

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS

NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism **Qualification No:** 601/5023/3 (NQF)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Overview

The NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) prepares candidates to become senior journalists. Learners will be equipped with the qualities, skills and knowledge needed to become a senior journalist and work on publications serving many different platforms. They will be able to cover a wide range of stories and take responsibility at a senior level. The qualification is designed to allow learners to demonstrate their skills and knowledge through practical work experience. This work is evidenced in a logbook and is one of four parts of the final assessment process.

The other three assessments take place on the same day in an exam-setting. There are three national exam days each year.

Target Market

The NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism is only suitable for those who are in full-time work as a journalist. They will have achieved the necessary pre-entry qualification (see progression). They will generally be educated to A-level standard, or higher. The qualification is frequently sought by editors when recruiting younger staff to the role of senior journalist.

NCTJ entry requirements are intended to ensure that there are no barriers to restrict access and progression. Equal opportunities exist for all learners. Learners with particular educational needs are not targeted separately although special provision may be made.

Progression

To be eligible to take the National Qualification in Journalism, candidates must have achieved a grade C or above in the qualifying Level 3 NCTJ Diploma in Journalism qualification, including obtaining 100wpm shorthand. Candidates must also have completed a period of at least 18 months' full-time employment.

Progression from the NQJ: There are, at present, no formal journalism qualifications beyond the NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism. Success in this examination will lead to career progression through continuous professional development, including being able to specialise or move into the management structure of media companies.

Mandatory units

Study for the NCTJ National Qualification in Journalism is designed to ensure the candidate has the skills and knowledge to carry out work in a newsroom at a senior level; one where the candidate can undertake a wide range of work for different platforms with minimal supervision. All units within the qualification are mandatory.

Candidates must complete an e-logbook containing 20 key tasks; covering a wide range of events and stories a senior journalist could be expected to undertake in day-to-day work. Candidates must provide two cuttings for each topic.

There are also three exams designed to test specific skills and knowledge. The exams are: media law and practice, testing the knowledge and application of law and ethics; news report, testing the ability to report the spoken word combined with information given in writing; and new interview, testing the ability to conduct an interview and write a news story. All units are mandatory. The pass mark for each of the four sections is 60 per cent. Candidates who achieve at least 50 per cent in all sections will pass if they achieve an overall average mark of 60 per cent.

Flexible learning

The NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism is designed for on-the-job delivery by employers, supported by off-the-job learning prior to the exams.

A candidate's learning on-the-job is supervised and guided by editors, training managers or other designated staff. They will ensure the candidate produces work to the required standard and is gaining wide experience. The e-logbook section of the assessment helps guide in-house training. The off-the-job learning can be provided "in-house" by employers or be delivered by specialists. It is usually undertaken in the run-up to the candidate's exam day.

Support

The NCTJ Level 5 National Qualification in Journalism was developed by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). 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.