?

4. Talk to people who work at the organisation and find out what they do and how they got there. You might uncover job roles and employers that are new to you as well as pick up some helpful tips. Keeping in touch with people you meet can be a great way of finding out about future opportunities.

5. Ask for feedback at the end of the placement to identify your strengths and the skills you need to develop further.

For more information on where you can develop your skills and experiences, see the Resources section.

Finding Opportunities

Work experience

Larger publishing houses, newspapers, magazines and broadcasters have formal work experience schemes that you can apply for e.g. [Penguin Random House](#), the [BBC](#), [Sky](#) and [The Guardian](#). Some only have annual opportunities such as Sky and usually advertise these in the early spring for summer placements. Others such as the BBC and Penguin Random House take several cohorts each year, so you need to be linked to their careers teams on social media & regularly checking their careers web pages to make sure that you do not miss out. [Bloomsbury Publishing](#) for example, only advertise work experience opportunities via Twitter!

Work experience doesn't just have to be in journalism or publishing though, as administrative and digital experience are particularly useful for getting into the industry and will be a valuable addition to your CV. There is no one way of finding a job. The most successful candidates are likely to be those that do a little of everything: apply to advertised jobs and work experience on job boards (see the links on the final page), attend events, network, make speculative applications and utilise personal contacts.

Graduate schemes

A structured one or two year programme that combines work and training, which can lead to a professional qualification. They are generally offered by larger organisations and can involve working in different departments of the business. A permanent position at the end of the scheme is not guaranteed.

[Sky](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC](#) etc. have graduate or structured training programmes, but graduate schemes or graduate internships exist in organisations from banks to law firms, manufacturers and energy providers. Most corporate schemes begin recruitment in the Autumn term, nearly a year before the job starts. There are usually multiple application stages including psychometric tests and assessment centres. Note deadlines well in advance, and allow time to work on applications. Smaller businesses are far less likely to offer them.

Recruitment agencies

Temping (a series of temporary jobs in various organisations through an agency) can be an excellent method of building your experience and establishing a network of industry contacts, whilst trying different roles and organisations. Know the type of work or organisation you are interested in, so you can be specific about what you are looking for. Previous work experience may be necessary.

Build your online profile

Create or update your profile on LinkedIn and make sure it is consistent with what you are now applying for. Follow organisations you are interested in on Twitter to both find out about current opportunities, but also to build your knowledge about current trends and develop your commercial awareness. These can be companies, professional associations or industry magazines such as [@PRHCareersUK](#), [@BBCGetIn](#) or [@journalismnews](#).

Speculative applications

Enquiring whether organisations have any opportunities available, known as a speculative application, can be an effective approach - particularly when sending to a 'warm contact' e.g. someone you met during work experience, at an event or have interacted with before on Twitter. You could apply to your favourite publications/publishing houses for example, detailing your interest and enthusiasm for the organisation. Many opportunities, especially in smaller organisations, are not advertised, so you could find yourself in the right place at the right time! Remember that some larger organisations may not accept this type of approach.

Networking

When networking, it is important to keep in touch with anyone you meet through work experience or at events using social media and email, as you never know when they might be able to help you. Consider how you can use social media to build your digital presence and support your job search. Twitter and LinkedIn are valuable tools for following industry trends and developments, as well as for hearing about events, news and jobs. Make sure to follow the [Queen Mary Alumni LinkedIn](#) to connect within alumni already working in the industry.

Make a good impression by having an elevator pitch prepared – a quick outline of who you are, what you do and how it relates to the contact. If you meet someone interesting at an event or during work experience, follow up an initial meeting with a short email afterwards. Students have found work experience by introducing themselves to employers at events, but make sure you do this diplomatically so you don't cause offence.

Resources

Getting Industry Ready

Here are some resources that you can use to learn more about the industry, and begin searching for organisations to which you could send speculative applications. This list is by no means extensive, but you can use it as a starting point.

[Artists and Writers Yearbook](#)

Blogs and forums with advice on the literary and publishing world, with a calendar of writing competitions.

[The Bookseller](#)

Professional association, has a 'careers' section with job listing and advice articles.

[National Council for the Training of Journalists](#)

Excellent website with information on events, training and courses plus careers information.

[The Press Gazette](#)

News, industry information, training, blogs.

[Professional Publishers Association](#)

Useful publishing news and information with searchable [member directory](#).

[The Publishers' Association](#)

The careers section includes useful information including further training and networking events. Their [YouTube](#) channel has industry information.

[Society of Young Publishers](#)

Excellent website with information about events, news and publishing careers.

[Creative Access](#)

Have a fantastic range of 'Graduate internships' i.e. paid first jobs for grads for 6-12 months in the creative industries, including Journalism & Publishing. Only accept applications from BAME candidates as their mission is to address the issue that only 5.4% of employees in this sector are from BAME backgrounds.

[Hold the Front Page](#)

Sector news, jobs, courses and resources

[Bauer Media Group](#)

Holding company of various radio stations and magazines

[Media.info](#)

Website listing UK media companies (including newspapers, radio, tv, etc)

[Community Media Association](#)

Membership body of not-for-profit community media

[The Spare Room Project](#)

Opening a door into publishing

[Publishers Association members list](#)

a useful way of looking up different publishing companies

Finding Opportunities

Jobs Boards

Here are some jobs boards for you to take a look at when searching for opportunities.

Remember many organisations will post their jobs directly to their own website or social media platforms, so make sure that you are also looking there.

[Guardian jobs](#)

[Journalism Jobs](#)

[Mediaweek Jobs](#)

[The Bookseller](#)

[Journo Resources](#) - Sign up for the newsletter with information and jobs

[BBC Careers](#) - including trainee schemes

[Scott Trust Bursary](#) - funding for a postgrad journalism qualification and support from The Guardian

[The Book Trade Charity](#) - helps colleagues in need and those starting out

[BroadcastJobs.com](https://www.broadcastjobs.com) - roles in TV, film, and broadcasting

[Channel4 careers page](#) - including 4Skills

[ITV careers page](#)

[PubInterns](#) - Twitter account for people looking to get into publishing

[Journalism Diversity Fund](#) - can help with the cost of NCTJ training

[Journalism.co.uk](https://www.journalism.co.uk) - sector news and job listings

Follow companies of your interest on LinkedIn and social media broadly, as companies list vacancies on LinkedIn too.