

MA Journalism

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Name of Final Award and Programme Title: MA Journalism

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Journalism

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100442) Journalism

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Periodical Training Council

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: December 2021

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Not applicable

Programme overview

This MA programme is accredited by the Periodical Training Council (PTC) and combines practical and theoretical approaches to journalism as a multi-media skill that can be applied to newspapers, magazines, online and television.

Students on the programme work on the School of Journalism's local online news service – www.eastlondonlines.co.uk – which covers a large area of east and south London. They also produce a portfolio of features work and a group magazine project.

Graduates from this programme have been successful in obtaining positions in national newspapers and magazines, television, radio and in other aspects of the media, such as public relations and communications. If you want to read more about them you can view the profiles on the new alumni site: <http://maj-alumni.gold.ac.uk>.

Programme entry requirements

Applicants will normally hold an appropriate first degree (2:1 or above) and have some experience in journalism (student publications, freelance work or work experience is usually acceptable).

If you do not have sufficient experience you may be asked to demonstrate your ability to write at this level. If English is not your first language you must hold an IELTS score of 7.0 (including 7.0 for writing).

Aims of the programme

This full time, one-year programme emphasises a critical approach to the practice of journalism. During the first term you will be introduced to the major theoretical approaches to the study of journalism, to media law and ethics, and to debates about questions of journalism and power, situating them firmly in a practical context. You will learn about the conventions of news reporting by writing news stories and working in a team to produce a news website for a large area of London. You will also be encouraged to develop a critique of those conventions. In the second and third terms you will develop these skills but concentrate on feature writing and developing an understanding of genre, audience and style. You will at all times be encouraged to relate the work you are doing to the industrial context in which you will be working in print, on-line and television and to make links with people working in the industry.

As well as subject specific knowledge and skills, the practical and theoretical studies will help you to further develop a wide variety of transferable intellectual, organisational and communications skills that can be applied in a wide range of employment contexts.

Students graduating from this programme work as journalists in print, on-line, and in television and PR. The flexibility and cross media nature of the module means that students are well equipped to move between media as their careers develop. Some choose to freelance but most go straight into full time jobs in the industry.

What you will be expected to achieve

The programme's learning outcomes are the result of continuing consultation with professional journalists, visiting tutors, professional colleagues in the Association for Journalism Education, external examiners and ex-students.

The programme is up-dated annually to ensure that it is in line with (or ahead of) current practice in the industry. You will also develop a wide range of transferable qualities and

skills necessary for employment in a variety of contexts. The Quality Assurance Agency describes these qualities as: effective communication skills, the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision making in complex and un-predictable situations and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development. Such skills are inherent in most of what you will learn on this programme.

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Journalism will demonstrate the following knowledge, understanding and skills:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Conceptual and practical knowledge of those journalistic techniques and practices required for researching and writing news	Practice News
A2	Knowledge of methodological techniques to be applied in the research and analysis of issues and information	All modules
A3	An advanced understanding of issues concerned with audience and genre	All modules
A4	An understanding of the media and media industries and how they may be conceptualised theoretically	Journalism in Context
A5	A comprehensive knowledge of appropriate legal and ethical issues	Media Law, Regulation and Ethics
A6	Knowledge and understanding of techniques appropriate to the constructive evaluation of your own original research of stories and their backgrounds and to the critique of your own completed work and that of others	All practice modules
A7	Understanding of the constructive interpersonal skills necessary for a successful shared production process in all sectors	All practice modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Ingenuity, originality and appropriateness in your approach to journalism	All modules
B2	Flexibility in use of media and application of technical skills	All practice modules
B3	Ability to assess situations quickly and act appropriately	All practice modules
B4	Ability to synthesise large volumes of information and rapidly summarise them	All practice modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	A high level of skill to the research and writing of news stories	Practice News
C2	A high level of organisational skills in the management of activities and processes	All practice modules
C3	Basic photography	Digital Methods
C4	Basic Video OR basic Data journalism skills	Digital Methods

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	All the skills learned in B and C above are transferable across a wide range of media and can be utilised in a wide range of employment. All are also transferable life skills which will enhance the ability of students to operate as fully engaged citizens of a democracy	All modules

In addition to the above outcomes, students who successfully complete the MA Journalism should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Your conceptual and practical knowledge of a wide range of journalistic techniques and practices (for newspapers, on-line and magazines) to the research and writing of a portfolio of journalistic work to a high standard	All modules
A2	An understanding of the application of these techniques to work across media	All modules
A3	Knowledge of how you may develop a personal approach to your own practice including an understanding of the development of style and clarity in your work	All modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	A high level of critical evaluation skills that enable you to make informed and reasoned creative decisions and to critique your own completed work and that of others	All modules
B2	Conceptual knowledge and critical reasoning skills in complex problem solving	All modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	A high level of journalistic skills to research & writing of work to a high standard. These include the application of methodological and evaluation skills in your original research of stories and their backgrounds; the use of relevant critical, analytical and empathetic skills in interviewing; the development of a personal approach to your practice; the	All modules

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
	ability to apply a high level of presentational skills and to communicate clearly and with style	
C2	The application of well-developed interpersonal skills to a shared production process	All practice modules
C3	Written and oral communication and management/team strategies appropriate to the needs of each situation	All modules
C4	Appropriate knowledge of online news production including picture handling	All practice modules
C5	Basic skills with appropriate web tools	All practice modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	All the skills learned in B and C above are transferable across a wide range of media and can be utilised in a wide range of employment. All are also transferable life skills which will enhance the ability of students to operate as fully engaged citizens of a democracy	All modules

How you will learn

The compulsory modules of the programme are divided between those that deliver journalism practice learning and those which provide the theoretical and key knowledge points learning which contextualises and underpins the practical work.

Feedback is a fundamental part of the learning process and comes in a number of different ways: through tutorials and individual feedback with staff; through formative and summative feedback on your practical editorial work, both verbal and written, which can be delivered individually and to the student group and through peer review: students are encouraged to constructively critique each other's work as well as well as deliver practical feedback through editorial processes.

The acquisition of the knowledge and understanding will be via, 1) your practice modules (see below) 2) a series of lectures and seminars for Journalism in Context, 3) a series of lectures and individual study for Asking the Right Questions and 4) a series of lectures (as

well as the application in practical work) on Media Law and Ethics and Politics, Power and Public Affairs. In addition there will be specific lectures on other known and emerging issues related to the field from members of staff and invited speakers from the industry.

The acquisition of the cognitive and thinking outcomes is through seminars with lecturers and industry professionals, workshops in which you will be supported by members of technical staff, and also in your individual work produced and discussed via tutorials and individual feedback.

Feedback is a fundamental part of the learning process and comes in a number of different ways: through tutorials and individual feedback with staff; through formative and summative feedback on your practical editorial work, both verbally and written, delivered individual and to the group and through peer review: students are encouraged to constructively critique each other's work as well as deliver practical feedback through editorial processes.

The acquisition of the subject-specific skills is achieved through both practical and theoretical studies and you will receive constant feedback on your performance via tutorials and individual feedback. Computer based skills are demonstrated by a technical adviser but you are expected to learn by the application of these skills to your own work. Team productions also aid the acquisition of these outcomes.

How you will be assessed

Assessment will be via portfolios of practical work, research projects, examinations and essays, including individual and group work in journalism practice modules

Practice Essay Marking Criteria

The marking criteria for theory essays are, in general:

- the extent to which the module learning outcomes have been achieved
- the originality, ambition, scope and relevance of the essay/project in terms of the topic being addressed
- the structure and form of the essay
- the presentation of the essay in terms of attention to clarity of expression, clear print/handwriting, spelling and punctuation

Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	<p>Journalism Practice Marking Criteria: Exceptional work of publishable quality showing originality and based on extensive research and independent thought. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to an outstanding level.</p> <p>Essay Marking Criteria: A mark of 80% or higher is awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work may be of publishable quality, and will be a significant contribution to debate within the field.</p>
70-79%	Distinction	<p>Journalism Practice Marking Criteria: It will demonstrate the very effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes. The portfolio will demonstrate an understanding of the target audience, grasp of the subject, critical awareness of the historical and cultural background of your subject, evidence of originality and individual research, evidence of interviewing ability, investigation, ingenuity, originality, scope or appropriateness in your approach to the subject, writing style and ability to communicate with clarity, and presentation. It will be work that the Department would normally regard as appropriate to exhibit, publish or broadcast externally.</p> <p>Essay Marking Criteria: the essay demonstrates the very effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module. The outstanding work will show evidence of extensive relevant reading and an impressive grasp of current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of issues of methodology and evidence, and be particularly clear, well focused and cogent.</p>
60-69%	Merit	<p>Journalism Practice Marking Criteria: Work that overall achieves a high standard. It will demonstrate the effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes. The work will have achieved the majority of its goals and will demonstrate a</p>

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		<p>significant degree of originality and ambition with a good level of technical competence. It will be based on an original idea and will be well structured. It will show significant evidence of research/planning and demonstrate a critical awareness of the medium and understanding of the audience. It will be work that the Department would normally regard as appropriate to exhibit or publish or broadcast externally.</p> <p>Essay Marking Criteria: candidates demonstrate the effective application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the module learning outcomes. The essay will show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. They will demonstrate an ability to relate this reading to their topic, and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature.</p>
50-59%	Pass	<p>Journalism Practice Marking Criteria: Work of an overall satisfactory standard. It will demonstrate the satisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes. The work achieves its primary goal(s). Technically it will be competent in quality with a recognisable overall structure. It will be based on a degree of research/planning and exhibit some critical awareness of the medium.</p> <p>Essay Marking Criteria: the essay demonstrates the satisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module. There is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but where there may be limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field.</p>
30-49%	Fail	<p>Journalism Practice Marking Criteria: Work of an overall unsatisfactory standard. It will demonstrate the unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes. The work will demonstrate little originality or ambition. It is likely that its goals will not have been achieved to a satisfactory extent and its level of technical competence will range from adequate to poor with a</p>

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		<p>weak structure. It will show evidence of a lack of research/planning and indicate little critical understanding of the medium and generally ineffective ability to sustain the involvement of the audience. It will be work that the Department would not regard as appropriate for any exhibition or publication.</p> <p>Essay Marking Criteria: indicates that a candidate has demonstrated an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the production modules learning outcomes.</p>
10-29%	Bad fail	Journalism Practice and Essay Marking Criteria: Work which is unsatisfactory and indicates that the student failed to understand or apply appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

How the programme is structured

The programme consists of the following modules

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Journalism Practice (Features)	MC71123C	60	7	Compulsory	2&3
Journalism Practice (News)	MC71122A	30	7	Compulsory	1& 2
Journalism Production Theory - Journalism in Context	MC71121A	15	7	Compulsory	1
Media, Law, Regulation and Ethics	MC71159A	15	7	Compulsory	1
Asking the Right Questions	MC71116B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Journalism Practice (Digital Methods)	MC71154C	15	7	Compulsory	1& 2
Journalism Practice (Production)	MC71155B	15	7	Compulsory	2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Power, Politics and Public Affairs	MC71160A	15	7	Compulsory	2

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

Employment prospects for those leaving with an MA in Journalism are excellent and reflect the close links with the industry and the reputation of Goldsmiths graduates, particularly from this programme. There are no formal placement schemes but all students undertake work experience, some of which is through their own endeavor while a large proportion is through informal links between the programme and major journalism employers, such as Times Newspapers, the Guardian and The Independent, which provide regular opportunities. Some of this can translate into paid part time and full time work. The majority of students find staff or regular freelance work in print journalism although we also have students in broadcasting. A few choose to take up jobs in allied fields such as public relations.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is

structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

Modules

Modules are defined as:

- “Optional” – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree

Progression

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

Classification

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student’s mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+

Merit – 60-69%

Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

Interim exit awards

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at gold.ac.uk/programme-costs.

Specific programme costs

In addition to these standard costs, you will also be expected to meet some costs which are specifically related to your programme, which are set out below:

You will need to cover local travel costs associated with reporting for Eastlondonlines. You will also need to have your own pens, notebooks, smartphone, and laptop - all essential for working as a reporter.

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).