**Programme Specification**

**Programme award and title:** BA with Honours in Journalism Studies and Communications Practice

**UCAS code:**

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<th>SCQF Qualification Level</th>
<th>SCQF Credit Value</th>
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<td>8-10</td>
<td>484</td>
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**Educational aims of the programme:**
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

- The degree is offered by the Department of Film, Media and Journalism at Stirling. The programme aims to develop a critical understanding of the role played by journalistic media in contemporary society and to equip students with the generic skills required to embark on journalistic careers. The programme investigates the wider social context within which the journalistic media operate and encourages a rigorous analytical approach to understanding their position within particular political, economic and cultural contexts.

Areas of study offered to students include the history, economics, sociology and aesthetics of journalism. The course exposes students to a range of approaches to the study of journalistic media, including political economy, institutional analysis, textual analysis and audience studies.

- In addition, the communications practice pathway provides students with practical skills in media campaign design and planning, which increases their employability with the creative industries arena.

The programme offers a mixed approach, encouraging students to reflect critically on the relationship between theory and practice in the field of journalism. They have the opportunity to develop skills in print, audiovisual and online journalism production, and to reflect critically on the cultural, economic, technological and political factors shaping the professional evolution and contemporary practice of these skills. In so doing, students would be able to work in different fields associated with media production, communication practices and creative industries.

Students will be expected to emerge with a distinctive understanding of both the position of the media in contemporary society and the range of creative and professional practices which are required of those who work within them. In a cultural economy where journalism is a major and expanding sector of the media industries, students on this programme should emerge with a range of practical, creative, intellectual, analytical and research skills that enhance their employability across a wide range of journalistic media.

**Intended programme learning outcomes:**
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student's personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

**Knowledge and understanding**
- Students on the Journalism Studies programmes would be expected to gain knowledge and understanding in these core areas:
  - Journalism and society
  - The historical context for development of journalistic media
  - Production processes and professional practices in journalism
  - Journalistic forms and aesthetics
  - Current regulatory issues in journalism
  - Develop a critical understanding of public relations and advertising theory and its problematic relation with journalistic practices in contemporary society.

**Subject-specific skills and other attributes**
- Skills of intellectual analysis.
- The ability to:
• understand forms of journalistic communication, media and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the evolutionary processes through which they have come into being;
• analyse closely, interpret, and show the exercise of critical judgement in the evaluation of journalistic media and culture;
• develop substantive and detailed knowledge and understanding of all aspects of journalistic media.
• Be able to critically intervene in the formulation and setting of media campaigns that uses news outlets, therefore enabling institutions and organisations to reach in an ethical way its constituencies.

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem-solving abilities) and other attributes
• There are a range of general transferable skills that students of Journalism Studies will be expected to gain during the programme. They include an ability to:
• communicate effectively in inter-personal setting and through the submission of assigned work to a given length, format, brief and deadline;
• gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogantly, and express them effectively in written, oral or in other forms;
• work in flexible, creative and independent ways, individually and in groups, showing self-discipline, self-direction and self-reflexivity.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features
• The degree programme contains theoretical, analytical and production elements. These provide students with an understanding of the social, economic and political roles of the journalistic media in contemporary societies. This is achieved by examining how journalism is funded, regulated, produced and consumed, and how audiences may be affected and influenced by that consumption.

• Second, they aim to develop the skills and methods required for the analysis of texts drawn from all forms of journalistic media. Print, broadcast and online media, news and features are all subject to detailed analysis to see how information, meaning and pleasure are structured and communicated.

Third, the degree programme has a substantial practical element, in which production techniques employed in electronic, broadcast and print media are introduced. These practical elements are not intended to provide full professional training. They do, however, give students an opportunity to measure theoretical knowledge against the considerable demands of practical necessity. They will provide those students with career ambitions in journalism with a grounding in key generic skills associated with journalistic practice, such as research (including interviewing) , writing and editing.

• In addition, the programme develops transferable skills in written and oral communication, logical reasoning, conceptual analysis, study skills and group work. Appropriate teaching methods and learning strategies have been developed to achieve the learning outcomes of Journalism Studies. A range of assessment methods is employed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

• Level 8 semester modules

• The first two semester modules are common to all undergraduate students in the department of Film, Media and Journalism, and have large student numbers, c.150-200. One- or two-hour lectures are used as an economical means of introducing students to the key concepts and issues in the modules and to guide their independent reading, an essential part of the learning process throughout the degree. Regular student questionnaires provide positive feedback on the educational value of lectures.

• Lecture s are complemented by weekly one-hour seminars or by 90-minute workshops, linked to student reading. Given the wide range of academic backgrounds, life experiences and self-confidence in the student body, group discussion in the first semester takes place in classes of c.12 students. The relatively small size of the group enables the tutor (normally a member of staff or, occasionally, a teaching assistant) to moderate the discussion or group activity sensitively, taking into account the individual characteristics of the students. Class discussion, which begins at this stage, is central to the Department's teaching and learning practice, and students are encouraged to work with the ground rules for discussion groups which are outlined in the Department's Student Handbook.
The weekly one-hour workshops in semesters 2 and 3 comprise larger groups (max. 16), moderated by a tutor (again, normally a member of staff or, occasionally, a teaching assistant). Working in groups of five or six, students analyse short clips drawn from film and television. By the end of the second semester module they are expected to be able to conduct a stylistic analysis of audio-visual and print texts using the appropriate conceptual frameworks and to understand the industrial context in which such texts are produced.

In semester 3 students take their first journalism module proper, Introduction to Journalism Studies. This is a broad introduction to academic approaches to the field of journalism and is again taught by lecture and seminar. By the end of it students should be able to show understanding of the different ways in which journalism affects and is affected by society, and to discuss academic and industry methods of analysing such effects. In their first three semesters students' assessed work comprises essays and end-of-term examinations. Both forms of assessment test students' knowledge of the subject matter of the respective modules, their understanding of the issues involved and their ability to write cogently and coherently. The semester 1 and 2 include different types of examinations as a means of encouraging due attention to factual learning early in students' careers. The first two modules offer an optional additional essay is set for those whose first essay is unsatisfactory, in line with university policy. Advice on essay writing techniques is set out in the Department's Student Handbook, and a lecture hour early in semester 1 is devoted to the topic.

Semester modules (level 9/10)

The work undertaken in semesters 4 to 8 builds on the knowledge and understanding provided by the three introductory modules, applying this to more detailed study of the journalistic media. Students undertake a series of core modules in journalistic theory and practice. Students can, however, continue to maintain an interest in the broader subject matter of Film & Media, including broadcast. In each of semesters 4 and 5 students complement the core Journalism Studies modules with one module chosen from the Film & Media Studies programme.

The core semester modules in Journalism Studies are as follows:

- In semester 4 students should undertake Introduction to Journalism Research, as well as Writing for Journalists.
- In semesters 5, 6 and 7 students will have a selection of core modules and will be allowed to choose from a series of advance options offered by the department. These may include modules such as Writing and Research, Journalism Research and Analysis, Print Journalism, Media Law, Issues in Journalism, Online Journalism, Advanced Reporting, Research Methods, Journalism and Literature of Reality, Magazine Journalism, among others. Students will also be able to choose from existing and new modules associated with communications practice.
- Final semester honours students prepare a dissertation, a print project or an audiovisual project (this depending on available resources, the courses previously selected by the student and in any case would need the consent of the programme director). The selected module will be double weighted to reflect both the amount and level of work associated with successfully completing it. This will give students the opportunity to undertake independent, sustained academic research in an area of their own choice about journalism studies. It enables them to display the range of research, conceptual and analytical skills that they have been developing throughout the programme.

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Entry requirements: [http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/undergrad/entry_reqs/index.php](http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/undergrad/entry_reqs/index.php)

Programme structure: [http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/](http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/)

Relevant Subject Benchmark statement: [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp)


Introduction/revision date: