

## NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS

NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism **Qualification No:** 601/1782/5

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

#### Overview

The NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism prepares learners for further learning and training for a career in journalism. It provides learners with an understanding of what the news business is about and the skills needed to get and find stories for publication across a wide range of platforms.

Learners will understand the qualities, skills and knowledge needed to become a journalist. They will discover whether they have “*what it takes*” to be a journalist in terms of motivation and abilities.

The qualification is designed to allow learners to demonstrate their skills by both classroom work and in the real world. This work is evidenced in a logbook/portfolio and is fundamental to the assessment process.

The logbook and portfolio will provide evidence of a learner’s determination, skills levels and abilities to training providers (or employers if seeking an apprenticeship). It will also instruct the learner on what is needed to become a journalist and whether they wish to follow this as a career. It will provide them with a good foundation if they progress to study for the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism.

The Certificate in Foundation Journalism, will not, on its own, provide a direct route to employment. The qualification is not available as part of an apprenticeship in journalism.

#### Target Market

The NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism is suitable for those aged 16+ and educated to GCSE level. There is no age limit. It can be used by those in full-time education or by those who are considering a career change. It can also support individuals to work independently and effectively in life and those seeking to progress further in education and training.

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.

**Primary outcomes** are that the learner can:

- progress to the next level of vocational training having gained a foundation in good journalism practise and the knowledge needed;
- operate independently and effectively in life, learning and work through the practise of foundation journalism – by meeting and negotiating with members of the general public, developing effective writing skills, researching and checking information from a variety of sources, being able to work to a “brief” and an understanding of modern, digital techniques;
- re-engage with learning: The Certificate in Foundation Journalism offers two units for those who wish to improve their English for use in journalism. The certificate is also constructed in small units of learning, which can be taken individually, for learners to concentrate on specific skills they wish to learn. The practical nature of the learning outcomes may also assists those re-engaging with learning.

### **Other outcomes**

The structure of the programme enables those wishing to learn specific skills for use in their work or recreation to take defined units. For example, someone working may have a duty of writing reviews – this subject is covered by one of the units. Another maybe a volunteer on a community radio station, helping with news coverage – there is also a specific unit.

### **Vocational learning**

The maximum amount of vocational learning is 100 per cent and the minimum is 90 per cent. The Certificate in Foundation Journalism has two optional units for use by learners who wish to improve their skills in English so they can maximise the benefit from the other 16 units offered. The “English” units are at Level 2 and are: *How to use the English language for Journalism* and *Using the English language for Maximum Effect*. The remaining 16 units are at Level 3 and are all vocational.

Completion of the Foundation Certificate in Journalism attracts a tariff of 8 UCAS points for entry to higher education from 2017.

### **Progression**

The Certificate in Foundation Journalism is on the Register of Regulated Qualifications and is one of a progressive range of qualifications from the National Council for the Training of Journalists. The certificate prepares learners to progress to a qualification in the same subject area requiring more specific knowledge, skills and understanding; the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism which is the industry standard entry-level qualification for a trainee journalist.

The Diploma in Journalism also forms part of a new apprenticeship standard for a ‘Junior Journalist’ which is published and available on the GOV.UK website.

Progression from the diploma is to the NCTJ’s National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) which qualifies a newspaper reporter to a ‘senior journalist’. This qualification is on the Register of Regulated Qualifications at level 5.

### **Mandatory and optional study units**

The qualification presents a series of study units to introduce learners to the key skills required by a journalist. These are practical modules where learners are taught the “*how to*” of journalism skills, supported by practical, real-world work. 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. The other 14 units are optional units including: sports reporting; feature writing; community radio newsgathering; and the history of news. Learners must achieve a minimum of 13 credits to gain the qualification and may choose the options they prefer to complete the Certificate in Foundation Journalism.

The mandatory and options model is used to ensure learners are taught and practise the key skills of journalism, but are fully engaged in the process by taking options for which they have a specific interest.

### **Flexible learning**

The Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism is designed in such a way that it can be delivered in adult education settings where learners may choose from a number of optional modules to suit their interests and can provide progression to further learning or training. The NCTJ issues unit certificates for the successful completion of individual modules. The Certificate is also available for study via distance learning at: [www.nctj.com](http://www.nctj.com)

### **Support**

The Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism was developed by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). It gained the support of Creative Skillset to develop the qualification. The NCTJ is an awarding organisation which is employer-led. It was established in the 1950s to run the newspaper industry’s training schemes following a Royal Commission on the Press. The nature of its formation and structure means that all qualifications promoted and accredited by the NCTJ have been given prior approval by the industry through representatives sitting on its main board of directors and on committees. The NCTJ, as in all cases when proposing new qualifications or changes, consults extensively with the industry by speaking directly with editors, editorial managers, educators and trainers.

Delivery of the qualification may be provided through distance learning, FE, HE and independent training providers which are accredited by the NCTJ to deliver its qualifications. For a full list of NCTJ-accredited training providers please see the NCTJ website at: [www.nctj.com](http://www.nctj.com)