BA Journalism Studies

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Why we’re the UK’s number 1.

Study journalism at the University of Sheffield and you’re on your way to a degree from the UK’s number 1 department in our field.

Look at the university league tables for journalism, media and communication studies. Year after year, Sheffield is the name that most consistently ranks towards the top. In 2015 we were the only journalism department in the top 5 of all three tables. And the 2016 Complete University Guide named us the UK’s number 1 university for journalism.

Our students agree. In almost every year of the National Student Survey they’ve given us a satisfaction rating of at least 90 per cent.

How do we do it? By showing our students journalism’s bigger picture.

Good journalists today need traditional skills like spotting big stories and excellent newswriting – and digital skills like video editing and social media. With decades of journalistic experience themselves, our expert staff teach all these techniques superbly.

But our students don’t just become good journalists: they become the best.

They do this because the best journalists aren’t just good at working a camera and taking notes in shorthand. The best journalists understand the difference between good and bad journalism. They grasp the responsibilities of their profession – and its rich history. They know that journalism is about right and wrong, war and peace, liberty and democracy. It’s about the life stories of people, societies, and entire continents.
“The University of Sheffield has helped journalists see their route map through what is by any accounts the most extraordinary revolution in communication... We've had a lot to thank Sheffield for in terms of the people you've sent us.”


And because Sheffield belongs to the Russell Group – the elite body of Britain’s top universities, where teaching is based on the highest-quality research – our staff are living, breathing and teaching these ideas. So our students come to appreciate the critical role of journalism in illuminating our civilisation, and defending the values of free expression on which it’s built.

That’s what’s special about Sheffield. We don’t just teach you how – we show you why. The technical skills and the reasons journalism matters.

That’s why Sheffield journalists are uniquely well equipped for the modern workplace and boast an excellent record in the jobs market.

That’s why editors know a Sheffield graduate can make a world-class journalist.

Many universities could teach you journalism. Sheffield will show you journalism’s bigger picture.

Link

To read about our league table rankings and National Student Survey scores in detail see sheffield.ac.uk/journalism/rankings
Where will you spend your time as a Sheffield journalism student?

In the beautiful, grade II listed Sir Frederick Mappin Building you might have a lecture on political and cultural themes in broadcast media. In the Diamond – the University’s spectacular new £81million teaching centre – you might analyse the news values of UK tabloid newspapers. When it’s time to work independently, you might use the library facilities or book in to use a PC at the Information Commons – another modern, award-winning study space that’s open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But you’ll be based right here in Journalism Studies HQ at 9 Mappin Street. This is where you’ll take part in smaller seminar groups, speak one-to-one with your tutors, hand in work, and use the specialist media tech provided by the department.

To make sure the best journalism students enjoy the best facilities, the University of Sheffield recently invested £3million in refurbishing 9 Mappin Street. Our four newsrooms here are designed to simulate a real working environment – where you do real journalism on real-time news production days. Over in the Broadcast Zone you’ll record bulletins in the radio booth and TV studio – again, all set up with industry-standard kit. The Media Store is where you go to borrow the cameras and recording gear you take out on to the streets to report. And down in the editing suite you’ll use high-spec Apple Macs and Adobe software to put the finishing touches to your multimedia journalism.

And we know there are times you’ll need to chat informally with other students about your group work, or just unwind and refresh. So we put a common room on the ground floor, with comfy sofas, tables, snacks and drinks – and a few more computers, just so you can check your email or carry on with your coursework when the inspiration takes you.

Then, when work is over and it’s time to play, you’ll find yourself in a very special city full of wonder and surprises. Turn to page 12 for more about student life in Sheffield.
Once you've chosen Sheffield, you don't need to choose between different journalism courses. We offer one undergraduate degree: BA Journalism Studies. But it's a degree with flexibility.

Core modules cover essential journalistic skills and knowledge – all students must take these. Alongside core content, years 2 and 3 introduce optional modules, allowing you to specialise and shape the course according to your interests.

Whichever path you choose, some things are certain. One is that you're in for some hard work.

As you'd expect from a Russell Group university, the BA Journalism Studies degree is intellectually demanding. The best journalists grapple with the complex legal and moral issues around their work. They need the brain power to make tough decisions in an instant and call it right every time. You'll need to prepare for this by getting stuck in to the heavyweight academic content on the course.

We'll also equip you with practical skills like framing a camera shot, shorthand (still a vital tool in journalists’ locker) and editing digital audio and video. You'll learn to uncover stories, write sharp, attention-grabbing copy, structure news bulletins and use social media like a pro.

But it doesn't end there. You'll need to go out and uncover stories for yourself, attending council meetings and court cases, and making contacts in your 'patch'. You'll need initiative, persistence and imagination to be successful on the course – and as a journalist. It’s no easy ride.

We know it’s asking a lot. But don’t be put off. If you get a place on the course, it means you’re good enough. See page 14 for our entry requirements.
Structure of the course.

Our BA Journalism Studies degree takes three years to complete. In year 1 you’ll get the basics of newsgathering and newswriting down: how to hunt out stories and turn them into sparkling copy that commands your readers’ attention. Workshops will also look at newspaper and digital news production, and with our researchers you’ll start to explore the fascinating history of the media and the ethical issues faced by journalists today.

In your second year you’ll look more deeply at the language of news reporting, media law, and investigative journalism. We’ll introduce you to broadcast journalism as you create TV and radio and TV news bulletins, developing your interviewing and presenting skills, and filming, editing and presenting video.

Then in your final year you’ll develop more advanced broadcast and newswriting skills, including structuring bulletins, feature writing and magazine journalism. Modules on European and global issues in media – and the chance to undertake independent research or production of your own – will complete the bigger picture.

Please be aware that the content of our degree courses is always subject to alteration. The modules mentioned here have been taught recently but, because we need to respond to the requirements of a fast-changing media industry, course information given both here and on our website may change at any time.

**Sample Modules**

**Journalism Skills (Part 1)**
Core module • Year 1, semester 1
New students taking this module become familiar with the requirements of newswriting. Lectures discuss the challenges of creating an accurate, readable narrative in the wider context of the media industry, while practical workshops help refine students’ skills.

**Language and Journalism**
Optional module • Year 2, semester 2
This module invites students to look critically at the way professional journalists select particular words, phrases and sentence constructions, and how this relates to power structures in society and representations of gender, ethnicity and national identity.

**Free Speech and Censorship**
Optional module • Year 3, semester 1
Free speech and censorship have featured in political and philosophical debate for centuries and remain central to discussion about the role of journalism in democratic societies. This module relates the debate to the position of UK media today.
Let’s get to work.

A journalism degree from Sheffield is a qualification that makes people sit up and take notice.

Our reputation in the media industry means the degree carries credibility in the workplace. Employers know it’s the mark of a graduate with serious knowledge and skills.

Because of our close links with newspapers, broadcasters, and other media organisations, we have a direct line to newsrooms and editors. This means we know what employers look for in journalism graduates – and we shape the practical content of the degree to meet their needs and yours.

Print may be a medium in decline, but more people than ever are accessing journalism in a range of formats. That’s why our students become experts in digital content and multimedia – and why our graduates are so successful in the workplace.

Since 2012 alone, graduates from BA Journalism Studies have gone on to roles with the BBC, Bloomberg, the Press Association, a range of national magazines, local television and radio, regional newspapers and high-profile titles such as the Daily Mail and Guardian.

Good experience

In the second and third year of your course, during vacation periods, you’ll join up with an employer for a period of work experience in the media industry. The Department of Journalism Studies has a dedicated work placements officer who can help you find a placement to suit your journalistic interests.

And you won’t just be making coffee. We visit and keep in touch with employers to make sure we only send students to workplaces where they’ll enjoy rewarding and meaningful experiences.

• Check out Twitter hashtag #jusplacement to see for yourself what our students say about their work experiences

Professional accreditation – twice over

BA Journalism Studies at Sheffield is double-accredited by leading industry bodies. Both the National Council for the Training of Journalists and the Professional Publishers Association make regular visits to the department to give their seal of approval to our teaching and make sure our students are ready to hit the ground running when they enter the workplace. Professional accreditation of this kind is recognised by many employers as a seal of quality. Some editors won’t hire journalists without accredited qualifications.
The numbers tell a story

We run an annual survey to find out how our graduates’ careers are progressing. The most recent data comes from 2015 – and it’s good news. Among UK students who graduated that year with BA Journalism Studies and responded to the survey:

- 100% are in any kind of work or further study
- 87.5% are in graduate-level work or further study
- 0% are unemployed

Want to keep your options open?

A degree in journalism doesn’t just mean a job in journalism. The skills you’ll learn on the course are transferable to many other vocational pathways. Students sometimes decide they’d like to pursue other careers where adeptness with language, empathy, and interpersonal skills are vital.

Many work in public relations, communications and marketing. Some become social media specialists. Others are teachers, authors and researchers. Recent graduates are working in roles like these with employers like Aviva, Centerparcs, Asda, Oxford University Press, police and local authorities.

Percentage of BA Journalism Studies graduates in work or further study six months after graduation
Meet our graduates at work

Lauren Peel
Graduated: 2013
Employer: Aviva
Position: Media Relations Manager

Straight after university, I joined Aviva, a global financial services company, on a marketing graduate scheme. I moved around the business, working in product areas, marketing, public policy and corporate responsibility before being promoted from the scheme into my current role as a Media Relations Manager.

The degree really made me stand out in job interviews. The fact that I had worked in teams, was used to tight deadlines and pressure, and had experience at communicating with people from all sorts of backgrounds put me in a strong position compared to other graduates.

The communications element has been the most important part for me, and that goes across all of the practical modules. I also valued my Public Administration knowledge as this allowed me to work in Public Policy for a year, including hosting events in the Houses of Parliament and regularly meeting with MPs to discuss important issues.

The journalism degree gives you a huge amount of confidence – the fact that you have to go out and get stories, work together with people on deadlines and present to camera and on radio – it takes you out of your comfort zone and prepares you for different challenges and opportunities.
It’s a people thing.

So our students learn skills and knowledge that are invaluable in the workplace. And they do so using outstanding study facilities. But there’s another aspect of journalism studies at Sheffield that makes it such a special experience for students. And that’s us.

We’re professional journalists who’ve spent decades working in all areas of the media – from local newspapers to Fleet Street, from small radio stations to network television. We’re reporters who’ve seen it and done it, sourcing and breaking the big stories. We’re experts in digital editing and publishing, social media, new communications tech.

We’re also internationally acclaimed academics with big reputations for our research – in media ethics, freedom of expression, political communication, international journalism and more. We write influential textbooks like the Oxford Dictionary of Journalism, and McNae’s – the legal guide used every day in newsrooms throughout the UK.

So Sheffield can show you journalism’s bigger picture because our teaching staff is so strong on both academic research and practical skills.

That’s not all. Our team of professional services staff work to support your studies and make sure the department runs smoothly – from intro week to graduation. We have a dedicated Student Support Tutor whose job it is to guide you through any problems related to your studies, and a work placements co-ordinator who’ll help you get employment experience that best suits your interests and career plans (see page 7).

Sheffield may be a prestigious traditional university, but we’re not about building ivory towers: we’re about breaking down barriers. Join us and you’ll join a rigorous but friendly community of learning, where academics and students are on the same side – working hard together to solve problems and create great journalism. We’ve even been known to enjoy a cup of tea together after a seminar.

Link
Find out more about Sheffield journalism people at sheffield.ac.uk/journalism/staff
See the world from Sheffield.

Sheffield’s pretty hard to drag yourself away from, but we know it’s good to spread your wings.

That’s why we’ve linked up with universities from the furthest corners of Europe under the Erasmus scheme so you can apply to spend a semester in another country – while continuing to work towards your degree.

In recent years journalism undergraduates have undertaken part of their degree at our partner universities in Norway, Malta, Netherlands, Spain and Turkey. It’s a cultural and educational experience that our students treasure. Where will you go?

“Studying abroad has truly been a life-changing experience and one of the best decisions I could’ve made. I feel more confident in my journalism and being at a university abroad has really inspired me. This experience will definitely help me in the future.

I chose Malta because it stood out from all other countries and I’m so grateful that I was given the opportunity to spend a semester studying what I love in a country so beautiful and different from others in the EU. I’m definitely going to return to Malta in the near future.”

Nadene Chandler
BA Journalism Studies
Erasmus 2016

Link
Explore your international study options at sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus
We know you'll be completely focused on your studies here in Sheffield, with total dedication to hard work and high achievement.

But if you're leaving your family and friends for three long years, you'll want to live in a place you can love and call home.

There's something special about the city of Sheffield. Something a little different. There's no wonder students finish their degrees and don't want to leave.

There are all the fun and interesting things you'd expect from one of Britain's biggest cities. Your multiplex cinemas. Your bowling alleys. Your shopping centre the size of an airport. But there's more.

Sheffield is quirky. Vibrant. Warm-hearted. Creative. It's a city with soul. With astonishing swathes of green space. With strangers who smile and hold the door open for you.

There's a pulsating grassroots arts community, a harmonious multicultural population, striking Victorian and modern architecture, niche indie stores, dazzling public art, stylish restaurants, champion sport facilities, a legendary music scene, the best pubs in the world, great cafés and coffee shops, secret parties, urban farms, Supertrams, seven hills, five rivers, and two and a half million trees. Where do you want to begin?

And Sheffield isn't a university that cuts itself off from its community. Our campus is woven into the fabric of the city. The Department of Journalism Studies is slap bang in the middle of town, just a couple of minutes' walk from most of the action.
In some cities people talk about ‘student ghettos’. Not in Sheffield. Students have voted our accommodation the best in the UK for three years in a row.

You can choose from a city centre pad – right on the doorstep of the department and the buzz of urban living – or our leafy residences at Ranmoor and Endcliffe (still only 20 minutes’ walk from campus). Look out for the accommodation tour on your open day – and make yourself at home in Sheffield.

“Students have voted our accommodation the best in the UK for three years in a row.”
How do I get in?

This course is demanding, and for every available place we receive several applications. So we need to set the bar high. If you’re studying for A Levels you’ll need ABB (or BBB + B for an Extended Project in a relevant subject). For the equivalent in other qualifications see sheffield.ac.uk/journalism/grades. All applications must be made through UCAS.

Some universities make unconditional offers based on predicted A Level grades, so long as you make them your firm choice. This is not Sheffield policy. Our advice? Aim high. If Sheffield is your number one choice of university, make us your firm and work hard.

So I need ABB grades at A Level, or equivalent. Do I need any particular subjects?
No. English or media studies will not give you an advantage. To gauge the quality of your language skills and decide whether you have what it takes, we’ll look at the quality of your UCAS application in general – and your personal statement in particular. Our advice is to study the A Level subjects that most interest you.

What if I’ve already done some journalism or work experience?
Tell us. Send us copies of your work, or links to your work online – even if you’ve just kept a blog. It will all help us make a decision. Experience with your local paper or radio station would be useful. We will still consider your application fully, however, if you have no previous journalistic experience.

I’m interested in studying journalism at another university too, and they’ve made me an unconditional offer if I firm them. What should I do?
If you firm the other university’s unconditional offer, your decision becomes final. UCAS will not allow you to switch to Sheffield later if you achieve ABB (except by withdrawing and reapplying, which carries its own risks). Our advice is straightforward: if Sheffield is your first choice, make us your firm. If you’re good enough, you’ll get in.

Other universities have their own policies; we don’t think it’s appropriate to make unconditional offers based on predicted A Level grades.

What if I just miss out on my grades?
We don’t usually have places available in clearing, but if you’ve firmed us and we find your application particularly impressive, we may be able to exercise some flexibility. Keep an eye on your inbox on results day – if we have any room to make you an offer, we’ll get in touch. Feel free to phone us for an update.

For more FAQs (and answers) see sheffield.ac.uk/journalism/faq
Visit us and see for yourself.

Reading up about journalism degrees is all well and good. But choosing a university is about more than module outlines and rankings. It has to feel right too. And to get a proper feel for a university and see if it’s right for you, it’s best to get along to an open day.

To make sure you get a full and comprehensive picture of life at the University of Sheffield, we have two kinds of open days. First of all – probably before you even apply – there’s the University open day.

University open days run from early summer through to autumn (typically June to October). Book a place and you can tour the campus and Students’ Union and view your accommodation. They’re a great way to get a general feel for the University and the city of Sheffield. If you’re interested in studying with us, this is the place to start.

Then, if you apply and we offer you a place, we’ll invite you back for an Experience Journalism day. These are different from University open days.

Experience Journalism days take place early in the following year, generally from January to April. In the morning, an exhibition at the Students’ Union offers another chance to look at University facilities. But after lunch you’ll visit the Department of Journalism Studies. You’ll meet your tutors and other Sheffield journalism students, get your hands on the facilities, and ask questions specifically about your course. It’s the best way to get a real taste of life here in the department and help you make a final decision on which university suits you best.

Places are limited – so don’t miss out. We’ll look forward to meeting you.

Link

Book your University open day place now at sheffield.ac.uk/opendays
Stay in touch.

Our admissions team are in the office all year round to help with your application. Check our website for the latest information – and if you need more, just call, email or tweet us.

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