



# Diversity in Journalism

Report for the National Council  
for the Training of Journalists

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National Council for the  
Training of Journalists



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All views and opinions expressed within this report are those of the author, Mark Spilsbury, and are not necessarily shared by the NCTJ.

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# Executive summary

A lack of diversity within the British media continues to be a major concern in the industry and beyond. This research, commissioned by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), explores the possible reasons why, beginning with the 'pipeline' issues of how people enter journalism through higher education, and the sort of jobs they move on to after graduation.

The data shows that:

- journalism students have **personal characteristics similar** to those of the general student body. In terms of **socio-economic background**, journalism students are less, not more, likely to have been through private education than their peers and are from similar socio-economic backgrounds to the wider student body;
- journalism students are more likely to be in (any) work six months after graduation than other students (83% compared with 78%), but within this journalism students are more likely to be in work if they are white, do not have a disability and are in higher and middle socio-economic groups;
- among those in work, 26% of those who studied journalism were working as journalists six months after graduation. Journalism students are more likely to be working as journalists six months after graduation if they are male, do not have a disability, are white (or more specifically, not black), went to a privately funded school, are from higher social economic backgrounds and are not from a low HE participation neighbourhood.

As a result, those working as journalists six months after graduation are, when compared with the rest of the student body, more likely to be white, more likely to have attended a private school, more likely to be from higher socio-economic backgrounds and more likely not to be from low HE participation neighbourhoods. When compared with the general population the lack of diversity is more stark, since the student population under-represents people from poorer backgrounds, state schools and low participation neighbourhoods.

Based on this we can argue that the lack of diversity is being caused by:

- employers mainly recruiting a graduate-only workforce – the undergraduate population is not like the overall population, its members being drawn from higher social classes, more likely to be privately educated, from wealthier neighbourhoods, etc. Choosing just from this 'sub-set' of the population means that the body of journalists will be less diverse than the population as a whole;
- issues involving the transfer of diverse students from HE into work, either due to (i) individual journalism students from minority groups not being attracted to becoming journalists and/or (ii) employers having (probably unconscious) selection bias, in that they are failing to recruit individuals who reflect the overall student population.



# 1 Introduction

Concerns about the lack of diversity within the British media were initially identified in 2002 in an NCTJ study entitled *Journalists at Work*<sup>1</sup>. This has been confirmed as an ongoing issue in more recent analysis undertaken by the NCTJ and published in *Journalists at Work* in 2012<sup>2</sup>; by recent research from City University<sup>3</sup>; and by (more anecdotal) evidence from the Sutton Trust<sup>4</sup>. Because of the continuing nature of the problem, the NCTJ has commissioned this latest research to explore still further the reasons for the non-representative make-up of the industry 15 years after the first study.

This paper begins the examination of the root causes of the lack of diversity by looking at the 'pipeline' issues of how people enter journalism via HE and the kind of employment they find immediately after graduation. It uses data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Authority to shed light on the backgrounds of the people who study journalism and to assess whether it is at this stage that the lack of diversity begins.

The remainder of this paper:

- reviews and summarises the evidence relating to the diversity of journalists working in the UK;
- examines the nature and characteristics of people studying journalism;
- considers the transfer from HE to work (both as a journalist and in other occupations);
- analyses the characteristics of those who have started working as a journalist after graduation; and
- offers an interpretation of this data and considers the possible implications.

<sup>1</sup> *Journalists at Work, 2002*, NCTJ. As a result of this work, the industry set up the Journalism Diversity Fund<sup>1</sup>, managed by the NCTJ.

<sup>2</sup> *Journalists at Work, 2012*, NCTJ, 2012

<sup>3</sup> *Journalists in the UK*, Thurman N, Cornia A and Kunert J, LMU Munich, City University and Volkswagen Stiftung, 2016

<sup>4</sup> *Leading People 2016, the educational backgrounds of the UK professional elite*, the Sutton Trust



## 2 Diversity of journalists in the UK

There is now a substantial body of evidence relating to the diversity of journalists in the UK, which is reviewed in this section.

### 2.1 Personal characteristics

In broad terms, research suggests that the main areas where the characteristics of journalists differ from those of the overall workforce involve:

- **age:** journalists tend to be older than the UK workforce as a whole, with only 4% aged under 25 compared with 13% for the whole UK workforce. This is driven by the need for high-level entry qualifications – journalism has become a graduate-only entry profession, meaning that people are usually not able to start work within it until they are beyond 21. This raises the age structure compared with other jobs which can still be entered from the age of 16 onwards; and
- **ethnicity:** journalists are less ethnically diverse than the workforce as a whole. Around 94% of journalists are white – slightly higher than the proportion for the UK workforce as a whole (91%). However, the lack of diversity in journalism is less positive than even this would suggest. The concentration of journalism in London and the south-east and (when not in these areas) in urban centres, where ethnic minorities live in greater numbers, suggests that they are significantly under-represented in the media. For example, the 2011 Census suggests that 60% of London's population is white, with 19% being Asian/Asian British and 13% black.

As far as disability and gender are concerned, the differences between journalists and the rest of the UK workforce appear less marked. In terms of:

- **disability:** the national data suggests that the proportion of working journalists who have a disability is roughly similar to that for the UK workforce as a whole (14% compared with 13%); and
- **gender:** the 2012 Journalists at Work report suggested that the balance of jobs between men and women was relatively equal. National data (the ONS's Labour Force Survey) analysed for this research suggests that there are only slightly more male than female journalists (52% compared with 48%) and the NCTJ's research shows no apparent difference in the distribution of jobs on a gender basis – women appear to be as likely as men to occupy senior roles in editorial management and as section heads, suggesting that at this level there are no issues with sex discrimination. However, Thurman et al<sup>5</sup> found in a more recent City University study that women may be more clustered in lower-level jobs which attract lower pay. This research suggests that women remain in junior management roles, whereas men are more likely to progress into senior management.

<sup>5</sup> *Journalists in the UK*, Thurman N, Cornia A and Kunert J, LMU Munich, City University and Volkswagen Stiftung, 2016

**Table 1:** Personal characteristics of journalists

	All UK employment	UK Journalists	
	Labour Force Survey %	Labour Force Survey %	Journalists at Work %
<b>Age</b>			
Under 25	13	4	4
25-29	11	14	12
30-39	22	32	26
40-49	26	20	27
50 and over	28	31	20
<b>Sex</b>			
Men	54	52	57
Women	46	48	42
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	91	95	94
Asian/Asian British	1	1	1
Black/Black British	4	1	1
Chinese	2	1	*
Other	0	1	4
<b>Disability</b>			
Have work limiting health problem/disability	13	14	8
No work limiting health problem/disability	87	86	92

Source: *Journalists at Work Survey, 2012 and Labour Force Survey, 2012*

## 2.2 Socio-economic characteristics

Journalism remains an occupation where social class affects the likelihood of entering the profession. The Journalists at Work research found that in 2012, as in 2002, young people entering journalism are likely to need financial support from their families. As a result, a higher than might be expected proportion of journalists have parents or carers in higher-level occupations, particularly managers and directors (17% compared with 10% of all employed in the UK) and professionals (48% compared with 19% across the UK). Relatively few new entrants have parents or carers from lower occupational groups.

**Table 2:** Occupation of new entrants' parents and of all employed in the UK

	JaW, 2012	Occupational distribution of all employed in the UK
Managers, directors and senior officials	17	10
Professionals	48	19
Associate professional and technical	7	14
Administrative and secretarial	17	11
Skilled trades	5	11
Caring, leisure and other services	2	9
Sales and customer services	3	8
Process, plant and machine operatives	1	6
Elementary occupations	2	11

Source: *Journalists at Work Survey, 2012 and Labour Force Survey, 2012*

This is confirmed by research into social mobility<sup>6</sup>, including journalism, using data from the Labour Force Survey to compare an individual's background (ie parental occupations) and his or her current occupation. This uses the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) to describe the classification of parents, with four categories:

- NS-SEC 1, higher managers and professionals;
- NS-SEC 2, lower managers and professionals;
- NS-SEC 3, 4 and 5, intermediate and clerical occupations, occupations which are normally self-employed and technically skilled and craft occupations; and
- NS-SEC 6 and 7, routine and semi-routine occupations, which are often called the 'working class'.

The data below shows that 39% of journalists come from NS-SEC 1 compared with 15% of the overall population, while a further 24% come from NS-SEC 2, compared with 16% of the overall population. At the other end of the scale, only one in 10 journalists (11%) come from NS-SEC 6 and 7 (ie, a 'working class' background) compared with a third (32%) of the entire population.

However, journalism is by no means the only profession to have a similar limited entry into its ranks. The table below reveals that the law, accountancy and medicine all have working within them a higher proportion of people from higher social classes than the entire population and a much lower proportion from the lowest social backgrounds.

<sup>6</sup> *Introducing the Class Ceiling: Social Mobility and Britain's Elite Occupations*, Laurison and Friedman, LSE Sociology Department Working paper Series, 2015



**Table 3:** Social class of Journalists

Social class of parents		All population	Journalists	Law profs.	Accountants	Medical practitioners
		%	%	%	%	%
NS-SEC 1	Higher managers and professionals	15	<b>39</b>	43	26	53
NS-SEC 2	Lower managers and professionals	16	<b>24</b>	20	18	23
NS-SEC 3, 4 and 5	Intermediate and clerical, self-employed and technically skilled and craft occupations	35	<b>26</b>	25	38	21
NS-SEC 6 and 7	Routine and semi-routine occupations	32	<b>11</b>	13	18	4

Source: Laurison and Friedman, 2016

This pattern is reflected in journalists' education. While private schools educate only a small proportion of the population – about 7% – the Sutton Trust<sup>7</sup> found that in 2015 more than half (51%) of the UK's 100 'top journalists' attended fee-paying schools. This is not a true sample of all journalists in the country, but a subjective list drawn up because of the writers' perceived influence on the public debate, and so is weighted towards the 'commentariat' in national newspapers as well as editors.

Furthermore, research now suggests that journalists are more highly qualified than ever:

- Journalists at Work in 2012 suggests that 73% of people working as journalists had a degree or higher-level qualification;
- Thurman's research suggests that 86% of UK journalists now have a degree.

Qualifications appear to be closely linked to age, with the likelihood of journalists holding a degree-level qualification decreasing significantly as individuals get older. Thurman's research shows that of those who have entered the industry recently (in the last three years), 98% have a degree, with 38% having a postgraduate degree. All the evidence suggests that journalism is now an occupation which requires a degree for entry.

As we know from government data, entry into university is socially skewed, with entrants into HE being more likely to be from advantaged social groups and having attended independent schools than the population at large (this is discussed in more detail in section 3). It follows that entry into journalism from university will be equally biased.

<sup>7</sup> *Leading people 2016: the educational backgrounds of the UK professional elite*, Kirby P, The Sutton Trust, 2016



## 3 Examining the pipeline: who studies journalism?

### 3.1 Characteristics of those studying journalism

For the most recent year that data is available (2014/15) there were just over 12,000 students on a journalism course at one of 72 higher education institutions. These figures include students from all year groups. There were 5,278 students in their first year of journalism study (split between 1,523 studying at postgraduate level and 3,755 at undergraduate level).

The majority (83%) were studying at undergraduate level. 95% were on full-time courses, with 5% studying on a part-time basis. Journalism students were (i) more likely to be studying at undergraduate level (83% compared with 76% in all other subjects) and (ii) more likely to be studying full-time (95% compared with 75%).

**Table 4:** Numbers studying journalism and mode of study

	Studying journalism		Studying all other subjects	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Level of study</b>				
First degree	9,920	82	1,514,305	67
Other undergraduate	150	1	203,520	9
Postgraduate (taught)	1,830	15	423,440	19
Postgraduate (research)	125	1	112,790	5
<b>Mode of study</b>				
Full-time	11,460	95	1,685,690	75
Part-time	570	5	568,360	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,030</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,254,050</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HESA, Student Record 2014/15

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

The patterns within this are the same for journalism as for other subjects – those studying at undergraduate level were more likely to be studying full-time (97% compared with 85% of those studying at a postgraduate level).

## 3.2 Characteristics of those studying journalism

HESA collects a range of data on students in higher education. This allows us to understand the nature of students studying journalism and (just as important) how this compares with the characteristics of students studying on other courses. In this section we separate this analysis between undergraduates and postgraduates to make sure that we compare, as far as possible, like with like.

This data shows that for undergraduates:

- the majority of undergraduate journalism students are female (57%), but that this is little different from the balance across all other subjects (56%);
- 82% of undergraduate journalism students who gave their ethnicity were white, with 8% black, 4% Asian and 6% other. This is a higher proportion of white students than for all other subjects (79%) and a lower proportion of Asian students (10% for all other subjects);
- 9% of undergraduate journalism students are known to have a disability, which compares with 12% of students across all other subjects; and
- 73% of undergraduate journalism students were 20 and under, 22% aged 21-24, and a small proportion were in older age groups. This is a different pattern from those studying all other subjects, where a much lower 52% are aged 20 and under and a higher proportion are older.

The make-up of postgraduates shows that:

- the majority of postgraduate journalism students are female (62% compared with 38% male);
- the majority of postgraduate journalism students are white (86% – a higher proportion than for postgraduates studying all other subjects);
- 7% of postgraduate journalism students are known to have a disability – the same as postgraduate students across all other subjects; and
- the majority of postgraduate journalism students are aged 21-24 (61%) with 20% aged 25-29. 18% are aged 30 and over. This compares with 33% aged 21-24 for students of all other subjects, 25% aged 25-29 and 42% aged 30+.

This difference in age distribution is of interest – it may suggest that people are more likely to sign up for a postgraduate journalism qualification immediately (or soon) after their first degree, rather than waiting until later, as seems to be the case for other subjects. It has been suggested elsewhere (Journalists at Work, 2012) that entry into a job in journalism is increasingly dependent on individuals having a postgraduate qualification – and this may be what is being reflected in this data.

**Table 5:** Personal characteristics of journalism students

		Studying journalism		Studying all other subjects	
		n	%	n	%
<b>Undergraduates</b>					
<b>Sex</b>					
	Male	4,300	43	752,995	44
	Female	5,770	57	964,575	56
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
	White	7,180	82	1,151,400	79
	Black	690	8	98,430	7
	Asian	375	4	146,265	10
	Other (including mixed)	515	6	69,775	5
<b>Disability</b>					
	Known to have a disability	955	9	202,295	12
	No known disability or unknown	9,120	91	1,515,530	88
<b>Age</b>					
	20 and under	7,350	73	893,440	52
	21-24	2,170	22	425,465	25
	25-29	305	3	126,880	7
	30 and over	250	2	271,825	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,070</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,717,575</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Postgraduates</b>					
<b>Sex</b>					
	Male	740	38	234,335	44
	Female	1,215	62	301,770	56
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
	White	870	86	259,120	81
	Black	35	4	18,300	6
	Asian	55	5	228,540	9
	Other (including mixed)	55	6	14,165	4
<b>Disability</b>					
	Known to have a disability	145	7	36,030	7
	No known disability or unknown	1,815	93	500,195	93



**Table 5:** Personal characteristics of journalism students

		Studying journalism		Studying all other subjects	
		n	%	n	%
<b>Postgraduates</b>					
<b>Age</b>					
	20 and under	25	1	2,660	1
	21-24	1,200	61	175,880	33
	25-29	390	20	132,825	25
	30 and over	340	18	224,750	42
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,955</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>536,105</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HESA, Student Record 2014/15

Note: bases are adjusted for each category to remove those who did not provide data so that all percentages add to 100

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

Thus in terms of physical characteristics journalism students look very much like the rest of the student body: a little more likely to be from white ethnic groups, less likely to have a known disability and (considering these are people on undergraduate courses), more likely to be young.

Other areas of concern do not relate to physical characteristics, but background – the issue of diversity and the impact of social class on studying journalism.

It is worth noting that when collecting details on education and socio-economic class the HESA data has a reasonably high proportion of gaps, either as a result of respondents refusing to answer, or simply because of missing data. In these cases – shown in the table below – we have indicated the distributions with this missing data included and with the table re-based to remove them from the percentages. These data gaps are particularly severe for students studying at postgraduate level. We have no way of knowing if there is any significant bias in these non-responses: whether, for example, people from the privately funded education sector or higher socio-economic classes are more (or less) likely to report their school type or socio-economic class, so on this basis we assume that they have the same distribution as those who have given a response.

The first thing to note is that the data on school type does not show the pattern that we may, before the event, expect. Research from the Sutton Trust has previously shown that half of 'leading journalists' were privately educated: we might also expect therefore that we would see a preponderance of privately educated students studying journalism – but the opposite is true. The data shows that 82% of journalism undergraduate students were funded in the state system, with only 3% being educated privately – although we have to bear in mind that there is missing data for a significant 16%. If we remove these from the base, the data suggests that 97% of undergraduate journalism students were state-educated. The comparable proportions for undergraduates studying all other subjects are 91% state-educated and 9% from the private system. Perhaps counter-intuitively, this data shows that those studying undergraduate journalism are less, not more, likely to have been through private education than their peers.

The figures for postgraduate students are similar – removing those where there is no data available, they suggest that 97% of those on a postgraduate journalism were from a state school or college, with 3% from a private school. This is broadly similar to the data for all other postgraduate subjects, where 99% were state-educated.

In terms of socio-economic class, the re-based data shows that 63% of undergraduates studying journalism were from socio-economic groups 1-3, similar to the 65% studying all other undergraduate subjects. For postgraduate study, 66% studying journalism were from socio-economic groups 1-3 (compared with 74% for all other postgraduate subjects) and 29% from groups 4-7 (compared with 24% for all other postgraduate subjects).

**Table 6:** Education and socio-economic class of journalism students

		Studying journalism			Studying all other subjects		
		n	%		n	%	
Undergraduates				(excluding DKs)			(excluding DKs)
School type							
	State-funded school or college	8,220	82	97	1,133,810	66	91
	Privately funded school	285	3	3	114,395	7	9
	Unknown or not applicable school type	1,565	16	n/a	469,615	27	n/a
Socio-economic class							
	1-3	4,635	46	63	634,265	37	65
	4-7	2,645	26	36	335,330	20	34
	Never worked & long-term unemployed	45	0	1	6,310	0	1
	Not classified	2,275	23	n/a	399,200	23	n/a
	Unknown	470	5	n/a	342,720	20	n/a
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,070</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,717,825</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Postgraduates							
School type							
	State-funded school or college	165	9	97	71,615	13	99
	Privately funded school	5	*	3	1,005	*	1
	Unknown or not applicable school type	1,785	91	n/a	463,610	86	n/a
Socio-economic class							
	1-3	95	5	66	43,290	8	74
	4-7	40	2	29	13,990	3	24
	Never worked & long-term unemployed	5	*	5	1,000	*	2
	Not classified	290	15	n/a	71,475	13	n/a
	Unknown	1,525	78	n/a	406,470	76	n/a
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,960</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>536,105</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HESA, Student Record 2014/15

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

We need to consider, however, whether we are making the right comparisons in comparing journalism students with other students. As there is a social bias in university attendance, the argument could be that it is the fact that journalism has become a graduate-only profession which has made it non-diverse: that it is not about journalism per se, but about graduate entry: if journalism employers recruit only from universities and university graduate figures are skewed, then by definition, the make-up of journalism employees is skewed.

This issue of widening participation has been recognised by the Department for Education as one that needs to be addressed. It produces an annual analysis<sup>8</sup> which measures three indicators of widening participation in HE: the annual percentage of 15-year-olds receiving free school meals who progressed to HE, the percentages of A-level students by school type who progressed to higher education and the proportions of differing social classes who enter different occupations.

This shows that:

- 22% of those who were in receipt of free school meals entered HE compared with 39% of those who did not receive FSM (and 37% of all students), a gap between the two groups of 17 percentage points. It is worth noting that despite considerable efforts and investments, this gap has remained stubbornly consistent, having been 19% in 2005/6;
- An estimated 62% of those who studied A-levels in state schools and colleges in 2011/12 progressed to HE by the age of 19 in 2013/14, compared with a progression rate for independent schools and colleges of 85%. A secondary measure here is the progression rate to the 'most selective HE providers' and the difference on this measure is more marked: 23% of state schools pupils progressed to these selective HE institutions compared with 64% from independent schools; and
- 78% of graduates who came from the most advantaged social backgrounds before HE were in the most advantaged occupational groups six months after graduating, compared with 72% of those in less advantaged groups.

HESA also produces an analysis of widening participation looking at the proportion of entrants from under-represented groups. This analysis shows that there:

- is a steady (albeit slow) increase in the percentage of first degree entrants from state schools – increasing from 85% in 1998/99 to 89.9% in 2015/16;
- is an increase in the percentage of first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods, from 9.6% in 2009/10 to 11.3% in 2015/16; and
- has been an increase in the proportion of first degree entrants who are defined as being disabled (ie, in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance, DSA) from 1.5% in 2000/01 to 6.9% in 2015/16.

This data could therefore suggest that a contributory cause of the lack of diversity among journalists is that they are mainly graduates, and that people who go to university are less diverse than the population at large. This would suggest that it is not solely a journalism issue but a wider societal one. Any profession which recruits a mainly graduate workforce will have the same problem. So part of the issue is about recruiting only graduates.

<sup>8</sup> *Widening Participation in Higher Education, England, 2013/14 age cohort*, Department for Education, August 2016.



## 4 Examining the pipeline (2): transferring from HE to work

In this section we examine the available data to explore issues of diversity which may arise on the transfer from higher education into work. Here, the emphasis is on whether students from different sub-groups have made the transition into work at similar levels. It uses the HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey, which follows up those who have left HE six months after their graduation.

We have two indicators to consider:

- the extent to which students (journalism and those studying other subjects) have been successful in gaining any work at all; and
- the extent to which those students have gained a job as a journalist.

This indicates the extent to which diversity is challenged by this transfer: it shows the levels at which individuals with different characteristics progress into the labour market.

### 4.1 Access to work

The data shows that journalism students are more likely to be in work than leavers who study other subjects. 83% of journalism students are in work (64% in full-time jobs, 17% in part-time jobs, 1% primarily in work but also studying and 1% primarily studying but also in work) compared with 78% of students of all other subjects (60, 12, 3 and 3% respectively). Journalism students are less likely to have continued in academia (6% compared with 16%). They are, however, more likely to be unemployed – 7% compared with 4% cent.

There is a distinction between the employment rates of undergraduate and postgraduate journalism students. 89% of postgraduate students were in employment six months after graduation compared with 77% of undergraduate journalism students. The difference is almost entirely made up of the differing proportions who have moved into further study (9% of undergraduates, 1% of postgraduates).



**Table 7:** Current activity

	Journalism students		All other subjects	
	n	%	n	%
Full-time work	1,695	64	236,245	60
Part-time work	460	17	47,924	12
Primarily in work and also studying	25	1	12,820	3
Primarily studying and also in work	25	1	9,995	3
Full-time study	115	4	47,010	12
Part-time study	15	1	4,460	1
Due to start work	30	1	3,420	1
Unemployed	175	7	16,975	4
Other	125	5	17,830	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>396,680</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

It should be noted that in this analysis we are looking at differential employment rates of students across all job opportunities, and not just those working in journalism. Issues of diversity here therefore reflect the practices of all employers, not specifically those employing journalists.

As can be seen from the data, there is relatively little difference in the propensity to find work between men and women, particularly among journalism students (females studying all other subjects have a slightly lower employment rate). Differences do emerge with regard to:

- **disability:** both journalism students and students of all other subjects with a disability have a lower employment rate than those without a disability; and
- **ethnicity:** employment rates for white students are higher than for all other ethnic groups (85% of journalism students, 80% of all other students). The employment rate for black journalism students is low, at 74% of journalism students.

**Table 8:** Current activity and demography

	Journalism students		All other subjects	
	In work	Not in work	In work	Not in work
	%	%	%	%
<b>All</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>22</b>
Male	83	17	79	21
Female	82	17	75	25
Known to have a disability	78	22	73	28
Not known to have a disability	83	17	78	22
White	85	15	80	21
Black	74	26	73	26
Asian	77	23	72	27
Other (including mixed)	76	24	72	27

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Note: In-work includes (i) Full-time work, (ii) Part-time work, (iii) Primarily in work and also studying and (iv) Primarily studying and also in work. Not in work includes (i) Full-time study, (ii) Part-time study, (iii) Due to start work, (iv) Unemployed and (v) Other

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

Social background appears to make little difference to the likelihood of being in work. Looking at those who studied journalism, the likelihood of being in work does not vary according to school type (82% of those who went to a state school were in work, as were 82% of those who went to a private school) or neighbourhood participation type (83% of those from low participation neighbourhoods were in work, as were 84% of those from other neighbourhood types). The proportion in work from the higher and middle social classes was the same (both 83%) although there is a clear lower rate among those in the lowest social class (the 'never worked or LTU').

**Table 9:** Current activity and demography

	Journalism students		All other subjects	
	In work	Not in work	In work	Not in work
	%	%	%	%
<b>All</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>22</b>
State-funded school	82	17	76	24
Privately funded school	82	17	68	32
SEC 1 - 3	83	18	76	25
SEC 4 - 7	83	19	76	24
Never worked and long-term unemployed	59	40	65	34
Low participation neighbourhood	83	18	79	21
Other neighbourhood	84	18	77	22

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Note: In-work includes (i) Full-time work, (ii) Part-time work, (iii) Primarily in work and also studying and (iv) Primarily studying and also in work. Not in work includes (i) Full-time study, (ii) Part-time study, (iii) Due to start work, (iv) Unemployed and (v) Other

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy

## 4.2 Working as a journalist

Our second indicator is the likelihood of those working to be employed as a journalist six months after graduation. The overall statistics show that (removing the missing data) 26% of those who studied journalism at university were working as a journalist some six months later. Of course, not all those who go on to work as journalists actually studied journalism – indeed more people were working as journalists who had not studied journalism than those who had studied the subject. However, when these are expressed as a proportion of the total number of 'other subjects studied' the proportion working as a journalist is very small (about a third of 1%).

As we can see, the patterns are very similar to those above. Overall, 26% of journalism students who are working are employed as journalists. This varies among personal characteristics, in that:

- male journalism students are more likely to be working as a journalist than female journalism students (29% compared with 24%);
- those students with a disability are less likely to be working as a journalist than those without a disability (22% compared with 26%); and
- black journalism students are less likely to be working as a journalist than white journalism students (8% compared with 26%), although Asian journalism students are more likely to be working as a journalist (33%).

**Table 10:** Working as a journalist and demography

	Journalism students		All other subjects	
	Working as a journalist	Working in another capacity	Working as a journalist	Working in another capacity
	%	%	%	%
<b>All</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>99.7</b>
Male	29	71	0.3	99.7
Female	24	76	0.3	99.7
Known to have a disability	22	78	0.3	99.7
Not known to have a disability	26	74	0.3	99.7
White	26	74	0.3	99.7
Black	8	92	0.2	99.8
Asian	33	67	0.1	99.9
Other (including mixed)	27	73	0.4	99.6

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Looking at socio-demographic indicators, we can see:

- those journalism students who had a privately funded education are more likely to be working as a journalist than those who were state-funded (25% compared with 17%);
- those journalism students who came from a low participation neighbourhood were less likely to be working as a journalist (20% compared with 26%).

The relationship between the likelihood of journalism students working as a journalist and social class is less clear and non-linear.

**Table 11:** Current activity and demography

	Journalism students		All other subjects	
	Working as a journalist	Working in another capacity	Working as a journalist	Working in another capacity
	%	%	%	%
<b>All</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>99.7</b>
State-funded school	17	83	0.3	99.7
Privately funded school	25	75	0.7	99.3
SEC 1 - 3	21	79	0.4	99.6
SEC 4 – 7	16	84	0.2	99.8
Never worked and long term unemployed	27	73	0.1	99.9
Low participation neighbourhood	20	80	0.2	99.8
Other neighbourhood	26	74	0.3	99.7

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Note: In-work includes (i) Full-time work, (ii) part-time work, (iii) Primarily in work and also studying and (iv) Primarily studying and also in work. Not in work includes (i) Full-time study, (ii) Part-time study, (iii) Due to start work, (iv) Unemployed and (v) Other



## 5 Characteristics of new entrants working as journalists

The final issue to consider here is how the factors discussed above combine to create the make-up of new entrants into British journalism's workforce. Here we consider the data from the other end of the lens, looking at those who are working as journalists some six months on from graduation.

The HESA data shows that of the 399,000 individuals who graduated from HE and were working six months later, some 1,587 were working as journalists. Compared with the 'all employment' level, those working as journalists were:

- less likely to have a disability (9% compared with 12%);
- more likely to be white (81% compared with 88%) and less likely to be from black ethnic groups (3% compared with 6%) or Asian ethnic groups (5% compared with 9%);
- more likely to have been privately educated – 14% come from independent schools compared with 9% from state education;
- more likely to come from higher social class groups (76% come from SEC 1-3, compared with 66% of all working graduates); and
- less likely to come from low participation neighbourhoods (7% compared with 11%).



**Table 12:** Characteristics of those working as journalists

		Working as a journalist	Working in another capacity
		%	%
<b>Sex</b>			
	Female	57	58
	Male	43	42
<b>Disability</b>			
	Known to have a disability	9	12
	Not known to have a disability	91	88
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
	White	88	81
	Black	3	6
	Asian	5	9
	Other (including mixed)	5	4
<b>Education</b>			
	State-funded school	86	91
	Privately funded school	14	9
<b>Social class</b>			
	SEC 1 – 3	76	66
	SEC 4 – 7	24	33
	Never worked and long term unemployed	0	1
<b>Neighbourhood type</b>			
	Low participation neighbourhood	7	11
	Other neighbourhood	93	89
	<b>Base</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>399,345</b>

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey 2014/15

Note: ethnicity, education, social class and neighbourhood type percentages calculate by excluding 'don't know' or 'not applicable' responses

Note: all numbers rounded to the nearest value of '5' to comply with HESA's rounding policy



## 6 Interpretation and implications

Concerns have existed about the diversity of journalists in the UK for 15 years, and the most recent research suggests that these remain. On balance, when compared with the British population and the rest of those working in the UK, journalists are more likely to be older, white, from higher social classes and to have been educated to high levels (ie, have a degree or higher level of qualification). While data on the extent to which the rank and file of journalists have been privately educated is incomplete, the evidence that we have suggests that among the ranks of senior journalists a far greater proportion have been privately educated than across the UK population as a whole.

The analysis suggests that:

- journalism students have similar **personal characteristics** to the general student body, with:
- females being in a majority (57% of journalism students);
- the majority (82%) coming from white ethnic groups; and
- the majority not having a known disability.

Where journalism students do vary slightly is in their age: 73% of journalism students were 20 and under, 22% aged 21-24, with small proportions in older age groups. This is a different pattern from those studying all other subjects, where a much lower 52% are aged 20 and under and a higher proportion are older;

- in terms of **socio-economic background**, journalism students are less, not more, likely to have been through private education than their colleagues at university and are from similar socio-economic backgrounds to the wider student body;
- journalism students are more likely to be in work six months after graduation than other students (83% compared with 78%), but within this journalism students are more likely to be in work if they are white, do not have a disability and are in higher and middle socio-economic groups;
- among those in work, journalism students are more likely to be employed as a journalist six months after graduation if they are male, do not have a disability, are white (or more specifically, not black), went to a privately funded school, are from higher social economic backgrounds and are not from a low HE participation neighbourhood.

As a result of these factors, those working as journalists six months after graduation are, when compared with the rest of the student body, more likely to be white, more likely to have attended a private school, more likely to be from higher socio-economic backgrounds and more likely not to be from low HE participation neighbourhoods. When compared with the general population, the lack of diversity is more stark, since the HE student population already under-represents people from poorer backgrounds, state schools and low participation neighbourhoods.

Based on this we can argue that the lack of diversity is being caused by:

- employers mainly recruiting a graduate-only workforce – the undergraduate population is not like the overall population, its members being drawn from higher social classes, more likely to be privately educated, from wealthier neighbourhoods, etc. Choosing just from this ‘sub-set’ of the population means that the body of journalists will be less diverse than the population as a whole;

- individual journalism students from minority groups not being attracted to becoming journalists; and/or
- employers having (probably unconscious) selection bias, in that from the student body they are failing to recruit individuals who reflect the overall student population.

For an improvement to be made, the characteristics of those in work six months after graduation (ie, new entrants into journalism) need to be more diverse than the overall student body, but they are not – and in some areas are notably less so.

This would suggest that remedial action needs to address the issues above, and could include:

- development of an alternative stream of non-graduate journalism entrants – Modern Apprenticeship fits this bill entirely;
- continuing with (or expanding) the various diversity schemes;
- publicising journalism as a potential career across all parts of society, including the various minority groups discussed above;
- working with employers to address issues of recruitment bias.

It is worth noting the scale of remedial action is not excessive. The table below has indicative numbers showing estimates of current numbers of minority groups who enter from HE and a target of what the number would be like if entry into journalism were to be the same as for all HE flow. This shows that, based on a new intake of 1,587 per year, all that would be required to redress the balance is the recruitment of an additional:

- 46 new journalists with disabilities;
- 79 new journalists from minority ethnic groups;
- 79 new journalists from state education;
- 159 new journalists from middle and lower socio-economic classes; and
- 64 new journalists from low participation neighbourhoods.

Changing the balance of recruitment in this way would, in the first instance, stop the lack of diversity in journalism becoming steadily worse. Of course, these diverse factors can overlap. A state-educated, black individual would count in both target groups.

**Table 13:** Indicative diversity targets

		Current intake	If same as all student body	Additional target
<b>Disability</b>	Known to have a disability	144	190	46
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Black	48	79	31
	Asian	79	143	64
	Other (including mixed)	79	63	-16
<b>Education</b>	State-funded school	1,365	1,444	79
<b>Social class</b>	SEC 4 – 7	381	523	143
	Never worked and long term unemployed	0	16	16
<b>Neighbourhood type</b>	Low participation neighbourhood	111	175	64



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