



POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title:	MA Journalism
Awarding Body:	Staffordshire University
Accreditation:	National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)
Final Awards:	Masters
Teaching Institution:	Staffordshire University
Intermediate Awards:	PG Certificate PG Diploma
Mode of Study	Full-time 1 year Part-time 2-3 years
UCAS Codes:	
QAA Subject Benchmarks:	
Professional/Statutory Body	
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EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of Journalism in relation to advanced theory and practical skills.

To facilitate an understanding of modern journalistic practice in relation to traditional and new thinking.

To facilitate independence of study in terms of innovation in finding appropriate sources, gathering information for substantive pieces of work, producing work suitable for convergent newsroom (written, broadcast etc) and integrating creative ideas and insights into established knowledge and journalistic practice.

To facilitate the development of advanced skills in research through engagement with current debates and practice relating to journalism, notably in relation to the major project.

To provide a critical insight into the changing nature of journalism, and more specifically convergent journalism.

To encourage the development of advanced analytical skills in relation to complex published material.

To develop advanced transferable skills from an undergraduate base to postgraduate level.

To provide modules and teaching methods relevant to the industry to enhance employability.

To provide a distinctive programme which utilises teaching and research skills of the Journalism team and the high spec facilities on campus. The programme responds to up-to-date developments within the industry.

What is distinctive about this programme?

- The NCTJ-accredited award has “convergence” at its core so students are learning multi-media skills suitable for today’s journalism industry
- A dedicated news site StaffsLive enables students to publish to a real audience and build an electronic portfolio of work
- Students get the opportunity to embark on a two-day newsroom field trip to London, touring Sky, The Telegraph, The Guardian etc
- Real world work placements enable students to put into practice their newly developed skills and knowledge

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

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

Postgraduate Certificate

Knowledge & Understanding Demonstrate strong news sense and what makes a good news story. Ability to understand the technical aspects of news production for multi-media journalism.
Learning Apply advanced journalistic skills (accurate interpretation of information in news judgements, operating audio and video editing equipment to an advanced standard, writing stories and interviewing to advanced standard) and demonstrate originality and ability to act decisively.
Enquiry Critically appraise different methods of research and demonstrate the ability to select appropriate strategies of data collection, analysis and evaluation.
Analysis Engage in critical reflection and analysis of multi-media journalism practice in order to challenge the industry as a whole and individual's working practice.
Problem Solving Demonstrate originality and ability to act decisively.
Communication Engage in professional verbal and written communication.
Application Apply advanced multi-media journalistic skills including ability to write in a journalistic manner.
Reflection This programme of study allows students to become a critical reflective multi-media journalist, able to enhance their professional practice as a result of deepening, broadening and consolidating their specialist knowledge.

Postgraduate Diploma

Knowledge & Understanding Demonstrate a professional strong news sense through working in the professional industry. Ability to work with the technical aspects of news production for multi-media journalism.
Learning Multi-media journalism practice at an advanced level with further development of the ability to identify, initiate and integrate new approaches to developments within the industry and advanced industry practice and continuing professional development.
Analysis Critically examine evidence from a variety of theoretical perspectives in relation to the area of specialist journalist practice to determine the implications for future research and practice development.
Problem Solving Recognise and evaluate working with uncertainty and unpredictability typical of a multi-media news environment and following critical enquiry, integrate appropriate strategies in an attempt to reconcile complex decision-making within the context of professional journalist practice.

<p>Communication Demonstrate the capability to develop journalism presentation and communication skills to industry standard, underpinned by a systematic understanding of specialist knowledge and enquiry. Demonstrate professional verbal and written communication.</p>
<p>Application Demonstrate the capability to develop multi-media journalism practice with an expanding range of autonomous practical skills, underpinned by a systematic understanding of specialist knowledge and enquiry. Critically examine evidence from a variety of theoretical perspectives in relation to the area of specialist journalist practice to determine the implications for future research and practice development.</p>

Masters

<p>Knowledge & Understanding The ability to conduct an independent study of research and investigation by completing a major journalistic content project with articles publishable with use of still images, audio and/or video on multi-media platforms.</p>
<p>Learning Multi-media journalism practice at an advanced level with further development of the ability to identify, initiate and integrate new approaches to developments within the industry and advanced industry practice and continuing professional development.</p>
<p>Analysis An in-depth understanding and application of research styles, methods of enquiry and techniques of data analysis and demonstrate an evaluative approach to the content produced.</p>
<p>Problem Solving Demonstrate professional originality and ability to act decisively and demonstrate strong leadership and team skills.</p>
<p>Communication The ability to select appropriate strategies for the communication of complex and abstract ideas to colleagues and to the wider multi-media journalism industry.</p>
<p>Application The ability to conduct an independent study of research and investigation by completing a major journalistic content project to professional standard and for publication on multi-media platforms.</p>
<p>Reflection The Masters programme of study allows students to become a fully critical and reflective multi-media journalist professional with the ability to enhance their professional practice as a result of broad reading and reflection and consolidating their specialist knowledge.</p>

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

Award: MA JOURNALISM

YEAR 1	Teaching Block 1	Core AM75159-7 An Introduction to Broadcast Journalism (15)	Core AM75156-7 News Reporting (15)	Core AM75161-7 Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues for Journalists (15)	Core AM25533-7 Government, Politics and Journalism (15)
	Teaching Block 2	Core AM75160-7 Specialist Journalism and Placement (30)		Core AM75155-7 Convergent Newsdays (15)	Core AM75158-7 Journalism Studies (15)
	Teaching Block 3	Conditional Core AM75157-7 Major Journalism Research Project Or AM75340-7 Major Journalism Dissertation (60)			

Potential Awards:

Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) - comprises AM75159-7, AM75156-7, AM75161-7, AM25533-7

Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits) - comprises PG Cert plus AM75160-7, AM75155-7, AM75158-7

Master of Arts (180 credits) - comprises PG Dip plus AM75157-7

Progression:

In order to progress from one stage of an award to another (i.e. PgC to PgD, PgD to Masters), you must normally obtain a Pass in all modules. Otherwise, award specific regulations must permit compensation of a failed module or retrieval of failure at a subsequent stage of your programme of study.

HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

The new MA award is distinctive in the way it brings together a wide variety of assessment strategies, supported by the implementation of a range of different teaching and learning methods. The uniqueness of the award requires different strategies to which students will be expected to adapt and benefit from. For example, in the more practical modules, the emphasis is very much on 'learn by doing'. The award also allows students to learn in a way that closely mirrors the way journalists operate in the industry, with the use of Newsdays, which allows students to engage in practical news gathering, interviewing and writing exercises. The focus will also be on group and peer interaction and teamwork, again with students benefiting from a range of opinions and experiences. The following learning strategies will be employed in the award:

Lectures

Provide the basic structure and introduction to some modules, such as Government, Politics and Journalism Studies. In some practical modules, such as News Reporting, lectures will take the form of a 15-20 minute presentation that aims to introduce students to the practical elements of reporting and to stimulate group discussion and subsequent workshop activities.

Staff-led seminars

Students are asked to view programmes and read key texts or extracts from texts before each session. The tutor leading the seminar will introduce the key themes for discussion, highlighting some of the possible criticisms that might be raised and issues around which the subsequent debate could focus. Students are encouraged to participate in discussion on the basis of their own reading around the issues. This will be prevalent in modules such as Regulatory, Legal and Ethical Issues.

Student-led seminars

One of the features that distinguish postgraduate from undergraduate teaching is the greater emphasis placed upon the student to take the initiative regarding content and structure of teaching sessions. Students will be asked to prepare and lead seminar sessions, which should reflect their own research. They are encouraged to explore innovative approaches to presenting ideas and stimulating discussion. Videos and OHPs are available for student seminar presentation.

Workshops

These are interactive sessions where students work in small groups on a defined task or project with a clearly defined outcome (for instance, planning news features or making packages). Students are expected to research a story, carry out interviews and voxpops, obtain audio and video actuality, write scripts/stories, and edit and produce print, radio and TV news packages suitable for a convergent newsroom. These packages will be the focus of interactive feedback sessions.

Research tutorials

Major research project students are expected to provide the tutor with a report on work in progress. The tutor will then discuss the student's work and offer various pathways forward.

Additional tutor support

This academic provision is both informal and indispensable, as it provides students with access to tutors to address practical or academic matters that they wish to

discuss outside scheduled teaching or tutorial sessions. The module tutors will normally deal with academic issues relating to specific modules. For wider issues relating to the course in general or personal problems, their first contact point will be the Award Manager.

IT skills and learning from electronic resources

Students are encouraged to use electronic resources to enhance independent learning and gain skills that are transferable into industry. Students are encouraged from the beginning of their postgraduate study to take full advantage of IT facilities and electronic learning bases available such as Blackboard, to use e-mail to communicate with tutors and fellow students, and to develop electronic writing and presentation desktop skills. All students will have access to IT facilities, including the internet.

Independent Research

Research is integrated by way of the independent research requirements for modules such as News Reporting, Specialist Journalism and Journalism Studies. Students are also expected to make full use of electronic research sources and conventional library sources. Fuller details of resources for research at Staffordshire University are provided in the relevant module handbooks. Students also have an Inter-Library Loan allocation for dissertation research.

Assessment

Students are asked to produce a variety of assessments in the different modules and the balance between them will be determined by the different aims and learning outcomes of the different modules.

Within the **News Reporting** module students will be assessed individually. The theory is learnt through academic reading and study of newspapers and news websites – thus theory is learnt alongside the practical skills. Students are assessed on their newsgathering abilities, news evaluation and their writing skills, both in terms of producing material to deadline and length as well as adaptability in writing for the cross platforms of print and online. Shorthand is also studied in this module, and assessment of this is implicit in the overall assessment, with shorthand notes and transcriptions submitted alongside completed, timed writing exercises.

Within the **Introduction to Broadcast Journalism** module students are assessed on their work and performance in multi-media Newsdays. The theory is learnt through academic reading and study of broadcasts – thus theory is learnt alongside the practical skills. They are assessed on their script writing skills, their presentation skills and their technical ability by making radio and television packages for online.

Essay writing and research skills are assessed within the **Government, Politics and Journalism** module, in which students will produce two essays of 1,500-2,000 words each. In the **Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues** module, students will sit a series of tests to test their knowledge of legislation and ethical codes, which will also help to prepare students for sitting the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) qualifications in this area.

The work placement element of **Specialist Journalism** is assessed by an NCTJ-approved form completed by the employer where the work placement takes place, a diary report produced by the student, and a portfolio/showreel of all

published/broadcast work.

It is up to the student to ensure that the work placement is agreed in advance with the employer, that all documentation is completed, and that it is carried out during the timescale set aside within the programme of study. Students will also have a timed deadline exercise in this module, to replicate the NCTJ Multi-media News Writing qualification.

In the **Convergent Newsdays** module, students will take on various roles within the production team during each Newsday. As well as submitting a portfolio of work produced and published online during the Newsdays, each student will be assessed by tutors on their overall performance in each Newsday. Tutors will consider presentation, teamwork, leadership skills, communication skills, organisation, and decision-making. Students will continue to study shorthand within this module and assessment of this will be implicit in the overall module assessment. Students must provide their shorthand notes and transcriptions for each piece in their portfolio. Producing accurate, full and clear shorthand notes taken during normal journalistic activity (ie. phone and face-to-face interviews) will demonstrate an ability to achieve an industry standard speed of 100 words per minute.

The **Major Journalism Research Project** requires the students to produce a major piece of publishable work in print that can then be adapted into audio and/or video packages suitable for broadcast on the target outlet's online platform. The project may include a series of linked news feature pieces of approx 8,000-words, with material then used to produce 10 minutes of audio/video broadcast as online radio and/or TV packages. The student is expected to conceive the original idea for the feature series themselves. They will need to develop their ideas through thorough research, showing determined energy and passion. Alternatively, students can opt to deliver an academic dissertation of between 12,000-15,000 words on a relevant subject agreed with the supervising tutor.

Feedback will be provided through a variety of means. Informal verbal and written feedback throughout practical workshops in both Semesters will be given to enable students to learn, understand and improve their skills and knowledge as they continue their development. Peer group feedback and reflection will take place at the end of Newsdays so students benefit from the observations made during the workshops by tutors and fellow members of their team. For assessed work, tutors will provide detailed formal written feedback as per faculty guidelines. Feedbacks will be based on assessment criteria clearly set out for students prior to all assessments taking place, both in module handbooks and detailed assessment briefs.

The variety of assessment strategies reflects the variety of modules students will be studying, tests the fundamental skills and knowledge required to work in the industry, and examines the multi-skilled abilities that employers are looking for. Assessment has convergence in mind, reflecting the principles of the award itself. Students will be assessed on many different criteria, and in particular their ability to adapt to different skills, knowledge, techniques and journalistic situations. In Semesters 2 and 3, students will be assessed on how they can 'converge' those different skills by bringing them together to produce high quality journalism, both working to tight deadlines as required on the Convergent Newsdays module, and in working independently to produce a portfolio for Specialist Journalism and major pieces of work in the Major research project.

All modules will be assessed to industry standards to reflect the rigorous standard set by the accrediting body NCTJ, and to accurately prepare students to pass the NCTJ's own, widely-recognised professional qualifications.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entry Requirements (including IELTS score)

What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

The entry requirements for the award are normally:

A good honours degree (2.1) or above from a United Kingdom institution of higher education or overseas equivalent, and appropriate English Language qualifications with a minimum 7.5 IELTS score.

Students who have a 2.2 honours degree and can demonstrate through an interview strong motivation to study Journalism at M level, or relevant experience such as involvement in broadcast or print journalism or related work experience, will be considered for the Diploma programme, with the possibility of continuing onto the MA Major Research Project subject to satisfactory progress and consultation with the MA Award Leader. Applicants will be considered for the diploma programme, with the possibility of continuing to the MA, if they can demonstrate other work-based or experiential learning, including skills of expression and analysis. Students may be considered for Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning on the basis of credit achieved in prior study, work-based training, substantial employment or other experiential learning. This will be considered in accordance with the AP(E)L Handbook. Evaluation is delegated to the Faculty that is required to assess each application according to the specified procedure. Information about the availability of AP(E)L can be found at: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/images/apel_policy_tcm68-12703.pdf

This policy demonstrates our commitment to value-added HE at masters as well as undergraduate level.

Candidates without an honours degree but with significant appropriate work experience may be admitted to the award providing they can satisfy the university that they will be able to respond to the challenge of a postgraduate award such as this.

Such candidates will attend all interview stages, and may also be required to complete written exercises and/or general knowledge tests as part of the admission process and as required by NCTJ accreditation guidelines.

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 fully accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ).

The NCTJ is an independent body and is the most widely recognised organisation in the UK which delivers and accredits journalism training programmes and courses. It also runs a series of pre-entry and senior qualifications, which are seen by many in the industry as a benchmark of quality.

To achieve and maintain accreditation, centres such as Staffordshire University have to demonstrate to the NCTJ that staff have the expertise and commitment to deliver an award to the highest standard, that students are capable of producing work to industry standard, and that facilities and resources are available to allow students to achieve that standard.

Accreditation also means that students on this award can sit the NCTJ pre-entry qualifications during their studies. These qualifications are very important for students who wish to progress in their journalism careers after graduating.

There are currently seven pre-entry NCTJ qualifications – News Writing, Portfolio, Shorthand, Media Law (General Reporting), Media Law (Court Reporting), Public Affairs (Central Government) and Public Affairs (Local Government). The NCTJ charges a small fee for each of the above qualifications.

This award is designed so some of the practical and knowledge-based modules are closely aligned to those NCTJ qualifications, enabling students to sit and pass them during their year of postgraduate study. Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues will help to prepare students for the two Media Law NCTJ exams. News Reporting will give students the tools to sit the News Writing and the Shorthand NCTJ qualifications. Government, Politics and Journalism is closely aligned to the Public Affairs exams, and the Specialist Journalism (+ Placement) and Convergent Newsdays modules will help students to compile a NCTJ Portfolio.

These qualifications are also important for a would-be journalist's future career prospects as he/she will only be able to sit the senior NCE journalism qualification (once they are working in the industry) at a later date with a minimum 50% (C grade) pass in all seven pre-entries.

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

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