

**National Council for the  
Training of Journalists**

**NCTJ Level 3  
Certificate in Foundation Journalism  
Qualification Specification**

Qualification No. 603/3651/1

NCTJ Training Ltd  
The New Granary  
Station Road  
Newport  
Saffron Walden  
Essex  
CB11 3PL

## **1. Rationale**

The Certificate in Foundation Journalism is a qualification that has been developed to broaden the potential routes into journalism as a career. It will provide training for community journalists and writers and those with an interest in journalism who wish to gain a professional qualification.

## **2. Aims and objectives**

A qualification to provide a stepping stone for those aged 16-18 into journalism; provide learning and training for those wishing to use journalistic skills in a community, non-professional setting. Learners can choose the specific units they wish or need to study and receive a credit certificate for those individual units.

## **3. Progression**

The qualification will prepare learners for further learning or training and may provide progression to the industry standard NCTJ level 3 Diploma in Journalism.

## **4. Target groups and entry details**

This syllabus provides opportunities for learners aged 16-18 and 19+. NCTJ entry requirements are intended to ensure that there are no barriers to restrict access and progression and equal opportunities exist for all learners. Learners with Particular Educational Needs are not targeted separately although special provision may be made for them.

## **5. Total qualification time**

Total qualification time (TQT) aims to provide learners with an indication of the minimum length of time it would take an average learner to complete this qualification.

TQT is made up of two components:

- 1) Guided learning: activities completed by the learner under the direct instruction or supervision of a tutor, trainer or other appropriate provider of education or training.
- 2) All other hours spent in preparation, study or training, including assessment time, but not under the direct supervision of a tutor, trainer or other appropriate training provider.

This syllabus incorporates a programme of study that includes an estimated 150 hours *guided learning (the estimated minimum time an average learner may expect to spend under direct instruction or supervision of a tutor or trainer)*.

A learner can also reasonably expect to spend an estimated 100 hours in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by a tutor, trainer or other appropriate training provider.

## **TQT**

The total qualification time an average learner can expect to take to complete the qualification is 250 hours.

Coursework will be set and marked by approved centre tutors. The coursework will incorporate practical tasks based in the classroom and/or in the real world covering the areas outlined in this syllabus.

## **6. How to gain the qualification**

There are 18 different units. To complete the qualification five units are mandatory including: Gathering information; How to tell a news story; Recording information; Legal and ethical considerations for journalists; and Writing for digital media. There are 13 optional units.

Candidates will gain 14 credits on completion of the four mandatory units and must achieve a minimum of 25 credits overall to gain the qualification. Learners may choose from the optional units what they wish to complete to gain a minimum of 11 credits and complete the full qualification.

Standards on which learners' levels of attainment are differentiated is outlined in the programme of study which will be read by the learner alongside this specification and described in the pass/fail grade descriptors (item 17 pg. 5). Assessment methods accepted by the NCTJ include:

- Direct observation of learners carrying out the relevant task;
- Inspection and evaluation of work produced (this includes electronic evidence where appropriate);
- Questioning of learners to support performance;
- Simulation where agreed;
- Expert witness where specific expertise is required;
- Oral or written exams/test;
- Presentations where the candidate can show clear understanding of the principles involved;
- Assignments;
- Projects;
- Case studies;
- Other methods by prior agreement with the NCTJ

#### **7. Availability of assessments**

Centres and tutors are required to provide learners with information and advice on the programme of study, the level of demand and associated requirements and expectations. Assessment is made on a continuous basis and methodologies will vary from centre to centre and learner to learner.

#### **8. Duration of assessments**

All assessments are structured so that the duration of each assessment provides opportunities for all learners to meet the learning outcomes and demonstrate achievement to the standard required as set out in the programme of study.

#### **9. Fair access to assessment**

Information on assessment, examination and entry requirements for learners with particular needs is published in the 'Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy'. A copy of this policy is available from NCTJ Training Ltd, The New Granary, Station Road, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3PL and is also provided on the company's website: [www.nctj.com](http://www.nctj.com)

#### **10. Validity of syllabus**

This general syllabus for the NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism is valid until August 2021.

#### **11. Repeats of assessments**

Where a learner is not able to reach the minimum standard in an assessment, re-submission at that level is permitted.

#### **12. Issue of results**

Results will normally be issued within five weeks of the date of completion of the unit. This time is necessary to ensure that results are properly standardised and verified by the NCTJ. Qualification certificates will normally be issued within six weeks of the course end date. Unit certificates will be issued on verification of the results.

### **13. Language and bias**

Every effort has been made to ensure that this syllabus and associated mark schemes, procedures and materials are free from any form of bias, refer to explicit content and have no hidden requirements for entry or assessment.

Care has been taken to ensure that the syllabus, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and standards make appropriate demands on learners both in terms of their physical safety and well being and expectations of physical and cognitive performance in relation to their age and level of ability.

### **14. Confidentiality**

In order to ensure that the NCTJ Certificate in Foundation Journalism reflects an accurate measure of attainment, the NCTJ will take all reasonable steps to ensure that such confidentiality is maintained.

Where any breach of such confidentiality (including through the loss or theft of assessment materials) is either suspected by the NCTJ or alleged by any other person, the NCTJ will investigate that breach.

### **15. Learner registrations**

Each learner that registers with the NCTJ to take the NCTJ Certificate in Foundation Journalism is uniquely identified by a Unique Reference Number (URN) generated by the NCTJ's database of learner records. Centres enrolling learners to take an NCTJ qualification are responsible for confirming the identity of the learner when they are enrolled.

### **16. Qualification specification**

To gain the Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism, the learner must complete five mandatory units: gathering information; how to tell a news story; recording information; legal and ethical considerations for journalists; and writing for digital media. There are 13 optional units to choose from: how to use the English language for journalism (level 2); using the English language for maximum effect in journalism (level 2); writing for a specific purpose; feature writing; how society works; using video to tell a story; using audio to tell a story; taking images suitable for publication; finding and using data; sports reporting; writing reviews and comment articles; the history of news; and community radio newsgathering.

Learners must achieve a minimum of 25 credits including 14 credits gained from the mandatory units and a minimum of 11 credits from the optional units to complete the qualification. Learners may choose the combination of options they wish to take.

#### **Mandatory units**

<b>1. Gathering information</b>	<b>2 credits level 3</b>	<b>J/507/8573</b>
<b>2. How to tell a news story</b>	<b>1 credit level 3</b>	<b>K/507/8601</b>
<b>3. Recording information</b>	<b>1 credit level 3</b>	<b>K/507/8582</b>
<b>4. Legal and ethical considerations for journalists</b>	<b>6 credits level 3</b>	<b>R/617/2000</b>
<b>5. Writing for digital media</b>	<b>4 credits level 3</b>	<b>D/617/2002</b>

## Optional units

1. How to use the English language for journalism	1 credit level 2	M/507/8602
2. Using the English language for maximum effect in journalism	1 credit level 2	T/507/8603
3. Writing for a specific purpose	1 credit level 3	A/507/8604
4. Feature writing	2 credits level 3	H/617/2003
5. How society works	4 credits level 3	M/617/2005
6. Using video to tell a story	2 credits level 3	L/507/8607
6. Using audio to tell a story	3 credits level 3	T/617/2006
8. Taking images suitable for publication	1 unit level 3	F/507/8586
9. Finding and using data	2 credits level 3	F/617/2008
10. Sports reporting	4 credits level 3	F/617/2011
11. Writing reviews and comment articles	1 credit level 3	Y/507/8612
12. The history of news	1 credit level 3	H/507/8614
13. Community radio newsgathering	2 credits level 3	K/507/8615

## **17. Grade descriptors**

Assessors apply the approved assessment criteria and follow the NCTJ guidance on assessment of candidates' work. Details of methods of assessment acceptable to the NCTJ can be found on page 3. Assessments carried out for this qualification are at an introductory level of journalism skills. Standards on which learners' levels of attainment are differentiated is outlined in the programme of study and described in the pass/fail grade descriptors below:

### ***Pass***

Candidates demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the unit being studied and all learning outcomes have been achieved. They are able to apply and present that knowledge and understanding consistently in a clear and relevant manner; whether verbally, in written form or by visual means. Work is accurate, both in terms of content and the use of English. Any inaccuracies will be minor and not affect the understanding of any work produced for journalistic purposes. Legal, regulatory and ethical issues must have been properly applied to any journalistic work.

### ***Fail***

Candidates have a limited knowledge and fail to achieve the learning outcomes. They lack a thorough knowledge and understanding of the unit being studied. They are unable to apply and present any knowledge and understanding consistently in a clear and relevant manner; whether verbally, in written form or by visual means. Work is often inaccurate, both in terms of content and the use of English. Inaccuracies may affect the understanding of any work produced for journalistic purposes. Legal, regulatory and ethical issues may have been ignored or wrongly applied.