



 Edinburgh
International
Book Festival

Programme Administrator

Recruitment Pack

Programme Administrator: Job Description

Contract

Full-time, fixed term (9 months)

Salary

£26,280 per annum pro rata

Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a world-leading cultural festival, with democracy, creativity, and ideas exchange at its heart. We celebrate the power of words and writing in all of their dynamic and imaginative forms, bringing diverse perspectives together, and empowering our audiences to deepen their understanding of our ever-changing world.

Since 1983, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Each year, we programme innovative events that broaden the horizons and enrich the minds of our audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. These take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, and more, all informed by a culture of open dialogue, curiosity about the perspectives of others, and active embracing of new ideas and experiences.

A registered charity, we are run by a passionate team who believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo – as well as to offer solace, nurture wellbeing, and spread joy. Our Festival aims not just to open up conversations, but to broaden them too: existing as a space where nuanced discussion happens.

At the heart of our Festival is a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and the creation of a truly democratic environment for the exchange of ideas and collaborative thinking. We give a platform to voices who are often overlooked and aim to break down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience. More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – with the aim of developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. The Festival also makes hundreds of events available to watch online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part, and making the Festival truly global in nature.

Over the last four decades, we have continually transformed our Festival model to reflect our rapidly evolving world, and ensure our ongoing relevance, with a programme balancing today's most challenging topics with exploration of how we can work together towards a brighter future. In 2024, this evolution saw the beginning of a new chapter under the leadership of Festival Director, Jenny Niven. It was also our first year presenting the Festival in our new home of the Edinburgh

Futures Institute – a cutting-edge university building created from the stunning renovation of the city’s old Royal Infirmary and positioned at the heart of the city’s Festival environment. We are excited about the opportunities this offers us to collaborate with new partners and share innovations and a wide range of voices with our audiences, both now and far into the future.

The team

The Book Festival has a permanent staff of 23 throughout the year, expanding over the spring and summer to a peak of around 150 staff during the Festival. All staff members play a role in the ongoing development of the organisation through full team planning and debrief meetings during the year. The heads of each department form the Senior Management Team.

The Programme team is made up of six full-time roles across programme curation and delivery: Programme Director (Adults); Communities Programme Director; Children and School’s Programme Director; Programme Manager; Author Logistics Manager; and Creative Learning Manager; plus one part-time role Communities Programme Assistant. The team increases in size in the lead-up to the Festival when we welcome colleagues who work on a contract basis across administrative support and project production.

The role

The Programme Administrator is a key member of the Programme team, providing administrative support across the Adult and Children’s programmes, which represent 80% and 20% of the Festival programme respectively. The Programme Administrator provides support for both programmes, and adapts to the workload of each at different times.

Reporting to the Programme Manager, the role provides essential support as we transition to a new Festival database, maintaining accurate participant and book records, assisting with invitations and event mailings, and ensuring key programme milestones are met across the department.

Working flexibly across the two strands of the programme, the role will be a central point of liaison internally and externally, responding to queries promptly, and nurturing relationships with authors, publishers, chairpersons, and other stakeholders. During August, this role will support with venue preparation and event coordination and delivery on site.

The Programme team is collaborative. Ideally the Programme Administrator would be part of all aspects of the creative process from research, development, and planning to production, delivery, and final reporting. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the shaping of a world-leading cultural festival.

Key responsibilities

Programme delivery and administration

- Support the Programme team (Adults, Children's, and Schools programmes) with the day-to-day function of the department and prioritise tasks and workload as needed.
- Provide administrative support across the Programme team, including facilitating the transition to a new Festival database (and attending associated training), ensuring participant records and event information is up-to-date, and creating reports.
- Input and track programme tasks and milestones on the Festival timeline hosted on Monday.com.
- Collate information and materials from publishers – including books, imagery, and permission forms – and ensure materials are correctly filed, with any changes or updates communicated promptly with the team.
- Oversee incoming book deliveries and coordinate complex mailings, including the mailing of books to Chairpersons across all programmes, and liaise with the Operations team to order required materials.
- Support the Programme Manager to collate and communicate technical and production requirements for events and ensure all information management systems are up to date.
- Oversee arrangements for workshops, including ordering materials, assisting with the creation of learning packs, and booking catering.
- Liaise with the site team to carry out an inventory of workshop materials and venue furniture stored in the warehouse. Place orders for and receive delivery of additional materials as necessary.
- Support the Programme Manager, Programme Directors, and the wider team with the planning and production of multi-artform event strands – including performance and cookery – and contributing ideas to deliver unique and memorable experiences for audiences.
- Support the Programme Manager and Access team to ensure that access requirements are met to a high standard including liaising with partner organisations to coordinate BSL and captioning provision for events.
- Perform other administrative tasks as required across the Programme team, such as attending meetings, on-site briefings, and distributing minutes and action points.

Communications and relationships

- Act as a central point of contact for participating authors, publicists, partners, and other stakeholders – including overseeing the centralised Programme mailbox – fostering positive relationships, and communicating updates warmly and courteously.

- Liaise with chairpersons and workshop leaders to share briefings, materials, and information required for their events, making sure they feel prepared and a valued part of the Festival community.
- Provide regular programme updates to the Festival bookseller, Waterstones, and support with arrangements for book signings.

Event coordination

- Support the Programme team with event curation and delivery during the August Festival, including hospitality events.
- Greet participants and respond to requirements promptly on site, acting as an ambassador for the Festival and contributing to a warm, supportive, and inclusive atmosphere.
- Introduce and host workshops in the workshop venues, overseeing activity and assisting the workshop leader and participants as required, as well as assisting with set-up with pack-down.
- Assist with the creation and distribution of evaluation and feedback forms to ensure we are capturing accurate and useful insights into the Festival experience.

Person Specification

Skills & Attributes

- Confident presentation and interpersonal skills, including the ability to adapt communication to a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Organisational skills, with an ability to plan and prioritise to meet deadlines.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- A practical, resourceful approach to problem-solving and a calm demeanour under pressure.
- An enthusiastic personality with a flexible, positive, can-do attitude.
- A commitment to equality, inclusivity, and diversity.
- A proactive and positive approach to work.
- The confidence to ask for assistance and support when necessary.

- Pays attention to detail but understands the bigger picture.

Experience & Knowledge

Essential

- Extensive administrative experience, preferably within a creative environment.
- Experience of working collaboratively, as well as a demonstrable aptitude for working independently.
- Computer literacy – including Microsoft Office, Teams, Monday.com, and databases – and the aptitude to learn new systems quickly.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the publishing industry and/or festivals, ideally with experience of working in an arts organisation.
- Experience working in a third sector organisation.
- Experience of working with vulnerable groups.

Staff wellbeing

The Book Festival is developing an open and active staff wellbeing culture and is committed to making everyone in our team feel safe, welcome and included. An Employee Assistance Package is available which offers a variety of levels of counselling, one-to-one personal support, and resilience tools, along with personal legal and financial advice and family support. Several of our team have chosen to be trained in First Aid for Mental Health and our Safer Spaces Policy actively promotes a culture where everyone's experience (staff, artists, partners and audiences) is valued and no-one is made to feel unsafe or excluded. We continue to reflect and consult with our team.

Terms and conditions

The post is based at our offices 121 George Street, Edinburgh and at the Festival site in Edinburgh Futures Institute during August. Normal hours of work are 9:30–5:30, Monday to Friday outwith Festival time. Additional hours are required during the Festival itself, with some long days and working up to six days a week. Flexible/hybrid working is welcomed – our team work from the office at least three days per week and are expected to discuss and agree their work patterns with their manager and team. Time off in lieu is given for days worked outside agreed working patterns.

Employees receive 34 days of paid holiday per annum pro rata including public holidays.

The salary for this position will be £26,280 per annum pro rata. The Book Festival will pay a contribution of up to 3% of salary into our approved, auto-enrolment pension scheme. Employees may make voluntary additional contributions through payroll.

Equal opportunities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is an equal opportunities employer and a Real Living Wage employer. Our work is framed by a commitment to Equity, Diversity, Care, and Inclusion.

The Book Festival is a working environment where everyone is treated fairly, and our differences are celebrated as strengths. We actively encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply.

If you have any specific access requirements, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

How to apply

We welcome conversations with potential applicants. Please contact Lilidh Kendrick (Lilidh.Kendrick@edbookfest.co.uk).

Please complete the online application using the links on our website:
<https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/about-us/jobs>

Please ensure you upload a **copy of your current CV** and an **application letter**. Your letter should outline your suitability for the post and why you wish to work at the Book Festival. You may include any other information to support your application.

Closing date for applications: Thursday 5th December

Interviews

First interviews will be held Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th December

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its registered office at 121 George St Edinburgh and is a company limited by guarantee (SC079939) with charitable status (SCO10120).