

**National Council for the
Training of Journalists**

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

Qualification No. 601/1782/5

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 80 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 50 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 130 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 four units are mandatory including: Gathering information; How to tell a news story; Recording information; and Legal and ethical considerations for journalists. There are 14 optional units. Candidates will gain 7

credits on completion of the four mandatory units and must achieve a minimum of 13 credits overall to gain the qualification. Learners may choose from the optional units what they wish to complete to gain a minimum of 6 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). 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

10. Validity of syllabus

This general syllabus for the NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism is valid until August 2018.

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 four 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 four mandatory units: gathering information; how to tell a news story; recording information; and legal and ethical considerations for journalists. There are 14 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 digital media; 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 13 credits including 7 credits from the mandatory units to complete the qualification and may choose which options they wish to take.

Mandatory units

1. Gathering information	2 credits level 3	J/507/8573
2. How to tell a news story	1 credit level 3	K/507/8601
3. Recording information	1 credit level 3	K/507/8582
4. Legal and ethical considerations for journalists	3 credits level 3	M/507/8583

Optional units

5. How to use the English language for journalism	1 credit level 2	M/507/8602
6. Using the English language for maximum effect in journalism	1 credit level 2	T/507/8603

7. Writing for digital media	1 credit level 3	T/507/8584
8. Writing for a specific purpose	1 credit level 3	A/507/8604
9. Feature writing	1 credit level 3	A/507/8585
10. How society works	2 credits level 3	F/507/8605
11. Using video to tell a story	2 credits level 3	L/507/8607
12. Using audio to tell a story	2 credits level 3	R/507/8608
13. Taking images suitable for publication	1 unit level 3	F/507/8586
14. Finding and using data	1 credit level 3	L/507/8610
15. Sports reporting	2 credits level 3	R/507/8611
16. Reviews and comment articles	1 credit level 3	Y/507/8612
17. The history of news	1 credit level 3	H/507/8614
18. Community news gathering	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 accurate, 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.