

**National Council
for the
Training of Journalists**

**NCTJ
Level 5 Diploma in Journalism
Qualification Specification**

Qualification No: 603/6435/X
The Register of Regulated Qualifications

NCTJ Training Ltd
The New Granary
Station Road
Newport
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 3PL

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1. Rationale

The Diploma in Journalism is a vocationally-related qualification that will equip the learner with the core skills and knowledge required to become a competent journalist. The development of this qualification includes consultation with industry representatives and the award is recognised by employers as an industry standard entry requirement.

2. Aims and objectives

The qualification aims to meet the needs of employers and to provide learners with the knowledge and skills for entry-level journalism. The fundamental skills of high-quality journalism in converged newsrooms are the heart of the Diploma in Journalism. The programmes of study are designed to equip learners with the skills and knowledge they need for multiplatform journalism across all sectors of the media including: newspapers, magazines, specialist brand publishing, online, television, radio or PR and communications. Leading employers across all media sectors as well as education and training providers are consulted on the structure and content of the diploma.

3. Progression

The NCTJ level 5 Diploma in Journalism is an industry recognised qualification. Gaining the full diploma qualification at 'gold standard' (all units achieved at grade A-C, and/or 100wpm shorthand if applicable, with a minimum 82 credits gained) can lead to employment within the industry. It may also provide access for entry to the NCTJ Level 6 National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) - the NCTJ's professional qualification which can be entered for after eighteen months employment within the industry (or a minimum 12 months in exceptional circumstances). See: <https://www.nctj.com/journalism-qualifications/National-Qualification-in-Journalism-NQJ>

4. Target groups and entry details

This syllabus provides opportunities for learners who are preparing for or are already engaged in careers as professional journalists. Because of the academic standards expected by the industry the minimum age for entry is 16 years. The minimum requirement for entry to courses teaching this syllabus is five GCSEs (at level 4 or grade C and above) or equivalent.

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

5. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) aims to provide learners with an indication of the minimum length of time it would take an average learner to complete this qualification.

TQT is made up of two components:

- 1) Guided learning: activities completed by the learner under the direct instruction or supervision of a tutor, trainer or other appropriate provider of education or training.
- 2) All other hours spent in preparation, study or training, including assessment time, but not under the direct supervision of a tutor, trainer or other appropriate training provider.

This syllabus incorporates a programme of study that includes an estimated 560 hours guided learning (*the estimated minimum time an average learner may expect to spend under direct instruction or supervision of a tutor or trainer*). Coursework will incorporate practical

tasks based in the classroom and/or in the real world covering the areas outlined in this syllabus.

An average learner can also reasonably expect to spend an estimated 260 hours in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by a tutor, trainer or other appropriate training provider.

TQT

The total qualification time an average learner can expect to take to complete the qualification is 820 hours.

6. Assessment

Each subject is assessed by examination and/or coursework. The essential journalism e-portfolio for journalists is a continuous assessment. Details on each assessment are available on the NCTJ's website at www.nctj.com. Each unit has a programme of study which will be read by the learner alongside this specification and includes assessment criteria, how marks are awarded and grade descriptors on which learners' levels of attainment will be differentiated. The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit clearly specify the standard of knowledge, skills and understanding that the learner is expected to meet in order to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved.

7. Overall grading and specified levels of attainment

To pass the Diploma in Journalism, learners must gain grades A-E in each unit completed (if shorthand is taken: a pass at a minimum speed of 60 words per minute is required). Learners who gain grades A-C in each unit taken and/or a minimum of 100 words per minute shorthand (if shorthand is taken) will be awarded the industry 'gold standard' Diploma in Journalism which is stated on the certificate. Learners must achieve a minimum of 82 credits to pass the qualification. Learners will gain 47 credits on completion of the four mandatory units and another 35 credits will be gained on completion of a selection of elective optional units.

Grading of A-E is awarded within the qualification for each unit apart from shorthand which is awarded a speed from 60-120 words per minute. The criteria against which individual performance within the qualification and units is differentiated is specified in each of the units' programme of study which will be read by the learner alongside this specification.

The grading scale used to signify performance differentiation within the qualification and units is A-E grades with C grade being the industry standard for each unit and F grade being a fail. Credit is awarded for achievement of grades A-E in each of the units and/or 60-120 words per minute shorthand.

No overall grade is awarded for this qualification.

8. Availability of examinations and assessments

Centres and tutors are required to provide learners with information and advice on the programme of study, the level of demand and associated requirements and expectations. The NCTJ reserves the right to decline entry to an examination where previous qualifications and experience are deemed to be inadequate. Examinations are available through centres with a minimum notice period of three weeks. Further details are available on the NCTJ website.

9. Duration of examination

All examinations are structured so that the duration of each examination provides opportunities for all learners to demonstrate achievement within a set time-frame.

10. Fair access to assessment

Information on assessment and examination and entry requirements for learners with particular needs is published in the '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

11. Validity of syllabus

This general syllabus for the NCTJ level 5 Diploma in Journalism is valid until 30 September 2025. We monitor the validity of this qualification ensuring that the qualification continues to meet the needs of users, learners and employers. Methods used to support this strategy include:

- Monitoring outcomes from quality assurance visits to centres
- 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 centres, employers, learners and any other stakeholders
- Consultation/survey activities with users
- Review of progression details
- Review of exam questions and performance
- Assessment comparability of findings if and when applicable.

12. Repeats of examinations

Where a learner is not able to reach the minimum standard in an examination, application for re-examination at that level is permitted.

13. Issue of results

Results will normally be issued within five weeks of the date of the examination. This time is necessary to ensure that all results are properly standardised and checked by the NCTJ. Completed qualification certificates will normally be issued within six weeks of the course end date.

14. Language and bias

Every effort has been made to ensure that this syllabus and associated mark schemes, procedures and materials are free from any form of bias, refer to explicit content and have no hidden requirements for entry or assessment.

Care has been taken to ensure that the programmes of study, grade descriptions and examination components make appropriate demands on learners both in terms of their physical safety and well-being and expectations of physical and cognitive performance in relation to their age and level of ability.

15. Confidentiality

In order to ensure that the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism qualification 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.

16. Learner registrations

Each learner that registers with the NCTJ to take the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism qualification is uniquely identified by a Unique Reference Number (URN) generated by the NCTJ's database of learner records. Centres enrolling learners to take an NCTJ qualification are responsible for confirming the identity of the learner when they are enrolled. Candidates registered with FE course providers are also given a Personal Learner Record (PLR) which the NCTJ supplies the relevant data to the Learning Records Service.

17. Qualification specification

To gain the Diploma in Journalism learners must complete four mandatory units and a selection of optional elective units at grades A-E to reach a minimum 82 credits. The four mandatory units are: essential journalism; essential journalism e-portfolio; essential media law and regulation; and essential journalism ethics and regulation. These are all level 5 units and are worth 47 credits in total.

The optional elective units include: public affairs for journalists; Teeline shorthand for journalists; media law court reporting; videojournalism for digital platforms; editing skills for journalists; sports journalism; *broadcast journalism; business and finance journalism; business of magazines; photography for journalists; PR and communications for journalists; practical magazine journalism; *radio journalism; *TV journalism; data journalism; journalism for a digital audience; introduction to PR for journalists: and broadcast regulation. These are all level 5 units and learners must complete at least three elective units at grade A-E from this group to achieve a minimum 35 credits.

*If you study broadcast journalism, TV journalism or radio journalism as elective options, you must also study the broadcast regulation elective option as mandatory.

Learners must gain 82 credits overall to achieve the full qualification. Credit is awarded for achievement of grades A-E in each of the units and/or 60-120 words per minute shorthand.

Mandatory units		Credits	Unit reference
Level 5	Essential journalism	22 credits	L/618/3836
Level 5	Essential journalism ethics and regulation	3 credits	Y/618/3841
Level 5	Essential Journalism e-portfolio	12 credits	R/618/3837
Level 5	Essential media law and regulation	10 credits	D/618/3839
Optional elective units			
Level 5	Shorthand for journalists	14 credits	H/618/3843
Level 5	Public affairs for journalists	7 credits	A/618/3847
Level 5	Media law court reporting	7 credits	F/618/3848
Level 5	Editing skills for journalists	7 credits	A/618/3850
Level 5	Videojournalism for digital platforms	7 credits	K/618/3861
Level 5	Business of magazines	7 credits	M/618/3862

Level 5	Sports journalism	7 credits	F/618/3851
Level 5	*Broadcast journalism	11 credits	A/618/3864
Level 5	Business and finance journalism	7 credits	T/618/3863
Level 5	Photography for journalists	7 credits	J/618/3866
Level 5	PR and communications for journalists	14 credits	F/618/3865
Level 5	Practical magazine journalism	14 credits	R/618/3868
Level 5	*Radio journalism	4 credits	Y/618/3869
Level 5	*TV journalism	4 credits	L/618/3870
Level 5	Introduction to public relations for journalists	7 credits	L/618/3867
Level 5	Data journalism	7 credits	R/618/3871
Level 5	Journalism for a digital audience	7 credits	Y/618/3872
Level 5	Broadcast regulation	3 credits	R/618/8357

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