



AM I FREELANCE? EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED? AND WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

You will be two of the three.

FREELANCE – a temporary worker

EMPLOYEE/PAYE – you are freelance but temporarily employed by a company

SELF-EMPLOYED – you are freelance and work for yourself. You are generally a senior member of the team.

HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs) are the government body that decide whether your job role may be considered employed or self-employed. If your role is recognised as self-employed, it will be listed in the back pages of this official government document linked to [here](#). If your role is not listed – you are an employee. The production company will deduct your tax and National Insurance contributions at source and pay them over to the government on your behalf. There will, of course, be exceptions to this rule but we won't go into them here just yet. You are still freelance even if you are employed on a temporary contract.

SHALL I GET A STAFF JOB OR TRY FOR THESE FREELANCE JOBS?

Being staff or freelance in broadcast TV production isn't really a choice. Very few production companies will choose/can afford to keep people on payroll without projects in production. There will be the company owners and perhaps a few senior staff like Creative Director or Executive Producer (often the company owner), Head of Production, Development Executive or similar, all key roles for bringing in business. Everyone else can be brought in when needed on short fixed-term contracts.

Staff jobs in TV are generally not in production and will, as a majority, be within broadcast at the channels, facilities and contractors. There's a list of places to look for recruitment, covering all areas at the [forum](#)

WHAT ARE THE PROS & CONS OF STAFF POSITIONS:

(staff positions are rarely available in programme making):

PROS -

- * Regular income
- * Work is constant even when nothing in production
- * Not having to work hard to find your next contract
- * Promotion internally
- * Salary reviews & appraisals
- * Opportunities for changing direction
- * Company may wish to invest in you and pay for training in areas both sides agree will benefit
- * Opportunities for getting your own ideas developed and commissioned even if you don't work in development area but have a great idea
- * Contribute to company development
- * Pension, maternity, sick pay

CONS -

- * Working in the same environment
- * Working with people you may not like
- * Having to work on productions you aren't interested in
- * Company politics
- * Increased workload babysitting pre-production projects or final post
- * Salary lower than constantly working freelancers in the same position
- * If self-employed, unable to submit own tax return and claim legally permitted expenses

WHAT ARE THE PROS & CONS OF FREELANCE POSITIONS:

PROS -

- * Variety of environments, travel to far flung places, new experiences
- * Meeting new people
- * Learning new things and ways of working
- * When established, ability to choose projects
- * Negotiating your rate on each job
- * Ability to walk away from people/companies you don't like and never work with them again
- * When self-employed, submit own tax return and claim legally permitted expenses back from your tax bill
- * Your choice to take a holiday between projects or only work some of the year (when established)
- * Next job offer often based on reputation and passed experience

CONS

- * Irregular income, hard to budget for long term plans
- * Can be difficult to access some financial products, eg: mortgages, insurances etc...
- * Endless rounds of interviews with new companies
- * Making conscious effort to keep up with colleagues/former employers with email/social media platforms
- * Can be difficult to move up to next position
- * Even at social events with colleagues, you are still 'at work' and can be judged unfavourable on your actions
- * Next job offer often based on reputation and past experience
- * Can be difficult to take holiday due to lack of funds between contracts and uncertainty of next contract and pay