

Level 3 Junior Journalist Apprenticeship

1. Overview of assessment procedures

This apprenticeship is designed for the role of a junior journalist working in a number of different environments including newspapers, magazines, broadcast and online. The assessment plan caters for the skills required in these different media sectors.

The design principles have been led by employers, training providers and the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), the professional training body for the industry.

The assessment approach adopted includes completion of a recognised, industry-standard qualification, the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism, early formative assessments and a synoptic end-point assessment which is formed of a work-related project plus assessment of the apprentice’s qualities (behaviours).

Formative assessment	Core skills assessment	End-point assessment
<p>Indicative timeframe: first 1-3 months</p> <div data-bbox="215 907 544 1198" style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>In-house performance management by employers and/or training providers including assessing knowledge and understanding of key legal and ethical issues</p> </div> <div data-bbox="215 1243 544 1400" style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px;"> <p>Successful completion of assessments recorded, but do not contribute to final apprenticeship grade</p> </div>	<p>Indicative timeframe: 4-17 months</p> <div data-bbox="614 907 975 1332" style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Completion of Diploma in Journalism qualification including assessment in journalism core skills: reporting; media law and regulation; public affairs, e-portfolio; and shorthand. Plus two specialist subjects relevant to media sector where the apprentice is employed</p> </div> <div data-bbox="630 1377 954 1534" style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Apprentice must complete Diploma qualification to move on to end-point assessment</p> </div> <div data-bbox="630 1579 954 1736" style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px;"> <p>Successful completion of assessments contribute 50% to final apprenticeship grade</p> </div>	<p>Indicative timeframe: last six weeks of apprenticeship</p> <div data-bbox="1026 907 1386 1265" style="border: 1px solid purple; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Work-related project completed in final six weeks of apprenticeship. Content agreed to cover all aspects of the standard. Rationale and evaluation of learning included and used towards final assessment of qualities (behaviours)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1042 1310 1366 1579" style="border: 1px solid purple; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Assessment will be independent and conducted by trained examiners with industry experience and no interest in the final outcome</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1042 1624 1366 1780" style="border: 1px solid purple; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px;"> <p>Successful completion of assessments contribute 50% to final apprenticeship grade</p> </div>

The following methodology has been designed taking into account that this is an entry-level, typically 18-month apprenticeship that must be consistently applied across all sectors and employers.

An apprentice can expect a number of formal assessments during their typically minimum 18-month apprenticeship. This apprenticeship standard calls for three specific assessment periods: early formative assessments; core skills assessments; and end-point synoptic assessments.

2. Early formative assessments

It is recommended that employers seek early assurance that apprentices are “safe for work”. Apprentices knowledge of the relevant code(s) of conduct, the key issues of media law (defamation, court reporting restrictions, contempt of court and copyright) and broad ethical issues will be tested. The results do not count towards the award of the apprenticeship.

Formative assessments will take place in-house and be carried out by the employer and/or training provider generally within the first three months of the apprenticeship.

Assessment methods and results should be recorded to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by employers and/or training providers to address problem areas and by apprentices to identify strengths and weaknesses and improve their learning.

These early assessments could form part of the induction process. The employer will decide when the apprentice is ready to move to the next stage of the apprenticeship or whether further training is necessary.

The assessments do not count towards the final award of the apprenticeship and are not externally assessed.

1. Codes of conduct.

TV/radio and associated digital platforms: Apprentices must have knowledge of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and, where appropriate, the BBC Editorial Guidelines. Apprentices should have an awareness of the wider media regulatory framework

Print and associated digital platforms: Apprentices must have knowledge of the appropriate code of conduct which has been adopted by their employer. Apprentices should have an awareness of the wider media regulatory framework

2. Key legal issues

Apprentices should be aware of the major laws which affect publishers. In particular, they should understand when material is likely to be defamatory, the restrictions placed on the identification of young people appearing in the courts, the restrictions surrounding other court reports, what is meant by contempt of court and how copyright constrains the use of material and photographs; including those published on social media.

3. Broader ethical issues

Apprentices must understand their work will be scrutinised and challenged as never before. They should be aware of key ethical issues including conflicts of interest and standards of behaviour.

3. Core skills assessments

The NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism

Apprentices will take the industry recognised NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism. The diploma is an industry-standard qualification for trainee journalists. Employers are responsible for and understand the qualification. They know the standard of work to expect from employees who take this qualification.

The diploma is not part of the end-point synoptic assessment. Marks gained will contribute towards the overall apprenticeship award and grading (see the awarding marks section of this document). The Diploma in Journalism must be completed before the end-point assessment.

The assessments for this qualification will take place prior to the end-point assessment.

Mandatory assessments in the Diploma in Journalism are:

Reporting – exam tests a candidate’s reporting skills; the ability to write in a clear, concise way to a specified length. The exam also tests ethical knowledge in a practical scenario. Candidates also have to demonstrate they are able to follow-up a story and come up with visual and digital ideas.

E-portfolio – ten pieces of a candidate’s original work, demonstrating an ability to handle a variety of work – including features. This is flexible and any publishing platform can be used. It is suitable for all forms of print and digital media, TV and radio.

Essential Public Affairs– exam tests a candidate’s knowledge and understanding of how we are governed and its application to the journalist’s day-to-day work.

Essential Media Law and Regulation – exam tests a candidate’s knowledge and understanding of the law relating to their chosen field of work and the ethics and regulations which guide day-to-day work

Shorthand – exam tests a candidate’s ability to listen and record the spoken word and accurately transcribe to a set standard. Speeds tested at 60 to 120 words per minute.

NB: If an employer does not require their apprentice to learn shorthand, they must opt to study an additional specialist option.

To complete the qualification the apprentice must also take a minimum of two specialist options from the following: media law court reporting; videojournalism for online; business of magazines; production journalism; sports journalism; broadcast journalism; and business and finance journalism.

Assessments for the specialist options are by exam and/or coursework.

Those following the TV/radio option and associated websites will be expected to take the broadcast journalism specialist option which is a double module.

4. Synoptic end-point assessments

There are two parts to the end-point assessment:

a. The apprentice will undertake a work-related project during the final six weeks of the apprenticeship. It must demonstrate that the apprentice has gained all the journalism skills listed in the standard. It must also demonstrate an understanding of the application of those skills and practices acquired both on and off-the-job. The apprentice may choose the topic with the approval of their employer and the assessment organisation and the project may be produced across any platforms. It will include a rationale and reflective review of their learning during the apprenticeship.

The project will be assessed independently by the assessment organisation which must have robust quality assurance procedures in place to ensure the consistency and fairness of assessment.

b. The end-point assessment will include an independent assessment of the qualities (behaviours) as stated in the standards.

a. work-related project

The work-related project will be completed towards the end of the apprenticeship and after completion of the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism qualification.

This work-related project must demonstrate a holistic understanding of all aspects of the standard including the core skills and additional specialist skills for the appropriate sector. The apprentice is free to choose their own topic for the project, as long as it meets the conditions as described below. Projects an apprentice may consider could include how a major event was covered by their employer, including their own contributions to the overall success; or specific areas such as brand development, regulation and ethics or data-driven journalism. This list is by no means exhaustive but indicates the wide range of topics available to an apprentice.

The project proposal will be checked and approved by the assessment organisation to ensure the chosen topic meets the scope and level of skills required in the standard.

All projects must be accompanied by a statement from the apprentice setting out the rationale for the topic, any legal, regulatory or ethical issues that were encountered and how they were dealt with, and a reflective review of their learning during the apprenticeship.

The project may be produced on any platform, must be completely their own work and demonstrate their understanding of the application of the journalistic skills and practices acquired both on and off-the-job.

The project must meet all the following core skills requirements demonstrating that the apprentice junior journalist:

- knows what a story is and how to carry out the necessary research and interviews;
- can build and maintain a range of reliable contacts;
- can create quality stories that are accurate, clear, vigorous, fair and balanced, in a form that will engage an audience;

- works in an ethical manner and in accordance with relevant codes of practice and demonstrate integrity;
- is able to work on getting stories 'right the first time';
- demonstrates an ability to write and use good English to industry standard for all platforms;
- produces content for digital platforms, including video and photographic material;
- is adept at using social media and digital platforms and techniques to source content, contacts and build an audience;
- is a good communicator;
- connects with the audience they serve;
- works to tight deadlines;
- is technically proficient and able to understand/use web analytics;
- understands how society works;
- can take and keep accurate notes and records;
- is able to gather, verify and make proper use of User Generated Content (UGC);
- is able to gather, use and present data;
- understands how the law affects the work of a journalist;
- adheres to relevant health and safety legislation in the workplace; and
- understands the 'news business' with knowledge of emerging trends in the media industry.

Apprentices will follow one of the following pathways to gain the additional specialist skills. Specialist skills will be assessed in the Diploma in Journalism and its options, and the final project.

For print and associated digital platforms, journalists must:

- for most employers, write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- edit copy and write headlines for publication on different platforms;
- take photographs suitable for publication;
- be able to report from a wide range of settings;
- research and write clear, accurate, compliant and engaging stories and features for newspapers, magazines and websites;
- for some employers, understand the importance and value of brands;
- for some employers, be able to use data to work out potential editorial strategies; and
- have a good working knowledge of regulation as laid out in the editors' code.

For TV/radio and associated digital platforms, journalists must:

- for some employers, be able to write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- research and write clear, accurate, balanced, compliant and engaging stories for TV and radio;
- understand the techniques of interviewing for broadcast and can conduct a simple broadcast interview themselves;
- demonstrate familiarity with the basic techniques and technology of broadcast newsgathering, including the sourcing of material;

- have an awareness of the basic set-up of radio and television news studios, operate simple radio and television equipment, and be familiar with the language and terminology of a broadcast newsroom;
- show a good working knowledge of the key principles of broadcast regulation as laid out in the Ofcom Broadcasting Code; and BBC editorial guidelines.

For public relations (PR) and corporate communications, journalists must:

- for some employers, be able to write and accurately transcribe shorthand at 100 words per minute;
- understand how journalism in PR and corporate communications differs from journalism in other sectors;
- be able to prepare content for specific purposes (e.g. press releases, social media, brochures, exhibition boards);
- have a good understanding of the business (businesses) they work for;
- know the difference between outputs (e.g. press releases, social media etc.) and outcomes (e.g. the result); and
- be able to act as a mediator and facilitator between the media and employer.

b. Qualities (behaviours) will be assessed alongside the work-related project.

The qualities (behaviours) to be assessed are listed in the standard. Apprentices will submit a rationale and evaluation of their learning on the apprenticeship as part of the work-related project. This will form a basis for assessing the apprentice's competency against the qualities (behaviours) in the standard and will be assessed independently by the assessment organisation.

Journalists should have:

- a hard-working attitude;
- an inquiring mind;
- a lively interest in current affairs;
- an ability to write and use words accurately and with effect;
- persistence and determination;
- and a willingness to accept unsocial working hours.

They must:

- be able to demonstrate commitment and desire to be a journalist;
- have professional attitudes to their job and how they present themselves for work;
- have an understanding of the diversity of their audience.

They should also:

- be prepared to work shifts;
- be conscientious; enthusiastic; resilient; a team player;
- and have an ability and desire to carry out duties in accordance with the law, regulations and any appropriate codes of conduct.

3. Ensuring independence of assessment

The employer will complete the first stage of marking the work-based project and the assessment organisation will provide an independent and impartial assessment of the whole end-point synoptic assessment. The assessment organisation, which should have

substantial support from employers in the broadcast, national and regional newspaper and magazine media sectors, must provide experienced examiners with the necessary industry-based skills and expertise.

The assessment organisation must be regulated by Ofqual, providing robust quality assurance processes which will be applied to the work-related project. Rigorous assessment criteria will be developed by the assessment organisations to meet the standard and to ensure quality assessment that maintains the standard over time.

The employer, with the help of the training provider, will also conduct an initial assessment of the apprentice's qualities (behaviours) using a scoring system developed by the assessment organisations against the standard. This assessment will then be verified by the independent assessment organisation, which will review the assessment of qualities (behaviours) against the scoring system, using the evidence submitted, and will amend or confirm the marks awarded.

4. Delivering consistent (reliable) judgments

The focus of the work-related project will differ across newspapers, magazines, online and broadcast sectors so the content will vary depending on the role that each apprentice has with their employer. The assessment criteria for the work-related projects will be based on meeting the core skills of a junior journalist as described in the standard. Detailed assessment criteria defining the core knowledge and skills requirements will be developed by the assessment organisations to ensure a consistent approach to assessment as well as a comprehensive scoring system to assess the apprentice's qualities (behaviours). These new assessment materials will be quality assured by the assessment organisation following their development and delivery processes and procedures.

5. Delivering accurate (valid) judgments

The end-point assessment is based entirely on the competence of the apprentice and their ability to demonstrate that they have fulfilled all the requirements of the standard. Detailed assessment criteria will be applied by trained independent examiners with relevant industry experience, following quality assured marking processes and procedures that will provide accurate and valid outcomes.

6. Graded assessments

This apprenticeship is graded and an apprentice must achieve the following to gain a certificate of completion:

- Pass (50 to 59 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks available)
- Merit (60 to 69 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks available)
- Distinction (70 per cent and above of the total apprenticeship marks available).

Fifty per cent of the total marks will be made up from the results achieved in the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism assessments. The remaining 50 per cent will be gained from the end-point assessments completed in the final six weeks of the apprenticeship.

Apprentices will not be able to gain a certificate of completion without passing the end-point assessments.

The early formative assessments do not contribute marks towards the overall apprenticeship grade.

NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism

This is worth 50 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks.

Each mandatory unit (excluding shorthand) of the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism exams successfully completed (gaining A to E grades) by an apprentice is worth up to ten per cent of the total marks for the apprenticeship. The core units are reporting, e-portfolio, essential media law and regulation and essential public affairs. The remaining ten per cent will be allocated (five per cent each) to the two specialist options which must be taken as part of the qualification (broadcast journalism is a double module and will attract ten per cent).

Shorthand passes should be from 60wpm to 120wpm, depending on the pathway being followed or as prescribed by the employer, and will be recorded on the Level 3 Diploma in Journalism certificate.

Results in shorthand do not contribute to the overall apprenticeship grade. This reflects the different emphasis on the importance of shorthand in different sectors of the media and different employers.

Allocation of marks to the apprenticeship grade from the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism will be as follows:

Reporting, e-portfolio, essential public affairs, essential media law and regulation plus two specialist options (combined) will be worth a maximum of ten per cent each of the total apprenticeship mark made up as follows:

Exam mark 70+ (grade A) – (10%) (each specialist option will be 5%)

Exam mark 60-69 (grade B) – (8%) (each specialist option will be 4%)

Exam mark 50-59 (grade C) – (6%) (each specialist option will be 3%)

Exam mark 40-49 (grade D) – (4%) (each specialist option will be 2%)

Exam mark 30-39 (grade E) – (2%) (each specialist option will be 1%)

No apprenticeship marks awarded below 30 (fail).

Marks for candidates taking the broadcast journalism specialist option will be doubled.

Any candidate who takes more than two options can choose the best two to go towards the apprenticeship certificate.

End-point synoptic assessments

a. work-related project

This is worth 40 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks. The project must demonstrate that the apprentice has all of the required core skills and knowledge as described in the

standard and in relation to the specialist skills for their sector. Detailed assessment criteria will be applied by trained independent examiners with relevant industry experience following quality assured marking processes and procedures. To achieve a pass under this heading, an apprentice must gain at least half the marks available, ie: has gained at least 20 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks.

b. qualities (behaviours)

This is worth 10 per cent of the total apprenticeship marks. The apprentice must demonstrate in their rationale and evaluation of their learning that they have gained all the qualities (behaviours) required of a junior journalist as listed in the standard. To achieve a pass under this heading, an apprentice must gain at least half the marks available, ie: has gained at least five per cent of the total apprenticeship marks.

A detailed scoring system will be produced by the independent assessment organisation.

Marks in summary:

The overall mark for the apprenticeship as a whole (out of 100) is reached by totalling the available marks from the Diploma in Journalism (50 maximum) and the marks for the end-point assessments: work-related project (40 maximum) and qualities (behaviours) (10 maximum).

Apprentices cannot gain the apprenticeship without passing both of the end-point assessments.

7. Who will assess

Early formative assessments

Early formative assessments will be carried out by the employer and/or training provider. Each employer will want to ensure the apprentice is “safe for work”. The assessor will be an appropriately qualified journalist (i.e. editor, line manager or senior, experienced journalist). A record of the assessment will be kept by employers and training providers.

Core skills: NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism

The NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism is a valid, reliable and appropriate qualification which is recognised by the industry as fit for purpose, providing the skills, knowledge and understanding required by a junior journalist. The design, development, delivery and evaluation of the diploma meet Ofqual’s general conditions of recognition.

Assessments are set and marked by NCTJ-approved and trained examiners with relevant industry experience. The NCTJ implements rigorous marking and moderation processes and robust quality assurance procedures to ensure the fairness, reliability and validity of the Diploma qualification.

End-point synoptic assessments

A check of the work-related project and an initial assessment of the apprentice’s qualities (behaviours) will be carried out by the employer (with the assistance of the training provider).

The employer will:

1. Verify all the work contained in the project is the apprentice's own work and was produced during the final six weeks of the apprenticeship.
2. Report any complaints associated with any of the work, from whatever source.
3. The project will be "signed off" by the employer.
4. Qualities (behaviours): Employers will carry out an initial assessment of the apprentice's qualities (behaviours) against a detailed scoring system, provided by the independent assessment body.

The project and qualities (behaviours), with the sections completed by the employer, will then be sent to the assessment organisation for external assessment. They will be marked by experienced, independent examiners, who are, or have been, senior journalists. They will be subject to rigorous quality assurance to ensure reliability of assessment and consistency of standards over time.

Employers are insistent the end-point-assessment must be able to command the confidence and support of all sectors of the industry to ensure those gaining apprenticeships are qualified to work in *all* areas of journalism. As a result, employers have said any assessment body should be regulated by Ofqual and recognised by all sectors of journalism as being competent to carry out such assessments.

8. Affordability

The early formative assessments will be carried out in-house and the end-point synoptic assessments are likely to be completed by the apprentice in the workplace. The NCTJ is the awarding organisation for the Diploma in Journalism assessments

Assessments will be spread over time during the scheme and should not place undue pressure or costs on employers.

The main costs will be to the training provider and assessment organisation with the fees for the Diploma in Journalism qualification and assessment fees for the work-related project.

9. Manageability/feasibility

Apprentices will be registered with the assessment organisation on recruitment and progress will be monitored remotely through the completion of the exams and portfolio for the Diploma in Journalism qualification. On completion of the diploma, apprentices may start to work on their work-related project (end-point synoptic assessment).

The development of detailed assessment criteria for the work-related project and scoring system for qualities (behaviours) will be developed by the assessment organisations and approved by the journalism standard employer group.

Take-up of the apprenticeship is expected to be approximately 100 during 2015-16. There are currently 68 registered journalism apprentices across all media sectors

10. Professional body recognition

The NCTJ is a professional awarding body regulated by Ofqual and industry training organisation. It is independent of the delivery of the training for the apprentice and is the awarding organisation responsible for the assessment and awarding of the NCTJ level 3 Diploma in Journalism qualification taken by the apprentice during the apprenticeship.

The NCTJ is not a professional body in respect of licensing journalists to practice.

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