

The Rt. Hon. Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
20 Great Smith St  
London SW1P 3BT

**Statement on Strategic Priorities Grant funding and the future of journalism education from the Association for Journalism Education (AJE UK), The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC), Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA), Professional Publishers Association (PPA).**

We are deeply concerned by the recent guidance from the Secretary of State for Education to the Office for Students (OfS), instructing the reprioritisation of high-cost subject funding away from journalism courses.

This decision comes at a time when the need for high-quality, accurate, ethical journalism has never been greater. Trained journalists play a critical role in tackling misinformation, supporting democracy and holding power to account.

The necessity of maintaining high-quality journalism has been repeatedly demonstrated by [academic research](#), by [Parliamentary reports](#) and investigations such as the [Cairncross Review](#). Successive governments have recognised the importance of journalism and have sought to support it through a range of policies such as Business Rate and VAT relief, the BBC Licence-funded [Local Democracy Reporting Service](#) and 'key worker' status granted to journalists during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Journalism education plays a critical role in preparing students for careers not only in newsrooms but across the wider communications landscape, with journalism graduates supporting the economic infrastructure of the UK far beyond traditional newsrooms. Recent [NCTJ research](#) found that 71% of diploma graduates studied at a university or higher education institution. Separately, its [Journalists at Work](#) report found 81% of journalists hold a journalism qualification, with 84% saying it helped them secure their first job—often because employers required it.

To reduce funding support for journalism courses now sends a damaging signal. Although the Strategic Priorities Grant is only one part of the funding picture, the message that journalism is no longer seen as a national priority risks real harm: to student recruitment, to institutional investment, and ultimately to the health of journalism in the UK. Furthermore, your commitment that opportunity is available for all is in direct opposition to the removal of funding for journalism students from underrepresented groups.

We urge the Department for Education to reconsider this guidance and to recognise the strategic and societal importance of journalism education. At a time when public trust in information is under strain, and when all sectors—from business to government—need skilled content creators and communicators, journalism should be supported, not sidelined.

We are ready to work with the Department for Education and the Office for Students to develop a sustainable approach to funding that supports journalism's essential role in public life.

Signed:

Dr. Lada T. Price, Chair of the AJE UK

Joanne Forbes, Chief Executive, NCTJ

Jon Godel, Chief Executive, BJTC

Prof Einar Thorsen, Chair of MeCCSA

Gareth Pritchard, Director of Operations, PPA

