



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Journalism
2	Programme Code	JNLT07
3	JACS Code	P500
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Master of Arts (MA)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	Masters
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Social Sciences
9	Department	Journalism Studies
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year (MA), nine months (PG Dip)
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	National Council for the Training of Journalists
14	Date of production/revision	April 2017

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This course prepares graduates, or those with an equivalent qualification, in any subject for work in the print and digital media and related areas such as press relations. It provides the necessary journalistic, print and digital specific skills necessary to find and build a journalistic career at a time when the industry is changing and developing at considerable speed and placing growing demands upon journalists. It seeks to develop the reflective practitioner, the journalist with an awareness of the social and political context in which he or she works. The programme is committed to giving students the underpinning knowledge and understanding they need of the industry, its regulation, its codes and conventions. Students will be encouraged to develop a critical understanding of the world around them through the study of law, ethics and politics, and how they affect journalists' work. The course is taught by experienced journalists and media academics in an environment which simulates as closely as possible the pressures and practices of a professional newsroom. . The course has close links with industry, is accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists, and working journalists visit regularly. Students are expected to use Sheffield as their news area and work on real stories, with a proper regard for legal and ethical concerns. Students normally undertake a work placement as part of the course.

For more information visit <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/journalism>

16. Programme aims

To equip students with the required skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to work successfully in the print and digital media, to reflect on media issues and practice, to understand the role of the journalist in society and to practise to high ethical and professional standards.

17. Programme learning outcomes

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate, students will have acquired some (60 credits worth) of the following:

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	Of media law and the courts.
K2	Of newsgathering and newsroom processes.
K3	Of ethics and codes of practice.
K4	Of contemporary media issues and the role of the journalist in society.
K5	Of news values.

Skills and other attributes:

S1	Core journalism skills including researching, reporting, organising, evaluating and structuring information, interviewing.
S2	Writing for print and digital.
S3	Organising and planning for print and digital, including time management.
S4	Self-criticism.

In addition to all the above, for the award of Postgraduate Diploma, students will have acquired the following:

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	Of government, political institutions, lobby groups and public services, their structure and organisation.
K2	Of the principles of newspaper design.
K3	Of the role of the journalist in society.
K4	Of the critical appraisal of contemporary media issues.
K5	Of the news production processes and their impact on journalistic practice.
K6	Of the research skills necessary to produce an independent piece of journalism.

Skills and other attributes:

S1	News production skills including the use of page layout software.
S2	The ability to work independently and as a member of a team.
S3	The ability to meet deadlines.
S4	Shorthand writing.

In addition to the above, for the award of MA students will have acquired the following:

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	Of devising, researching and independently executing a major portfolio of journalism.
K2	The ability to reflect critically on their own journalism.

Skills and other attributes:

S1	Critical engagement with academic and non-academic material.
S2	The ability to solve problems that arise in a complex production process.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

A programme of lectures and workshops introduces students to basic journalistic concepts of what makes a story. They are taught how to write for newspapers, websites and social media platforms, how to research, gather, organise and structure information, and then how to present it in an accessible way. Workshops are structured to represent newsroom activity. Students are sent out to the courts and council meetings, to report on these events. They write their stories in the newsroom and receive critical feedback as they develop their skills. They are assigned districts within the city to develop contacts and gather stories. Students are encouraged to develop different writing styles, through lectures and relating to journalism produced by distinguished reporters and authors. Senior industry figures give lectures and teach students about different journalism specialisms. Work experience provides the opportunity to engage in journalism in the workplace, and to experience the pressures of deadlines and the demands of real newspapers. Though not assessed it informs coursework delivered for assessment. Running alongside the gathering and writing of stories for print publication are lectures and workshops covering the various aspects of media law, ethics and codes of practice, as well as political organisation at local and national level. This knowledge, gained in the classroom and library, is put into practice in a journalistic context through its application to newspaper stories and reflection upon this practice. Students also develop accurate note-taking through shorthand classes. As the course develops, students are introduced to newspaper production, learning how to subedit, display and present stories, headlines and pictures and use page make-up software. Throughout the programme the newsroom learning environment allows for regular formative feedback and discussion between tutors and students.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Course work, examinations and the development of portfolios based on field work.

Professional skills are assessed largely through practice. Knowledge is assessed by examination.

Students studying for an MA qualification are expected to produce a final portfolio of journalistic work based on a particular theme or area which demonstrates their researching, newsgathering and writing skills, and their ability to reflect upon their own practice.

Students also have the opportunity to take examinations set by the National Council for the Training of Journalists in shorthand, law, public administration and newspaper journalism, all of which enhance their employability.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

University Strategic Plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2011-16)

<http://www.shf.ac.uk/lets/staff/lts>

Department aims and objectives

Department Learning and Teaching Strategy

The accreditation criteria of the National Council for the Training of Journalists

External examiners' reports

20. Programme structure and regulations

The programme structure assumes no prior knowledge or experience of journalism and is based on the principle that students must learn how to 'do' journalism as well as analyse and critically reflect on its products and processes. A key element is that students are expected to apply knowledge gained in theoretical modules in practical situations and be able to demonstrate how each informs the other. The programme is structured to ensure it meets the requirements of the professional accrediting body and maximises the students' chances of gaining employment on completion of the course.

Professional skills provide the main thread of the programme, comprising incremental teaching of journalistic skills. Beginning with the skills of simple story-telling, the programme seeks to equip students with the cognitive discipline, writing fluency and production expertise to produce compelling, polished narratives in print media. It is also designed to develop students understanding of the demands and skills of news gathering, interviewing and story development.

As students learn how to research, gather and present information for publication, they put these skills into practice by applying them to real stories gathered in districts of the city, the courts and the council. Alongside this skills development, students are learning about the administration of justice through the courts and governance through the council. Work experience gives students the opportunity to put their learning into practice in a professional environment.

The MA portfolio demands reflection upon the journalistic processes involved in gathering and presenting the final portfolio of work.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>

21. Student development over the course of study

The module structure is designed to develop writing and reporting skills by confronting students with increasingly complex writing and reporting tasks over the length of the course. They move from developing professional skills in the workshop setting to finding, developing and writing stories in the field. Students are encouraged to develop editorial judgement, news values, news gathering and to exercise that judgement in realistic settings by taking responsibility for covering a designated area of South Yorkshire, and through coverage of local councils and of the courts. This also enables them to develop their writing skills in describing complex and sensitive situations and events. They are also encouraged to develop colour and feature writing skills. In the second semester they learn to use page make-up software and to explore ways of presenting news in a newspaper page.

MA students are required to develop their own ideas for the production of a portfolio of journalistic work based, if possible, on a theme of interest to them – and potential readers. They are required to carry out the necessary research, collect information and to arrange and carry out relevant interviews. They are also asked to reflect upon the journalistic processes involved and the particular challenges they encountered.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/>

Applicants will generally be expected to have achieved an upper second in their undergraduate degree (or its equivalent).

They will demonstrate an understanding of the industry and the demands it makes on journalists. If possible they will have organised and undertaken a period of work experience within the industry. They should demonstrate a strong commitment to their chosen career.

Applicants are required to submit an example of original journalism which should demonstrate an ability to use the English language, an understanding of grammar and the ability to structure a piece of writing with the eventual reader in mind.

Overseas applicants must demonstrate evidence of English language competence as defined by the Department and on the website below.

23. Additional information

None

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.