

**National Council
for the
Training of Journalists**

**NCTJ
Level 3 End-point assessment for ST0285
Junior Journalist
Qualification Specification**

Qualification No: 603/7265/5
The Register of Regulated Qualifications

1. Rationale

The end-point assessment for a junior journalist is a vocationally-related qualification that provides a holistic assessment of the core skills and knowledge required to become a competent journalist. This qualification was developed by the journalism trailblazer group of employers representing a wide range of media sectors. The apprenticeship standard for a junior journalist includes the Diploma in Journalism qualification and is recognised by employers as an industry standard award.

2. Aims and objectives

The end-point assessment aims to meet the needs of junior journalist apprentices and employers to provide apprentices with the overall knowledge and skills for entry-level journalism. The apprenticeship is designed to equip learners with the skills and knowledge they need for multiplatform journalism across all media sectors including newspapers, magazines, online, television, radio or PR and communications.

3. Progression

Successfully completing the end-point assessment for a junior journalist and gaining a pass, merit or distinction grade for the journalist apprenticeship standard may provide progression to the apprenticeship standard for a senior journalist. See:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-journalist-v1-0>

4. Target groups and entry requirements

The minimum age for entry on the junior journalist apprenticeship standard is 16 years. Individual employers will identify any relevant entry requirements in terms of previous qualifications, training, work experience or other criteria. Apprentices without Level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to progressing to the end-point assessment (gateway) and completing the apprenticeship.

Apprentices must also gain the Level 3 Diploma in Journalism qualification, a mandated qualification in the apprenticeship standard, to progress through 'gateway' to the end-point assessment for the junior journalist apprenticeship.

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

5. Fair access to assessment

Information on assessment for learners with particular needs is published in the NCTJ's '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

6. Validity of the qualification

This general syllabus for the NCTJ level 3 end-point assessment for ST0285 junior journalist is valid until 30 September 2023. We monitor the validity of this qualification ensuring that the qualification continues to meet the needs of apprentices and employers. Methods used to support this strategy include:

- monitoring outcomes from quality assurance visits
- monitoring outcomes from quality assurance standardisation activities i.e. marking and moderation
- review of malpractice and/or maladministration investigations

- review of complaints
- review of enquiries and appeals
- review of requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
- review of feedback from employers, training providers, apprentices and any other stakeholders
- consultation/survey activities with users
- assessment comparability of findings if and when applicable.

7. Resits and re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or a re-take. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does. An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the EPA in the first instance, will be required to re-sit or re-take any failed assessment methods only.

8. Issue of results

Results will normally be issued within five weeks of submission of the EPA for marking and moderation. This time is necessary to ensure that all results are properly standardised and checked by the NCTJ.

9. Language and bias

Every effort has been made to ensure that the EPA procedures, assessments and associated mark schemes and any other materials are free from any form of bias and refer to explicit content.

10. Confidentiality

In order to ensure that the end-point assessment 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.

11. Apprentice registrations

Each apprentice that registers with the NCTJ is uniquely identified by a Unique Reference Number (URN) generated by the NCTJ's database of learner records. Training providers or employers enrolling apprentices to take an NCTJ qualification are responsible for confirming the identity of the apprentice when they are enrolled.

12. Methods of assessment

The end-point assessment is assessed by a work-related project produced by the apprentice and a qualities (behaviours) assessment conducted by the employer/training provider.

Work-related project

The work-related project demonstrates a holistic understanding of all aspects of the standard including the core skills and additional specialist skills for the appropriate sector.

The project proposal is checked and approved by the assessment organisation to ensure the chosen topic meets the scope and level of skills required in the standard.

All projects must be accompanied by a statement from the apprentice setting out the rationale for the topic, any legal, regulatory or ethical issues that were encountered and how they were dealt with, and a reflective review of their learning during the apprenticeship.

The project may be produced on any platform and must be completely their own work.

Qualities (behaviours)

The qualities (behaviours) to be assessed are listed in the standard. Apprentices submit a rationale and evaluation of their learning on the apprenticeship as part of the work-related

project. This will form a basis for the employer assessing the apprentice's competency against the qualities (behaviours) in the standard.

13. Knowledge, skills and qualities (behaviours)

The end-point assessment must meet all the following core knowledge and skills requirements demonstrating that the apprentice junior journalist is able to:

- know what a story is and how to carry out the necessary research and interviews;
- build and maintain a range of reliable contacts;
- create quality stories that are accurate, clear, vigorous, fair and balanced, in a form that will engage an audience;
- work in an ethical manner and in accordance with relevant codes of conduct and demonstrate integrity;
- be able to work on getting stories 'right the first time';
- demonstrate an ability to write and use good English to industry standard for all platforms;
- produce content for digital platforms, including video and photographic material;
- adept at using social media and digital platforms and techniques to source content, contacts and build an audience;
- be a good communicator;
- understand the importance and value of brands;
- connects with the audience they serve;
- work to tight deadlines;
- be technically proficient and able to understand/use web analytics;
- understand how society works;
- take and keep accurate notes and records;
- be able to gather, verify and make proper use of User Generated Content (UGC);
- be able to gather, use and present data;
- understand how the law affects the work of a journalist;
- adhere to relevant health and safety legislation in the workplace; and
- understand the 'news business' with a knowledge of emerging trends in the media industry.

Apprentices will follow one of the following pathways to gain the additional specialist skills:

For print and associated digital platforms, journalists must:

- for most employers, write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- edit copy and write headlines for publication on different platforms;
- take photographs suitable for publication;
- be able to report from a wide range of settings;
- research and write clear, accurate, compliant and engaging stories and features for newspapers, magazines and websites;
- for some employers, be able to use data to contribute towards potential editorial content and strategies; and
- have a good working knowledge of regulation as laid out in the editors' code

For TV/radio and associated digital platforms, journalists must:

- research and write clear, accurate, balanced, compliant and engaging stories for TV and radio;
- for some employers, be able to write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- understand the techniques of interviewing for broadcast and can conduct a simple broadcast interview themselves;

- demonstrate familiarity with the basic techniques and technology of broadcast newsgathering, including the sourcing of material;
- have an awareness of the basic set-up of radio and television news studios, operate simple radio and television equipment, and be familiar with the language and terminology of a broadcast newsroom;
- show a good working knowledge of the key principles of broadcast regulation as laid out in the Ofcom Broadcasting Code; and BBC editorial guidelines.

For public relations (PR), corporate communications and associated digital platforms, journalists must:

- understand how journalism in PR and corporate communications differs from journalism in other sectors;
- for some employers, be able to write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- be able to prepare content for specific purposes (e.g. press releases, social media, brochures, exhibition boards);
- have a good understanding of the business (businesses) they work for;
- know the difference between outputs (e.g. press releases, social media etc.); and
- be able to act as a mediator and facilitator between the media and employer.

Qualities (behaviours) are assessed alongside the work-related project. The qualities (behaviours) to be assessed are:

- a hard-working attitude;
- an inquiring mind;
- a lively interest in current affairs;
- an ability to write and use words accurately and with effect;
- persistence and determination;
- a willingness to accept unsocial working hours.
- be able to demonstrate commitment and desire to be a journalist;
- have professional attitudes to their job and how they present themselves for work;
- have an understanding of the diversity of their audience.
- be prepared to work shifts;
- be conscientious; enthusiastic; resilient; a team player;
- and have an ability and desire to carry out duties in accordance with the law, regulations and any appropriate codes of conduct.

14. Specified levels of attainment

The final apprenticeship grade is calculated as follows:

Diploma in Journalism qualification	50 per cent of the overall apprenticeship
Work-related project	40 per cent of the overall apprenticeship
Qualities(behaviours) assessment	10 per cent of the overall apprenticeship

Level 3 Diploma in Journalism qualification

The Diploma in Journalism is a mandated qualification in the junior journalist apprenticeship standard. The assessments for this qualification will take place prior to the end-point assessment. Apprentices must pass the diploma to progress through the gateway to the end-point assessment. The diploma is worth 50 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks.

To pass the Diploma in Journalism, learners must gain grades A-E in each module (if shorthand is taken: a pass at a minimum speed of 60 words per minute is required).

Marks will be allocated as follows for successful completion (gaining A to E grades) of the diploma assessments as listed below:

MANDATORY MODULES

Combined, these will be worth 40 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks and will be allocated as follows:

Essential media law and regulation	15 per cent
Essential journalism	10 per cent
Essential journalism e-portfolio	10 per cent
Essential journalism ethics and regulation	5 per cent

ELECTIVE MODULES

Combined, these will be worth 10 per cent will be allocated (5 per cent each) to two elective skills modules which must be taken as part of the qualification.

Allocation of marks to the apprenticeship grade from the Diploma in Journalism qualification will be as follows:

Essential journalism exam mandatory module

Exam mark 70+ (grade A)	– (10%)
Exam mark 60-69 (grade B)	– (8%)
Exam mark 50-59 (grade C)	– (7%)
Exam mark 40-49 (grade D)	– (6%)
Exam mark 30-39 (grade E)	– (6%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below 30 (fail).

Essential journalism e-portfolio mandatory module

Exam mark 70+ (grade A)	– (10%)
Exam mark 60-69 (grade B)	– (8%)
Exam mark 50-59 (grade C)	– (7%)
Exam mark 40-49 (grade D)	– (6%)
Exam mark 30-39 (grade E)	– (6%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below 30 (fail).

Essential journalism ethics and regulation mandatory module

Marks for non-broadcast apprentices will be taken from the results of the newspaper and magazine regulation test. Broadcast apprentices' marks will be calculated from the broadcast regulation exam.

Exam mark 70+ (grade A)	– (5%)
Exam mark 60-69 (grade B)	– (4%)
Exam mark 50-59 (grade C)	– (3%)
Exam mark 40-49 (grade D)	– (2%)
Exam mark 30-39 (grade E)	– (2%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below 30 (fail).

Essential media law and regulation mandatory module

Exam mark 70+ (grade A)	– (15%)
Exam mark 60-69 (grade B)	– (12%)
Exam mark 50-59 (grade C)	– (9%)
Exam mark 40-49 (grade D)	– (7%)
Exam mark 30-39 (grade E)	– (7%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below 30 (fail).

Elective subject modules – options

An apprentice's best two results from elective skills modules (excluding shorthand but including a double module), will be calculated towards the final mark.

Exam mark 70+ (grade A)	– (5%)
Exam mark 60-69 (grade B)	– (4%)

Exam mark 50-59 (grade C) – (3%)

Exam mark 40-49 (grade D) – (2%)

Exam mark 30-39 (grade E) – (2%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below an exam mark of 30 (fail).

Note: Shorthand passes should be from 60wpm to 120wpm, depending on the pathway being followed or as prescribed by the employer, and will be recorded on the Level 3 Diploma in Journalism certificate. Results in shorthand do not contribute to the overall apprenticeship grade. This reflects the different emphasis on the importance of shorthand in different sectors of the media and different employers.

EPA work-related project and qualities and behaviours

There are 150 marks available for the work-related project and 100 marks available for qualities (behaviours).

The work-related project is worth up to 40 per cent of the overall apprenticeship mark.

Marking categories are:

- up to 5 marks are awarded for each core knowledge and specialist skill
- up to 10 marks are awarded for the project statement
- up to 15 marks are awarded for the overall project
- the final mark will be divided by 3 and multiplied by 2 to reach an overall mark out of 100. This will be multiplied by 0.4 to calculate the final mark awarded.

Qualities(behaviours) are worth up to 10 per cent of the overall apprenticeship mark:

- up to 10 marks are awarded for each quality(behaviour)
- the final mark will be divided by 10 to calculate the final mark awarded

Specific assessment criteria are provided for each marking category for the work-related project and qualities and behaviours assessments.

14. Overall grading

The end-point assessment is based entirely on the competence of the apprentice and their ability to demonstrate that they have fulfilled all the requirements of the standard. Fifty per cent of the total marks are made up from the results achieved in the Diploma in Journalism qualification. The remaining 50 per cent is gained from the end-point assessment completed in the final six weeks of the apprenticeship. Apprentices cannot gain an apprenticeship certificate of completion without passing the end-point assessment.

The overall apprenticeship is graded and an apprentice must achieve the following to gain a certificate of completion:

- Pass (50 to 59 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks available)
- Merit (60 to 69 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks available)
- Distinction (70 per cent and above of the total apprenticeship marks available).

Pass

The apprentice has achieved an overall percentage of between 50 and 59 per cent gained from the results of the Diploma in Journalism and the end-point assessment. In achieving a pass, the apprentice has met all the core learning outcomes specified by the apprenticeship standard, plus the learning outcomes specified for the sector of the industry within which the apprentice works. In addition, the apprentice has demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the knowledge and skills needed in the workplace. The apprentice has also demonstrated satisfactory knowledge and understanding of professional methods when meeting the standard.

Merit

The apprentice has achieved an overall percentage of between 60 and 69 per cent gained from the results of the Diploma in Journalism and the end-point assessment. In achieving a merit, the apprentice has met all the core learning outcomes specified by the apprenticeship standard, plus the learning outcomes specified for the sector of the industry within which the apprentice works. In addition, the apprentice has demonstrated a good, consistent understanding of the knowledge and skills needed in the workplace. The apprentice has also demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of professional methods when meeting the standard and has:

- demonstrated good news judgment and written and produced good, tight material and has understood how to tailor news priorities for different audiences.
- demonstrated good knowledge of law, ethics and regulation with a good ability to apply them to real-life situations.
- produced a quality of journalism in the end-point assessment that is (or could have been) published with only minor amendments by senior staff.

Distinction

The apprentice has achieved an overall percentage of 70 per cent or above gained from the results of the Diploma in Journalism, and the end-point assessment. In achieving a distinction, the apprentice has met all the core learning outcomes specified by the apprenticeship standard, plus the learning outcomes specified for the sector of the industry within which the apprentice works. In addition, the apprentice has demonstrated an excellent understanding of the knowledge and skills needed in the workplace. The apprentice has also demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of professional methods when meeting the standard and has:

- demonstrated an excellent news judgment and written and produced excellent, tight material and has understood how to tailor news priorities for different audiences.
- demonstrated excellent knowledge demonstrating a depth and breadth of law, ethics and regulation with an excellent ability to apply them to real-life situations.
- produced a quality of journalism in the end-point assessment that is (or could have been) published with no amendments by senior staff. The work would have potential to influence how the apprentice's employer covers future events.

You can view the published apprenticeship standard for a junior journalist and accompanying assessment plan here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/junior-journalist-v1-0>