

# ACCREDITATION INFORMATION PACK 2023-24

**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 60 journalism courses at over 30 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 2023-24 the diploma elective modules include:

- shorthand for journalists
- public affairs for journalists
- media law court reporting
- broadcast journalism
- broadcast regulations
- TV journalism
- radio journalism
- sports journalism
- PR and communications for journalists
- 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
- photography for journalists

Knowledge in all the diploma subjects is assessed by exams/assessments 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 following standards:

- Level 3 Content Creator
- Level 5 Journalist
- Level 7 Senior Journalist

The programmes are delivered over a recommended minimum 18-month period. Apprentices study for the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism as part of their on-programme training for the Level 5 apprenticeship. For the Level 7 apprenticeship, apprentices' study for the NCTJ National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) as part of their on-programme training.

To complete the apprenticeship, apprentices must complete an end-point assessment made up of the following components:

- Level 3 Content Creator – project or campaign evaluation report, presentation and professional discussion
- Level 5 Journalist – journalism project, project report and professional discussion
- Level 7 Senior Journalist – journalism project, project presentation and professional discussion

More information can be found on our website [here](#).

## NCTJ and the Industry

Through our qualifications and the courses we accredit, we help equip would-be journalists to find their first job by providing them with the vocational skills editors are looking for. 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 and broadcasting employers say they prefer NCTJ-qualified applicants. Hundreds of students sit our exams every year, and many well-known and successful journalists– including Mark Austin, Kay Burley, Jeremy Clarkson, Geordie Greig, John Humphrys, Piers Morgan, Nick Owen, Helen Skelton and Alice Woolley – achieved an NCTJ qualification.

### What the industry says...

**Sharmeen Ziauddin, assistant editor, Community Care**

*"It's really essential to do an NCTJ qualification. It's really worth investing your time and money, because most organisations want someone with that training."*

**Neha Gohil, correspondent, The News Movement**

*"Routes such as the [NCTJ's] Journalism Diversity Fund and the training offered by the NCTJ...is such a great way to getting your foot in the door in this industry."*

**Tymiah Ford, assistant producer, Times Radio**

*"There's a lot you can pick up by doing the job, but to really succeed I needed that NCTJ qualification."*

**Annie Smith, social media fellow, Insider**

*"I knew that there were quite a few journalism jobs that required that NCTJ qualification and I didn't want to be in a position where I wasn't qualified for a job. With the NCTJ, you know you are getting an education that employers respect."*

**Tom Grant, reporter, Clydebank Post**

*"The skills I have learnt in the diploma are vital and I use them in my job every day... The access you get to the industry from having that NCTJ diploma is also absolutely key."*

**Kristina Wemyss, trainee sub editor, Daily Mail**

*"My NCTJ course was intense but rewarding, without it I certainly would not be in the job I am in today."*

**Jacqueline Shepherd, radio and TV presenter and BAFTA winning producer**

*"Because I had my NCTJ, I then was confident enough to apply for jobs which I wouldn't have even looked at before."*

**Jack Shute, award-nominated journalist and presenter and former BBC travel presenter**

*"The NCTJ training really helped me becoming the journalist I am today. If the course didn't have the NCTJ diploma, I wouldn't be as strong a journalist."*

**Peter Moor, journalist, UTV**

*"[The NCTJ] gives you such a good grounding that you need on an everyday basis. You need to have that grounding to trust yourself in the decisions you make and to be able to have that confidence."*

**Georgia Chambers, newsletter editor, The i**

*"The NCTJ was a great starting point an very intense and full-on, but it made you work as if you were a working journalist. The main thing was that it gave me the confidence to step into an industry that felt quite intimidating."*

## 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 £2.93 million in course fees and living expenses since the fund was set up in 2005.

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 and digital 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.

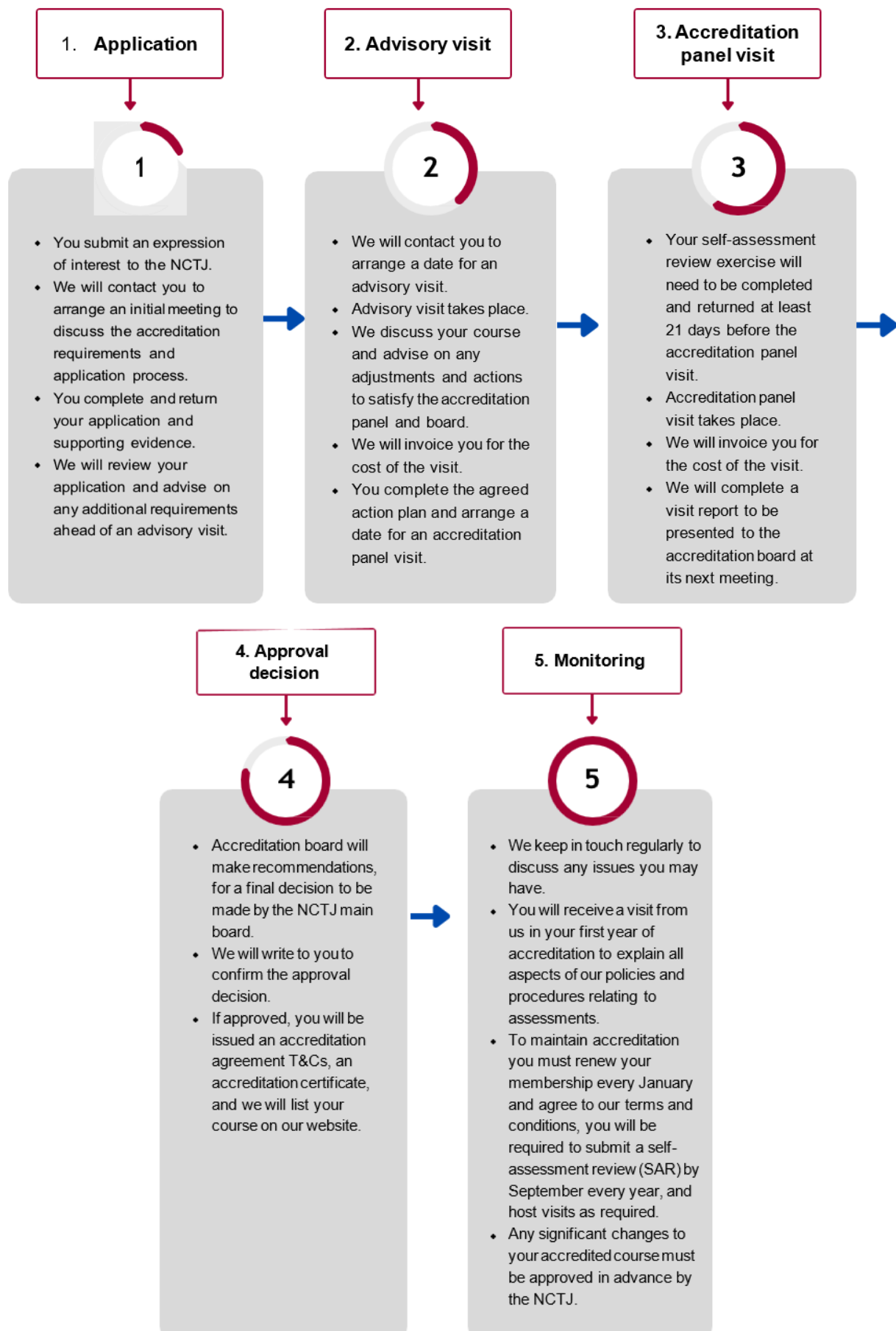
As the media world continues to change, so too does the NCTJ. We've already introduced substantial improvements covering all aspects of the organisation, including accreditation. As part of our commitment to working with the industry to make journalism a more diverse profession, we encourage all centres 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 – process





## 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 accreditation 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 e-Journalism 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 panel 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 safeguarding, 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 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**

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

- Renewing 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 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 accreditation 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 11 of this document.

Monitoring visits may be requested, carried out and charged for at any time with four weeks' notice. The purpose of a monitoring visit is to check progress with any development issues and/or conditions of accreditation, that assessment 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. For full guidance please refer to **Appendix 3**.

- Complete sections 1 and 2 of the 'Create a new Application to deliver new Diploma courses or modules' on your centre's Creatio account
- Section 1 of the form will ask you to describe your course and the combination of diploma modules you wish to offer
- Section 2 of the form will ask you to include a business case for the new course or change of modules, demonstrating how it will boost the employability of your students, and the information you will include your marketing and course information
- You will need to provide evidence in the form that you have the resources and expertise to deliver each of the diploma modules to the required standard
- Once complete, submit the form on Creatio to the NCTJ
- 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 renews 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.

## **Assessment outcomes**

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 NCTJ module 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/assessments 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 achieve.

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.

## **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 assessments; collect and pay exam fees to the NCTJ
- Provide appropriate invigilators and facilities for your students to sit exams on dates set by the NCTJ
- Mark exams as directed by the NCTJ (including media law) and assess student e-portfolios using our marking criteria and guidelines
- Attend marking workshops and subject seminars organised by the NCTJ
- Distribute exam results to students
- Liaise regularly with the NCTJ assessment team
- Ensure prompt payment of all NCTJ invoices
- Have appropriate internal policies and procedures in place to quality assure exams delivery, including for safeguarding, complaints, conflicts of interest, reasonable adjustments 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 assessment delivery 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 2023-24 are as follows (click [here](#) for a full list of our centre fees from September 2023):

- **Annual membership, payable in January** - £860
- **Accreditation panel visit** - £590
- **Advisory or monitoring visit** - £470
- **New centre accreditation** - £860

**VAT at the rate of 20% has not been included in all the fees listed above**

# Appendix

**Appendix 1:** Accreditation performance standards

**Appendix 2:** Annual self-assessment review (SAR) – guidance for centres

**Appendix 3:** Gain approval to deliver a new course or additional diploma modules - guidance for centres

## Appendix 1: Accreditation performance standards

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Evidence – these are examples of evidence that a centre may submit with their self-assessment review to demonstrate they are meeting the standards. The list is not intended to be prescriptive.</b>	
<p><b>Quality journalism education and training and results</b></p>	<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>	<p>Schemes of work reflect the requirements of the NCTJ syllabus in full</p> <p>Course timetables reflect the recommended guided learning hours for the Diploma in Journalism</p> <p>Students have access to appropriate news gathering and editing facilities/equipment across a range of platforms.</p> <p>Course journalism platforms (newspapers, magazines and/or web pages) demonstrate students' knowledge of news writing, media law and other journalism skills</p> <p>The teaching of ethics and regulation is integrated into the practical journalism exercises</p> <p>Resilience training should be integrated into the course so that students can be adequately supported and prepared to deal with scenarios in training and assessments that reflect real-world journalism.</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p>Students have access to software and hardware with the appropriate quality and specifications to access news gathering and editing equipment across a range of platforms remotely. The software should have sufficient capabilities for the practical output of journalism work.</p> <p>Students are given appropriate training on how to use systems and equipment remotely.</p> <p>Centres encourage, monitor and demonstrate student engagement of training delivered remotely.</p> <p>Sufficient time is given to one-to-one appointments with students, and students are able to meet with tutors online to give feedback, particularly on issues with remote learning.</p> <p>Centres demonstrate active learning from students on remote modules or courses, including evidence of how much of the remote</p>



		<p>Tutor CVs demonstrate that staff have the appropriate subject and teaching experience for delivery of the relevant diploma modules</p> <p>Centres feedback any changes of ownership/faculty heads, staff changes (including CVs for new staff) or fluctuations to the NCTJ and must be notified within one month of the event occurring</p> <p>The course aims for students to achieve A-C grade pass rates (and 100wpm shorthand) in all pre-agreed NCTJ assessments that are comparable with the centre's average over three years and the average for the relevant education and training sector. The course must meet the eligibility performance benchmark of a 50% A-E grade pass rate (60wpm shorthand) in all pre-agreed NCTJ assessments</p> <p>The course aims for a high proportion of student course completions</p> <p>Feedback from students and employers demonstrates that the quality of journalism training on the course is robust, fair, fit for purpose and of a consistently high standard</p>	<p>teaching is live and tutor-led, and how much is self-study.</p>
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<p><b>Close industry links and practical up-to-date journalism experience</b></p>	<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>	<p>Students practise their journalism skills and/or do work placements that expose them to the practices of 'real world' journalism – operating within tight deadlines and adhering to professional codes/standards. Centres demonstrate the calibre of work produced</p> <p>Evidence is collected detailing latest student industry placements and time spent in the industry, and whether they were remote or in person.</p> <p>Students have access to court and council visits linked to the production of news materials and, particularly if court reporting and public affairs modules are offered, a sufficient number of visits take place.</p> <p>Tutors visit newsrooms for work experience and/or update their relevant subject areas of expertise</p> <p>A number of sessions/classes on the course are taught by guest lecturers from the industry.</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p>Students practise their journalism skills by taking part in practical activities or placements remotely that expose them to 'real world' journalism</p>
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<p><b>Professional delivery of the Diploma in Journalism</b></p>	<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>	<p>Centres have suitable premises and appropriate up-to-date facilities for delivery of the diploma assessments in-centre. Any change in premises/facilities must be notified to the NCTJ within one month of occurrence</p> <p>Teaching staff attend NCTJ marking workshops and exam seminars once yearly</p> <p>Internally assessed exam papers are marked accurately, consistently and within the required timeframes, in line with the requirements detailed in the NCTJ marking guidance</p> <p>Examination sessions are conducted and invigilated appropriately in line with NCTJ policies and procedures. The centre has appropriate policies in place for handling complaints, appeals and dealing with malpractice/maladministration</p> <p>There are successful unannounced annual spot checks conducted by NCTJ representatives</p> <p>Students are registered promptly within NCTJ guidelines for examinations; exam fees are paid on time; examination results and certificates are distributed to students as soon as they are available</p> <p>Centre completes an annual self-evaluation and risk assessment against NCTJ examination policies and procedures,</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course) and the delivery of remote exams, evidence includes:</b></p> <p>For exams delivered remotely, centres ensure candidates have the appropriate technology and facilities for the delivery of remote exams. Candidates without the appropriate technology or facilities to sit exams remotely are given the option to sit in-centre</p> <p>For a remote course, students should be recruited on the condition that they have the appropriate technical requirements and facilities to sit exams remotely. If a candidate does have access requirements, arrangements should be made for them to sit exams in-centre</p>
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		including a lessons learnt exercise following any exam incidents	
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<p><b>Commitment to diversity</b></p>	<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>	<p>The centre has appropriate policies in place for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- equal opportunities</li> <li>- access and widening participation</li> <li>- health and safety</li> <li>- reasonable adjustments</li> </ul> <p>The Journalism Diversity Fund is promoted to potential eligible students</p> <p>Centre collates and makes available to the NCTJ on request the relevant diversity data for student recruitment. This should include data on gender, disability and ethnicity</p> <p>Where required, the centre has appropriate measures/initiatives in place to increase diversity. For example, published literature, website initiatives, details of appropriate bursaries, commitment to diversity in tutor recruitment</p> <p>Processes and procedures must be in place to ensure the learning environment is suitable and appropriate for all students</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p><i>There are no additional examples of evidence for this standard relating to remote training</i></p>
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<p><b>Innovation, ambition and continuous improvement</b></p>	<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>	<p>Centre reviews the quality of the course and collates feedback from students on an annual basis including course management and delivery. Evidence is available that action has been taken to improve courses where required and to change in line with industry developments</p> <p>Examples that might demonstrate innovation include: investment in new facilities and equipment; support for new NCTJ initiatives; introduction of new opportunities and options for students; staff development opportunities and industry work experience; new approaches to delivery; success in the NCTJ innovation award; partnerships with employers; new ways of recruiting and motivating students</p> <p><i>This list is not exhaustive. Any ideas/initiatives demonstrated by the centre but not detailed here will be judged on their own merits</i></p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p>Examples that might demonstrate innovation also include: investment into online platforms, introduction of remote opportunities for students, remote events, new ways of motivating and engaging students remotely, supporting cohort cohesion with opportunities and activities.</p>
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<p><b>Employability</b></p>	<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>	<p>Centre has promotional materials and/or course literature that meets the requirements of the standard descriptor, with particular emphasis on the exacting skills required to succeed in journalism and the importance of learning shorthand for news journalism</p> <p>Students are normally selected on the basis of an interview and the NCTJ's entrance test (or a similar test devised by the centre and approved by the NCTJ). The interview and entrance test assess the qualities demanded of journalists</p> <p>Where an interview/entrance test is not feasible, the centre provides evidence of a robust student selection process that identifies applicants who possess the appropriate personal qualities and potential to operate effectively as journalists</p> <p>Information is available on students' first job destinations, both journalism-related and other areas, six weeks after completing the course</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p><i>There are no additional examples of evidence for this standard relating to remote training</i></p>
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<p><b>Communication, collaboration and contact</b></p>	<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>	<p>The promotion of the course must describe the aims and objectives of the course and the options in the Diploma in Journalism that are offered or not offered, and examples of career paths available. There must be transparent information on fees</p> <p>A student representative is elected by students and attends NCTJ student council meetings</p> <p>Every year, course leaders/heads of journalism attend the relevant accreditation forums and skills conference held by the NCTJ to discuss and give feedback on accreditation, qualification and journalism training issues</p> <p>The centre collaborates with the NCTJ on qualification development and the piloting of new qualifications and/or assessment processes</p> <p>Effective quality assurance procedures are in place to deal with complaints and to monitor and act on student attendance, achievement and progression</p> <p>There is timely notification to the NCTJ of reportable events, for example, changes to staff/premises, or potential/actual incidents of malpractice/maladministration</p>	<p><b>For remote training of any modules (or course), evidence includes:</b></p> <p><i>There are no additional examples of evidence for this standard relating to remote training</i></p>
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## Appendix 2: Annual self-assessment review (SAR) – guidance for centres

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. Your self-assessment review (SAR) must be submitted to the NCTJ by the end of September every year, and ensure your centre profiles on Creatio are up-to-date, including staff changes ready for the next academic year.

### 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, as we like to be non-prescriptive; however, one can be provided on request and is optional to use. 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.

Below is a checklist of what your centre should 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, including updates of any significant events.
  - **NB** A significant event would include anything that impacts the course in anyway, such as; staff changes, any concerns with the delivery of any of the course modules, teaching provision, poor student feedback, moved sites or changed facilities, and any reasons why the centre are unable to meet the NCTJ accreditation standards.
- ☑ 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
- ☑ 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
- Reference to the NCTJ's accreditation standards where review, change or improvement has taken place
- Submission of key evidence documents, including (but not limited to); timetables; CVs of newly appointed staff; internal policies; list of visiting speakers/lecturers; and list of student job destinations
- Defined future actions and timescales for completion that reference the relevant NCTJ accreditation standard(s)

The following information should also be included in the report/action plan sent to the NCTJ, to support the points detailed above:

- Details of any current partnerships or collaborative working
- Details and the current status of any sanction(s)/restriction(s) imposed on your centre by any other awarding organisation in the last 18 months
- Whether your centre been refused centre recognition or qualification approval by another awarding organisation in the last 18 months
- Any significant events involving the delivery of NCTJ exams/assessments in the last 18 months
- The centre staff members who have attended NCTJ marking workshops in the last 24 months with dates (tutors marking NCTJ internally assessed exams/assessments must attend the relevant marking workshop a minimum of once every two years)
- Whether you use internal or external invigilation for NCTJ exams
- Any actions your centre has taken to meet any outstanding sanctions/conditions related to the delivery of NCTJ exams

**Please note:** any staff changes must be detailed in your SAR report/action plan and updated in your centre's Creatio account, ensuring your Creatio staff list is accurate and up-to-date at all times. Up-to-date copies of your centre's policies and procedures for the following; safeguarding; appeals; complaints; reasonable adjustments; conflicts of interest; and malpractice/maladministration, must be uploaded to and retained in the 'Documents' section of your centre's Creatio account.

## Appendix 3: NCTJ Accreditation of journalism courses

### Gain approval to deliver a new course or additional diploma modules - guidance for centres

As part of the NCTJ accreditation process, recognised centres are required to gain approval from the NCTJ to deliver new accredited courses. Centres that want to add an additional specialist option to an already accredited course must also gain approval from the NCTJ to deliver this additional module. To gain approval, centres must submit an application on Creatio to the NCTJ which includes:

- A description of the course and the combination of diploma modules they wish to offer
- A business case for the course and how it will boost the employability of students
- Evidence that they have the resources and expertise to deliver each of the diploma modules to the required standard
- Information the centre will use in their marketing and course information

The application form centres should use to submit their proposal to the NCTJ is called 'Application to deliver new Diploma course or modules' and is available in centre's Creatio account, in the 'start a new form' box on the right-hand side of the homepage. Centres must complete section 1 and 2 of the form before submitting it to the NCTJ.

Included below is a checklist of the information centres will be asked to include on their application form:

- The course name (for centre's that are applying for accreditation of a new course) **OR** which of your current accredited courses the new module(s) will be part of, if approved (for centre's that are applying to add an additional specialist option to an already accredited course)
- The diploma module(s) you are proposing to deliver
- Why you want to deliver the selected module(s) – you should state here the full business case you are making for approval. This should include, but is not limited to, research demonstrating demand from students and industry employers, and an analysis of the relevant jobs market
- The names of industry employers you have spoken to in support of your application, and attach letters of support as evidence
- The academic and practical experience your centre has of the module subject(s)
- Information the centre will use in their marketing and course information and how many students you expect to take the elective module(s) at each stage of the course
- When you propose to start delivery
- The number of direct teaching hours that will be allocated to the module(s)
- Who will deliver the module(s) – centres should include here tutor CVs and contact details (including email address, direct dial and mobile telephone numbers and postal address, if different from the centre's main address)
- Contingency arrangements for module delivery if the main tutor is unavailable
- The markers for any modules that are internally marked by the centre – if this person is different to the tutor delivering the module(s), centres should also detail the individual's academic and practical experience that qualifies them to take up this role

- Who will quality assure the course
- The mode of delivery (remote or in-centre)
- The practical equipment that will be used to deliver the module(s)
- Where the module exams will be delivered and the processes in place to ensure the integrity and security of the exams and adherence to NCTJ policies and procedures for exams delivery
- The processes in place to ensure that exams administration is carried out in a timely, professional manner with adherence to required timeframes

Please note that it is important to provide as much information as possible with the application to support your proposal. Following submission, the NCTJ accreditation board will confirm whether the centre's proposal has been approved. A short report will be provided to the centre to give feedback on the board's decision.