

**National Council
for the
Training of Journalists**

**NCTJ
Level 7 End-Point Assessment for ST0286
Senior Journalist
Qualification Specification**

Qualification No: 610/0140/5
The Register of Regulated Qualifications

1. Rationale

The end-point assessment (EPA) for a senior journalist is a vocationally-related qualification that provides a holistic assessment of the core skills, knowledge and behaviours required to operate effectively as a competent journalist at a senior level. This qualification was developed by the journalism trailblazer group of employers representing a wide range of media sectors. The apprenticeship standard for a senior journalist includes the National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) as a mandated qualification and is recognised by employers as an industry standard award.

2. Aims and objectives

The EPA aims to meet the needs of senior journalist apprentices and employers to equip apprentices with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to operate effectively as a senior journalist across a wide range of media setting. The EPA is designed to assess the skills, knowledge and behaviours at the appropriate level for a senior journalist across all media sectors.

3. Progression

The senior journalist apprenticeship standard may provide professional development from the junior journalist apprenticeship standard. It may also provide professional development for journalists wanting to develop their roles within their organisation to a senior level. Senior journalists may also progress to management positions including senior editorial roles within their organisations.

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

4. Target groups and entry requirements

The minimum age for entry to any apprenticeship standard is 16 years. Whilst any entry requirements will be a matter for individual employers, an apprentice might be expected to have either: gained a regulated Diploma in Journalism qualification; achieved a degree (any subject); or completed the Junior Journalist Apprenticeship. Individual employers will identify any relevant entry requirements in terms of previous qualifications, training, work experience or other criteria. Some employers will seek candidates who have previously worked as a journalist. 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 gain the NQJ, the level 6 mandated qualification in the apprenticeship standard, to progress through 'gateway' to the EPA for the senior journalist standard.

Full time apprentices will typically spend 18 months on-programme (before the gateway) working towards the occupational standard, with a minimum of 20 per cent off-the-job training. All apprentices must spend a minimum of 12 months on-programme.

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 apprentices 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 published on the company's website: www.nctj.com

6. Validity of the qualification

The NCTJ level 7 end-point assessment for ST0286 senior journalist is valid until 30 September 2024. 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 observations on assessment methods
- 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. The apprentice's employer must agree that either a re-sit or re-take is an appropriate course of action. 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. Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to distinction. Where any assessment method has to be re-sat or re-taken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum EPA grade of pass, unless the NCTJ determines there are exceptional circumstances requiring a re-sit or re-take.

The timescales for a re-sit/re-take are agreed between the employer and the NCTJ. A re-sit is typically taken within two months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a re-take is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within four months of the EPA outcome notification. All assessment methods must be taken within a four-month period otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat/re-taken.

8. Issue of results

Results will normally be issued within five weeks of completion of all assessments to allow for marking, moderation and quality assurance procedures. 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. Gateway requirements

The EPA period should only start, and the EPA be arranged, once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is deemed to be consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard, all of the pre-requisite gateway requirements for EPA have been met and can be evidenced to the NCTJ. As a gateway requirement and prior to taking the EPA, apprentices must achieve the approved NQJ qualification mandated in the senior journalist standard. Apprentices must also submit a portfolio of evidence and the NCTJ will sign-off the project plan at the gateway, to confirm its suitability prior to the project commencing.

Apprentices without English and mathematics at level 2 must achieve level 2 prior to taking their EPA. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and mathematics minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. British Sign Language (BSL) qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications for those who have BSL as their primary language.

The EPA must be completed within an EPA period lasting typically 4 months, after the EPA gateway.

13. Knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)

The EPA will holistically assess the knowledge, skills and behaviours as listed in the published apprenticeship standard for a senior journalist ST0286 and confirm the apprentice has achieved competence at the level of a senior journalist. See link on page 6 below.

14. Methods of assessment

The EPA consists of two discrete assessment methods:

AM 1: Journalism project with presentation and supplementary questioning

The journalism project will be designed to ensure the apprentice's work meets the needs of the business, is relevant to their role and allows the relevant KSBs to be demonstrated for the EPA. The project's subject, title and scope will be agreed between the employer and the NCTJ. The employer will ensure it has a real business application and the NCTJ will ensure it meets the requirements of the EPA (including suitable coverage of the KSBs assigned to this assessment method).

Senior journalists also have to be able to explain how they have used their journalistic skills to create the content and report the story and why they have selected the particular platform(s) and method of delivery for the story. Apprentices will undertake a presentation with supplementary questioning to cover the skills, knowledge and behaviours defined in the relevant assessment criteria assessed using this method.

Apprentices will be awarded a grade for this assessment: Fail / Pass / Distinction

AM 2: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

A professional discussion is a two-way discussion which involves both the independent assessor and the apprentice actively listening and participating in a formal conversation. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to make detailed and proactive contributions to confirm their competency across the KSBs mapped to this method.

This assessment method is a valid way to draw out KSBs which would be less likely to occur in the project. Senior journalists must be able to engage in detailed discussions and present findings and recommendations, so this assessment method replicates part of their daily responsibilities.

Portfolio requirements

Apprentices must compile a portfolio of evidence during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship. The portfolio of evidence is submitted to the EPAO at the gateway. It is not directly assessed, but underpins the professional discussion and therefore it is not be marked.

- The portfolio will typically contain 10 discrete pieces of evidence
- It must contain evidence related to the KSBs that will be assessed by the professional discussion
- Evidence must be mapped against the KSBs
- Evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one KSB
- Evidence sources may include: work products; work instructions; safety documentation; company policies and procedures as appropriate to the activities; reference materials & research undertaken; workplace documentation/records, for example workplace policies/procedures, records; colleague feedback/statements.

This is not a definitive list; other evidence sources are possible. It should not include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment. Employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance (for example colleague feedback/statements) rather than opinions. The evidence provided must be valid and attributable to the apprentice and must contain a statement from the employer and apprentice confirming this.

Apprentices will be awarded a grade for this assessment: Fail / Pass / Distinction

15. Overall grading

Performance in the EPA will determine the overall apprenticeship standard grade of: Fail, Pass or Distinction. Both assessment methods are weighted equally in their contribution to the overall EPA grade.

All EPA methods must be passed for the EPA to be passed overall. Apprentices must gain a distinction in both assessment methods to gain a distinction. Grades from individual assessment methods will be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the EPA as a whole:

Assessment method 1 Journalism project	Assessment method 2 Professional discussion	Overall grading
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

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

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

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