



## UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

<b>Programme Title:</b>	BA Hons Sports Journalism
<b>Awarding Body:</b>	Staffordshire University
<b>Final Awards:</b>	BA (Hons.)
<b>Teaching Institution:</b>	Staffordshire University
<b>Intermediate Awards:</b>	Ordinary degree, DipHE, CertHE
<b>Mode of Study</b>	Full-time three-year undergraduate Part-time study available
<b>UCAS Codes:</b>	P501
<b>QAA Subject Benchmarks:</b>	Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2008)
<b>Professional/Statutory Body</b>	n/a
<b>Date of Production:</b>	January 2005
<b>Date of Revision:</b>	January 2010

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## EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

The Sports Journalism award aims to develop intellectual, communication and problem-solving skills, and to foster the journalistic skills (including writing, editing and production) and knowledge of sports policy and critical analyses, which will prepare our students for employment in sports journalism, related areas of work, and other areas of general graduate employment.

The award aims:

1. To provide students with an understanding of journalism in relation to both theory and practical skills, and in relation to traditional and new industry practices. To provide students with an understanding of government policy on sport and an appreciation of sociological and cultural perspectives on sport.
2. To offer the necessary skills for students to pursue a career in sports journalism.
3. To facilitate independence of study by introducing students to established techniques of journalistic and academic enquiry.
4. To encourage students to make independent judgements on journalistic practice by developing their critical evaluation of current research and assumptions in the study of both journalism and sport.
5. To enable students to acquire a critical understanding of journalism through an informed, analytical and creative approach to professional practice and academic perspectives, and to encourage them to develop a sense of social consciousness and an ethical self-responsibility towards their work.
6. To provide Sports Journalism students with the opportunity to write extended pieces of sports journalism for print, online and/or broadcast (or related research dissertations) under supervision.
7. To give students the opportunity to gain professional experience of sports journalism through work placement within the industry (for example, sports desks, sports magazines and sports broadcast programmes) or related industries (such as public relations and sporting club press offices).
8. To provide the employability skills required for working in all areas of sports journalism (including magazines, newspapers, broadcast, online publications) and the transferable skills (within both the theoretical and practical frameworks of journalistic enquiry) for employment in other areas of work.
9. To provide the necessary skills to equip Sports Journalism students with the ability to work for a higher degree.

### **What is distinctive about this programme?**

There are only a handful of Sports Journalism awards available in this country. Staffordshire's carries a high reputation in the industry and many of our students over the past five years are now in employment.

Uniquely students are taught by tutors with a deep and continuing professional background in their subject. All tutors on the award work regularly in their own personal time within the sports journalism industry – e.g. for national newspapers, network broadcasters and Premier League football clubs. Consequently the award has access to a huge range of professional sports journalism contacts unparalleled by other similarly advertised awards. Former and current students have benefited from these contacts through work placements, professional level exercises and ultimately, in many cases, full-time work within the industry. A recent distinctive development has seen former students now in professional work environments offering freelance opportunities for current students. A good example is at Stoke City FC where there is regular flow of students working in a part-time capacity and one former student a full-time member of the club's media department.

## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

The numbers in brackets refer to relevant paragraphs in the QAA subject benchmark statements for *Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies*. See also the attached Award Learning Outcomes grid.

At the end of your studies you should have:

<p><b>Knowledge &amp; Understanding</b> A systematic understanding and coherent and detailed knowledge of the key aspects of sports journalism, including new developments in journalistic practice such as on-line journalism. (3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.5, 3.3.4)</p>
<p><b>Learning</b> An understanding of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of journalistic knowledge (3.1.9, 3.3.5) The ability to continue to learn and develop skills independently, through the selection and application of appropriate practical, critical and theoretical methodologies. (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4)</p>
<p><b>Enquiry</b> The ability to carry out secondary and primary research for articles, broadcasts, projects, presentations, essays and dissertations, involving sustained, self-managed enquiry. (4.2.1,5.3)</p>
<p><b>Analysis</b> The ability to analyse current journalistic research and debates and critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, concepts and data (that may be incomplete) to make reasoned judgements and apply them appropriately to the interpretation, critical analysis and evaluation of a story or source's accuracy and relevance. (4.1.1, 4.1.4, 5.2)</p>
<p><b>Problem Solving</b> The ability to develop appropriate questions to achieve a solution or range of solutions to a problem and use decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts and circumstances (for example, where information is incomplete or unclear) and the ability to plan and manage individual and group-based, creative, research and production projects to a given brief, deliver them to deadline and evaluate the effectiveness of the processes employed. (4.3.4, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7)</p>
<p><b>Communication</b> The ability to communicate and analyse sports journalism information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences in formal writing, sports journalism and through broadcast media. (4.4.4, 5.5)</p>
<p><b>Application</b> The confidence to apply the methods, theories and techniques that you have learned to review, consolidate and extend, and apply your sports journalism knowledge and understanding to devise and sustain arguments using the appropriate research techniques and methodology. (4.2.1, 4.2.3) The ability to interpret theories and concepts of media communication through practical application and to apply creative and imaginative practice to the critical understanding of sports journalism devices and techniques. (3.4.6, 3.4.8, 4.3.6, 4.5.5)</p>
<p><b>Reflection</b> The ability to evaluate your own work and personal development, with reference to professional media practices and the academic debates that surround you and demonstrate the learning ability and transferable skills necessary for graduate employment or further training and/or postgraduate research (4.1.6, 4.2.1)</p>

These learning outcomes have been informed by the QAA Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2008) Subject Bench Marking Statement.

# PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

## Award: SPORTS JOURNALISM

### Route: Single (Hons)

Potential award = Cert HE (120 credits passed with at least 90 at L4)

<b>L E V E L  C  (4)</b>	Teaching Block 1	<b>CORE AM75062-4 Theory &amp; Practice 1</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75067-4 Law for Journalists 1</b>  (15)		<b>CORE AM75234-4 Sports Reporting and Commentary</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75080-4 Shorthand</b>  (15)	
	Teaching Block 2	<b>CORE AM75064-4 Theory &amp; Practice 2</b>  (15)		<b>CORE HES91105-4 Introduction to Sociology of Sport And Physical Activity</b>  (15)	<b>CORE HES91107-4 Introduction to Sport Policy</b>  (15)		<b>CORE AM75138-4 Thinking Journalism</b>  (15)

(To progress to Level 5(I) at least 90 credits with at least 75 L4 award specific credits must be passed)

Potential award = DipHE (240 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4 and L5)

<b>L E V E L  I  (5)</b>	Teaching Block 1	<b>CORE AM75056-5 Editing and Production 1</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75052-5 Sportswriting in the Cross-Media Market</b>  (15)	<b>CORE HES92107-5 Applied Sociology in Sport</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75184-5 Web-Based Journalism - in either teaching block</b>  (15)
	Teaching Block 2	<b>CORE AM75081-5 Work Placement</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75053-5 Sports Features And Creative Content</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75078-5 Sports Broadcasting</b>  (15)	<b>GENERAL OPTION - in either teaching block</b>  (15)
	Teaching Block 3				

(To progress to Level 6 at least 210 credits including all required award specific Level 4 credits and at least 75 award specific Level 5 credits must be passed)

Potential award = Honours Degree (360 credits passed with at least 90 at each of L4, L5 and L6)

<b>L E V E L  H  (6)</b>	Teaching Block 1	<b>CORE AM75076-6</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75415-6 Sports Broadcasting 2</b>  (15)	<b>CORE AM75196-6 Career Development</b>  (15)	<b>AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION</b>  (15)	<b>AWARD SPECIFIC OPTION</b>  (15)
	Teaching Block 2	<b>Journalism Project</b>  (45)				<b>GENERAL OPTION</b>  (15)

## Award Specific Options – SPORTS JOURNALISM

<b>LEVEL I (5)</b>					
<b>Teaching Block 1</b>		<b>Cats</b>	<b>Teaching Block 2</b>		<b>Cats</b>
<b>AM75026-5</b>	Commissioning and Freelancing	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75006-5</b>	Political Propaganda & Mass Communication	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75197-5</b>	Screening Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75028-5</b>	Documentary Debates	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75344-5</b>	Law for Journalist 2	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75057-5</b>	Editing and Production 2	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75360-5</b>	Video and Audio Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75059-5</b>	Magazine Writing & Creative Content	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75388-5</b>	Entrepreneurial Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75060-5</b>	Magazine Design, Development & Production	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75417-5</b>	PR Operations	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75388-5</b>	Entrepreneurial Journalism	<b>15</b>
<b>HES92109-5</b>	Challenges to UK Sport and Leisure Policy	<b>15</b>	<b>HES92104-5</b>	Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Psychology	<b>15</b>
			<b>HES92108-5</b>	Sports Marketing and Promotion	<b>15</b>
			<b>HES92112-5</b>	Sports History	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75162-5</b>	Shorthand 2		Serial (with assessment deadline in teaching block 2)		<b>15</b>
<b>AM75195-5</b>	Public Affairs for Journalists				<b>15</b>

<b>LEVEL H (6)</b>					
<b>Teaching Block 1</b>		<b>Cats</b>	<b>Teaching Block 2</b>		<b>Cats</b>
<b>AM00214-6</b>	Understanding Photojournalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM00214-6</b>	Understanding Photojournalism	<b>15</b>
<b>AM25148-6</b>	Conflict & Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75064-6</b>	The Political Columnist : Origin, Development and Practice	<b>15</b>
<b>AM25319-6</b>	Women in Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75077-6</b>	The Philosophy of Journalism	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75198-6</b>	Screening Journalism	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75363-6</b>	Magazine Design, Development and Production	<b>15</b>
<b>HES93109-6</b>	Contemporary Issues in Sport Psychology and Motor Learning	<b>15</b>	<b>AM75364-6</b>	Editing and Production 2	<b>15</b>
<b>HES93118-6</b>	Football Culture	<b>15</b>	<b>BLB00059-6</b>	The Professional Sports Business	<b>15</b>
			<b>HES93113-6</b>	Drugs in Sport	<b>15</b>
			<b>SHP93014-6</b>	Applied Sport Psychology	<b>15</b>
<b>AM75163-6</b>	Shorthand 3		Serial (with assessment deadline in teaching block 2)		<b>15</b>
<b>LWU10085-6</b>	Sport The Individual and the Law				<b>30</b>

### GENERAL OPTIONS

Students can choose from the Award Specific Option list or modules from elsewhere in the Faculty of Arts, Media and Design. Alternatively, they can choose from the University General Option Guide or a module from another Faculty (e.g. Business and Law). (Available via [www.staffs.ac.uk/amdoptions](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/amdoptions)).

## HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

### Teaching and Learning

Sports Journalism students progress through their degree by a cumulative process of gaining experience and knowledge; both the vocational needs of a career in sports journalism and the reflective analysis necessary for intellectual development are fostered. The more theoretical modules link with practice, both in the content of the modules (where practical examples illustrate journalism and communication theories) and in the way that student knowledge of the theoretical perspectives and analyses helps them to understand the role of the journalist in society.

A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed in Sports Journalism modules. Besides the traditional one hour lecture, one hour seminar model (for example in *Introduction to Sports Policy*) students are taught through practice-based workshops (*Theory and Practice 1 & 2*; *Editing & Production 1*), two-hour interactive workshops (*Law for Journalists*), individual tutorials (*Sports Journalism Project*) and student-led workshop seminars (*Sports Features & Creative Content*, *Sportswriting in the Cross-Media Market*).

Independent learning is important on all modules, as it enables students to develop their subject and key skills and to prepare for written and oral communication. Independent learning is promoted through the feedback given to students, which takes several forms including small group and one-to-one discussions on both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is crucial in guiding students towards the appropriate standards; on a number of modules, including *Theory & Practice* and *Sports Reporting & Commentary*, regular diagnostic tests by tutors in seminars informally assess the progress of students during workshop sessions in their practical modules. Students are given regular written feedback on the work they produce. Portfolios of work (including the production of magazines, photojournalism and newspaper page layouts), which are largely independently produced, allow tutors to assess student progress towards appropriate professional standards. Writing regular news and feature stories during their core *Theory & Practice* and *Sportswriting in the Cross-Media Market* sessions and workshops test the student's progress towards the appropriate professional standards they will need to reach in order to make the most of their placement.

In the past five years, the world of media has been totally changed by the advance of web-based journalism. Most modules have been adapted to encompass the demands put on modern journalists to produce online material, both written and broadcast. But the burgeoning demands of the internet has been reflected by the introduction of a new module – *Web-based Journalism* – where students concentrate specifically on how to write for the web and website production. Students are encouraged to submit their work to the departmental website *StaffsLive* which is published under tutor supervision and available to view by an outside audience.

The student's *Work Placement* offers them the chance to use the skills they have developed in a professional sports journalism environment. The Level C modules in Law and Theory and Practice have embedded within them the professional training a student requires as preparation for a placement in a sports environment; their modules looking at the sociology of sport and the public policy of sport give them the knowledge of current debates in journalistic practice and the historical and intellectual context of sport. This historical, cultural and theoretical background, which ensures a wider pool of sporting knowledge, helps them to make the most of their placement. At the start of their second year (Level I), students receive a placement handbook which helps prepare them for the task of getting an industry placement. All Sports Journalism students receive formal and informal guidance from the work placement tutor and other tutors.

## Assessment

Sports Journalism students are formally assessed (formative and summative assessment is used) in a variety of ways over the course of their undergraduate careers and the balance between the different forms of assessment is determined by the different aims and learning outcomes of the core and option modules.

Assessment methods include academic essays (for example in *Thinking Journalism*), researching and writing news stories (*Theory & Practice 1,2,3 & 4*), unseen examinations (*Law for Journalists*), writing features (*Theory & Practice II, Sports Journalism Project*), group oral and written seminar assessment (on the option *The British Press*), computer produced demonstrations of technical ability (*Editing & Production 1 & 2*), group production project (*Magazine Journalism*), individual portfolios (*Photojournalism; Introduction to Sports Policy*).

Individual modules (including the above) may also be weighted by combinations of these different assessment methods; for example, the *Work Placement* module is assessed by a combination of editor's report, a student portfolio of published work (where appropriate) and written reflection by individual students on their experiences of work placement in a sports journalism environment.

Academic essays allow tutors to gauge the student's ability to independently research and then analyse, assess and present that information in a coherent and detached (i.e., academic) manner. Writing news and feature stories for formal assessment tests the student's progress towards the appropriate professional standards. Unseen examinations help prepare students for their unseen NCTJ Law examinations (if they wish to take this route). Group oral seminar assessments encourage students to work collaboratively with their colleagues and develop their communication skills. Portfolios of work (including the production of magazines, photojournalism and newspaper page layouts) encourage group working and allow tutors to assess student progress towards appropriate professional standards. The editor's report on the student's work placement assesses their performance as a sports journalist in a working newsroom (or similar environment).

A representative sample across the range, and all first class marks and fails, of student work on Levels I and H is anonymously second-marked. All third year Sports Journalism projects are at least double marked – most are also seen by a third marker in a two day exercise where all Journalism tutors look at student projects to ensure fairness and parity. Journalism externals, who include representatives from both the industry and academic institutions, are sent a representative sample of work and also spend the day before the Assessment Board with a range of student work available to them in a 'paper room'. External examiners therefore have the opportunity to see an individual student's work across a range of modules

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Entry Requirements (including IELTS score)

300 UCAS tariff points (typical three-A level offer would be BBB)

We also recruit mature students by interview and written assessment. The Journalism team is flexible in their judgement of the suitability of an applicant, however, and will take factors such as work experience, personal statements into account.

For international students, a minimum overall IELTS score of 7.5 is required, and possibly an interview and written assessment (delivered online) to assess candidate suitability.

### What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

The entry requirements for the award are normally:

A Levels, BTEC National Diploma or equivalent (points as above).

### Disability Statement

Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at: [http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study\\_here/disabled\\_students/index.jsp](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study_here/disabled_students/index.jsp)

## AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This award offers access to examinations set by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), an organisation which oversees the provision for and management and delivery of what are termed pre-entry examinations offered at a number of accredited centres in the UK, including Staffordshire University.

Pre-entry refers to the fact that these examinations are being taken before a candidate begins employment in journalism. As such these examinations are seen by many editors as a key factor in offering jobs to graduates. In Sports Journalism, exams are offered in Sports Journalism (one exam), Media Law for Journalists (two exams), and shorthand (one exam).

The award leader was invited two years ago by the NCTJ to contribute to the development of a new nationally accredited sports journalism exam. Subsequently Staffordshire students were the first to sit the exam in May 2008. The award leader continues to be involved in the future development of sports journalism at a national level and is currently the chief exam marker for the NCTJ in this subject.

Sports journalism students have the opportunity to take any of the other NCTJ exams on offer at Staffordshire as outlined below.

Preparation for these examinations is concomitant with the content and delivery of the modules in theory and practice, law, public affairs and shorthand. The modules covering these areas were redesigned for the 2003-4 academic year to more

appropriately mirror the NCTJ curricula regarding content and assessment. Course assessments for modules covering law, public affairs, shorthand and, to some extent theory and practice, are class tests. This redesign of modules and shift to unseen test assessment has produced significant improvements in students' grasp, quality of work and NCTJ results and continuous refinement is expected to further improvements. Early evidence from the first batch of students sitting the sports journalism exam shows encouraging results.

Preparation for news practice exams is provided through the four theory and practice modules through semesters one to four. Tutors, all seasoned news practitioners, use a combination of theory, example, practice and ongoing feedback in workshops to take students through all aspects of news production from news sense, sources, research and presentation to interviewing, house style, news editing and writing techniques. Course assessment is through written news stories produced through independent reporting by the student, directed by the tutor and from unseen material. Past NCTJ papers are used in class exercises to give students appropriate material relevant to newsroom practice and as preparation for NCTJ examination content and format. Most students will develop their abilities through the first two years of their award to take the two NCTJ examinations in news practice at the end of the second year, particularly following their work placement, although some students progress quickly enough to do this by the end of the first year. The examinations are in the form of writing news stories from written unseen material based around press releases, press statements, quotes and background material.

The redrafting of modules for law and public affairs provision has provided a thorough investigation of the subject areas through a lecture programme covering the essential knowledge curricula, together with appropriate reflective and critical perspectives. These modules are delivered by tutors with both practical and academic experience pertinent to the subject areas. The lecture programme leads to end-of-semester assessments by class tests. These tests mirror the content, style and length of the NCTJ examinations. Most students sitting NCTJ examinations in these subjects will do so following the semester in which material specific to particular NCTJ papers is addressed. For example, the NCTJ Media Law (General Reporting) examination, which concentrates on contempt and defamation, is mirrored by the content of the level 4 serial module Law for Journalists 1.

Shorthand is taught through workshops delivered by an experienced specialist shorthand tutor who takes the students from scratch, by exposition, example and class practices, up to, potentially, the ability to pass the NCTJ 100 words per minute test. Again, the module assessment is by class test, mirroring the method of NCTJ assessment.

NCTJ examinations are offered at Staffordshire University in January and again in April/May.

This effectively means that more than 20 individual NCTJ examinations are offered in any one academic year. This is to give all students adequate access, particularly given the difficulties of accommodating such elements as resits and work placements. The NCTJ provides a range of dates for examinations across the different subjects each year. Students are allowed multiple resit opportunities. They are responsible for paying all NCTJ examination fees themselves, currently £38 for all exams except shorthand at £11.50.

The NCTJ examination provision is the responsibility of a designated NCTJ coordinator within the journalism team at Staffordshire University. Students are advised orally, by e-mail and by notices of exam dates and requirements. Specific forms are provided for them to book these examinations which are then processed, together with the appropriate payment in advance, by faculty administrative staff in

concert with the NCTJ coordinator. Invigilation is arranged from within the journalism team by the coordinator. Contact with the NCTJ is continuous, by e-mail, post and telephone. The journalism team works closely to ensure that preparation for the NCTJ examinations is relevant while at the same time maintaining appropriate academic content of the respective modules.

**Further information about the award can be found in the relevant Student Handbook and on the University Website. This includes information about optional modules, learning outcomes at levels below honours, student support, and academic regulations.**

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