

## Rali Chorbadzhiyska, Rights Assistant at Penguin Random House UK



Course of study	MA Publishing
Year of graduation	2019
City / Region / Country	Sofia, Bulgaria

### 1. Tell us more about your job; an example of day-to-day work, average week, or a recent project (or how would you describe your job to a friend?).

If an Editor acquires (buys) the rights in a certain book from its author, then it is the Rights team's job to subsequently sell those internationally and domestically. If those are translation rights, then we work with publishers across the globe and we submit books to them, offering them to buy those. We don't deal with the translation of the book, we would propose our English version and every foreign publisher who buys the rights will then translate it in their own country. Similarly with Newspapers/Magazines as well as other Audio or Large Print publishers, we would offer them to buy the right to publish our titles.

### 2. What attributes make someone successful in this job (or what skills are involved in your current role)?

The necessary attributes for Rights and publishing as a whole would be organisation, time management and communication. You can learn those on the job but it is always helpful to do internships. These skills are also transferable, so you can gain them in other work experience outside of publishing.

### 3. What do you like most about your job?

I love being trusted with my own deals. This is something you get to do once you've been in the job for a while but just managing any independent project is exciting and valuable.

Rights is particularly appealing with its international reach. It is a great opportunity to meet people from all over the world and sometimes there is the opportunity to speak other languages although all online communication happens in English (this is company-specific, of course).

**4. What are the most challenging aspects (role or sector)?**

I believe Publishing is difficult to get into and I started by volunteering at festivals as a route into it. It was a good opportunity to meet publishing people and start building my own network. I have thankfully been able to complete numerous paid internships and would advise anyone to always challenge companies who do not offer any payment to their interns.

**5. How did your degree prepare you for your current role (or are there any skills/knowledge you developed which you are using now)?**

Initially I studied English Literature and then I did a Master's in Publishing because I wanted to specialise in the practical expression of my passion for books. A Masters in Publishing is helpful in meeting current and future publishing people, you also become a part of an alumni family and start building your publishing network. The UCL Publishing MA had subjects that catered to different tastes, which helped me learn more about Production and Bookselling, for example. It is useful to have a wider (and theoretical) understanding before starting to apply for specific roles. Guest speakers is another exclusive perk to doing the MA because you learn from them about the specifics of different areas of the job. Make sure to ask them about their applications, their day to day work life and if they would offer any advice on your CV and Cover Letters. Developing a dissertation thesis is exciting and gives you a confidence to talk about at interviews.

However, I would advise that you also try to find some kind of paid internships/work experience as this will be invaluable in learning the publishing lingo and specifics, and meeting potential employers!

**6. How did you get to where you are now in your career (or what experiences helped you)?**

I started off by volunteering at festivals while doing my Undergraduate. Then I used the KCL network and agencies such as Inspired Selection to find internships. I ended up being the guest liaison for 2 years in a row at Africa Writes Festival after having volunteered!

I applied for numerous opportunities and constantly tried to improve my CV and Cover Letter writing skills by asking for feedback not only from employers but also friends and teachers. I did 7 or 8 different work experiences before I landed my first job, and even that started off as a temporary position! Every new internship helped me learn more about the industry and a different department as well as become better at applying and interviewing.

**7. What advice would you give to current students about getting into / starting out in your sector? (e.g. relevant experiences, supportive people, necessary education)**

Keep in touch, if possible, with people you meet at festivals, job fairs and uni events.

Start a side hussle (blog, bookstagram, podcast, zine) if it is something you're into, it will always be an advantage to have something to show for your passion!

Use every rejection to become better, try to understand what you can do better.

**8. What is on the horizon within your industry that our students should know about? (positives or negatives)**

Publishing caters to people's interest in stories and as much as the logistics of it have been challenged by a certain pandemic or other global events, people would always want to "consume" stories. Digital is not the end of publishing because the work that goes into producing a physical book is applicable to producing an eBook or an audiobook (and hopefully any new formats that might come up in the future). It is also rewarding to work for authors and books, and see them do well. Perks would always include free books and interactions with authors and like-minded colleagues.

**9. If you could give a current student one piece of advice on something you wish you'd have known prior to starting your career what would it be?**

I feel like I knew it was going to be difficult prior to trying to get into publishing, but it never stopped me!

A useful advice would be to use the rejections as fuel and become better with every new application.

Publishing also involves a degree of admin, so don't lose your creativity but don't undermine the value of gaining admin experience neither.

**Any final comments to current students.**

Advice for applications is to always have the job description at hand and make sure you tick as many as the requirements as possible. It could be from experience at school/uni/other industries but you need to prove it is relevant to the role you're applying for. Make sure to research the company you apply for and mention a few of the books you've read or that you'd be interested in reading/working on (no one has read everything!). One thing I tried to do is read titles from different publishers, so when job come up I have at least one to talk about.