

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Arts and Humanities, City Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MA News Journalism
4.	Normal Duration:	11 months (FT); 23 months (PT)
5.	UCAS Code:	N

### 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

1. MA News Journalism is a vocational course that combines practical training in multimedia journalism with a solid academic base. Taught by staff with substantial experience in the media, you will learn the skills needed to work in news journalism, including newsgathering, reporting and editing, shooting and editing video, and using social media as a journalist. To support these practical skills, you will study media law and politics and choose from options in ethics and social media. You will also be required to plan, design and execute a rigorous programme of research in a chosen topic related to the news media industry at local, national or international level. By the end of the course you will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to work in news-based journalism across a range of different platforms and in a number of roles. The course adheres to descriptors specified by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for professional or practice Master's degrees, including structured learning, work-based learning and research methods. (QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement, part A, September 2015).

The course is distinctive in the following ways:

1. It is accredited by industry training body the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). Students follow the NCTJ syllabus leading to NCTJ exams including essential journalism, law, public affairs and practical journalism. Successful students will consequently gain two complementary awards. Those who pass all the NCTJ exams will gain the NCTJ Diploma, while satisfactory completion of all aspects of the course leads to an MA in News Journalism.
2. It is supported at all levels by strong links with the journalism industry, including the Centre for Broadcasting & Journalism (CBJ) Consortium with includes representatives from the Nottingham Post, BBC East Midlands and BBC Radio Nottingham; Notts TV, the hyper-local TV station; and The Voice, the national newspaper and website for the African-Caribbean community.
3. Opportunities for placements are available for all students to prepare you for the world of work, and provide valuable contacts for your future.

4. The course is a mixture of practical and academic modules.
5. The teaching staff have substantial experience in the media.

The educational aims of the course are to:

1. Provide a course of study that will allow you to develop the knowledge and skills needed to work in multiplatform journalism.
2. Develop the skills needed to work as a journalist in news-based organisations.
3. Educate you to a competent level of theoretical and critical understanding of the practices and processes of the newspaper industry in contemporary society.
4. Train journalists of the future who have an informed and responsible critical understanding of the role of media in society.
5. Provide an education which will foster cognitive and transferable skills useful in the development of future career potential and graduate employment.
6. Conduct learning and teaching within a supportive, academic and journalism environment.
7. Develop your skills and qualities to enable you to be a confident and ambitious graduate.

#### 7. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Critically analyse emerging trends in the study of news journalism.
2. Critically appraise and demonstrate relevant knowledge of the cultural, historical, social, political, economic, regulatory, legal and ethical context and discourses around news journalism.
3. Recognise and critique industry structures and practices in news journalism.
4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of contemporary controversies about news journalism.
5. Apply knowledge and skills to different news formats.
6. Synthesise knowledge of different industry structures, challenges and practices

#### **Skills, qualities and attributes**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and application of the practical skills relevant to a career in news journalism.
2. Plan, design and execute a rigorous programme of research in a chosen topic.
3. Plan work and use time effectively.
4. Work effectively and collaboratively in teams.
5. Demonstrate that you have developed effective interpersonal skills.

6. Demonstrate proficiency in finding, evaluating and managing information and sources of information.
7. Express yourself with confidence, both orally and in writing.
8. Read and analyse visual and aural form.
9. Synthesise existing data with original research to draw credible conclusions.

#### **8. Learning and teaching methods**

The curriculum content reflects the requirement for students to achieve a competent level of performance across a range of core practical and critical inquiry modules. You will work to develop the skills needed to become an effective multiplatform journalist. Modules are complementary, enhancing core knowledge. All modules are delivered and designed by staff whose interests and expertise most closely relate to that provision and need.

Teaching methods vary from module to module, but given the dynamic range of activities on the programme of study, you will benefit from a vibrant and challenging programme of lectures, seminars, tutorials, mock newscasts, role-play, group working, e-learning (handouts and other information are available through the university's virtual learning portal) and other practical workshops.

Learning and teaching support is comprehensive. All modules are supported by module guides, staff are available for you to seek individual assistance and you are also encouraged to use electronic communication with tutors and fellow students. Your feedback is actively sought and your comments inform future development of modules. All modules are also supported by web-based learning materials.

#### **9. Assessment methods**

MA News Journalism's assessment policy is flexible and provides diverse, wide-ranging and progressively more challenging approaches to assessment as you advance through your studies.

Modes of assessment vary from one module to another but assessment 'equivalence' between modules is ensured through consultation between tutors, second marking by tutors, verification by external examiners and annual reviews. Most of the modules make extensive use of coursework (essays, dissertations, portfolios, projects). Some are entirely assessed in this way while others include exams. All exams are assessed anonymously.

In all modules, assessments tasks are aligned to the curriculum and learning outcomes. Each assessment is presented and explained in lectures/seminars and also in one-to-one tutor sessions, as appropriate. Samples of the content and standard of work expected are made available in class and on NOW, the online learning platform.

#### **10. Course structure and curriculum**

The course is comprised of three 20-credit modules and two 60-credit modules which are completed by full-time students over an 11-month period and by part-time students over a 23-month period. For one of the 20-credit modules (see overleaf) students are given a choice of two options.

60-credit modules

News Journalism Skills and Digital Production (full year)

News Journalism Dissertation (full year)

20-credit modules

Media Law (half-year, October-January)

Journalism, Ethics and Society OR Social Media (half-year, October-January)

Public Affairs for Journalists (half-year, February-June)

You will also have the option to take a non-credit bearing module in shorthand.

Please note that international students will take a module called Transnational Media instead of Public Affairs for Journalists.

You will not be able to pass the News Journalism Skills and Digital Production module unless you successfully complete three weeks' worth of placements.

**11. Admission to the course**

**Entry requirements.**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

**12. Support for learning**

Student support is provided through a number of mechanisms:

1. Creative induction events. These include sessions to introduce you to the facilities, staff, library, IT resources and an introduction to your course of study. In addition, sessions are provided which include an introduction to the media industry and in particular the local media, 'Meet the Consortium' and an opportunity for you to meet your personal tutor.
2. Support from your personal tutor.
3. Support from the relevant module leader.
4. All tutors offer Office Hours support which students can use to book one-to-one sessions.
5. Support through the university's e-learning support system.
6. The Course leader has informal regular meetings with the nominated student representative.
7. MA students will be assigned individual dissertation supervisors.
8. Study skills sessions to help with academic writing and presentation are available to all students.

9. English language support is available to international students.

**13. Graduate destinations/employability**

Because of the vocational nature of this course, there are very strong links with the media. These particularly come into play when you go on placement. You will be asked to complete a minimum of three weeks-worth of work experience. In order to get a placement you may have to submit your CV and an application letter, and sometimes even go through an interview. This is invaluable experience for life after university, as students often gain paid employment following their placement. To supplement this you will also be invited to special sessions towards the end of your course when the university employability team will give you advice on how to prepare for interviews, and the best way to present your CV. Members of the CBJ Consortium and graduates will also visit the centre to pass on their experience of working in the media and how to approach interviews.

Graduate destinations and employability are monitored by the course team and included in course reports which are submitted to the external examining team.

**14. Course standards and quality**

Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways: through module feedback questionnaires; course feedback mechanisms; statistical data; and external examiners' comments and reports. In addition, informal student comment is sought. The outcomes of these processes are the main influence on the annual reporting process and are instrumental in the development of an annual action plan which leads to curriculum changes and developments and module modifications. New industry practices feed into course content and development through the Centre's close contacts with the industry, including the CBJ Consortium.

Every three years the course holds a Periodic Course Review (PCR) which involves external stakeholders, such as placement providers, and also involves student representatives

As part of the University's quality management and enhancement processes all courses are internally reviewed as part of a five-year subject review cycle. The most recent review was held in December 2015.

Standards and quality of the course is also monitored by the courses two external examiners who submit a report on their findings annually.

In summary, standards and quality of provision are maintained and enhanced through a variety of mechanisms, including:

1. Course team reviews.
2. The Consortium.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Industry accreditation guidelines (NCTJ).</li> <li>4. Comments and guidance received from external examiners.</li> <li>5. School postgraduate course reviews.</li> <li>6. Student feedback (formal and informal). Course committees three times a year attended by staff and course representatives.</li> <li>7. Market research for programme development.</li> <li>8. Maintaining close contact with CBJ graduates.</li> <li>9. Annual and periodic course reporting.</li> </ol>								
<p>15. <b>Assessment regulations</b>  This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>								
<p>16. <b>Additional information</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Collaborative partner(s):</td> <td>Not applicable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:</td> <td>QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement, September 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course recognised by:</td> <td>National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date this course specification approved:</td> <td>8 January 2018</td> </tr> </table>	Collaborative partner(s):	Not applicable	Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement, September 2015	Course recognised by:	National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)	Date this course specification approved:	8 January 2018
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