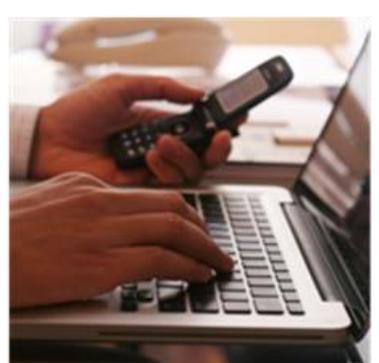


SO YOU WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST?



INTRODUCTION

This information pack has been compiled by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) for those considering a career in journalism. It will help you to make the right choices regarding courses, advise you of the exams you must pass in order to work as a journalist across multimedia, and help you choose the right study method for you.

So why listen to us? The National Council for the Training of Journalists is the industry's charity that delivers the premier training scheme for journalists in the UK. We provide a world-class education and training system that prepares current and future journalists for the demands of a fast-changing multimedia industry.

Our range of journalism training products and services includes: accredited courses; qualifications and exams; careers information; distance learning; short courses and continuing professional development; awards; information and research; publications; and events. We play an influential role in all areas of journalism education and training.

In the 21st century journalism has converged: almost all media are publishing on the web, and the skills required to work across all platforms are integrated. Traditional broadcast skills and web skills are needed by print journalists too.

You can start a career in any platform: it's not necessary to start on a small newspaper, niche magazine or tiny cable channel. You could quite easily begin on a large regional daily, top consumer title or at a major broadcasting corporation.

Some of the journalists have learned their trade on the job, but many will have undergone some kind of formal education and/or training. National data sources suggest that over four-fifths (82 per cent) have a degree or a higher-level qualification, compared to 38 per cent of all those employed in the UK. Further, sixty-three per cent of journalists hold a journalism qualification, with a further one per cent working towards one. In 73 per cent of those cases the qualification was awarded by the NCTJ.

Not everyone who has undergone formal training is brilliant at their job, and many who have learned on the job are good journalists.

But what training does is give able people a solid foundation. It saves time by teaching them the basics of journalism accurately and effectively. It means they don't need to learn by trial and error. They can get it right first time.

And the NCTJ is second-to-none in setting the standards for journalism training. Through its examinations and accredited courses, it equips would-be journalists to find their first job in the profession, and helps working journalists to progress to the next rung up the ladder.

An NCTJ qualification equips you with the skills you need to be an effective reporter. It gives you a solid grounding in shorthand, law and how government works. With an NCTJ qualification on your CV, a prospective employer knows you have grasped the core skills.

If, after reading this leaflet, you're still not sure, we'll be more than happy to answer any questions you have about the NCTJ and the courses we accredit. You can call us on **01799 544014**, email us at **info@nctj.com** or visit us at **www.nctj.com**.

TRAIN AS A JOURNALIST

Journalism is often seen as glamorous and exciting but, as with any occupation, success comes only after much hard work and routine activity. However, each day in journalism is different, and the training you receive will give you the flexibility to cover a wide range of news stories and features across a range of platforms.

Multimedia journalism draws on all the knowledge and skills you have acquired and can give you a tremendous sense of achievement. If you've got what it takes, journalism could be the career for you.

WHAT QUALITIES DO EDITORS LOOK FOR?

To convince an editor you're worth hiring you will need to be able to demonstrate the following:

- an interest in current affairs at all levels
- a lively interest in people, places and events
- an ability to write in a style that is easy to understand
- good spelling, grammar and punctuation
- a willingness to accept irregular working hours
- an ability to work under pressure to meet deadlines
- determination and persistence

WHAT TRAINING DO I NEED TO GET INTO JOURNALISM?

The NCTJ offers a number of training options so that prospective students can select the route that best meets their particular needs.

Advanced Apprenticeship in Journalism

The Advanced Apprenticeship in Journalism is a training scheme that provides a direct route into the industry. Apprentices are recruited directly by the employer, and are usually expected to work four days a week and attend off-the-job training at a college one day a week. Apprentice journalists are paid a salary while they gain skills and experience working in a news environment and completing the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism Practice qualification.

Apprentices can also progress to completing the full Diploma in Journalism qualification (see below).

For more information about our apprenticeship scheme, visit <http://www.nctj.com/journalism-qualifications/apprenticeships>

Diploma in Journalism

The NCTJ Diploma in Journalism equips trainee journalists with the knowledge and skills for professional entry-level journalism.

Accredited NCTJ courses who offer the Diploma in Journalism are provided by colleges, universities and private providers across the UK. All candidates must complete the five

mandatory subjects of reporting, media law, public affairs, shorthand and e-portfolio, plus two options in order to be awarded the Diploma in Journalism.

Some of these courses are for graduates, while others require five GCSEs including English, and two A-levels.

To learn more about the individual modules, visit: <http://www.nctj.com/journalism-qualifications/diploma-in-journalism>

To learn more about accredited courses or to do a course search, visit <http://www.nctj.com/want-to-be-a-journalist/Accreditedcourses>

Courses accredited by the NCTJ should display this logo on their website and printed brochures, so look out for it when researching which course to study:



If invited for an interview at the centre of your choice, you may be required to take a written test, based on current affairs knowledge, to test your English skills and writing ability.

Some colleges will only grant places if the applicants have already been on a brief work experience placement at a news organisation. You should write to a number of local print, broadcast or online editors, explain why you think you would make a good reporter, and ask if they will allow you to join their team for a few days. Try to pick a time other than June or July, when demand for work experience places is at its highest.

Media organisations advertising a vacancy often stipulate that they prefer candidates who possess an NCTJ Diploma in Journalism. Also, some graduate schemes, such as Sky Sports News' graduate training scheme, specify that they want applicants who have achieved 100 wpm shorthand.

Diploma in Journalism by distance learning

Trainee reporters and photographers are occasionally recruited directly by regional and national news organisations.

If you have been recruited into the industry from school or university, it is possible to complete the Diploma in Journalism through distance learning while you are working.

To learn more about distance learning, visit: <http://www.nctj.com/want-to-be-a-journalist/Distance-learning-journalism-courses>

National Qualification in Journalism

The National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) is the NCTJ's professional senior qualification that examines all-round competence in a range of essential journalism skills.

If you are working for a newspaper, they may enter you to sit the NQJ. In order to be eligible to sit these exams, you must have achieved A-C grades in all modules of the Diploma in Journalism, including 100 wpm shorthand, and have undertaken a period of 18 months'

full-time employment on a newspaper or news agency (Johnston Press trainees are required to undertake 24 months).

To learn more about the NQJ, visit: <http://www.nctj.com/journalism-qualifications/National-Qualification-in-Journalism-NQJNCE>

HOW DO I GET INTO PHOTOJOURNALISM OR PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY?

The NCTJ's Diploma in Journalism for Press Photographers and Photojournalists equips trainee journalists with the knowledge and skills for professional entry-level press photography and photojournalism.

On completion of this qualification a trainee press photographer or photojournalist will be proficient in digital stills and video photography and demonstrate an awareness of the news photograph and video as a medium of communication. The syllabus also covers how to operate as a freelance photographer, health and safety and basic picture desk skills.

This qualification leads to eligibility to sit the National Certificate Examination (NCE) for press photographers or photojournalists.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctj.com/journalism-qualifications/press-photography>

IS THERE FINANCIAL HELP AVAILABLE TO HELP ME STUDY?

A few local educational authorities may award grants for adult learners. Early enquiries should be made as grants can be limited. Students are advised to contact their training provider for more information.

Before applying for a full-time course, it is essential candidates establish their financial situation and determine how to cover the costs involved. Contact the centre you're considering studying at for details of course fees.

In addition to these, there are subsistence costs, travel, exam fees and textbooks to be considered.

Career Development Loans may also be available. Contact your local careers office or job centre. For postgraduate courses at universities apply directly to the university. For degree courses, apply through UCAS.

THE JOURNALISM DIVERSITY FUND

The Journalism Diversity Fund has been set up by those in the industry who want to support the training of journalists from socially and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

This industry fund was set up with the help of the NLA media access in association with leading media companies including Associated Newspapers, The Scott Trust, Sky and Pearson.



It is for people without the financial means to attend NCTJ training courses. Applicants will need to demonstrate a genuine commitment to journalism and the potential to succeed.

The fund can assist financially by paying course fees and living expenses, as well as providing a mentor and helping to find work experience.

Individuals who make an application to the fund must:

- be able to provide proof they have submitted an application to an NCTJ-accredited course, or have secured a place, for the relevant academic year;
- not have the financial means to support themselves on an NCTJ-accredited course;
- be a British citizen residing in the UK;
- be able to demonstrate genuine commitment and potential to be a successful journalist, through a range of journalism-related work experience;
- not be in receipt of any other bursary award

Visit www.journalismdiversityfund.com to find out more about the fund and to download an application form.

ARE THERE JOBS IN JOURNALISM?

Journalism is a very competitive industry, but there are jobs for dedicated and driven candidates. There are around 60,000 journalists in the UK. More than half of the UK's journalists are employed in London and the South East.

Journalists working outside London are much more likely to work in regional and local newspapers. Those working in London are more likely to work for international media organisations, national newspapers, business magazines, on-line or for a news agency. The North West has a higher proportion of journalists working in radio (both national and regional/local) and national TV.

Trainee journalists, photographers and photojournalists usually start a career in a news organisation, which could be a small newspaper, niche magazine or tiny cable channel, a large regional daily, top consumer title or the BBC.

In some cases reporters and photographers are given trainee jobs straight from school or university. This usually only happens after that person has proven themselves to an editor time and time again, producing content for love and little money, or on the Advanced Apprenticeship in Journalism.

Eighty-three per cent of new entrants did a period of work experience or worked an internship before gaining their first paid job.