

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	Media and Journalism
5	Programme Code	4075 F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	April 2025

10 Programme Aims

MA Media and Journalism course creates a 'laboratory of inquiry' where students are assisted to develop critical, academically rigorous and pragmatic research methods and conceptual tools to facilitate scholarly research of a high standing in the related fields of media, journalism and communications. This programme prepares students for further study at PhD level by providing them with methodological rigour and the resources needed for independent study.

The programme exposes students to leading-edge research in contemporary journalism, with a particular focus on the theoretical comprehension of the issues facing a global society in a digitised world. By engaging with innovative scholarship and creative practices, students develop an advanced understanding of the complex, pervasive global cultures that govern the production of consumption of media, journalism and communications. It provides learning opportunities to develop a critical awareness of cross-cultural and trans-national issues and contexts in media, journalism and communications, through comparative analysis and global contextualisation. The curriculum uses the diverse and high-quality research of the Media, Culture & Heritage team to enhance students' understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political contexts in which multimedia news and journalism work.

The programme adopts an ethical approach to developing responsible graduates and is specifically designed for students to shape their own learning journey through a choice of optional modules and flexible assessments. As part of the programme, students create and develop their own portfolio of journalism and multimedia content, in an area of interest to them, and complete an independent research project.

In brief the programme aims to:

1. Develop graduates with the academic and professional skills to prepare for a career in journalism or for further study at PhD level.
2. Deliver a curriculum that focuses on the latest research, contemporary debates and leading academic and professional practice within a global context.
3. Offer a supportive learning environment and employability opportunities through collaboration between the University, academia and media industries regionally, nationally and globally.
4. Work effectively, and at pace, with people from a range of cultural and social backgrounds within the academic, journalism, media and digital communications sector.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for media, culture and society and the skills associated with the practices of journalism.

- a) Conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to studies of media, journalism and communications;
- b) The skills required to enhance employability in the profession of journalism as provided through compulsory and optional modules.

Graduates of this programme will be able to demonstrate the analytical and critical skills needed to conduct and evaluate current research and advanced scholarship, and the practical skills associated with the profession of journalism.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should possess:

- A1.** A critical and sophisticated understanding of media, culture and society;
- A2.** An advanced knowledge and understanding of the key approaches to theorising and analysing media and journalism, which is informed by cutting-edge research in global contexts;
- A3.** An understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data dissemination and analysis in media, communication and journalism;
- A4.** A detailed understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communication industries;
- A5.** An advanced understanding and knowledge of the ethical responsibilities of media and journalism practice and research;
- A6.** An awareness of professional codes of practice across multimedia and multiplatform journalistic contexts;
- A7.** An advanced knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research fieldwork in journalism and in media and cultural contexts.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) designed for this programme supports students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, in line with the principles and priorities set out in both the School Plan and the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Learning happens in semesterised modules, with clear transitions and progressions between semesters.

The pedagogical philosophy and Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy (LTAS) aims to produce industry-ready, global-minded and civically motivated journalists who are able to enhance their own lives and help develop offline and online communities, facilitate meaningful communication and change and offer creative solutions to problems.

Teaching and Learning is focused on key areas:

- 1) Students as producers and project-based learning;
- 2) The assessment of both process and product;
- 3) The intercommunications between research-based critical analysis and practice;
- 4) Mechanisms to facilitate meaningful feed-forward and feedback both within and across semesters. This is to support learning and assessment across modules and semesters which works cohesively both laterally (working together with co-occurring learning to support development) and lineally (advancing knowledge and expertise in cross-semester and stage inter-related modules).

Each semester of the Programme is arranged across key themes, which work towards a 60-credit research project.

The teaching strategy is to offer a combination of lectures, interactive seminars, professional workshop training sessions and small-group tutorials.

Students develop skills in defining and formulating issues for investigation, skills in data collection and analysis for journalism, bibliographic work, and competence in the critical use of sources in the following ways: seminars, independent reading and hands-on experience through written assignments and professional practical work.

Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues through teamwork, presentations, case studies, teaching materials on such topics as industry regulatory bodies and independent reading.

The approach enables plurality of academic modules rather than a “template” for single-form delivery. The curriculum design specifically aims at a coherent student learning experience with appropriate ladders of progression.

The teaching strategy, therefore, offers a combination of lectures, interactive seminars, workshops and small-group tutorials. Students develop skills in defining and formulating research issues, skills in methodology, data collection, analysis, bibliographic work, and competence in the critical use of sources in the following ways: seminars, independent reading and hands-on experience through project work and research for the research project. Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues through teamwork, presentations, case studies and independent reading.

Assessment Strategy

The curriculum underpins a meaningful and coherent assessment and feedback strategy, which while allowing for varieties of project, offers a familiar structure to students in terms of weighting, the construction of assessment criteria, submission and how feed-forward and feedback are received and responded to.

A full range of assessment methods – including group and individual oral presentations, case-study projects, written essay assignments, tests, professional plans and profiles, methodological critiques of selected research studies, practice-based reports, individual and group oral presentations, portfolios of media production work and critical evaluation – will be employed. These will reflect the aims and objectives of the programme and the postgraduate level of the degree.

The key factor that distinguishes this course from other Masters programmes in media and journalism is the unique combination of a sophisticated analytical approach with intensive practical professional training to provide students with advanced professional journalism skills. The range of assessment reflects this diversity. Assessment requires students to

1. engage with theories and concepts;
2. formulate areas of enquiry and engage with relevant literature;
3. demonstrate a critical understanding of modes of journalistic investigation;
4. develop advanced practical skills associated with the profession of journalism.

This is assessed by a variety of means: oral presentations, case-study and professional reports, essays, methodological critiques of selected research studies, written assignments, and portfolios of work to assess students' ability to gather, assimilate and report on news stories or issues.

The programme therefore uses a full range of assessment methods, including group and individual oral presentations, case-study projects, written essay assignments, tests, professional plans and profiles, methodological critiques of selected research studies, practice-based reports, individual and group oral presentations, portfolios of media production work and critical evaluations.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should possess:

- B1.** Effective problem-solving strategies and high-level analytical and planning processes;
- B2.** The capacity to define and formulate research problems, questions and hypotheses;
- B3.** The ability to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice;
- B4.** Conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to media and journalism studies,
- B5.** The analytical and critical skills needed to assess and conduct current research and engage in advanced analysis;
- B6.** The ability to critically analyse key theoretical and practical concerns relating to media, journalism and communications;
- B7.** The ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and to extract information from relevant data sources;
- B8.** The ability to analyse and/or develop strategies around practice, using underpinning knowledge of the theoretical and practical landscape of media, journalism and communications.

Teaching and Learning Methods

In addition to that outlined in relation to Knowledge and Understanding, the teaching strategy consists of a combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical workshops, and fieldwork utilising both discipline-specific and team-based problem-solving exercises. Students will be provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and of cross-cultural and trans-national issues and contexts in media and journalism through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter. Students will learn through completing assignments, practical exercises, professional project work, and a research project.

Assessment Strategy

Please also see Assessment Strategy for Understanding and Knowledge

A cohesive plan for digital assessment and feedback (through online portfolios) underpins the assessment and submission strategy. All practical assessments are submitted via Canvas, which has feedback space directly beside the submission, facilitating staff-student communication and feedback/forward. Essays are submitted via Canvas and feedback is also provided via Canvas.

Cognitive Skills will be assessed by the research project, by oral presentations and by professional and practical projects.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

- C1.** The capacity to produce multimedia journalism and communication materials which communicate with audiences via the production of journalistic and related practical work;
- C2.** Professional writing skills for a range of different contexts;
- C3.** Bibliographic skills needed to identify and retrieve relevant material, including books, journal articles, conference proceedings, statistical data, government and other public reports including resources available online and offline;
- C4.** A sophisticated use of methods of evaluating a range of sources, texts and practices using theoretical frameworks that pertain to media, journalism, communication and cultural studies;

- C5.** A capacity to reflect critically on the key theoretical, subject-specific and practical concerns of media and journalism, and the journalistic techniques of multimedia newsgathering and production;
- C6.** The application of principles and concepts of journalistic production to a number of relevant multimedia contexts;
- C7.** The skills to produce news reports in a range of media forms and to comprehend and manage change in journalism and the media industry.
- C8.** The skills to select and utilise appropriate multimedia technologies such as video, audio, written, still image and interactive forms as appropriate to the story at hand and the audience;
- C9.** The ability to devise and develop creative and/or research projects and strategies pertinent to the fields of media and journalism.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The course acknowledges the importance of both pedagogical and discipline-specific research and practice, where appropriate, to the development of LTASs. Practice-based delivery of the MA in Media and Journalism is facilitated by academic staff members who are both practitioners and researchers in journalism.

Teaching, research and practice is viewed as a cohesive whole for academic leadership of the programme and key to how staff can shape and support student learning and attainment.

Due to the nature of the discipline, the production of digital learning materials that facilitate meaningful blended learning is key to this programme.

The teaching strategy is to provide subject-specific and professional skills through a range of specialist modules. Students are provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote the capacity to evaluate and reflect critically on their practical work and apply the principles and concepts of journalistic techniques to a number of contexts.

Students are also given support and guidance by their module leaders on both compulsory and optional modules. Students work independently in teams and present their work orally as well as in written form and production form. They learn through participation in workshops, seminars, lectures, through the preparation of oral presentations, through tutorials and through intensive professional practical and project work.

Assessment Strategy

Learning and Teaching underpins a meaningful and coherent assessment and feedback strategy, which, while allowing for varieties of project, offers a familiar structure to students in terms of weighting, the construction of assessment criteria, submission and how feed-forward and feedback are received and responded to.

Analysis of employer needs and skill gaps both locally and nationally has led to a developing meaningful blended learning with a focus on industry-facing and industry-standard projects. The programme is designed with technical and storytelling skills taught entirely within subject modules through industry-facing project achievement. Process, as well as product, will be weighted as a vehicle for learning and assessment through critical analysis of practice.

Students are assessed through oral presentations, professional and practical reports, written assignments and the critical evaluation assignment.

A cohesive plan for digital assessment and feedback (through online portfolios) underpins the assessment and submission strategy. All practical assessments are submitted via Canvas, which has feedback space directly beside the submission, facilitating staff-student communication and feedback/forward. Essays are submitted via Canvas, with feedback also provided via Canvas.

Transferable/Key Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should have:</p> <p>D1. The skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;</p> <p>D2. The skills of effective written and/or oral communication and presentation;</p> <p>D3. The capacity to manage research effectively, including planning, implementing and producing reports, assignments, and related projects on time;</p> <p>D4. The skills to manage workloads and to work to deadlines;</p> <p>D5. The skills to work effectively, both independently and as a member of teams, in both an academic and professional context.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p>The teaching strategy consists of a range of written assessment, including essays, reports, written tests, projects, and other practical work and seminars/workshops in which students are required to make team and individual presentations. They provide opportunities for the students to co-operate, develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. The research project provides specific opportunities for skills development through the construction of a research plan, through synthesising knowledge and through participation in research project workshops on the methodologies module and individual meetings with supervisors.</p>
Assessment Strategy
<p>Key skills will be assessed through oral presentations, practice-based reports, tests, written assignments and the research project.</p> <p>Assessments will test, as appropriate, theoretical, empirical and professional knowledge and understanding, together with their application to the profession of journalism.</p> <p>The assessments will reflect the postgraduate nature and aims of the course. They permit assessment on an equal footing for students from a wide range of cultural, national and disciplinary backgrounds.</p> <p>A cohesive plan for digital assessment and feedback (through online portfolios) underpins the assessment and submission strategy. All practical assessments are submitted via Canvas portfolios, which have feedback space directly beside the submission, facilitating staff-student communication and feedback/forward. Essays are submitted via Canvas, with feedback also provided via Canvas.</p>

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
<p>MA Media and Journalism is a research-focused programme that develops your cultural understanding and critical analysis and introduces the content-production skills needed for global media industries. Through a balance of theoretical and creative practical projects, you foster the strategic, critical and analytical skills needed to either advance as a researcher or take a first step into journalism and communication industries.</p> <p>Semester 1 focuses on understanding of media in regional, national and global contexts. Through independent research, you develop theoretical, critical and methodological understanding of the field and begin to consider your own areas of interest and expertise. You also apply this understanding to creative projects, advancing your skills in multimedia journalism production.</p>

Semester 2 focuses on **individuality and creativity** and allows you to choose the knowledge, research and journalistic skills you want to develop further. You evolve your own areas of interest and expertise and work with a research supervisor to begin producing a research project during bespoke learning sessions. You have freedom to decide from a range of optional modules that will complement this process and work holistically to advance your expertise.

In Semester 3 you are immersed in **advanced research practice**. Working closely with your research supervisor, you finalise your research project. You also put together a CV and either a portfolio of journalistic work with a professional journalist or a research proposal and application for further study with a research-focused academic.

If you are interested in experimenting with a range of media and journalism contexts, practices and studies, this programme allows you to develop an individual pathway of expertise. It suits anyone with an undergraduate programme who wants to shift their focus to contemporary media and cultural industries research and practice.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The key factor that distinguishes this course from other Masters programmes in Media and Journalism is the combining of a research-led and critical approach with practical components that allow students to develop professional skills.

The range of assessment reflects this diversity. Assessment requires students to:

- a) Engage with theories and concepts;
- b) Provide research evidence and engage with relevant literature;
- c) Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methodology;
- d) Develop practical skills of direct relevance to the profession of journalism.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[PROGRAMME REGULATIONS](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports

N/A

Additional mechanisms

N/A

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.