

**Have you  
got a**

**STORY**

**to tell?**

**The essential guide for starting  
a career in journalism**

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## Where your STORY goes



Visit the hub for our new campaign 'Where your story goes' to take our short personality quiz and hear from NCTJ alumni working for the likes of BBC Radio 1, ITV News and more about what roles in journalism could be a perfect fit for you!

➔ [nctj.com/yourstory](https://nctj.com/yourstory)

# INTRO

At the NCTJ, we believe journalism should be open to everyone - no matter where you're from or what kind of story you have to tell.

You don't need to have it all figured out. If you're curious about the world, enjoy telling stories, asking questions or creating content, journalism could be for you. There are all kinds of roles out there, and your strengths might be just what a newsroom needs.

This guide is here to show you what journalism really looks like today, and how your skills and interests could help shape its future. You'll find out about different jobs, training routes, funding options, and hear from real people who started out just like you.

Wherever your story begins, the NCTJ is here to help you take the next step.



## TOM BRAITHWAITE

News editor, *Financial Times*



Twenty-one years ago, starting out in journalism, I caught the tail end of an old culture: smoking rooms, hacks who took 3-hour lunches in the pub, copytakers who typed out stories dictated down the phone, libraries of carefully kept thematic newspaper clippings. It was a world away from Substack and ChatGPT.

But a lot hasn't changed. Back in 2005 the job market already seemed daunting. It was an oversubscribed business - lots of people like you and me queuing up to work in an industry that was known for being poorly paid and widely believed to be dying.

The way to survive and thrive is also the same.

I studied English and I liked writing. It can help. But when I'm looking to hire trainees I see good writing only as a bonus - even before the growing danger that it is produced by AI.

A good grounding in law and the other aspects of the NCTJ course is both attractive to employers and useful for you. But this is

a trade not a profession - there are no compulsory exams.

So if you boil it down only one thing matters.

Happily, as well as writing, I also liked finding things out. And this endures: the thrill of news. Machines can produce decent copy; for now they are still lousy reporters.

When hiring established journalists it's easy. My interview questions are always the same. The go-to: what is your favourite scoop?

For new entrants it's harder. You have to somehow demonstrate your ability to break news before getting paid for it. There is no one way of doing this. This is why it's hard. This is why it's fun. I can't tell you how. I can only tell you this is what counts.

# What kind of JOURNALIST could you be?

Journalism is about more than writing headlines. Maybe you see the details others miss. Maybe you value truth over trends. Whatever your skill set, passion, or personality, there's a role for you.

Have a think about some of your skills and traits, and explore some of the roles in journalism that could be a good fit for you.

## Tip

**You don't need to pick one now** – many journalists try different roles throughout their careers

Not sure which category might best play to your skills?

**Scan the QR code to take our quiz to find out what kind of journalism role could be a good fit for you.**

[nctj.com/yourstory](https://nctj.com/yourstory)



### The Truth Seeker

Curiosity is your instinct. You dig deep and ask the right questions to get to the full story.

**Key skill:** Curiosity  
**Roles:** News reporter

### The Pattern Finder

You don't miss a thing. The facts, the stats, the hidden details; you see how they connect to something bigger.

**Key skill:** Attention to detail  
**Roles:** Data journalist

### The Creative

You're the one who obsesses about the best way to tell a story. Allergic to boring - every story you tell needs a spark.

**Key skill:** Creativity  
**Roles:** Content creator, social media editor

### The Enthusiast

You're powered by passion. Whether it's a person, music genre, sport or trend, if it's your thing, you know it inside out.

**Key skill:** Passion  
**Roles:** Specialist journalist, e.g. music editor, football correspondent

### The Deep Diver

You can't be distracted. You follow the story no matter how deep it goes, determined to uncover the big picture.

**Key skill:** Persistence  
**Roles:** Investigative journalist, documentary maker

# BBC GET IN!

[bbc.co.uk/earlycareers](https://bbc.co.uk/earlycareers)

## READY TO LAUNCH YOUR JOURNALISM CAREER?

Whether you're a school leaver, graduate, or looking for the opportunity to change your career, the BBC's Journalism apprenticeships could be the place for you!



Our Junior Journalist Apprenticeship (Level 5) and Journalist Apprenticeship (Level 6) schemes give you an opportunity to gain experience whilst developing your journalism skills in roles across the BBC.

You'll receive gold standard training, a full-time salary and study for a professional qualification.

Search BBC Early Careers to learn more and apply

What

# SUBJECTS

Should I take?

## Subjects that might help:

### English

Helps with clear writing, structure and storytelling.

### Languages

Brilliant if you want to work internationally or reach different communities.

### Maths or sciences

Useful for data journalism, research and making complex topics easier to explain.

### History or politics

Teaches you to check facts, question sources and spot connections.

### Media studies or drama

Can help build confidence in presenting, producing and performing.

### What grades do you need?

Most pathways ask for GCSE English at grade 4 (C) or above. Some courses have different entry requirements, so it's best to check with each training provider.

### Journalism isn't just news

You could specialise in sport, fashion, food, music, tech, travel, politics or social media - or cover a bit of everything.

### What really counts:

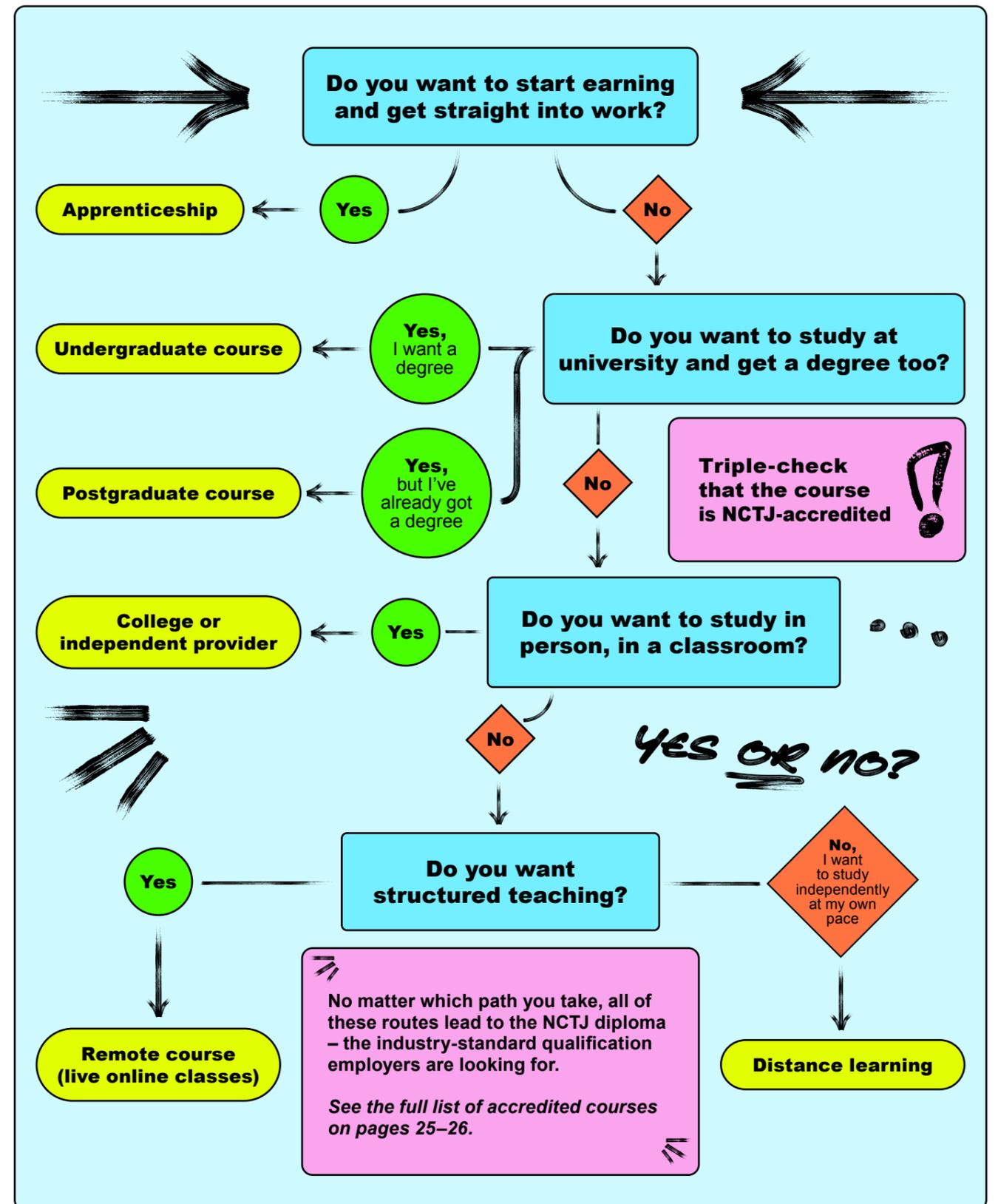
Your *attitude* and *ideas*.

Journalists need curiosity, creativity and initiative. Show your passion by writing, filming or talking about the topics that matter to you.

Don't worry about having all the skills yet - the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism will teach you what editors are looking for.

# CHOOSING THE BEST ROUTE

What's the best way for you to get your NCTJ diploma?



Can I be a

# JOURNALIST

if...

"I don't live in London"

**You absolutely can.**  
Many journalists work outside London, and local journalism is a great way to start your career, telling stories that matter to your community.

"I'm dyslexic or struggle with spelling"

**Yes – don't let that stop you.**  
What matters most are your ideas, curiosity and determination. And remember, not all journalism is written.

"I don't want to go to university"

**That's absolutely fine.**  
You don't need a degree to be a journalist. The NCTJ diploma is what editors look for, and you can study for this in a number of ways.

→ Go to page 9 to find the right route

"I don't know anyone in the industry"

**Most people don't when they start.**  
You can build your experience by writing for your student paper, starting a blog, or publishing your content online.

"I'm better at maths or science than writing"

**Those skills are really valuable.**  
Journalists are needed to report on subjects like science and health, and to find stories in numbers.

"I don't want to be on camera or in the spotlight"

**You don't have to be.**  
There are loads of behind-the-scenes journalism roles, like editing, producing and researching.



## Journalism needs people like you

Whatever your background, interests or skills, there's a place for you in journalism.

I STARTED MAKING YOUTUBE VIDEOS IN MY BEDROOM

EVIE FLYNN

COMMUNITY REPORTER AND VIDEO JOURNALIST,  
SOUTHWARK NEWS

NCTJ APPRENTICE, TRAINING WITH DARLINGTON COLLEGE

VISIT THE 'WHERE YOUR STORY GOES' SITE TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH EVIE [nctj.com/yourstory](https://nctj.com/yourstory)

## Why journalism

# MATTERS

Every day, decisions are made that shape your future - from climate and healthcare to jobs, housing and education. But who's asking the hard questions? Who's holding power to account?

## Journalists are.

They don't just report the news - they uncover the truth, challenge injustice, and give a voice to people who aren't being heard.



### More than news

Today's journalists do much more than write headlines. They use data to track stories, make podcasts and videos, and shine a light on what's happening in their communities. They call out false information and fight for facts.

To do all that, they need curiosity, clear communication, research skills and sharp thinking.

You don't have to wait until you graduate to do real journalism. From writing about your community to starting a school podcast, you can make a difference now.

### Journalism needs you

In a world full of fake news and filtered feeds, trusted journalism matters more than ever. Democracy only works when people have access to reliable, truthful information.

That means journalism needs people like you - with fresh ideas, different experiences and the confidence to ask, "Why?"

Our newsrooms should reflect the communities they report on. That's why your voice matters.



# STUDY JOURNALISM AT NTU

Our journalism students shape the way we see the world, bringing hot topics from across the world into our industry-standard newsroom. On NTU's NCTJ-accredited course you'll learn from our experts how to write, interview and produce, all preparing you for an exciting future career as a journalist.



[ntu.ac.uk/journalism](https://ntu.ac.uk/journalism)

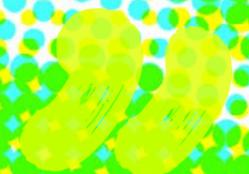


“  
I'M  
CONSTANTLY  
LOOKING FOR  
THE STORY -  
EVERYWHERE

**CREE-SUMMER HAUGHTON**  
JOURNALIST & PRESENTER, ITV NEWS

NCTJ ALUMNI, FORMER ITV CENTRAL AND BAUER MEDIA GROUP APPRENTICE

VISIT THE 'WHERE YOUR STORY GOES' SITE  
TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW  
WITH CREE-SUMMER [nctj.com/yourstory](https://www.nctj.com/yourstory)



# The School of Journalism

Learn about our free journalism events here



THE ONLY NCTJ-ACCREDITED

JOURNALISM UNDERGRADUATE

DEGREE IN LONDON

BECOME A MULTIMEDIA JOURNALIST AT THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Get your multimedia journalism degree and industry-standard NCTJ qualification at the same time on our super practical programme and be ready to walk into a job without further study.



OUR NEWSROOM IS YOUR CLASSROOM



The School of Journalism is a great place to start your journalism career. You are taught all the skills really early and it's not long before it becomes second nature.

Holly Nichols, BBC

Top tips from

# EMPLOYERS

The NCTJ Diploma in Journalism is trusted by editors - many see it as essential for anyone starting out. But when it comes to hiring, qualifications are just the beginning.

Here's what editors say they're really looking for in new journalists:

**"We take your NCTJ qualification as a given. Show me why you want to do this job and what stories you want to tell. A can-do attitude and curiosity really stand out."**

Joan Cummins, senior news reporter, BBC

**"Find your niche. Expertise in a specific area makes you invaluable."**

Paddy von Behr, assistant sports editor at The Times

**"Don't be afraid to ask questions, get things wrong, or try new things."**

Mark Waldron, editor-in-chief at Iconic Media

The NCTJ will teach you the core skills - but it's your attitude, curiosity and willingness to learn that will make you stand out.

“

**DATA IS JUST  
A TOOL TO  
TELL BETTER  
STORIES.**

**HAMZAH KHALIQUE-LOONAT**  
FOOTBALL REPORTER AND DATA JOURNALIST, THE TIMES

NCTJ ALUMNI, STUDIED AT PA MEDIA ACADEMY

VISIT THE 'WHERE YOUR STORY GOES'  
SITE TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW  
WITH HAMZAH [nctj.com/yourstory](https://nctj.com/yourstory)



**CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY**  
**PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYDD**

School of Journalism,  
Media and Culture

Yr Ysgol Newyddiaduraeth,  
y Cyfryngau a Diwylliant



## News Journalism (MA)

From Susanna Reid to Martin Lewis, and Emma Barnett to Jason Mohammad, some of the most respected and recognisable faces in UK journalism were #CardiffTrained.

The writing and reporting skills we teach underpin every role in journalism from TV and online to podcasts and social. Graduates can be found at major outlets such as the BBC, Sky and The Daily Mail. They cover beats ranging from Parliament and the climate crisis to sport.

The industry wants, and needs, diverse voices. Those who can bring fresh perspectives. On our NCTJ-accredited course you'll gain the multimedia skills and knowledge to tell the stories that matter to you and your community.

**Find your voice to amplify theirs.**



Students join us from a wide range of undergraduate degrees and many have been helped by the NCTJ's Journalism Diversity Fund.

Yusuf Khan came to Cardiff in 2018 and now works as a sustainability reporter with The Wall Street Journal. He says the JDF was key to kick-starting his career in journalism.

# Funding your JOURNALIST training

Don't let the costs stop you from becoming a journalist. Whether you're heading to university, college, or doing a fast-track course, there are ways to get help with your training costs.

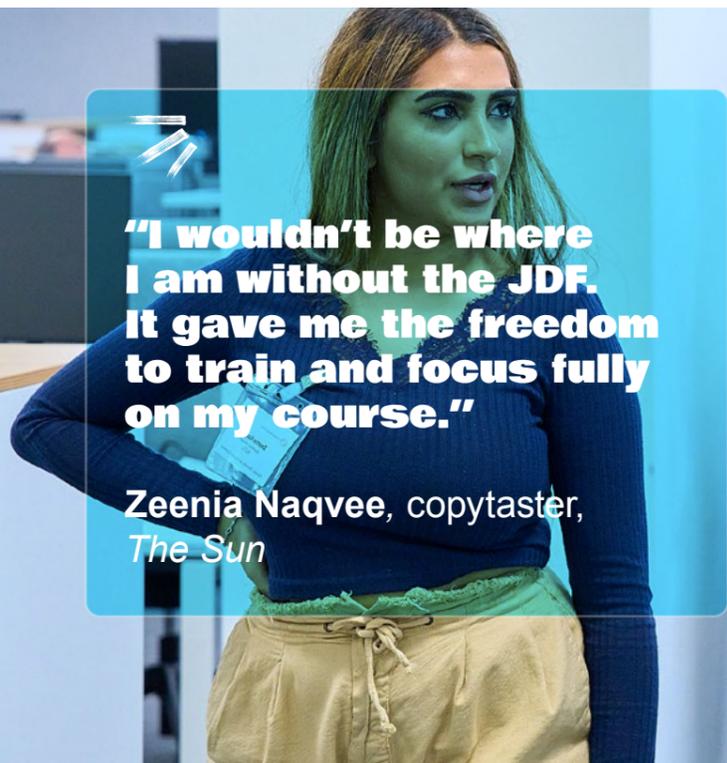
## The Journalism Diversity Fund

The Journalism Diversity Fund (JDF) supports people from underrepresented backgrounds who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford journalism training.

- Can help with course fees and/or living costs
- Each recipient gets a working journalist mentor
- More than 600 students have been supported so far

Newsrooms need people from all backgrounds to reflect the communities they serve - and that includes you.

Find out more at [journalismdiversityfund.com](http://journalismdiversityfund.com) or follow the NCTJ for updates.



**"I wouldn't be where I am without the JDF. It gave me the freedom to train and focus fully on my course."**

Zeenia Naqvee, copytaster,  
*The Sun*



**"The JDF helped me build confidence, skills and connections. It was the first step in my career."**

Amar Mehta, news editor,  
*Sky Sports News*

## Going to UNIVERSITY?

You can apply for student finance to cover your course fees and help with living costs.

### The two main types of support:

Student finance can help cover some or all of your costs, including tuition fees and living expenses. Depending on your circumstances, you can apply for one or both types of support - it's up to you.

The exact support available varies across the UK, as Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have different systems to England. The rules for student finance are changing, so it's important to check the latest guidance to see what you are eligible for based on your potential course start date.

**Estimate your support:**  
Use the student finance calculator: [www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator)

**"Student finance made it possible for me to study journalism at university. I wouldn't have managed without it."**



George Palmer-Soady,  
reporter, Nottinghamshire Live

## Apprenticeships: earn while you learn

Not sure about taking out a loan? Journalism apprenticeships offer a different route. You'll:

- Get paid a salary
- Work in a newsroom
- Gain real-life experience
- Complete your training while on the job
- Complete your NCTJ diploma without paying course fees

Apprenticeships are a great way to start your career and hit the ground running.

You can apply for apprenticeships directly with journalism employers.

**Whatever your background, there's a route into journalism for you - and support to help you get there.**



Where can

# JOURNALISM

take you?

A career in journalism can lead to exciting opportunities – in newsrooms, on air, online, or even beyond the media. Here’s how it can begin, and where it can take you.



**Mirek Gosney**  
- from community reporter to social media producer

Mirek started as a community reporter for his local newspaper. He developed a passion for video journalism and now works at Sky News, where he researches, scripts, shoots and edits digital videos and explainers.

**First job:** Community news reporter, *Newbury Weekly News*  
**Now:** Social and audience engagement producer, Sky News



**Karimah Bangura**  
- from trainee to digital producer

Karimah started as a trainee at the BBC, before joining Channel 5 News as a journalism apprentice. Today she works at ITN, pitching and producing digital news packages.

**First job:** BBC trainee, then journalism apprentice at Channel 5 News  
**Now:** Digital news producer, ITN



**Katey Pigden**  
- from reporter to content director

Katey began her career as a local news reporter. After working in a range of editorial roles, she moved into PR and communications. She’s now content director at Octo Members, a private network for financial services professionals.

**First job:** Reporter, *South Wales Argus* and *Pontypool Free Press*  
**Now:** Content director, Octo Members

**Did you know?**

74% of NCTJ diploma graduates are working in journalism 15 months after completing their studies – this compares to just 28% of all journalism graduates\*

\*NCTJ Destinations of NCTJ Diploma in Journalism students, 2024



## STUDY IN A CITY WITH NEWS AND SPORT AT ITS HEART

LIVERPOOL IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO BE A JOURNALISM STUDENT

Our NCTJ-accredited courses place our students at the heart of the stories that matter.

- BA (Hons) JOURNALISM
- BA (Hons) SPORTS JOURNALISM
- MA JOURNALISM
- MA SPORTS JOURNALISM

As a student journalist at LJMU you can report for our live multimedia platforms on breaking news and from the press boxes at world-class sporting events. You will learn from staff with decades of industry experience at our city centre campus, while studying for the NCTJ diploma as well as your degree at no extra charge. If you want to broadcast your own show live, why not join our award-winning student station, Moore Radio where you can develop your own voice. You will also get behind-the-scenes in professional newsrooms through field trips and work experience placements.

[ljmu.ac.uk](http://ljmu.ac.uk)

SCAN THE CODE TO FIND OUT MORE



**NCTJ AWARD WINNERS**  
for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion





You don't need to wait until you leave school or college to become a journalist. Here are some simple ways you can start building your skills right now.



### Start writing

Write about things that matter to you – your school, your area, your interests. Use a blog, newsletter or even your notes app. You don't have to show anyone, just practice getting your ideas down.

### Join (or start) a student newspaper

If your school or college has one, get involved. If not, start one! Even a one-page newsletter or a group blog can help you develop your storytelling skills.

### Use social media creatively

Follow journalists, news outlets and organisations like the NCTJ. Try reporting on local events through Instagram or TikTok. Learn what makes a post engaging and informative.

### Experiment with other formats

Try making a podcast, YouTube channel, or short video series. Film reviews, opinion pieces, interviews – whatever interests you. These formats help you build confidence and digital skills.

### Consume news

Watch, read or listen to the news and get into the habit of asking questions. Why is this story important? Who is affected? How did they find out? This will help you think like a journalist.

### Small steps count

You don't need to be perfect, just get started. Every step will help you on your journey!

We are @NCTJ\_news on TikTok, Instagram and X

## SPONSORED FEATURE

### Sub-editing and its importance



## MILES REBEIRO

Production journalist, *Financial Times*

When I started my career in journalism, I had very little idea what a sub-editor did. Unlike reporters who craft stories and earn bylines for their work, a sub-ed's role is below the radar but no less important in earning and protecting the trust and loyalty of a publication's readers.

A good sub-editor's work should be invisible. But that makes it no less important. Production journalists ensure reporting is clean, that copy is accurate, grammatically correct and reads well. They are the final safeguard before publication.

At a respected national newspaper such as the *Financial Times*, it is our responsibility to take reader trust seriously. This is not only to encourage people to pick up copies of our newspaper but also because *FT* readers depend on the paper to explain sometimes highly complex subjects with clarity and authority. A stray error, confusing sentence or misleading headline can quickly damage a reader's confidence.

The role was an excellent fit for me as someone who loves language and using it to communicate ideas concisely, as well as someone who enjoys working under pressure. As a sub for print, my job feels like working on a puzzle with a deadline —

cutting stories to shape by finding more concise language, or condensing a complicated idea down into a five word headline is as rewarding as any of the hardest brain teasers.

This is no less evident than on 'budget day', the day that the UK chancellor announces the budget surpasses even Christmas as the most important day in our calendar.

It is a day spent shaping a flurry of major stories: cutting copy to fit the page, crafting striking headlines, and adding essential "furniture" such as standfirsts, captions and pullquotes. The pace is relentless, the responsibility enormous. And while my name may not appear at the top of the story, there is nothing more gratifying than seeing the finished paper on the newsstand, knowing I helped make it as clear and accurate as possible.

For aspiring journalists, sub-editing offers a rewarding and intellectually demanding career. It has strengthened my attention to detail, and has even made me a better writer in the process. A brilliant piece of journalism may start with great reporting, but it ends with clever and incisive sub-editing.

*Miles Rebeiro is an NCTJ-qualified journalist.*

# Find a JOURNALISM course

All the courses listed here are accredited by the NCTJ, which means they meet the standard trusted by editors and employers across the industry.

Whether you want to study full-time, part-time, at university or college, or something in-between, there's an option to suit you.

Visit [www.nctj.com/courses](http://www.nctj.com/courses) to explore your options and find out more.

## South West England

### Bournemouth University

BA (Hons) Multimedia Journalism  
BA (Hons) Multimedia Sports Journalism

### University of Gloucestershire

BA (Hons) Journalism

## South East England

### Oxford Brookes University

BA Media, Journalism and Publishing  
MA Journalism

### University of Brighton

BA Journalism  
BA Sport Journalism  
MA Journalism  
MA Sport Journalism

### University of Portsmouth

BA (Hons) Journalism

### KMTV Academy

A Year in Journalism

## London

### Brunel University

Diploma in Journalism

### Kingston University

MA/PgDip Journalism

### News Associates London

Fast-track Multimedia Journalism  
Multimedia Sports Journalism  
Part-time Diploma in Multimedia Journalism  
BA (Hons) Multimedia Journalism  
(in partnership with Plymouth Marjon University)

### PA Media Academy

Fast-track Multimedia Journalism  
Part-time Multimedia Journalism  
Fast-track Sports Journalism

### St Mary's University

MA Sports Journalism

## East of England

### University of Essex

BA Multimedia Journalism

## Scotland

### Glasgow Caledonian University

BA (Hons) Multimedia Journalism  
MA Multimedia Journalism

### Glasgow Clyde College

Fast-track Diploma in Journalism

## Wales

### Cardiff University

MA News Journalism

## North East England

### Darlington College

Diploma in Journalism

### Teesside University

BA (Hons) Multimedia Journalism  
BA (Hons) Sport Journalism

### University of Sunderland

BA (Hons) Fashion Journalism  
BA (Hons) Journalism  
BA (Hons) Sports Journalism  
MA Journalism  
MA Journalism (sports pathway)

## North West England

### City of Liverpool College

Fast-track Diploma in Journalism

### Liverpool John Moores University

BA (Hons) Journalism  
MA Sports Journalism  
BA (Hons) Sports Journalism  
MA Journalism

### University of Lancashire

BA (Hons) Journalism

### University of Salford

MA Journalism

## East Midlands

### Nottingham Trent University

BA (Hons) Journalism  
MA Journalism  
MA Sports Journalism

### University of Lincoln

BA (Hons) Journalism  
BA (Hons) Sports Journalism

## Yorkshire

### Leeds Trinity University

MA Journalism

### University of Sheffield

BA Journalism Studies  
MA Journalism

## Northern Ireland

### North West Regional College

Diploma in Journalism

### Ulster University

MA Journalism

## Remote

### University of Portsmouth

MA Journalism

### News Associates

Part-time Multimedia Journalism

# OUR NEWSROOM. YOUR IMPACT.

Looking for a job where you can challenge the establishment?  
At the Financial Times, we've been holding power to account  
since 1888. Today, we continue to deliver world leading news  
with purpose, integrity and accuracy. Tomorrow's yours.  
Build a newsworthy future based on our trusted reputation.

[aboutus.ft.com/careers](https://aboutus.ft.com/careers)

**BUILD A NEWSWORTHY CAREER AT THE FT**

KENNIS FUNG  
TALENT ACQUISITION SPECIALIST  
HR