PRINT FINISHING OPERATOR

ALSO KNOWN AS: POST-PRESS OPERATOR | PRINT FINISHING TECHNICIAN | BINDING OPERATOR

PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON GREATNESS.

As a Print Finishing Operator, you'll be the final link in the chain of print production, turning flat sheets into polished products that leap off the page.

KEY SKILLS

Skills which may benefit anyone considering a job as a print finishing operator include:

- Attention to detail
- Precision
- Problem solving
- Technical proficiency
- Time management

VALUES & ATTRIBUTES

Values and attributes of anyone considering a job as a print finishing operator include:

- Reliable
- Adaptable
- Team Player
- Quality-focused
- Safety-conscious
- Artistic – "Creator"

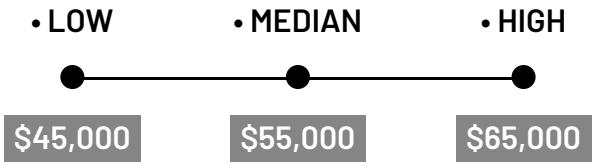
CAREER PROGRESSION

In this role, you may have the opportunity to progress to other positions. Career progression opportunities include:

- Business Manager
- Team Leader
- Production Operator
- Marketing and Communication Manager

SALARY EXPECTATION

The expected salary for a Print Finishing Operator can vary across different areas of manufacturing and may vary as you become more experienced.



RELATED INDUSTRIES

- Printing and Graphic arts

RECOMMENDED SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Industrial Graphics Skills
- Visual Arts in Practice

CORE SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Essential English
- Essential Mathematics
- Design
- Visual Arts

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JOB OVERVIEW

Print Finishing Operators play a crucial role in the printing industry, transforming raw printed materials into finished products ready for distribution. They operate a variety of specialised equipment to cut, fold, bind, and package printed materials, ensuring the final product meets quality standards and client specifications.

These skilled professionals work with a wide range of printed materials, from books and magazines to brochures and packaging. They must have a keen eye for detail, as even minor errors can result in costly reprints or dissatisfied customers. Print Finishing Operators contribute significantly to the economy by enabling the production of high-quality printed materials used in various sectors, from education to advertising.

In a typical day, a print finishing operator might set up and operate binding machines, adjust cutting equipment, monitor production quality, and troubleshoot any issues that arise during the finishing process. They need to be proficient in using various tools and machines, including guillotine cutters, folding machines, and perfect binders, while also maintaining a safe work environment.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Your role may include duties as follows:

1. Set up and operate binding and finishing equipment
2. Cut, fold, and assemble printed materials according to specifications
3. Perform quality checks on finished products
4. Maintain and troubleshoot finishing equipment
5. Package and prepare finished products for shipping or distribution

HOW TO BECOME A PRINT FINISHING OPERATOR

Becoming a print finishing operator doesn't necessarily require formal qualifications to start, but having relevant training can be advantageous. Many enter the field through on-the-job training or apprenticeships. Here are some steps to become a print finishing operator:

1. Complete high school education with focus on subjects like mathematics and technology
2. Consider obtaining a Certificate II in Printing and Graphic Arts (ICP20120) for initial skills
3. Research employers online and apply for an apprenticeship to earn a Certificate III in Print Binding, Finishing and Packaging (ICP31320) or apply directly with an employer. Even if an employer doesn't have any jobs listed it can be useful to submit a letter and resume to express your interest.
4. Continuously update skills to keep up with evolving printing technologies

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

Whether you're starting your journey or looking to upskill, there are multiple entry points and career progression opportunities available through vocational education and training.

You may want to pursue a qualification to deepen your expertise. A qualification that introduces many people to the industry includes Certificate II in Printing and Graphic Arts (ICP20120).

The following qualification/s can be completed as an apprenticeship:

- Certificate III in Print Binding, Finishing and Packaging (ICP31320)

As an apprentice you will combine work with formal training, allowing you to gain practical skills and knowledge in a specific trade while earning a salary.

Duration: Apprenticeships typically last up to four years for full-time participants. Part-time apprenticeships may take longer, depending on the individual's work schedule and training progress.

Work and study combination: As an apprentice, you will work either full-time or part-time while receiving formal training from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). School-based apprenticeships may be available.

Eligibility: Generally, apprenticeships do not require any formal qualifications to enter, making them accessible to a wide range of individuals, including if you are a school leaver or someone looking to change careers. There are minimum age requirements and there may be other eligibility criteria.

Completion: On completion you will receive a nationally recognised trade qualification, showcasing your skill and experience.

Advancing Your Career

Choosing to advance your career offers exciting opportunities for growth and specialisation. As you gain experience and skills through entry-level positions or initial qualifications, you can explore higher-level vocational education and training options to elevate your expertise. These qualifications can open doors to senior roles allowing you to take on more responsibility, as well as offering a foundation for further education.

To advance your career, or deepen your knowledge in this industry, consider the following qualifications:

- Certificate IV in Printing and Graphic Arts Management (ICP40120),

Diploma of Printing and Graphic Arts Business Management (ICP50120)

UNIVERSITY & HIGHER EDUCATION

While university education is not typically required for print finishing operators, some may choose to pursue higher education to move into management roles or specialised areas of the printing industry. Relevant degree programs might include:

- Bachelor of Design (majoring in Visual Communication or Graphic Design)
- Bachelor of Engineering (majoring in Print Media Technologies)

These programs can provide a deeper understanding of design principles, print technologies, and business management, which can be valuable for career advancement in the printing industry.

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