



UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title:	BA (Hons) Journalism
Awarding Body:	Staffordshire University
Accreditation:	National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)
Final Awards:	BA Single (Hons), Joint (Hons), Major/Minor (Hons)
Teaching Institution:	Staffordshire University
Intermediate Awards:	Ordinary degree, DipHE, CertHE
Mode of Study	Full-time three-year undergraduate Part-time study available
UCAS Codes:	P500
QAA Subject Benchmarks:	Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2008)
Professional/Statutory Body	
Date of Production:	July 2004
Date of Revision:	January 2010

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EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

- To provide students with an understanding of journalism in relation to both theory and practical skills, and in relation to traditional and new industry practices.
- To offer the opportunity and encouragement for students to take the NCTJ professional examinations.
- To facilitate independence of study by introducing students to established techniques of journalistic and academic enquiry.
- To encourage students to make independent judgements on journalistic practice by developing their critical evaluation of current research and assumptions in the study of journalism.
- To enable students to acquire a critical understanding of journalism through an informed, analytical and creative approach to professional practice, and to encourage them to develop a sense of social consciousness and an ethical practice and responsibility to their own work.
- To provide Journalism students with the opportunity to write extended pieces of journalism or related research dissertations under supervision.
- To give students the opportunity to gain professional experience of journalism through work placement within the industry or related industries (such as public relations and press offices).
- To provide the employability skills required for working in all areas of print journalism (including magazines, newspapers, on-line publications) and the transferable skills (within both the theoretical and practical frameworks of journalistic enquiry) for employment in other areas of work.
- To provide the necessary skills to equip Journalism students with the ability to pursue life-long learning.

What is distinctive about this programme?

- The award is one the top courses in the country as rated by accrediting body the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)
- The massive experience and knowledge of the delivery team in the media world.
- The award has “convergence” at its core so students are learning multi-media skills suitable for today’s journalism industry
- A hands-on, real-world focus throughout maintained by specialist lecturers for every aspect of the programme, work placements and real-world project briefs set by media professionals.
- A dedicated news site StaffsLive enables students to publish to a real audience and build an electronic portfolio of work
- Students get to work with a team of experienced lecturers who are all still very practising in the industry
- An outstanding track record of former journalism graduates now working in mainstream and niche journalism and media organisations.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

At the end of your studies you should be able to:

Knowledge & Understanding Demonstrate a systematic understanding and coherent and detailed knowledge of the key aspects of journalism, including new developments in journalistic practice such as convergent journalism and a systematic understanding of relevant theoretical concepts concerning news production and the regulatory framework of journalism (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.4-6, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Learning Demonstrate an understanding of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of journalistic knowledge, and the ability to continue to learn and develop skills independently, through the selection and application of appropriate practical, critical and theoretical methodologies (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-6, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Enquiry Carry out secondary and primary research for articles, projects, presentations, essays and dissertations, involving sustained, self-managed enquiry (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-6, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Analysis Analyse current journalistic research and debates and critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, concepts and data to make reasoned judgements and apply them appropriately to the interpretation, critical analysis and evaluation of a story or source's accuracy and relevance (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-6, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Problem Solving Develop appropriate questions to achieve a solution or solutions to a problem, use decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts and circumstances, and plan and manage individual and group-based, creative, research and production projects to a given brief, deliver them to deadline and evaluate the effectiveness of the processes employed (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-5, 6.1, 7.1-7, 8.1-2)
Communication Demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of communication techniques to hone journalistic content for both specialist and non-specialist audiences via the media (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-6, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Application Apply methods, theories and techniques learned to review, consolidate and extend, and apply their journalistic knowledge and understanding to devise and sustain arguments using the appropriate research techniques and methodology (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-5, 6.1, 8.1-2)
Reflection Critically evaluate your own work and personal development, with reference to professional media practices and the academic debates that surround them and demonstrate transferable skills necessary for other employment or further training and/or postgraduate research (QAASBS 4.1-5, 5.2-6, 6.1, 7.1-7, 8.1-2)

These learning outcomes have been informed by the 2008 QAA Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies Subject Bench Marking Statement.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

Award: JOURNALISM

Route: Single (Hons)

Potential award = Cert HE (120 credits passed with at least 90 at L4)

L E V E L C (4)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75062-4 Theory and Practice 1 (15)	CORE AM75269-4 Story R&D (15)	CORE AM75341-4 Accredited Shorthand Level 1	CORE AM75067-4 Law for Journalists 1	CORE AM75055-4 The British Press (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75064-4 Theory and Practice 2 (15)	CORE AM75270-4 Editing and Production 1 (15)	(15)	(15)	CORE AM75138-4 Thinking Journalism (15)

(To progress to Level 5(I) at least 90 credits with at least 75 L4 award specific credits must be passed)

Potential award = DipHE (240 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 and L5)

L E V E L I (5)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75360-5 Video and Audio Journalism (15)	CORE AM75049-5 Theory and Practice 3 (15)	CORE AM75344-5 Law for Journalists 2 (15)	CORE AM75195-5 Public Affairs for Journalists	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75081-5 Work Placement (15)	CORE AM75050-5 Theory and Practice 4 (15)		(15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 3	(15)				

(To progress to Level 6 at least 210 credits including all required award specific Level 4 credits and at least 75 award specific Level 5 credits must be passed)

Potential award = Honours Degree (360 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 L5 and L6)

L E V E L H (6)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75076-6	CORE AM75233-6 Newsdays (15)	CORE AM75196-6 Career Development		GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	Journalism Project (45)		(15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

Award: JOURNALISM
Route: Joint (Hons)

Potential award = Cert HE (120 credits passed with at least 90 at L4)

L E V E L C (4)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75062-4 Theory and Practice 1 (15)	CORE AM75067-4 Law for Journalists 1 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75064-4 Theory and Practice 2 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 5(I) at least 90 credits with at least 75 L4 award specific credits must be passed)

Potential award = DipHE (240 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 and L5)

L E V E L I (5)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75049-5 Theory and Practice 3 (15)	CORE AM75056-5 Editing and Production 1 (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75050-5 Theory and Practice 4 (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 6 at least 210 credits including all required award specific Level 4 credits and at least 75 award specific Level 5 credits must be passed)

Potential award = Honours Degree (360 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4, L5 and L6)

L E V E L H (6)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75196-6 Career Development (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2		CORE AM75075-6 Journalism Project (30)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

Award: JOURNALISM
Route: Major (Hons)

Potential award = Cert HE (120 credits passed with at least 90 at L4)

L E V E L C (4)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75062-4 Theory and Practice 1 (15)	CORE AM75067-4 Law for Journalists 1 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75064-4 Theory and Practice 2 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 5(I) at least 90 credits with at least 75 L4 award specific credits must be passed)

Potential award = DipHE (240 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 and L5)

L E V E L I (5)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75049-5 Theory and Practice 3 (15)	CORE AM75056-5 Editing and Production 1 (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75050-5 Theory and Practice 4 (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 6 at least 210 credits including all required award specific Level 4 credits and at least 75 award specific Level 5 credits must be passed)

Potential award = Honours Degree (360 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4, L5 and L6)

L E V E L H (6)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75076-6 (15)		CORE AM75196-6 Career Development (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	Journalism Project (45)			OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)

Award: JOURNALISM
Route: Minor (Hons)

Potential award = Cert HE (120 credits passed with at least 90 at L4)

L E V E L C (4)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75062-4 Theory and Practice 1 (15)	CORE AM75067-4 Law for Journalists 1 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75064-4 Theory and Practice 2 (15)		OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 5(I) at least 90 credits with at least 75 L4 award specific credits must be passed)

Potential award = DipHE (240 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 and L5)

L E V E L I (5)	Teaching Block 1	CORE AM75049-5 Theory and Practice 3 (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	CORE AM75050-5 Theory and Practice 4 (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)

(To progress to Level 6 at least 210 credits including all required award specific Level 4 credits and at least 75 award specific Level 5 credits must be passed)

Potential award = Honours Degree (360 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4, L5 and L6)

L E V E L H (6)	Teaching Block 1	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)
	Teaching Block 2	AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	OTHER SUBJECT (15)	GENERAL OPTION (15)

Award Specific Options – JOURNALISM

LEVEL C (4)					
Teaching Block 1		Cats	Teaching Block 2		Cats
AM25240-4	War, Peace and Terrorism	15	AM25241-4	Issues in World Politics	15
AM75055-4	The British Press	15	AM75138-4	Thinking Journalism	15
			AM75269-4	Story R&D	15
AM75080-4	Shorthand		Delivered across teaching block 1 and 2		15
<i>Level One Award Specific Modules for Joint/Major Routes only</i>					

LEVEL I (5)					
Teaching Block 1		Cats	Teaching Block 2		Cats
AM75052-5	Sportswriting in the Cross-Media Market	15	AM25320-5	Broadcast Journalism and Government	15
AM75056-5	Editing and Production 1 (Single only)	15	AM75053-5	Sports Features and Creative Content	15
AM75184-5	Web-Based Journalism	15	AM75057-5	Editing and Production 2	15
AM75197-5	Screening Journalism	15	AM75059-5	Magazine Writing and Creative Content	15
AM75260-5	Video and Audio Journalism (joint/major only)	15	AM75060-5	Magazine Design, Development and Production	15
AM75344-5	Law for Journalist 2 (Joint, Major only)	15	AM75063-5	The Politics of Broadcast News	15
AM75388-5	Entrepreneurial Journalism	15	AM75184-5	Web-Based Journalism	15
AM75417-5	PR Operations	15	AM75388-5	Entrepreneurial Journalism	15
AM75162-5	Shorthand 2 (serial module runs across both semesters)				15
AM75195-5	Public Affairs for Journalists (serial module runs across both semesters)				15
AM75342-5	Accredited Advanced Shorthand (single only) (serial module runs across both semesters)				15
			Teaching Block 2 - 3		
			AM75081-5	Work Placement (joint/major only)	15

LEVEL H (6)					
Teaching Block 1		Cats	Teaching Block 2		Cats
AM00214-6	Understanding Photojournalism	15	AM00214-6	Understanding Photojournalism	15
AM25148-6	Conflict and Journalism	15	AM25319-6	Women in Journalism	15
AM75185-6	Web-Based Journalism (cannot study with AM75184-5)	15	AM25504-6	The War on Terror Explained	15
AM75198-6	Screening Journalism (cannot be studied with AM75197-5)	15	AM75064-6	The Political Columnist: Origin, Development and Practice	15
			AM75075-6	Journalism Project (minor only)	30
			AM75077-6	The Philosophy of Journalism	15
			AM75185-6	Web-Based Journalism (cannot study with AM75184-5)	15
			AM75363-6	Magazine Design, Development and Production	15
			AM75364-6	Editing and Production 2	15
AM75163-6	Shorthand 3 (runs across both teaching blocks with assessment deadline in teaching block 2)				15

GENERAL OPTIONS

Students can choose from the Award Specific Option list or modules from elsewhere in the Faculty of Arts, Media and Design. Alternatively, they can choose from the University General Option Guide or a module from another Faculty (e.g. Business and Law). (Available via www.staffs.ac.uk/amdoptions).

HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

Journalism students progress through their degree by a cumulative process of gaining experience and knowledge; both the vocational needs of a career in Journalism and the reflective analysis necessary for intellectual development are fostered. The more theoretical modules link with practice, both in the content of the modules (where practical examples illustrate journalism and communication theories) and in the way that student knowledge of the theoretical perspectives and analyses helps them to understand the role of the journalist in society.

A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed in Journalism modules. Besides the traditional one hour lecture, one hour seminar model (for example, in *The British Press*) students are taught through practice-based workshops (*Theory & Practice, Editing & Production*), two-hour interactive workshops (*Law & Public Affairs for Journalists*), individual tutorials (*Journalism Project*) and student-led workshop seminars (*The Political Columnist*).

Independent learning is important on all modules, as it enables students to develop their subject and key skills and to prepare for written and oral communication. Independent learning is promoted through the feedback given to students, which takes several forms including small group and one-to-one discussions on summative assessment. On a number of modules, including *Theory & Practice* and *Shorthand*, regular diagnostic tests by tutors in seminars informally assess the progress of students – students are given regular feedback on their progress during seminar/workshop sessions in their practical modules.

The student's *Work Placement* offers them the chance to use the skills they have developed in a professional journalism environment. Level C Modules such as *Law for Journalists*, *Shorthand* and *Theory & Practice* have embedded within them all the professional training a student requires as preparation for their placement; their modules looking at the *British Press* give them the knowledge of current debates in journalistic practice and the historical and intellectual context of the industry, helping them to make the most of their placement. At the start of their second year (Level I), students receive a placement handbook which helps prepare them for the task of getting an industry placement.

Assessment

Journalism students are assessed in a variety of ways over the course of their undergraduate careers and the balance between the different forms of assessment is determined by the different aims and learning outcomes of the core and option modules.

Assessment methods include academic essays (for example in *British Press, Thinking Journalism*), researching and writing news stories (*Theory & Practice 1*), unseen examinations (*Law for Journalists 1*), class tests (*Shorthand*), writing features (*Theory & Practice 3, Journalism Project, Career Development*), computer produced demonstrations of technical ability (*Editing & Production*), production projects (*Magazine Design*), individual portfolios (*Photojournalism*), and Newsday portfolios (*Theory & Practice 4, Newsdays*).

Individual modules (including the above) may also be weighted by combinations of these different assessment methods. For example, *Work Placement* module is assessed by a combination of editor's report, a student portfolio of published work (where appropriate) and written reflection by individual students on their experiences of work placement.

Academic essays allow tutors to gauge the student's ability to independently research and then analyse, assess and present that information in a coherent and detached (ie. academic) manner. Writing news and feature stories for formal assessment tests the student's progress towards the appropriate professional standards. Unseen examinations and class tests help prepare students for their unseen NCTJ examinations. Portfolios of work (including the production of magazines, photojournalism and newspaper page layouts) encourage group working and allow tutors to assess student progress towards appropriate professional standards. The editor's report on the student's work placement assesses their performance in a working newsroom (or similar environment).

At Level C, all first and fails are double marked by Journalism tutors. At Levels I and H, as well as double marking all first and fails, a sample of work from each classification band (2:1, 2:2, 3rd) is double marked by Journalism tutors and given to External Examiners. All third year Journalism projects are at least double marked – most are also seen by a third marker in a day-long exercise where all Journalism tutors look at student projects to ensure fairness and parity. Journalism externals also have the opportunity to see all pieces of work across the board – our externals spend the day before the Assessment Board looking at the sample and with all second and third year work in Journalism available to them in a 'paper room'. Externals thus have the opportunity to see an individual student's work across the whole range of Journalism modules.

The effectiveness of our teaching on practical modules is judged by the success rates in NCTJ examinations, and by regular team meetings and peer assessment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entry Requirements (including ILETS score)

What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

The entry requirements for the award are normally:

300 points; 40 points may come from key skills, AS or other units.
For joints, the requirement is 280 points.

We also recruit mature students by interview and written assessment. The Journalism team is flexible in their judgement of the suitability of an applicant, however, and will take factors such as work experience, personal statements into account.

For international students, a minimum overall IELTS score of 7.5 is required, and possibly an interview and written assessment (delivered online) to assess candidate suitability.

Disability Statement

Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at:

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study_here/disabled_students/index.jsp

AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This award is accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), an organisation which oversees the provision for and management and delivery of what are termed pre-entry examinations offered at a number of accredited centres in the UK, including Staffordshire University.

Pre-entry refers to the fact that these examinations are being taken before a candidate begins employment in journalism. As such these examinations are seen by many editors as a key factor in offering jobs to graduates. They cover four subject areas: news gathering and writing (one exam + one portfolio), media law for journalists (two exams), public affairs for journalists (two exams), and shorthand (one exam).

Preparation for these examinations is concomitant with the content and delivery of the modules in theory and practice, law, public affairs and shorthand. The modules covering these areas were redesigned for the 2003-4 academic year to more appropriately mirror the NCTJ curricula regarding content and assessment. Course assessments for modules covering law, public affairs, shorthand and, to some extent theory and practice, are class tests. This redesign of modules and shift to unseen test assessment has produced significant improvements in students' grasp, quality of work and NCTJ results and continuous refinement is expected to further improvements.

Preparation for news practice exams is provided through the four theory and practice modules through semesters one to four. Tutors, all seasoned news practitioners, use a combination of theory, example, practice and ongoing feedback in workshops to take students through all aspects of news production from news sense, sources, research and presentation to interviewing, house style, news editing and writing techniques. Course assessment is through written news stories produced through independent reporting by the student, directed by the tutor and from unseen material. Past NCTJ papers are used in class exercises to give students appropriate material relevant to newsroom practice and as preparation for NCTJ examination content and format. Most students will develop their abilities through the first two years of their award to take the two NCTJ examinations in news practice at the end of the second year, particularly following their work placement, although some students progress quickly enough to do this by the end of the first year. The examinations are in the form of writing news stories from written unseen material based around press releases, press statements, quotes and background material.

The redrafting of modules for law and public affairs provision has provided a thorough investigation of the subject areas through a lecture programme covering the essential knowledge curricula, together with appropriate reflective and critical perspectives. These modules are delivered by tutors with both practical and academic experience pertinent to the subject areas. The lecture programme leads to end-of-semester assessments by class tests. These tests mirror the content, style and length of the NCTJ examinations. Most students sitting NCTJ examinations in these subjects will do so following the semester in which material specific to particular NCTJ papers is addressed. For example, the NCTJ Media Law (General Reporting) examination, which concentrates on contempt and defamation, is mirrored by the content of the level 4 serial module Law for Journalists 1.

Shorthand is taught through workshops delivered by an experienced specialist shorthand tutor who takes the students from scratch, by exposition, example and class practices, up to, potentially, the ability to pass the NCTJ 100 words per minute

test. Again, the module assessment is by class test, mirroring the method of NCTJ assessment. The shorthand module has been redrafted at level 4 for students on the accredited course, which requires those students to achieve a minimum of 80wpm on completion of the module, now called Accredited Shorthand. This is designed to prepare students to achieve the minimum industry standard of an NCTJ 100wpm pass, which is demanded by almost all traditional journalism outlets and seen as a massive plus by other related media industries.

NCTJ examinations are offered at Staffordshire University in January and again in April/May.

This effectively means that more than 20 individual NCTJ examinations are offered in any one academic year. This is to give all students adequate access, particularly given the difficulties of accommodating such elements as resits and work placements. The NCTJ provides a range of dates for examinations across the different subjects each year. Students are allowed multiple resit opportunities. They are responsible for paying all NCTJ examination fees themselves, currently £38 for all exams except shorthand at £11.

The NCTJ examination provision is the responsibility of a designated NCTJ coordinator within the journalism team at Staffordshire University. Students are advised orally, by e-mail and by notices of exam dates and requirements. Specific forms are provided for them to book these examinations which are then processed, together with the appropriate payment in advance, by faculty administrative staff in concert with the NCTJ coordinator. Invigilation is arranged from within the journalism team by the coordinator. Contact with the NCTJ is continuous, by e-mail, post and telephone. The journalism team works closely to ensure that preparation for the NCTJ examinations is relevant while at the same time maintaining appropriate academic content of the respective modules.

Further information about the award can be found in the relevant Student Handbook and on the University Website. This includes information about optional modules, learning outcomes at levels below honours, student support, and academic regulations.

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Extract of relevant sections from QAA benchmark standards for graduate outcomes from honours degree courses in Communication, Media, Film and Cultural studies (2008).

For full QAA document go to:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/CMF08.pdf>

**4 Subject knowledge and understanding
Communications, culture and society**

4.1 Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

- an understanding of the roles of communication systems, modes of representations and systems of meaning in the ordering of societies
- an awareness of the economic forces that frame the media, cultural and creative industries, and the role of such industries in specific areas of contemporary political and cultural life
- a comparative understanding of the roles that media and/or cultural institutions play in different societies
- an understanding of the roles of cultural practices and cultural institutions in society
- an understanding of particular media forms and genres, and the way in which they organise understandings, meanings and affects
- an understanding of the role of technology in terms of media production, content manipulation, distribution, access and use
- an understanding of new and emergent media forms and their relation both to their social context and to earlier forms
- an understanding of the ways in which participatory access to the central sites of public culture and communication is distributed along axes of social division, such as disability, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and sexuality
- an understanding of the dynamics of public and everyday discourses in the shaping of culture and society
- an understanding of the ways in which different social groups may make use of cultural texts and products in the construction of social and cultural realities, cultural maps and frames of reference.

Histories

4.2 Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

- an understanding of the development of media and cultural forms in a local, community, regional, national, international or global context
- an understanding of the social, cultural and political histories from which different media and cultural institutions, modes of communication, practices and structures have emerged
- a historically informed knowledge of the contribution of media organisations to the shaping of the modern world
- an understanding of the interconnectedness of texts and contexts, and of the shifting configurations of communicative, cultural and aesthetic practices and systems
- an understanding of the historical evolution of particular genres, aesthetic traditions and forms, and of their current characteristics and possible future developments

- an understanding of the history of communication and media technologies, and a recognition of the different ways in which the history of, and current developments in, media and communication can be understood in relation to technological change
- an understanding of the interrelationships of technological and social change
- an understanding of the historical development of practices of cultural consumption (including subcultural forms and everyday lived practices)
- an awareness of the ways in which critical and cultural theories and concepts have developed within particular contexts.

Processes and practices

4.3 Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

- an understanding of the processes linking production, distribution, circulation and consumption
- an understanding of the processes, both verbal and non-verbal, whereby people manage communication face to face and in the context of real and virtual groups and/or communities
- an awareness of the processes of cultural and subcultural formations and their dynamics
- an understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communicative industries, and of ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship
- an understanding of professional, technical and formal choices which realise, develop or challenge existing practices and traditions, and of the possibilities and constraints involved in production processes
- a knowledge of the legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks that affect media and cultural production, manipulation, distribution, circulation, and consumption
- an understanding of how media, cultural and creative organisations operate, communicate and are managed
- an understanding of how in creative industries individuals, or collaborative project-oriented teams, are formed, operate and complete their work
- an understanding of the material conditions of media and cultural consumption, and of the cultural contexts in which people appropriate, use and make sense of media and cultural products
- an awareness of how media products might be understood within broader concepts of culture.

Forms and aesthetics

4.4 Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

- an understanding of the aesthetic and formal qualities at play, and their relation to meanings, in particular cultural forms
- an insight into the cultural and social ways in which aesthetic judgements are constructed and aesthetic processes experienced
- an understanding of the student's own creative processes and practice through engagement in one or more production practices
- an examination of the role that aesthetic and other pleasures and judgements may play in the production and maintenance of social relations
- an awareness of a range of works (in one or more media) which generate different kinds of aesthetic pleasures

- an understanding of the narrative processes, generic forms and modes of representation at work in media and cultural texts
- an understanding of the ways in which specific media and their attendant technologies make possible different kinds of aesthetic effects and forms
- an understanding of the audio, visual and verbal conventions through which sounds, images and words make meaning
- an understanding of the ways in which people engage with cultural texts and practices and make meaning from them.

Culture and identity

4.5 Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

- an appreciation of the complexity of the term 'culture' and an understanding of how it has developed
- an understanding of the ways in which identities are constructed and contested through engagements with culture
- an understanding of how disability, class, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexuality and other social divisions play key roles in terms of both access to the media and modes of representation in media texts
- an insight into the different modes of global, international, national and local cultural experience and their interaction in particular instances
- an understanding of the ways in which forms of media and cultural consumption are embedded in everyday life, and serve as ways of claiming and understanding identities
- an understanding of the relationship between discourse, culture and identity.

5 Subject-specific skills

5.1 The specific focus and breadth of range of individual degree programmes will determine not only the knowledge bases on which they draw, but also the balance of skills and approaches developed within them. Graduates will demonstrate, as appropriate, some of the following subject-specific skills.

Skills of intellectual analysis

5.2 Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- engage critically with major thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field and put them to productive use
- understand forms of communication, media and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the processes through which they have come into being, with reference to social, cultural and technological change
- examine such forms critically with appropriate reference to the social and cultural contexts and diversity of contemporary society, and have an understanding of how different social groups variously make use of, and engage with, forms of communication, media and culture
- analyse closely, interpret and show the exercise of critical judgement in the understanding and, as appropriate, evaluation of these forms
- develop substantive and detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more designated areas of the field
- consider and evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner, with reference to academic and/or professional issues, debates and conventions.

Research skills

5.3 Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- carry out various forms of research for essays, projects, creative productions or dissertations involving sustained independent enquiry
- formulate appropriate research questions and employ appropriate methods and resources for exploring those questions
- evaluate and draw upon the range of sources and the conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in the chosen area
- draw on the strengths and understand the limits of the major quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and be able to apply this knowledge critically in their own work
- draw on research models enabled or underpinned by emergent technologies
- draw and reflect upon the relevance and impact of their own cultural commitments and positioning to the practice of research
- explore matters that may be new and emerging, drawing upon a variety of personal skills and upon a variety of academic and non-academic sources.

Media production skills

5.4 Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- produce work which demonstrates the effective manipulation of sound, image and/or the written word
- demonstrate competences in the chosen field of practice
- demonstrate the development of creative ideas and concepts based upon secure research strategies
- understand the importance of the commissioning and funding structures of the creative industries and demonstrate a capacity to work within the constraints imposed by them
- produce work showing capability in operational aspects of media production technologies, systems, techniques and professional practices
- manage time, personnel and resources effectively by drawing on planning, organisational, project management and leadership skills
- produce work which demonstrates an understanding of media forms and structures, audiences and specific communication registers
- produce work which is informed by, and contextualised within, relevant theoretical issues and debates.

Creative, innovative and imaginative skills

5.5 Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audiovisual, sound or other electronic media
- experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices
- employ production skills and practices to challenge existing forms and conventions and to innovate
- draw upon and bring together ideas from different sources of knowledge and from different academic disciplines
- be adaptable, creative and self-reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of media forms.

Skills of social and political citizenship

5.6 Graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- critically appraise some of the widespread common sense understandings and misunderstandings of communications, media and culture, and the debates and disagreements to which these give rise
- analyse how media and cultural policies are devised and implemented, and the ways in which citizens and cultural communities can play a part in shaping them
- analyse the role which community and participatory media forms may play in contributing to cultural debate and contesting social power
- critically evaluate the contested nature of some objects of study within the fields of communication, media, film and cultural studies, and the social and political implications of the judgements which are made
- show insight into the range of attitudes and values arising from the complexity and diversity of contemporary communications, media, culture and society, and show capability to consider and respond to these.

6 Generic skills

6.1 With varying emphasis, graduates in these subject areas will also be able to:

- work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline, self-direction and reflexivity
- gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms
- retrieve and generate information, and evaluate sources, in carrying out independent research
- organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects
- communicate effectively in interpersonal settings, in writing and in a variety of media
- work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively
- deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate, of a problem-solving approach
- apply entrepreneurial skills in dealing with audiences, clients, consumers, markets, sources and/or users
- put to use a range of information communication technology (ICT) skills from basic competences such as data analysis and word-processing to more complex skills using web-based technology or multimedia, and develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in utilising a range of media technologies.

7 Teaching, learning and assessment

General

7.1 Individual programmes within the fields of communication, media, film and cultural studies will articulate their own principles of progression within, and coherence and balance across, the particular curriculum and learning experiences offered to students. Teaching, learning and assessment will be designed to reflect the specific aims, emphases and learning outcomes of the programme, and students should be made aware of these at the outset.

7.2 Students will benefit from exploring a wide range of materials and sources, drawn from a range of academic and non-academic contexts.

7.3 Throughout, learning strategies will acknowledge, respect and encourage a wide variety of learning styles and activities, offering a balance between the provision of information (direct or resource-based) and opportunities for active assimilation, application, questioning, debate and critical reflection.

7.4 Where production knowledge and practice-based learning form a part of the programme's curricular and delivery strategies, resources should be appropriate and adequate to support this.

Teaching and learning

7.5 Progression through programmes will lead to an increasing emphasis on student self-direction and self-responsibility in the teaching and learning strategies deployed.

Part of this process will involve the ongoing development of communicative competencies among students. Teaching and learning strategies will be oriented towards some of the following learning processes:

- **awareness raising and knowledge acquisition:** the process through which a experience, and broadens and deepens existing knowledge
- **conceptual and critical understanding:** the process whereby a student engages in critical analysis of texts, fields of knowledge, concepts, and cultural and production practices, testing their analysis against received understandings and practices
- **practice experience:** the process through which a student acquires practical experience, skills and the opportunity for creative expression and/or thinking in a range of activities, from empirical research to production work, and receives and gives feedback on their performance
- **critical reflection:** the process through which a student reflects on new knowledge and understandings, and on their own learning experiences and performance, and acquires new awareness and understandings.

7.6 Learning and teaching methods reflect the specific aims, emphases and learning outcomes of the degree programme, and will draw on an appropriate balance from among the following:

- lectures; demonstrations; screenings; seminars; workshops; work simulations; tutorials; group and individual project work; live projects; supervised independent learning; open and resource-based learning; e-learning, production practice; and work placements
- large and small group, and individual learning and teaching situations
- tutor-led, student-led and independent learning sessions
- sessions that emphasise primarily knowledge acquisition, skills development (specific and general-transferable), and analysis and evaluation
- use of a range of technology systems for accessing data, resources, contacts and literature, and for the acquisition of production skills.

7.7 The learning context will encourage active engagement with cultural and communicative forms and practices, and with examples from the medium/media or cultural practice being studied and, where appropriate, contact with a variety of academic and non-academic speakers, organisations and production voices.

Assessment

7.8 Assessment is an integral part of the learning process, and will be formative and diagnostic as well as summative and evaluative, providing feedback to students wherever appropriate. In many programmes, particularly those that feature production work, students will be participants in the

assessment process through strategies such as the group critique, where students present and discuss their work with peers and tutors.

7.9 Assessment strategies will follow the specific aims, emphases and learning outcomes of the degree programme, and reflect the range and balance of teaching and learning methods used. They will be appropriate to the learning processes and intended learning outcomes. Programmes will seek to ensure that, within the variety of approaches taken, assessment is consistent both in the demands it makes on students and in the standards of judgement it applies.

7.10 Accordingly, assessment methods may draw from among the following:

- short and long essays
- analyses of textual and cultural forms and practices
- reviews and reports
- seen and unseen examinations
- individual and group presentations (whether oral and/or technology-based)
- critical self and peer-evaluation
- role analyses/evaluations
- logbooks, diaries and autobiographical writing
- individual or group portfolios of work (whether critical, creative, self-reflective, or the outcome of professional practice)
- group and individually produced artefacts, including productions in sound, audiovisual or other media
- individual and group project reports
- research exercises
- tasks aimed at the assessment of specific skills (for example ICT skills, production skills, research skills and skills of application)
- external placement or work-based learning reports.

7.11 Programmes may also require the production of an extended piece of independent investigation and/or a creative production or portfolio of work, typically undertaken in the final year. This may be discursive or production-based, and may be individual or group work. It will usually include a significant component of individually assessed work.

7.12 Overall, assessment will focus on the following areas:

- breadth and depth of subject knowledge and awareness of the history and context(s) of that knowledge
- critical analysis, whether of texts, fields of knowledge, concepts or cultural or production practices, including the ability to contextualise the analysis and engage in critical debate through discursive argument
- subject-specific and generic skills, including skills of investigation and enquiry, oral and written communicative skills, the use of a range of technology systems for accessing data, resources, contacts and literature, and media production skills and creativity
- critical reflection on issues of practice, on new knowledge and understandings, and on students' own and others' performance against agreed criteria, including the capacity to deploy and evaluate evidence and to express the outcomes of such reflection clearly and fluently.

7.13 In the case of production work, assessment criteria will reflect the specific brief and the overall aims of the programme, and a recognition of relevant professional standards, where appropriate.

Benchmark standards

General

8.1 We have emphasised that the fields embraced under communication, media, film and cultural studies are very broad so that no degree programme can embrace all of these elements. Furthermore, individual programmes will vary in the degree of focus or breadth of range they adopt. In general, it may be expected that programmes working with a tighter focus will require greater intensity of knowledge, understanding and skills within their field, drawing as appropriate on those outlined in sections 4 to 6.

Programmes that adopt a broader focus will draw more widely on these sections, emphasising interconnections and/or interdisciplinarity. Typically, however, students graduating within these fields will display:

- coherent **knowledge** of the communication, media and cultural forms and processes chosen for study within their degree programme
- understanding** of a range of concepts, theories and approaches appropriate to the study of those objects and processes, and the capacity to apply these to the learning tasks set by their programme, as well as an array of generic and creative skills.

8.2 Within this general rubric, individual programmes will combine in different ways components from the following. Individual programmes will build coherent sets of expectations from among them, with appropriately different emphases. The learning outcomes are indicative, and **do not in any sense constitute a checklist**. Typically then, graduates from programmes in communication, media, film and cultural studies will have demonstrated outcomes from among the following:

- knowledge of the central role that communications, media and cultural agencies play at local, national, international and global levels of economic, political and social organisation, along with the ability to explore and articulate the implications of this
- awareness of the historical formation of their particular objects of study, and their contexts and interfaces
- knowledge of appropriate research practices, procedures and traditions, and some awareness of their strengths and limitations
- awareness of the diversity of approaches to understanding communication, media and culture in both historical and contemporary contexts, and of the uses and implications of these approaches
- knowledge of a range of texts, genres, aesthetic forms and cultural practices, and the ability to produce close analysis of these, and to make comparisons and connections
- engagement with forms of critical analysis, argument and debate, expressed through an appropriate command of oral, written and other forms of communication
- understanding of production processes and professional practices within media, cultural and communicative industries
- critically informed competency in the management and operation of production technologies, procedures and processes
- the ability to engage with and to advance creative processes in one or more forms of media or cultural production
- knowledge of a range of communicative situations and cultural practices, along with the ability to produce detailed analyses of these, and to make comparisons and connections
- the ability to consider views other than their own, and exercise a degree of independent and informed critical judgement in analysis

- the ability to work across a variety of group and independent modes of study, and within these to demonstrate flexibility, creativity and the capacity for critical self-reflection
- the ability to use their knowledge and understanding of communication, cultural and media processes as a basis for the examination of policy and ethical issues, whether in the public domain or in other aspects of democratic participation and citizenship.

Threshold level

8.3 Graduates who have achieved the threshold level in a programme within the fields of communication, media, film and cultural studies will be able to demonstrate sufficient grounding overall in the knowledge outlined in sections 2, 3 and 4, and in the subject-specific and general skills as defined in sections 5 and 6, as emphasised by their particular programme. Their performance, however, is likely to be characterised by imbalances and unevenness in their levels of achievement.

Typical level

8.4 Graduates who achieve the typical level within the fields of communication, media, film and cultural studies will be able to demonstrate systematic knowledge and understanding of the subject and field as outlined in sections 2, 3 and 4, and subject-specific and general skills as defined in sections 5 and 6, as emphasised by their particular programme. They will have demonstrated strengths from among the outcomes listed in 8.2. Their performance will be characterised by a more consistent level of achievement, a greater ability to synthesise and make links between a range of knowledge and skills, and a greater self-reflexivity and awareness of the limits, ambiguities and uncertainties of knowledge.

Levels of excellence

8.5 Graduates who attain above the typical level in a programme within the fields of communication, media, film and cultural studies will display excellence in a range of the knowledge, understandings and abilities required by their programmes. Their work will display independence or originality, engagement with the dynamics of contemporary theoretical debate, and/or of relevant practice, and demonstrate the ability to make innovative connections in practice, research and/or analysis.