

# Accreditation Information Pack 2021-22

**Working in partnership with you  
to train and develop  
the journalists of tomorrow**

***National Council for the Training of Journalists***

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## WHAT WE DO

The National Council for the Training of Journalists accredits more than 80 journalism courses at 36 universities, colleges and independent training centres across the UK.

The courses are delivered to post A-level, undergraduate students, postgraduate students and trainees already working in journalism on a full-time, part-time and day release basis, over periods ranging from four months to four years.

All students on accredited courses study for the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism. To achieve the Diploma in Journalism candidates must achieve a minimum of 82 credits. The qualification includes four mandatory modules, worth a total of 47 credits, which must be studied to achieve the qualification:

- essential journalism (reporting and storytelling)
- essential journalism e-portfolio (original work to show future employers)
- essential journalism ethics and regulation (standards in journalism)
- essential media law and regulation (legally safe journalism)

Students must also complete enough elective modules to bring their total number of credits to 82. As part of the NCTJ accreditation process, centres are required to gain approval from the NCTJ to deliver their chosen elective modules. For 2021-22 the diploma elective modules include:

- shorthand
- public affairs
- court reporting
- broadcast journalism
- sports journalism
- PR and communications
- intro to PR for journalists
- editing skills for journalists
- videojournalism for digital platforms
- practical magazine journalism
- business and finance journalism
- data journalism
- journalism for a digital audience

Knowledge in all the diploma subjects is assessed by exams set by the NCTJ that offer five graded levels of achievement: A (70%+); B (60-69%); C (50-59%); D (40-49%); E (30-39%); and F (fail, 0-29%).

Students who earn their Diploma in Journalism need to achieve A to C grade passes in all their exams, plus – where applicable – a shorthand speed of 100wpm in order to be eligible to progress to the NCTJ's final qualification, the National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ). This is usually taken after 18 months' employment as a trainee and is deemed by most editors to be the best proof that trainees are ready to qualify as senior journalists. While students are offered NCTJ exams at lower shorthand speeds (60 to 90wpm), they should be aware that these may not be acceptable to prospective employers.

## **Apprenticeships**

The NCTJ does not accredit apprenticeship training, but we work with a number of training providers to support the delivery of apprenticeship training for the Level 3 Junior Journalist apprenticeship standard. The programme is delivered over a recommended minimum 18-month period. Apprentices have to complete three specific assessments: early formative assessment; core skills; and end-point assessment (EPA). Apprentices will take the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism for the core skills assessment. Marks gained for the diploma will contribute towards the final apprenticeship grade.

## NCTJ AND THE INDUSTRY

Journalism is changing – and so are journalists.

News is all around us, reaching more people more quickly than ever before. The opportunities created by online publishing and social media have revolutionised the way news is gathered and disseminated. Newspaper and magazine publishers and broadcasters are facing challenges to their dominance from agile new companies able to take full advantage of the technological advances. Modern journalists are learning new techniques and adapting traditional skills to find ways to tell stories using text, still photographs, sophisticated graphics, audio and moving images. Where once clear differences existed between newspaper journalists, magazine journalists and broadcasters, today's journalist is expected to work across several platforms.

Amid all this change, acquiring the core skills of good journalism remains vital. Without the ability to spot a story and compile a fair, accurate and balanced report, no one can prosper in what is now largely a graduate profession, albeit one where a degree alone is unlikely to be enough to gain entry. That's where the NCTJ fits in.

### What the industry says...

***"We are the biggest employer of trainee journalists in the provincial press. We recruit mainly from those who have taken an NCTJ course."*** – John Wilson, editorial learning & development manager, Johnston Press

***"The course was time well spent in every sense of the word. It is excellent preparation for the industry and worth three times as much as on-the-job experience."*** – John Pienaar, deputy political editor, BBC News & former NCTJ trainee

***"What an NCTJ course gives aspiring journalists is a solid foundation for a reporting career, the basics of the job, whether they end up in newspapers, radio or television."*** – Mark Austin, US correspondent, Sky News & former NCTJ trainee

***"I'm most proud of getting my 100 words per minute shorthand – the toughest exam I've ever done."*** – Andrew Porter, director, Brunswick Group, former political editor, Daily Telegraph & former NCTJ trainee

***"Training of any kind, I think, is vital. Broadcast writing is short, punchy, easy to read... My NCTJ course helped highlight the differences with print journalism. In the end journalism is about telling a good story – training gives you the tools to do it."*** – Anna Botting, Sky News presenter & former NCTJ trainee

***"My NCTJ course was invaluable in so many ways. Possibly most importantly for the work placement which, for me, led to paid work with the Irish News. Freelancing and completing the course was actively encouraged by the course director... Ultimately we wanted to get a job in the industry at the end and quite a few of us did. It was busy but fun."*** – Sarah Clarke, reporter and presenter for UTV & former NCTJ trainee

Through our qualifications and the courses we accredit, we help equip would-be journalists to find their first job by providing them with the basic vocational skills that editors want. How do we know what they want? We consult leaders in all sectors of the industry regularly, and many editors play active roles in designing and revising our syllabuses and exams.

That's why NCTJ qualifications are the most common and highly-regarded qualifications in the UK journalism industry. That's why major media groups and other journalist employers, including many broadcasters, say they prefer NCTJ-qualified applicants.

That's why hundreds of students sit our exams every year, and why many successful journalists in all media – including people like Mark Austin, Kay Burley, Jeremy Clarkson, Alex Crawford, Geordie Greig, John Humphrys, Piers Morgan, Nick Owen, Helen Skelton and Alice Woolley – are thankful for their NCTJ qualification.

## From NCTJ training into work

*Source: Destinations of NCTJ Diploma in Journalism Students, 2015  
Independent survey by BMG Research  
commissioned by the NCTJ*

The research is based on a survey of 205 individuals who had completed their course of study for the NCTJ Diploma between six and 10 months previously. The research approach was based on that used by the UK's Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), which conducts regular destination surveys of graduates from the UK's HE institutes.

The survey found 82% of former Diploma students working, with 6% studying, 9% unemployed and 3% doing other things. The higher the level of attainment of the NCTJ Diploma, the more likely it is that the individual will be in employment – 96 per cent of those who attained the gold standard were in a job, compared to 90 per cent of those who attained the Diploma standard and 72 per cent of those who did not complete their diploma.

Of those who were working, the great majority were working in journalism-related jobs. For those who attained a gold standard Diploma pass, the figures were higher still:

Gold standard pass and working in journalism	86%
Diploma pass and working in journalism	76%
Did not complete Diploma and working in journalism	75%
All respondents now working in journalism	79%

Base: 180

Asked about the role of the NCTJ qualification in securing their job, most former students said the Diploma was either a formal requirement or had given them an edge:

	All	Those in journalism jobs
Formal employer requirement	39	37
Not requirement, but gave advantage	22	40
Not required	32	24

Base: 180/142

Asked how well the Diploma prepared them for work, almost all of the gold standard respondents said either "well" or "very well":

	All	Gold standard students
Very well	27	39
Well	50	57
Not very well	12	4
Not at all	12	0

Base: 189

## ACCREDITED COURSES

### The benefits

NCTJ accreditation is *the* hallmark of excellence in journalism training, providing a world-class standard that is recognised and sought after throughout the media industry. Achieving our accreditation brings big benefits to employers, centres and students:

- As the hallmark of excellence in journalism training, NCTJ accreditation makes a course more appealing to students looking for a career in journalism.
- Students studying on NCTJ accredited courses are more appealing to employers looking for multi-skilled recruits who know the fundamentals of journalism and can operate effectively in a fast-paced digital newsroom.
- Centres are assigned an industry adviser (a senior working journalist or editor based in their local area) as part of the NCTJ accreditation process. This adviser adds value for centres with up-to-date knowledge of aspects of the industry which they can share with tutors.
- For centres that have achieved our accreditation, the NCTJ offers a range of professional development and networking opportunities, including diploma workshops, industry experience, accreditation forums, industry-led seminars and the annual journalism skills conference.
- Centres offering accredited courses are members of the NCTJ and have a significant influence on our work through our events and boards.
- Tutors on accredited courses are given exclusive access to a range of learning materials provided by the NCTJ, including programmes of study, top tips and sample examinations for each diploma subject.
- Students are given online access to NCTJ learning resources, including sample examinations, to support on-course learning.
- Student representatives on accredited courses are invited to attend an annual student council event hosted by the NCTJ to communicate their views on journalism training.
- Accredited courses are marketed and promoted on the NCTJ website and through our comprehensive careers information service.
- Centres that achieve accreditation are given discounted exam fees and our full range of diploma examination dates between November and July each year.
- Free entry in our annual awards for excellence.
- Payment of course fees to centres for students who cannot afford to pay for their training and are being supported by the Journalism Diversity Fund. The

NCTJ has paid centres and students more than £1.3 million in course fees and living expenses over the last ten years.

But if these benefits are to mean anything, we need to be sure that students and employers are not short-changed, and that an NCTJ-accredited course does exactly what it says on the tin by delivering vocational training to a high standard that is understood and valued by everyone who cares about the quality of journalism.

## What we are looking for

So what are we looking for in an accredited journalism course? The NCTJ believes that overall programme structure and methods of teaching should be left to experts at the universities, colleges and independent training centres who deliver courses. Our role is to:

- Satisfy ourselves that the NCTJ syllabus is delivered effectively and in full with an appropriate balance between academic and vocational modules, so that students leave the course able to practise journalism as well as being able to analyse and reflect on it
- Encourage the provision of courses where students learn to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century newsrooms – with their emphasis on skills convergence, mobile journalism and publishing across a range of platforms
- Insist that students learn to operate to the regulatory and ethical standards expected in all sectors of the industry and in wider society
- Work in partnership with course providers to maintain and update an accreditation system that is both focused on quality, “real world” journalism skills and flexible enough to accommodate innovative approaches to learning.

As an awarding body recognised by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland, we set high standards. But that doesn’t mean we’re asking course providers to jump through unnecessary hoops to win our endorsement. We believe working towards accreditation should be a worthwhile, meaningful exercise based on collaboration and practical support.

As the media world continues to change, so too does the NCTJ. We’ve already introduced substantial improvements covering all aspects of the organisation, including accreditation. As part of our commitment to working with the industry to make journalism a more diverse profession, we encourage all centres which offer accredited courses to open up recruitment to candidates from the widest possible range of backgrounds.

## Our approach to accreditation

The NCTJ’s approach to accreditation is risk-based and proactive. It is not based on a predictable cycle of visits. High performing centres are subject to fewer and proportionate accreditation visits so that our support is given to centres that need it most.

We are confident that the majority of centres offering NCTJ-accredited courses will agree that our accreditation process, while challenging, is fair, reasonable and professional. To ensure that it stays that way and that we validate our licence to

operate, the NCTJ is committed to a programme of continuous improvement based on regular discussions with all our partners – course leaders, students and editors. We welcome your ideas and feedback.



## ACCREDITATION FOR NEW CENTRES

### Step-by-step guide



## How to apply

To apply for centre recognition and course accreditation, new centres must:

- Submit an expression of interest to the NCTJ
- Take part in advisory discussions, a self-assessment exercise reviewing their performance against the NCTJ's seven performance standards and host an advisory visit from the NCTJ
- Complete the action plan agreed at their advisory visit with support from the NCTJ
- Host a full accreditation panel visit from an NCTJ-led industry team
- Following the full accreditation panel visit, NCTJ trustees approve new centres recommended by the accreditation board. A full written report is provided for the centre.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** to find the NCTJ's seven performance standards. For guidance on how to conduct the self-assessment review against these seven performance standards, please refer to **Appendix 2**.

To help speed up the application process and iron out any potential problems at your centre, we require at least one pre-accreditation advisory visit. We are always available to discuss any queries you may have over the phone or by email, and you can keep abreast of the latest developments via our website and our eJournalism newsletter.

## What we need from you

Once you have submitted an expression of interest and we have contacted you to conduct initial advisory discussions, we will ask you to complete a self-assessment exercise reviewing your performance against our seven performance standards (see **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**). The NCTJ will also organise an advisory visit with an NCTJ representative to discuss your course plans. Following your advisory visit, an action plan will be put in place detailing any adjustments or actions that may be needed to satisfy the accreditation panel and the NCTJ accreditation board. When this action plan is complete and you feel that you are ready, we will then agree a date with you for a full accreditation panel visit from an NCTJ-led industry team. The panel will include at least one NCTJ representative and normally three editors or senior journalists.

At least 21 working days before the accreditation visit we would like you to send us by email the results of your self-assessment exercise along with documentary evidence to show that your course is ready for accreditation. We don't need reams of paper, just clear evidence that you are meeting the NCTJ's seven performance standards for journalism courses. While courses applying for accreditation for the first time will not be able to produce all the evidence, generally we will expect you to include the following evidence with the results of your self-assessment review:

- A description of your course and the combination of diploma modules you wish to offer
- A business case for the course and how it will boost the employability of your students

- Evidence that you have the resources and expertise to deliver each of the diploma modules to the required standard
- Your self-assessment report/action plan
- Student/course handbook
- NCTJ module descriptors/schemes of work
- Student timetable
- Centre's own entrance test (if applicable)
- Examples of promotional materials and/or course literature which indicate that the purpose, scope, cost and distinctive nature of the NCTJ qualifications have been explained clearly to those enquiring about the course and to those who have joined it
- CVs (in summary form) of tutors who will be delivering NCTJ modules
- Names and first job destinations of recently graduating students
- The centre's most recent external examiner's report (if applicable)
- The centre's internal policies and procedures for complaints, appeals, malpractice/maladministration and reasonable adjustments
- A timetable for the panel visit (unless otherwise agreed with the NCTJ, please assume panel visits will start at 11am and finish by 3pm with the centre providing a half-hour sandwich lunch for panel members and key course staff. Please note: The NCTJ cannot accept any other hospitality.)
- A centre location map, travel directions by car and train, and car parking details

The NCTJ needs to receive these documents by email at least **21 working days** in advance of the accreditation panel visit.

## Accreditation panel visit

The accreditation panel visit will last for four hours and normally starts at 11am and finishes at 3pm. The key parts of the day are detailed below.

- A meeting with the head of journalism, course leader(s)/NCTJ co-ordinator for at least an hour to discuss your self-assessment review and performance, and any actions you are taking to make improvements.
- At the start of the visit, after the panel has met in private, we would like the head of journalism or course leader to give a short presentation (ten minutes) which provides a brief summary of how the course meets the seven performance standards. You may like to prepare for this in advance.
- A meeting of the panel in private with a full cohort of students.
- The observation by the panel of a practical journalism session and a tour of facilities.
- An opportunity to discuss any issues raised by students with the course leader.
- A private session for the panel to discuss their findings followed by a feedback session with the head of journalism and course leader(s)/NCTJ co-ordinator.

After the visit you will be sent an accreditation report which will have been reviewed by our accreditation board. An industry adviser will be assigned to your centre/course to provide on-going support and to check you are continuing to meet our standards.

## Maintaining your accreditation

Centres working towards accreditation for the first time can apply for approval as an approved NCTJ exam centre for a period of up to three years. Centres must complete an advisory visit and provide annual evidence that progress with accreditation is being made. The NCTJ always takes action if centres make false or misleading claims about accreditation to ensure that no potential applicants are being misled.

Following first accreditation, you will be required to maintain accreditation of your course. This involves:

- Signing your annual accreditation agreement and paying your membership fee in January each year
- Reporting 'significant events' to the NCTJ as they occur
- Updating your self-assessment review and completing an online annual return before the end of September each year
- Host occasional meetings with your assigned industry adviser as required by the NCTJ
- Host accreditation panel and monitoring visits as required by the NCTJ.

We will give you notice if we decide a monitoring visit and/or reaccreditation visit is required. You can request an advisory visit or come to our offices if you would like to discuss your accreditation or make any changes to your accredited course(s). High performing low risk centres will have fewer visits so that more support can be given to centres who need it most.

Changes to accredited course(s) do need to be approved in advance by the NCTJ. If you would like to make any changes to the content of an accredited course, you will need to contact the NCTJ and follow the process outlined on page 12 of this document.

Monitoring visits may be requested, carried out and charged for at any time during the accreditation period with four weeks' notice. The purpose of a monitoring visit is to check progress with any development issues and/or conditions of accreditation, that examination guidelines are being adhered to, and to discuss any other issues that may require attention.

## Industry advisers

Recognised centres are assigned an industry adviser to provide on-going support to the head of journalism and tutors and to check that centres are continuing to meet NCTJ standards in between accreditation visits. At your centre's first accreditation visit, an industry adviser will be assigned to the centre by the NCTJ. The adviser will be a senior working journalist normally based in the centre's local area. The role will:

- add 'value' for the centre with up-to-date knowledge of aspects of the industry which they can share with tutors
- provide up-to-date information about the centre to the NCTJ in between accreditation visits to support the NCTJ's quality assurance process
- provide a direct link between the centre and the NCTJ

Your assigned industry adviser will visit your centre a minimum of once every 12 months, or more as required. If you are running a fast-track course, the industry advisers will visit your centre twice per year. The industry adviser is responsible for arranging a date for their visit directly with your centre, in liaison with the NCTJ. The visit should last no longer than half a day. At the end of a centre visit, the industry adviser will be required to complete a centre visit report and return it to the NCTJ. The NCTJ will review/approve the report and note any action points or recommendations. The report will then be made available to your centre.

## **Making changes to an accredited course**

Any significant changes to an accredited course must be approved in advance by the NCTJ. Centres can apply for approval to change the combination of diploma modules on their accredited course by following the process outlined below. Centres who are already recognised by the NCTJ and want to apply for first accreditation of a new journalism course should also follow this process.

- Contact the NCTJ, describe your course and the combination of diploma modules you wish to offer
- Prepare a proposal and business case for the new course or change of modules and submit this to the NCTJ, demonstrating how it will boost the employability of your students
- Provide evidence with the proposal/business case that you have the resources and expertise to deliver each of the diploma modules to the required standard
- Submit to the NCTJ the information you will use in your marketing and course information
- The NCTJ accreditation board approves (or turns down) your proposal. A short report provides feedback for the centre.

## **Removal of accreditation**

Accreditation is removed where performance falls seriously short of the required standards. If the centre fails to meet its obligations included in the accreditation agreement, which is signed upon commencement of accreditation and annually every January following, the NCTJ reserves the right not to renew accreditation, or to temporarily remove accreditation at any time. Should accreditation be temporarily removed, the NCTJ shall at its discretion impose a series of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed) objectives to help the centre meet the NCTJ performance standards.

If the centre cannot remedy its default within 45 days of the removal of accreditation, the NCTJ reserves the right to remove NCTJ accreditation. The NCTJ's decision is final and there is no appeal. When providers decline to co-operate with the NCTJ, accreditation will be removed in a way that allows students already on course to complete their NCTJ qualifications. Centres can reapply for accreditation.

The NCTJ shall not be liable for any costs or losses sustained or incurred by the centre arising directly or indirectly from the removal of the NCTJ accreditation, and the centre shall reimburse the NCTJ on written demand for any costs or losses sustained or incurred by the NCTJ arising directly or indirectly from the centre default.

If the centre claims due process has not been followed the complaints procedure can be instigated.

## **Exam outcomes and results tables**

Accreditation is awarded to those providers who meet (and continue to meet) the NCTJ performance standards for journalism courses – a key performance indicator being at least a 50 per cent (based on the number of graduating students) A-E grade pass rate in each core NCTJ exam plus (where applicable) at least a 50 per cent pass rate at a minimum shorthand speed of 60wpm.

The NCTJ believes that all students on any course it accredits should enter and pass our professional exams in addition to any assessments required by the course provider. It is these exams that distinguish NCTJ-accredited journalism courses from the many others on offer, and the Diploma in Journalism is what the overwhelming majority of employers want their trainees to possess.

Accreditation will not be appropriate for those courses that seek to use our kite mark solely for marketing purposes but which lack sufficiently robust recruitment criteria, motivation and support to ensure adequate take-up of the NCTJ's professional exams.

Just as we believe that course providers should be able to make a fully informed choice about whether to seek accreditation, so we believe students are entitled to make an informed choice about which course is right for them.

To that end the NCTJ publishes annually on its website results tables showing the take-up and exam pass rates for every accredited journalism course.

## **Administration responsibilities/professional delivery of the Diploma**

Accredited course providers work in partnership with the NCTJ and that means sharing administrative responsibilities. If you are granted accreditation you will be expected to:

- Meet the deadlines for registering your students to sit NCTJ exams and ordering portfolios on their behalf; collect and pay exam fees to the NCTJ (refer to the fees list on our website for costs)
- Provide appropriate invigilators and facilities for your students to sit exams on dates set by the NCTJ
- Mark diploma exams as directed by the NCTJ (including media law) and assess student e-portfolios using our marking criteria and guidelines (the NCTJ pays a fee for each portfolio/exam marked)
- Attend marking workshops and subject seminars organised by the NCTJ
- Distribute exam results to your students
- Liaise regularly with the NCTJ exams team
- Ensure prompt payment of all NCTJ invoices
- Have appropriate internal policies and procedures in place to quality assure exams delivery, including for complaints and malpractice/maladministration

## NCTJ accreditation service

The NCTJ regards its relationship with centres as a partnership and strives to provide a professional and beneficial accreditation service. The NCTJ will:

- Provide the centre with reasonable support in relation to the NCTJ accreditation process
- Endeavour not to impose necessary or unduly burdensome requirements when arranging visits
- Strive to ensure that all information supplied to a centre is provided in good faith and is accurate in all material respects
- Market and promote the accredited courses and provide other reasonable benefits
- Grant the centre permission to use NCTJ copyright materials for the purposes of training and education
- Where appropriate ensure that the centre's potential students are considered for the NCTJ's Journalism Diversity Fund bursaries
- Designate the centre as an NCTJ-approved exam centre

Centres will be encouraged to participate in forums, workshops and the annual Journalism Skills Conference to discuss issues and share practice.

## Accreditation fees

Our accreditation fees for 2021-22 are as follows, and include 20% VAT:

- **Annual membership, payable in January** - £972
- **Accreditation panel visit** - £660
- **Advisory or monitoring visit** - £522
- **New centre accreditation** - £972

# Appendices



## Appendix 1: Accreditation Performance Standards

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>
<b>Quality journalism education and training and results</b>	<p>1. Centres must demonstrate that the course delivers the requirements of the NCTJ syllabus in full.</p> <p>2. Course tutors are experienced, trained and qualified to deliver journalism teaching and learning opportunities that are based on best practice and industry requirements.</p> <p>3. There is high student satisfaction and positive feedback about the course. Students achieve good results in NCTJ assessments.</p>
<b>Close industry links and practical up-to-date journalism experience</b>	<p>4. Centres must be able to demonstrate that the course maintains close industry links, ensuring that the quality of journalism training is fit for purpose and that students are benefiting from up-to-date, practical and relevant journalism experience.</p> <p>5. There should be an integrated approach to teaching, with formal classroom tuition linked to practical journalism sessions that reflect the requirements of the industry.</p>
<b>Professional delivery of the Diploma in Journalism</b>	<p>6. Centres must be able to demonstrate a professional and consistent approach to the delivery of all NCTJ assessments for the Diploma in Journalism, in line with NCTJ examination policies and procedures.</p> <p>7. Centre staff are required to carry out the NCTJ's administration and examination functions in a timely and professional manner.</p> <p>8. Centres must be able to demonstrate that they have suitable premises and facilities to deliver the Diploma in Journalism to a professional standard.</p>
<b>Commitment to diversity</b>	<p>9. Centres must be able to demonstrate that the course has a commitment to diversity via appropriate measures and initiatives.</p> <p>10. There must be an approach to fostering a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students regardless of class, gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, disability or particular needs.</p>
<b>Innovation, ambition and continuous improvement</b>	<p>11. Centres must be able to demonstrate that they have a commitment to continuous improvement and achieving high standards via the application of new ideas or initiatives to enhance the delivery of quality training.</p>

	<p>12. Centres must ensure that course content and delivery reflect the changing requirements of the journalism industry. Where appropriate, course delivery should be flexible and adaptable, based on the needs of the student cohort and the requirements of the sector.</p>
<b>Employability</b>	<p>13. Centres must be able to demonstrate that the course has an effective and appropriate student selection process, recruiting students who will readily find jobs and be able to maintain high standards of journalism into the future.</p>
<b>Communication, collaboration and contact</b>	<p>14. Information promoting the course to students must be clear, compelling and must explain the purpose, scope and distinctive nature of NCTJ qualifications and the diploma options offered. Centres must be committed to clear and effective communication with students and the NCTJ.</p> <p>15. Centres will collaborate with the NCTJ so that issues, reportable events and feedback are communicated to the accrediting and awarding organisation in an effective and timely manner.</p> <p>16. Centre staff must attend NCTJ forums, meetings and events where required, to engage in collaborative feedback on accreditation, qualification development and exams delivery.</p>

## Appendix 2: Self-assessment review – guidance for centres

To apply for first accreditation and to maintain accreditation of an NCTJ course, your centre is required to complete an annual self-assessment review of its performance against the NCTJ's accreditation standards. The results of each annual self-assessment review conducted by your centre must be retained by the centre for the duration of its accreditation with the NCTJ. For all accreditation visits the NCTJ will request a copy of the results of the centre's most recent annual self-assessment review in advance of the visit taking place. The NCTJ's seven accreditation standards and sources of evidence are detailed in this appendix in **Appendix 1**.

### What is self-assessment?

Self-assessment is a process of ongoing review used to measure the effectiveness of your centre's performance. In this case, you are measuring your centre's performance against the requirements detailed in the NCTJ's accreditation standards. The outcome of the annual self-assessment review should result in a self-assessment document, such as a report or action plan, which demonstrates how and to what extent your centre is meeting the NCTJ's accreditation standards, and confirming any changes or recommendations that have been put in place to improve your centre's performance against these standards in the future.

### Approach to self-assessment

There are a number of different ways that your centre can undertake a self-assessment. We do not provide a proforma document or prescribe a particular method of how centres should approach this. The self-assessment must assess your centre's performance against the seven accreditation standards published by the NCTJ. You should use the NCTJ's suggested sources of evidence detailed in the accreditation standards as a guide to measuring your centre's performance against each standard.

The annual self-assessment review is **not** the same as the online annual return. However, centres may choose to submit the results of their self-assessment review as part of their online annual return. This is recommended as best practice by the NCTJ.

Below is a checklist of what your centre may want to include in their annual self-assessment review and resulting report/action plan. Please note this checklist is not exhaustive and all points should be considered in line with the NCTJ's seven accreditation standards.

- A review of key course activities over the last 12 months
- Evidence of risk management, including where risk has been identified, its impact, how the centre has corrected the risk and how it has prevented it from re-occurring
- Evidence of change and improvement, including where the centre has implemented change and improvement, and how and why the change was brought about
- Evidence of the centre's strengths and areas of weakness in relation to the NCTJ accreditation standards, including any changes/recommendations that

have been put in place to improve performance in relation to areas of weakness

- Reference to the NCTJ's accreditation standards where review, change or improvement has taken place
- Well-defined future actions and timescales for completion that reference the relevant NCTJ accreditation standard(s), are risk rated and assigned to an individual or group of individuals for completion
- Submission of key evidence documents, including (but not limited to) schemes of work, timetables, CVs of newly appointed staff, internal policies, list of visiting speakers/lecturers, list of student job destinations

