Working in Publishing

Careers with the Penguin Group
WORKING IN PUBLISHING
Careers at Penguin

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If you want to work in publishing, you need to find out as much as possible about the publishing process. It’s also important to recognize that there are many rewarding careers with a publishing house, and that the successful publication of a book requires the energies and creative input of a variety of people.

People who apply here are always well qualified, so Penguin looks for somebody who’s got that special bit of initiative: they’ve managed to get some really interesting work experience or they’ve done something a little out of the ordinary that makes you think, yes, they’ve tried that little bit harder.

MARGARET BLUMAN, CONTRACTS DIRECTOR
A really good measure of Penguin’s overall quality and charisma is the calibre and commitment of the people who join us. They’re terrific – smart, engaged, enthusiastic, and from a host of different backgrounds and cultures. But I’m even more impressed by their loyalty to us once they arrive. Every month I sit down to write a short thank you note to anyone who’s been working at Penguin for a decade. It’s a long list every month because Penguin is a very sticky place. Of course people leave – to raise a family, go travelling and just occasionally to join a competitor – but most don’t.

A dozen people will give a dozen different answers to the question of what makes Penguin special, but there are consistent themes that recur again and again. The famous brands – not just Penguin but Dorling Kindersley, Puffin, Ladybird, Rough Guides and many others – give us all a sense of pride in the company. But the brands can take us only so far. We have to excel in every dimension of publishing, from the commissioning of the author, to the design of the jacket, to the delivery of books from the warehouse. And we do. Ask anyone.

We manage this by attracting and retaining only the best people. People are the lifeblood of any organization, but at Penguin we’re acutely aware that if we can’t attract great authors and great colleagues, fairly soon we won’t have a business at all. So we work very hard to make life at Penguin enjoyable, stretching, varied and rewarding. We don’t have a simple agenda – we have to think about our responsibility to the environment as well as our dividends to the shareholders, about the opportunities of the internet as well as the traditional book, about the markets in India and China as well as Waterstone’s around the corner – so life is never dull.

If you like the idea of a fast-moving and creative working environment, Penguin may be for you. We’re looking for people with a wide range of different talents and from an equally wide range of different backgrounds. We need marketing professionals, web designers, accountants, lawyers, editors, salespeople and production experts. And we need people from a mix of different social and ethnic backgrounds in order to reflect the multicultural character of the book-buying market in the UK. We simply need the best of everything.

Might it be the right place for you?

JOHN MAKINSON
Chairman and Chief Executive of the Penguin Group
He just wanted a decent book to read . . .

Not too much to ask, is it? In 1934 Allen Lane – then managing director of publishing company The Bodley Head – stood on a platform at Exeter railway station looking for something good to read on his journey back to London. His choice was limited: popular magazines and poor-quality paperbacks, the same choice faced every day by the vast majority of readers, few of whom could afford hardbacks. Lane’s disappointment and anger at the range of books generally available led him to found a company and, subsequently, to change the world: the quality paperback was born. They weren’t just sold into bookshops: Lane was adamant that his Penguins should appear in chain stores and tobacconists’ shops, and should cost no more than a single packet of cigarettes.

While reading habits (and cigarette prices) may have changed since 1935, Penguin still believes in publishing the best books for everybody to enjoy. We still believe that good design costs no more than poor design, and that quality books published passionately and responsibly make the world a better place.

So wherever you see the little bird – on a piece of prize-winning literary fiction or a celebrity autobiography, political tour de force or historical masterpiece, a serial-killer thriller, reference book, world classic or a piece of pure escapism – you can bet that it represents the very best that the genre has to offer.

Whatever you like to read – trust Penguin.

PENGUIN TODAY

Penguin now has offices in fifteen countries, from Penguin US (formed in 1939) to Penguin Ireland (formed in 2003), and keeps over 5,000 titles in print at any one time.

In London, Penguin occupies three floors of 80 Strand, a listed building overlooking the Thames. There are around 1,000 people in these offices, organized into smaller publishing units, or ‘divisions’, with shared central departments of Sales, Production, Finance, Human Resources, Contracts and Legal.

Penguin is home to many of the best-known names in the book business: Ladybird, Puffin, BBC Children’s Books, Beatrix Potter, Dorling Kindersley, and two of the best names in travel, Rough Guides and DK Eyewitness, as well as Penguin Books itself. And within the Penguin publishing teams you’ll find the long-established hardback imprints of Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Allen Lane and Viking, and the younger hardback imprint Fig Tree. Full details of our publishing structure can be found at www.penguin.co.uk.

Penguin is now owned by Pearson, an international media company with market-leading businesses in education, business information and consumer publishing. Pearson is focused on bringing quality, innovation and profitability to ‘education in the broadest sense of the word’, and joins together some of the most valuable brands in publishing: the Financial Times, Penguin, Dorling Kindersley and Longman. From its roots as the world’s largest book publisher, Pearson provides a range of related services: testing and learning software for students of all ages, data for financial institutions and public information systems for government departments.

With more than 30,000 employees based in sixty countries, Pearson is a family of businesses that draw on common assets and processes, and share a common purpose: to help our customers live and learn. Pearson is listed on the London and New York stock exchanges (UK: PSON; NYSE: PSO); in 2007 Pearson had sales of £4,218m (£8,394m) and an operating profit of £634m (£1,262m).

DIVERSITY AT PENGUIN

At Penguin, we not only value diversity – we actively promote it. Our view is that if our workforce doesn’t reflect the richness of the society around us, then our business will be the poorer for it.

Our approach to diversity is simple: if you’re good, we want you. We don’t discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, disability or age, and we take a proactive approach to ensure our business is a place where everyone with the right ability and aptitude can work and thrive.

Every year we run ‘Getting into Publishing’, an open day for students and graduates from a wide range of backgrounds, so they can find out about working in publishing and network with Penguin’s employees and senior management. We also run a highly successful Pearson Diversity Summer Internship Programme. For full details, see page 36.

THE ENVIRONMENT

As a well-known frog once noted, it’s not easy being green. But at Penguin we are doing our very best. Here are some of the things we are doing to reduce our effect on the environment:

• FSC paper: Penguin’s biggest impact on the environment comes from our use of paper (though it may surprise you to know that book manufacture accounts for only 2% of world paper use). Wherever possible, our books are printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper, which guarantees that the paper comes from environmentally and socially responsible sources.

• The Penguin Wood: In January 2007 we created the Penguin Wood, planting the first of more than 40,000 trees. This 96-acre site at Botany Bay in Devonshire is being developed in partnership with the Woodland Trust, the UK’s biggest charity dedicated solely to saving woods, and will be used to host further planting days for local schoolchildren and the community.

PENGUIN VALUES

• Green Champions: Every part of Penguin has green champions who generate green ideas and promote Penguin’s eco-initiatives to their team members. We’ve also reduced our energy consumption in the office with movement sensitive lights, recycling bins, recycled photocopying paper and many other schemes.

CHARITY

One of the most important purposes of our company is to harness our financial resources, as well as the skills and energies of our people, to the needs of our communities. Wherever you look within Penguin, people are giving generously of their time and money, and this individual enterprise is matched by a similar commitment at the top of the company.

We place a lot of emphasis on encouraging our staff in their own grass-roots activity by giving time off to pursue personal projects, and providing matching funding where we can: in 2007 Penguin employees who participated in the matched funding programme helped to raise over £60,000 for various causes. Penguin had marathon runners in both the London and New York marathons and raised money for a number of charities, including the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Barnardo’s, Demezla House Children’s Hospice, the Connection at St Martin’s and the Alzheimer’s Society.

As publishers there are many ways, big and small, in which we can make a difference. We send a large number of books to Africa through Book Aid, and in smaller numbers to local schools, libraries and charities, including the Terence Higgins Trust, Shelter, the Haller Foundation, the Children’s Society and Amnesty International. We also work with partners such as the Letterbox Club, which aims to improve the educational outlook for children aged 7-11 in foster families by providing them with a parcel of books, maths activities and educational materials every month for six months. We support the work of our authors, not only through major organizations like PEN but in small ways as well, with marketing or charitable support. And of course our authors also help us to help: a single mini-cookery book by Jamie Oliver raised over £1,000,000 for Comic Relief in 2007.

It’s a commissioning editor’s role to build a list of authors and books for their imprint. As well as maintaining strong relationships with the authors already on their list, they work with agents, go to book fairs and literary events, and scour newspapers, magazines and blogs to find the best new writers around, often having to pitch against other publishers for the acquisition.

Once an editor has acquired a book, they will edit the manuscript with the author, offering broad suggestions on structure, characterization or plot. If it’s an illustrated book, they will work with the Design department to commission illustrations and source or commission photographs. Editors have an influence on everything about a book, from the cover design to production details, and will work closely with the Sales, Marketing and Publicity teams.

When a manuscript leaves the editor’s desk, it goes to the Copy Editorial department for copy editing. The copy editors read the manuscript to check for repetition, contradictions, clarity, consistency, and simple mistakes of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They will also check factual information and look out for anything that might be libellous.

WITHIN DORLING KINDERSLEY AND THE TRAVEL DIVISION:

DK Travel Guides
New titles are commissioned by the list managers - who are also responsible for coordinating the revision and updating of each new edition - in association with the category publisher. Ideas for destinations within existing series, or for one-off titles, can come from the creative team or the wider DK sales/marketing teams in the UK and internationally, and can be influenced by trends in the travel industry and gaps in the list as well as up-and-coming destinations.

Once a title has been confirmed, the list manager or project editor will commission contributors (occasionally one but usually more) to supply text, while the managing art editor or project art editor commissions photography and picture research. The layout and editing of the book are completed by a team of editors and designers, often working from the DK Delhi office and liaising with colleagues in London, who ensure the pictures and text work together, the structure of the book is sound, and facts are correct and up to date.

DK Adult and Children’s books
An editor commissions briefing notes from an author that outline key contents, briefs a picture researcher, and brainstorms with the designer to develop the spreads and set up a visual style. Editors and designers also work closely together when commissioning illustrations or photography. When the team is happy with the overall design and content of the page spreads, the author or editor writes text to fit. Editors copy edit the text on screen, checking for sense, flow, grammar and factual accuracy.

Edited page spreads are sent to the author and consultant, as well as to any publishing partners, before they are given a final proofread and supplied to the printer to make the book. The page files are then archived and translation materials provided so that the title can be sold around the world.

HOW DO I GET IN?
Most editors begin their careers as editorial assistants or secretaries to publishers. Work experience is a useful way to start, and we sometimes hire from our work-experience candidates. For full details of work-experience placements, see page 36.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
As an editorial assistant, you’ll work closely with an editor or publisher as a form of apprenticeship. An editorial assistant’s job involves liaising with authors and agents as well as the in-house departments of Design, Copy Editorial, Production, Publicity and Marketing.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
A good eye for detail, strong negotiation skills, a keen commercial sense and good people skills are all essential. A passion for reading and an excellent command of the English language are also crucial.
HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I’ve had a slightly unusual career path: before joining Penguin I was an assistant editor for Book Club Associates; then, on joining Penguin, moved from Editorial into Rights; and after five years in the Rights department here, I moved back over to Editorial. It’s incredibly useful to get experience in other departments, though, and my Rights experience developed my negotiation skills as well as giving me a keen sense of the commercial, which is extremely helpful as an editor.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
There are quite a few books on my list at the moment, all at different stages in the production process, big brand names as well as some debut authors who are just breaking into the charts – which is what it’s all about. And 2008 saw the launch of the new James Bond book written by Sebastian Faulks, which has been a fantastically exciting project for all of us at Penguin.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
I’m an editorial director for Michael Joseph. I’m responsible for all our action, adventure and crime thrillers, and look particularly at the male readership – authors like Clive Cussler, Tom Clancy and Dick Francis. A large part of my job is building up good relationships with agents so that they think of me first when a new author comes on the scene. If a book comes in that I like, I present it in-house to the Marketing, Publicity and Sales teams, and we discuss how we would pitch the book to the market. We then have to work out the value in terms of sales and advance, before we make our offer to the author’s agent.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER EDITORIAL?
First and foremost, it’s about having an overriding passion for books – but particularly you should think about which genre or category of book you’re most interested in, and concentrate on working for an appropriate house for that type of publishing.

“It’s about having an overriding passion for books.”

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
I’m head of the Copy Editorial and Proofreading department, and to deal with the huge Penguin list we use a large number of freelancers, so much of our time is spent managing and supporting them. Our role is to go through a typescript with a fine-tooth comb – with each new book you have no idea what to expect, so only by going through a proper copy-editing process can you make sure everything is as it should be. A large part of doing the job successfully is to adopt a questioning approach – taking nothing for granted and being mindful that there may well be loose ends. It’s not for us to say if it’s a good book or a bad book, but rather to make sure that the final text works within itself and has no unwanted surprises for the reader.

Of course we have to look at the basics of spelling and grammar and sense, but we also have to check for consistency and continuity – you’d be surprised how many fiction authors don’t get their timelines right, for instance. You have to read it for one thing and then again to check that something else is right, so it’s quite a painstaking process.

The joy for most copy editors is dealing with an author at the level which appeals to them, which is text – we are in copy editing because we like the words, we like the stories that the authors tell, we like dealing with authors, we like it when we can say we think this is a great book but we’re not quite sure what you mean here. This is a micro rather than a macro approach.

“What tips do you have for anyone wanting to enter Copy Editorial?”

“we like the words, we like the stories that the authors tell”

KEITH TAYLOR
Managing Editor, Penguin Copy Editorial

ALEX CLARKE
Editorial Director, Michael Joseph

“we like the words, we like the stories that the authors tell!”
HOW DO I GET IN?
Various training courses are available for learning about copyright and publishing contracts and these are a useful starting point, but most people gain their experience by starting at the bottom as an assistant and working their way up.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
On a day-to-day basis you’d be drafting contracts under supervision, checking rights, processing contractual documentation, and answering queries from Editorial, Rights and Royalties departments. You’d learn about Penguin systems and policies on contractual terms.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Good organizational skills, a meticulous eye for detail and an interest in the legal side of publishing are the main qualities needed in this field, as well as sound negotiating skills.

CONTRACTS
Responsible for:
Drafting and negotiating the contracts for each book we publish, to ensure the company achieves the best possible terms on which to publish our books. The team works closely with Editorial, but a thorough understanding of all aspects of the publishing process is required to draft contracts and negotiate them successfully. The wide range of the Penguin Group’s publishing makes this a particularly challenging and interesting area in which to work.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I started my career in publishing as an editorial secretary in a small publishing company. I graduated to becoming an editorial assistant and did that for three years before I took eight years off work to raise my two children. After my career break I got a job in Penguin as a permissions assistant; two years later I was asked to start a Contracts department because Penguin didn’t have one at that time.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
Supervising the drafting and negotiation of all agreements with authors and literary agents and other companies that enable us to publish our books. I also advise on company policy on contractual terms and language, and assist publishers in negotiating terms on individual deals.

In Contracts, you are quite at the hub of things. It’s a satisfying job and involves you in all the different areas of the company. I find that lots of people really enjoy it and stick with it; they come in thinking ‘I am not sure I want to do this’ and then get seduced by it.

MARGARET BLUMAN
Contracts Director

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER CONTRACTS?
Most of the learning happens on the job – if people have a bit of experience that’s great, but it’s people with the right attitude and aptitude that we’re looking for. There’s always room for people to develop, and we like to help people to do that: we’ll train them up and help them with their career progression.

The way a CV is written is very important - we look for someone who can write in a very precise way because we have to draft language.

It’s a satisfying job and involves you in all the different areas of the company.
FINANCE
Responsible for:
The financial well-being of the company. The Finance department ensures that budgets and project appraisals are realistic, that the business is operating with strong controls and that performance is effectively monitored. Finance offers a varied and challenging career and provides opportunities to work with all departments across the business, from Editorial and Sales to Distribution. The more routine accounting functions at Penguin have been outsourced to Pearson’s Accounting Services department, so that Penguin Finance can concentrate on supporting the publishers with project appraisals or by developing initiatives to improve the company’s cash flow.

HOW DO I GET IN?
You can join the Finance department either as a graduate or as a part-qualified or qualified accountant with a recognized accountancy qualification such as ACA, ACCA or CIMA.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Strong communications skills with the ability to communicate financial issues in laymen’s terms.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I trained as a chartered accountant with one of the Big Four accountancy firms before joining Penguin. I’ve had a number of roles since I joined and am currently the business manager for Brands and Licensing, which encompasses a number of well-known brands, including Beatrix Potter, Flower Fairies and Ladybird.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
My role as a business manager involves working with the management teams of the respective publishing divisions to help them meet their financial goals and provide commercial advice. This includes setting and monitoring annual budgets, looking at which titles to invest in, helping to put together a business case for a new digital initiative and reviewing the performance of titles, series and brands once published.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
An average day in my job varies quite a bit: you can find yourself attending a weekly management meeting for your division talking about year-to-date results, or being asked to advise on how to appraise a potential title acquisition, or the effect on profits if we print a certain quantity. Doing these things means that you need to be able to communicate with all parts of the business, and you spend quite a bit of time with other teams.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER FINANCE?
It’s worth looking at working towards a professional accounting qualification, perhaps within a company scheme or accounting practice. The Finance department sometimes offers work-experience placements for high-calibre undergraduates.
Picture research is a specialist area within the Design department, and it is the researcher’s job to find existing images from galleries, museums and other sources, and to clear rights for their usage.

**HOW DO I GET IN?**

A degree in graphic or typographic design is the first step towards working in Design. The Penguin Design Award aims to encourage students on design degrees or HNDs to engage in book design; the prize is a six-week placement within the Penguin Design Studio. Full details are at www.penguindesignaward.co.uk. Penguin also regularly uses freelance designers, photographers and illustrators.

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT?**

An average day in the design department is very busy and varied. In any one day you could be juggling three or four covers, all at different stages. Using a cover brief initiated by the editor, you will resolve the cover art (which might involve sourcing a found image, organizing a photo shoot, commissioning an illustrator or doing it yourself), set type, consult with Editorial, Sales and Marketing, and account for the author’s opinions on the progress of a design. And then speak to Production about any special finishes that need to be taken into account.

**WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?**

A wide and thorough understanding of design - both technically and in terms of how it works in the commercial marketplace - and good communication skills. And, of course, you need to have a great understanding of design software.

**HOWN D I JOIN PENGUIN?**

I used to work for Dorling Kindersley before I moved to Ladybird. After graduating I was offered a two-week temporary contract helping out with the annual book fair as a design assistant. After this my contract was extended and I continued to work with the team, developing children’s titles from rough layouts to printed form. I was promoted fairly rapidly within the company, even securing a secondment for two years in New York, where I worked on both adult and children’s titles simultaneously. Four years ago I returned to London, where I worked in adult reference; then I transferred to Ladybird nine months ago, back on preschool titles, where I’m happiest.

**WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?**

At DK, I loved art directing the photo shoots; clothes shopping for models, casting models and making props. I loved that buzz. On the last book I was working on, the DIY manual, I dealt with what seemed like a cast of thousands of people. The book was well received in the UK, and it was developed into an American edition, which involved my going to America and living there for two weeks on and two weeks off for about three months. I loved being in charge and organizing the entire shoot.

**WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER DESIGN?**

Anyone who wants to work in this field should also take a look at the history of book design, visit bookshops and seriously consider why books look the way they do. Work on mock-ups for a variety of titles and themes to build up your portfolio and try to get work placements at a variety of publishers whose work you are interested in.

"you’ll need an ability to adapt to anything that is thrown at you"
WHOA CAN I EXPECT?
As a production assistant you’ll handle general office administration as well as supporting the production controllers and managers in their work. You will be involved in the entire process of putting a book together, and will need to communicate with many different people, from Editorial, Marketing and Sales to the printers and the warehouse.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Strong organizational, interpersonal and negotiation skills, diplomatic ability and excellent project management.

HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry into production is usually as a production assistant. Most training for Production is done in-house but there are formal courses, notably at the London College of Printing.

PRODUCTION
Responsible for:
The physical process of transforming a manuscript into a finished book. This includes everything from producing the initial costing, arranging the typesetting, and selecting and buying paper, to organizing the printing and binding of the book and its delivery into the warehouse. Production must ensure that all these processes happen in time to meet the publication date of the book. Production people are also the first to see the final books. Being the first to handle our next bestseller is hugely satisfying and exciting.

SEYHAN ESSEN
Senior Production Controller

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
My first job in publishing was as a production assistant with Octopus. I then moved to DK Children’s as production controller and from there I moved over to Penguin as a senior production controller.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
Production is essentially a project management role. You oversee the whole schedule, from the start of the book’s production to the end, when final copies are delivered into the warehouse. You guide the creative teams, control the costs and schedule of the printing, ensure that the book is being printed to the required standard and make sure that the books are delivered on time.

Not only do you work on a variety of books at the same time but also with suppliers in the Far East and Europe and with customers from different parts of the world, as well as with internal departments, all of which brings diversity to your daily work life.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
I recently worked on Victoria Beckham’s That Extra Half an Inch. The designer would work with her and get her feedback on the images, and then we’d sit down together and colour correct it to make sure that the images would print as well as they should. Seeing a book that I have worked on in a finished and marketable state is the most satisfying aspect of working in Production.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER PRODUCTION?
It helps to be organized, have great planning skills and be a good people person, because you are dealing with lots of people in many different areas of the business.

Not many people outside of the industry understand what Production involves, so it’s a good idea to do a bit of research first to see if it’s what you want to do. There are work-experience opportunities in the Production department, and that’s a great way to gain experience and see how Production works, in order to find out if it’s the job for you.

‘You guide the creative teams, control the costs and schedule of the printing.’
HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry is usually as a publicity assistant. Work experience is a useful way to start, and we sometimes hire from our work-experience candidates. For full details of work-experience placements, see page 36.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
Expect the role to be very fast-paced and engaging; the Publicity department is one of the busiest and noisiest in the company. Penguin’s books are rarely out of the press, and our publicists are constantly on their toes in order to keep it that way. Some of your responsibilities will include monitoring the press for any mention of Penguin’s authors, coordinating and administrating the work of the Publicity department and helping the publicity managers with their publicity campaigns.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
You’ll need to enjoy talking to a wide variety of people, great people skills, a good knowledge of the media industry and good organizational skills, as well as an ability to thrive in a busy, pressurized environment.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I wrote to publishing houses for work experience, and got a few rejection letters that said, ‘We’re fully booked already but we’ll keep your details on file.’ Penguin said that they didn’t have any editorial positions, but would I like to do publicity? It was an opportunity to work in Penguin, so I took it. I spent two weeks in Penguin Press, and a couple of weeks later I had a call saying the publicity assistant job was available. I was a publicity assistant for a year and a half, a press officer for two and a half years, and I’ve now been a publicity manager for just over a year.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER PUBLICITY?
If you’re the type of person who is quite happy to pore over detail and work on your own in isolation, then I don’t think Publicity is for you – you’ve got to be quite an outgoing person. You have to be super-organized – you have to have a brain that’s capable of working out the details and logistics of an author’s media schedule. Yes, it’s a stressful job, but it’s also such an adrenalin rush.

I’d advise people to try to gain as much work experience as possible and to figure out what kinds of books they’d like to work on.
Every month, our websites are updated with information and content on new books that are coming out. It’s the job of the Online department to promote them – with extracts, original short pieces written by the authors, author interviews and competitions.

The main Penguin Group websites are:
- www.penguin.co.uk
- www.penguinclassics.co.uk
- www.spinebreakers.co.uk
- www.hamishhamilton.co.uk
- www.traveldk.com
- www.dk.com
- www.roughguides.co.uk
- www.puffin.co.uk
- www.peterrabbit.com
- www.flowerfairies.com
- www.funwithspot.com
- www.ladybird.co.uk

**HOW DO I GET IN?**
Entry is usually as an Online marketing assistant or junior designer. Work experience is a useful way to start, and we sometimes hire from our work-experience candidates. For full details of work-experience placements, see page 36.

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT?**
You will need to be able to work independently and use your own initiative. You’ll also have to multi-task and work on several book and author campaigns at the same time, and will require excellent organizational skills, be able to manage your own workload and prioritize efficiently, work to deadlines and be very good under pressure – the internet is not something that finishes at 5.30!

**WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?**
Good communication skills, an interest in internet marketing, and a deep and enthusiastic passion for the internet and the opportunities that digital channels offer our authors and readers.

**HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?**
After university, I worked as a production editor for a business-to-business magazine, where I learned how to use Photoshop and different software packages. I’m very interested in the internet and wanted a career in publishing, so when the job at Penguin came up I jumped at the chance.

**WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?**
We get to work across all divisions because everyone wants to promote their books online and on our website. Part of my role is seeing what things are new on the internet, what trends are out there, what digital stuff is popular at the moment and how we can utilize them to promote our books. The internet is moving at such a fast pace that if a trend is quite hot we have to jump on it immediately.

**WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?**
Recently I’ve been involved in the Spinebreakers project, which was set up for teenagers who enjoy books. I was given quite a lot of responsibility, and had to oversee the page layout and design, and help with the launch. We have monthly meetings with a team of nineteen teenagers, who decide which books they’d like to review and then go away and come up with content for the site. That might be alternative endings, an interview with an author, or maybe filming a sketch in the book. It’s a great project to be involved in.

**WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER ONLINE?**
You need to be a good communicator and someone who can work with lots of other departments. I didn’t have that many online skills when I joined but you learn on the job.
The Marketing teams at Penguin also work closely with Editorial on the positioning and packaging of a book, and spend a lot of time preparing presentation materials, working up pitches for new books, brainstorming creative ideas, juggling tight budgets and finding exciting new ways to reach readers.

HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry into marketing is usually as a marketing assistant. Work experience is a useful way to start and we sometimes hire from our work-experience candidates. For full details of work-experience placements, see page 36.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
Marketing assistants are crucial to the effective running of our Marketing departments. You’ll work closely with marketing executives and managers on their campaigns, as well as arranging and attending marketing meetings to brainstorm ideas. On any given day you could find yourself doing anything from briefing a designer on a national press ad to approaching companies to link up with us on a promotion, and from writing copy for book proofs to helping run the Penguin tent at Fruitstock. Marketing thrives on innovation and energy, and your opinions and ideas will always be listened to and encouraged.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
A high level of creativity, strong copywriting skills, a good understanding of retail and a keen awareness of consumer habits and trends. In addition you need to have good budgeting skills and to be highly organized and good at working on several different projects at the same time.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
Initially I’d wanted to go into Editorial and thought I’d use Marketing as a bit of a foot in the door, but I actually ended up being fascinated by Marketing. I’ve been here six years now: I started as a marketing assistant, then was promoted to marketing executive and am now a marketing manager.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
Marketing is one of the most creative parts of the business and is also very challenging. You have to come up with ever-more innovative ways to cut through a very cluttered market – it’s not just other books that we’re competing with, it’s entertainment in general: music, magazines and film.

We work very closely with Editorial and Publicity, but particularly Sales, offering them support in terms of positioning titles in the market and setting up promotions with the major retailers to ensure our books have maximum prominence in-store.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
I’m very lucky to work with some of Penguin’s top authors. I’m currently working on Jane Green, Adele Parks, Jeremy Clarkson and the James Bond marketing campaigns, all of which have different target audiences and therefore different approaches. I really enjoy the variety in Marketing: working with creative agencies, arranging ad photo shoots, signing up with external companies. A big part of my job involves working with lots of other big brands, such as innocent, Toni & Guy, lastminute.com and Oasis, on partnership marketing. We have great content to offer and they can help us reach a new audience outside traditional marketing channels and get cut-through over our competitors. It’s also quite a kick when you wrap the London Lite with an advertising cover, see a massive poster on the underground or watch a TV campaign on Five that you’ve been responsible for.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER MARKETING?
Get to know your market – be aware of all the ads around you, and the many different ways in which companies try to communicate with their consumers. Sometimes reading magazines really is research!

‘You have to come up with ever-more innovative ways to cut through a very cluttered market.’
Broadly speaking, the UK Sales department is divided into five areas: Key Accounts, Direct Sales, Custom Publishing, Fields Sales and Sales Support.

Group Sales is responsible for promoting and marketing Penguin UK books to our six sister companies around the world: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, India and America.

HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry into Sales is usually through Sales Support as a sales assistant to an account manager.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
As a sales assistant you will be involved in providing customer support as well as providing administrative support to the Sales team. You will work closely with other departments, including Marketing, Design, Editorial and Production, to track the progress of titles.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Strong interpersonal skills, with good numeracy and presentation skills; you should also be target-driven, naturally gregarious, enthusiastic and energetic.
KAYODE JOSIAH  
Key Account Manager

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I applied for an internship in 2005, part of the Diversity Internship programme. I got an interview with the sales director and was given an internship with the Customized Publishing department. I was given a permanent job as a key account assistant after three months, was promoted to key account executive, and then became a key account manager within the space of three years.

I think if you want to be promoted you have to step outside of your comfort zone, to take on things that are probably not at your level. As a key account manager everything comes down on me; if we don’t make the budget, it’s my issue, and I enjoy that pressure.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
I’m a key account manager within the Customized Publishing team. Our job is to create products from existing books that are customized for a particular customer. So that might be a boxed set of thrillers for a supermarket or a customized book branded for a particular retailer. My job is very creative, and I work closely with Production and Editorial on creating new products.

I love selling – getting a deal in is quite a good buzz, because you are creating something that’s not already out there.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
A lot of my time is spent looking for new titles that I can use in existing formats; we have done a lot with audio books in bespoke tins, and this worked really well in the direct door-to-door market. I spent a lot of time trawling through our backlist audio to see what could work as a set; my challenge now is how to replace this revenue stream and update our product to offer the customer something new and fresh for this year. I also work with promotional and remainder companies with very tight budgets which is challenging and means liaising closely with Production in an attempt to nail down the printers.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER SALES?
I started through the Diversity Internship programme, and it was an incredible opportunity that really helped to kick-start my career. For Sales specifically, you’ve got to enjoy selling and you’ve got to get on well with your customers, because if you get on well with your customers it will build trust and this is probably the most important factor in getting a deal done. At the end of the day they have to believe that you’re selling them a good product that will work well for them.

RICHARD ROWLANDS  
Group Companies Sales Director

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I didn’t go straight into Sales; I went into Editorial. At that time, Penguin had an English Language Teaching department, and I was recruited as a secretary to the publisher. I did that for about a year and then got another job as the marketing person for the ELT list, which I sold to schools overseas and in the UK. I then moved into International Sales and started to rep in south-east Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
The most exciting thing about Sales is taking an author from scratch, and working with Marketing and Editorial on a plan to grow them in your territories over a period of time. That doesn’t necessarily mean we’re going to make them a bestseller next year, but we’ll make them a bestseller in a few years’ time, and I think that’s what we do particularly well. I love international sales, I love the travelling aspect of the role – I travel about two or three months a year – and I love working with great colleagues in our sister companies around the world.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER SALES?
We need somebody who can communicate really well about the books in a very convincing and honest way. You’ll be talking to people who’ve been in the business for twenty-five years, so you can’t pull the wool over their eyes. We want people with passion but who are good at the logistical part as well and have an understanding of the needs of the business.

I worked as a bookseller part time while I was studying, and when I started in publishing I found that my buying and selling experience at a grass-roots level was extremely helpful. Always be prepared to get your hands dirty. I think it’s important to start at a certain level and build your experience up.

“Always be prepared to get your hands dirty”
HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry into Rights is typically as a rights assistant. Work experience is a useful way to start, and we sometimes hire from our work-experience candidates. For full details of work-experience placements, see page 36. A publishing MA can help your CV to stand out, but is in no way vital to your success.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
You can expect to be very busy and dealing with a variety of things at the same time. As a rights assistant your role will be quite admin-based, but the job can serve as a great apprenticeship for learning how Rights works, and for making contacts. It’s also a good way of learning about the publishing process in general, as you will deal with many of the other departments, especially Editorial, Production, Publicity and Design. An assistant will help the Rights managers with their submissions to foreign publishers or newspapers, and support them through the deal process.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Strong negotiation, numeracy and communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, a flair for selling, an eye for detail and a good ability to multi-task. If you’re selling serial rights, an interest in the media, popular culture and current affairs is important. Languages are an advantage if you're working in Foreign Rights.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
After a varied career working at a book club and then a literary agency, I decided to come back to Rights, which was my first job at an assistant level at Random House. I was attracted by the idea of selling rights at a more senior level, and of working for Penguin.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
I sell serial rights, which involves the sale of extracts to newspapers or magazines. As well as being a good source of revenue, it’s an integral part of the publicity campaign, so I work closely with the Publicity department. I sell books from across the whole of the Penguin list, although the newspapers tend to be more interested in non-fiction than fiction.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
I am entering the busiest time of my year, selling the autumn non-fiction list. The biggest book I’m working on right now is Malcolm Gladwell’s Outliers, which I’m hoping to get lots of money for. I recently did a big deal with the Sun for Ross Kemp’s second book on gangs – tying into his Sky TV series – and I’ve been working on Gary Rhodes’s new cook book. I’m also about to start pitching a book about Josef Fritzl. That gives an idea of the wide variety of titles I work on.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER RIGHTS?
We are always pleased when people actively want to begin their career in Rights, as it’s not often an area of publishing that people know much about, unless they have experience of the industry. It’s important to get to grips with what Rights actually involves before you apply for a job (too often people think it’s about copyright and contracts, but the most important aspect of Rights is selling). You’ll be dealing with a wide variety of titles, from celebrity autobiographies and cook books to cerebral literary biographies, from literary fiction such as Zadie Smith to very commercial fiction such as Jane Green or Clive Cussler, so it’s important to have eclectic tastes, or at least to keep an open mind and recognize and respect the commercial potential of books that you wouldn’t necessarily be queuing up to buy yourself. We are looking for natural sales people and people who like to talk – so do your best to sell yourself in any interview!
INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING AND LICENSING TEAM

Responsible for:
Selling Dorling Kindersley books in as many countries as possible worldwide. IPL works with publishers all over the world to publish different DK books, from children’s books to travel guides, in as many languages as possible, and also sells rights to DK titles to newspapers and magazines internationally. IPL is the most international team within Penguin, and most team members speak at least one other language. If you’re looking for an opportunity to utilize your language skills, International Publishing and Licensing is a great place to start.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I studied Chinese at Durham, and when I graduated I wanted to find something in which I could make use of my Chinese. I started off as a rights assistant – the first year was a very steep learning curve – getting to know the business and building up my sales skills, until I was able to take on responsibility for my own territories. Now I’m responsible for the Chinese-speaking territories including Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, and I also do Mongolia.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
IPL is split into four teams: Far East, Southern Europe, Northern Europe, and Spain and the Americas. Most people in the department speak the language into which they are selling. The team is a huge mix of people from all over the world, from Guatemala to Italy to Korea – there’s every nationality you can think of.

The Editorial department comes up with an idea for a book, which they then present to us. They sketch out what the book will look like, mocking up pages with photos and dummy text. We present this to our foreign publishers and give their feedback to the Editorial team, until the book is produced, so it’s a very collaborative process. Once our foreign publishers are interested in a title, we negotiate the contract with them. We work with other departments in DK to make sure that the publishers have everything we can provide, so that they can successfully publish and sell the book. So we are involved in every part of the process. The travel is great, and meeting new people and doing new things is very stimulating; on any given day you don’t know what’s going to land in your inbox.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?
I recently sold a book in Tibet, for which they actually had to invent new Tibetan words – that’s quite a good feeling. Working with another culture is really interesting. You have to constantly think of how they do things and why it’s different for that market.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER IPL?
Because of the nature of the job we tend to recruit for an assistant. It usually means you don’t start with a whole lot of work experience, but we look for previous experience that makes you a bit special and shows you have initiative, like forming or leading a society at college or university. And language skills are, of course, very important.

"we look for previous experience that makes you a bit special"
HOW DO I GET IN?
Entry into HR is usually as an HR assistant.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
Day-to-day activities at an entry level are varied and have a strong administrative focus. Due to the nature of the role, a strong eye for detail and a high level of accuracy are required when drawing up correspondence or contracts. The role requires the individual to be discreet due to the handling of confidential information and also requires a strong communicator who is able to liaise with employees across the company. In HR, the nature of the queries received can range from the common to the unexpected.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?
Good interpersonal and organizational skills, effective verbal and written abilities, and commercial awareness. To work at management level you would usually have achieved an HR CIPD qualification; study for this professional standard is supported by the company.

HUMAN RESOURCES
Responsible for:
Making Penguin the place to work in publishing, Penguin’s HR department is characterized by the strong emphasis on developing and nurturing the people who work here. Penguin believes that if we are going to publish the best books, we need a highly talented and motivated workforce to do that. The role of HR includes recruiting and developing employees, performance management, employment relations and negotiations, communicating with employees, providing family-friendly and egalitarian benefits, and developing a proactive approach to diversity.

HOW DID YOU JOIN PENGUIN?
I worked in HR for a picture library before joining Penguin. The role is similar to the one I have now, but Penguin is much larger than my previous employer. Prior to this I was training to be a secondary school history teacher.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?
I support management and employees within Dorling Kindersley and Rough Guides, by collating candidate requirements, contacting recruitment agencies and advertising available positions. My role also involves interviewing and shortlisting candidates for both temporary and permanent vacancies as well as overseeing work-experience applications. Advising managers on performance issues and staff management also falls within my remit.

My role requires liaison with staff across the company, from meeting and greeting new starters to advising employees at all levels, and I also conduct exit interviews, confirm probation periods, consolidate references and liaise with payroll.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO ENTER HR?
It is really important to be able to relate to people at all levels, as well as being customer-focused and team-orientated. You need to be extremely diplomatic, a good problem solver, highly organized and a multi-tasker.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR PEOPLE LOOKING TO GET INTO PUBLISHING IN GENERAL?
I would look into getting some work experience and doing as much research as possible into the area you have an expressed interest in.

You need to be extremely diplomatic, a good problem solver.
WORK EXPERIENCE

“You can always prove yourself on work experience. We try to give people press releases to write, and we try to include them in meetings, but there’s a lot of admin to be done as well and it’s part of what we do. I have to mail out books and stuff envelopes, and so does our director. If you do that with a good grace, it will stand you in good stead, and the good ones do get remembered.”

PREENA GADHER, PUBLICITY MANAGER

Work experience is a great way to get into Penguin and into publishing; spending two weeks working with one of our teams gives us the chance to really get to know you and for you to learn more about us. When it comes to applying for a specific vacancy, you’ll be able to talk more confidently about our business, and we’ll have a much better understanding of you, and of what you can bring to the company. We offer two-week work-experience placements throughout the year in most of our departments. While our placements are unpaid, we do offer a small payment towards any travel expenses – and, with any luck, the experience you’ll gain will be priceless. Apply at www.penguin.co.uk/jobs.

“When work-experience placements come in with a good attitude, it’s a great shortcut for Penguin to people who care about the industry, want to learn more and have a lot to offer. I think it’s a really good way to get in. Initiative and flexibility are important – and a sense of humour helps.”

SAM BINNIE, JUNIOR COPYWRITER

INTERNSHIPS

Pearson, our parent company, runs a summer internship aimed at increasing the diversity in the publishing and media industry. The internships are paid and run for six weeks each summer from July till August, and are a great opportunity to gain experience in a wide range of areas in publishing, including Editorial, Publicity, Marketing, Production, Finance, Human Resources and Sales. The Pearson Diversity Summer Internship Programme is run under Section 37 of the Race Relations Act.

You can find out more information about the internship at: http://extranet2.pearson.com/diversity

RECRUITMENT

All our vacancies, including graduate-level entry roles, are listed on our website – www.penguin.co.uk/jobs – and you can apply for positions directly through the website. We frequently have temporary roles that are worth applying for in order to get a feel for the company and how we work. Occasionally we recruit for some positions through recruitment agencies, using some of the following agencies:

• Judy Fisher Associates
• Inspired Selection
• Career Moves
• Rare Recruitment

Hopefully, this guide has answered many of your questions about working in publishing. For any further queries, visit www.penguin.co.uk, or browse in any good bookshop for some page-by-page examples of what Penguin – and the rest of our family – is really all about.

www.penguin.co.uk/jobs