
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks

(O*NET 43-5061.00)

Significant Points

- Production, planning, and expediting clerks work closely with supervisors who must approve production and work schedules.
- Many production, planning, and expediting jobs are at the entry level and do not require more than a high school diploma.
- Manufacturing firms and wholesale and retail trade establishments are the primary employers.
- Slower-than-average employment growth is projected.

Nature of the Work

Production, planning, and expediting clerks coordinate and facilitate the flow of information, work, and materials within or among offices. Most of their work is done according to production, work, or shipment schedules that are developed by supervisors who determine work progress and completion dates. Clerks compile reports on the progress of work and on production problems, and also may set worker schedules, estimate costs, schedule the shipment of parts, keep an inventory of materials, inspect and assemble materials, and write special orders for services and merchandise. In addition, they may route and deliver parts to ensure that production quotas are met and that merchandise is delivered on the date promised.

Production and planning clerks compile records and reports on various aspects of production, such as materials and parts used, products produced, machine and instrument readings, and frequency of defects. These workers prepare work tickets or other production guides and distribute them to other workers. Production and planning clerks coordinate, schedule, monitor, and chart production and its progress, either manually or electronically. They also gather information from customers' orders or other specifications and use the information to prepare a detailed production sheet that serves as a guide in assembling or manufacturing the product.

Expediting clerks contact vendors and shippers to ensure that merchandise, supplies, and equipment are forwarded on the specified shipping dates. They communicate with transportation companies to prevent delays in transit, and they may arrange for the distribution of materials upon their arrival. They may even visit work areas of vendors and shippers to check the status of orders. Expediting clerks locate materials and distribute them to specified production areas. They may inspect products for quality and quantity to ensure their adherence to specifications. They also keep a chronological list of due dates and may move work that does not meet the production schedule to the top of the list.

Work environment. Although their offices or desks may be near a production plant or warehouse, production, planning, and expediting clerks generally work in clean and environmentally-controlled conditions. They spend most of their day either

on the phone or on the computer while working closely with supervisors who must approve production and work schedules. The typical workweek is Monday through Friday.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Training requirements for production, planning, and expediting clerks are limited. Usually a high school diploma is sufficient, although computer skills also are essential.

Education and training. Many production, planning, and expediting jobs are at the entry level and do not require more than a high school diploma. However, applicants who have taken business courses or have specific job-related experience may be preferred. Production, planning, and expediting clerks usually learn the job by doing routine tasks under close supervision. They learn how to count and mark stock, and then they start keeping records and taking inventory. Production, planning, and expediting clerks must learn both how their company operates and the company's priorities before they can begin to write production and work schedules efficiently.

Other qualifications. Employers prefer to hire those familiar with computers and other electronic office and business equipment. Because communication with other people is an integral part of some jobs in the occupation, good oral and written communication skills are essential. Typing, filing, recordkeeping, and other clerical skills also are important. Strength, stamina, good eyesight, and an ability to work at repetitive tasks, sometimes under pressure, are other important characteristics that employers look for in prospective workers.

Advancement. Advancement opportunities for production, planning, and expediting clerks vary with the place of employment, but often require additional education.

Employment

Clerks engaged in production, planning, and expediting activities work in almost every sector of the economy, overseeing inventory control and assuring that schedules and deadlines are met. In 2006, production, planning, and expediting clerks held 293,000 jobs. Jobs in manufacturing made up 41 percent. Another 15 percent were in wholesale and retail trade establishments. Others worked in advertising firms and for telecommunications companies, among other places.



Production, planning, and expediting clerks monitor reports to ensure a steady flow of materials.

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2006	Projected employment, 2016	Change, 2006-16	
				Number	Percent
Production, planning, and expediting clerks	43-5061	293,000	305,000	12,000	4

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

Job Outlook

Employment of production, planning, and expediting clerks is expected to increase more slowly than average.

Employment change. The number of production, planning, and expediting clerks is expected to grow by 4 percent from 2016 to 2016, slower than the average for all occupations. As a greater emphasis is placed on the timely delivery of goods and services throughout the economy, there will be increasing need for production, planning, and expediting clerks at all levels of the supply chain. However, the expected employment decline in manufacturing will limit the overall growth of this occupation. The work of production, planning, and expediting clerks is less likely to be automated than the work of many other administrative support occupations.

Job prospects. In addition to openings due to employment growth, job openings will arise from the need to replace production, planning, and expediting clerks who leave the labor force or transfer to other occupations. Opportunities will be better in fields that are experiencing faster growth, such as wholesale trade and warehousing.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of production, planning, and expediting clerks in May 2006 were \$38,620. The middle 50 percent earned between \$29,560 and \$48,900. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$23,470, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$59,080.

These workers usually receive the same benefits as most other workers.

Related Occupations

Other workers who coordinate the flow of information to assist the production process include cargo and freight agents; shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks; stock clerks and order fillers; and weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities may be obtained from local employers and from local offices of the State employment service.