

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA Journalism PG Dip Journalism PG Cert Journalism <i>Exit pathway award:</i> MA Investigative Journalism (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip Journalism; PG Cert Journalism PG Dip Investigative Journalism, PG Cert Investigative Journalism
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London and online
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	MA, PG Dip: Full-time – 1 year Part-time – 2 years PG Cert: Part-time – 1 year September, January (MA)
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMAJOUIP_C (MA, on campus) TMAJOURM_X (MA, flexible study) TMAJOUON_C (MA, online study) TMAJOURJ_C (MA, on campus, Jan start) TPDJOURN_C (PG Dip)/TPCJOURN_C (PG Cert)
HECoS Code	100442 (journalism)
Start date of programme	Autumn 2009
Date of programme approval	Spring 2009
Date of last programme amendment approval	April 2024
Valid for academic entry year	2025-26
Programme Director	Dr Imke Henkel
Date of last revision to document	18/04/2024

Admissions requirements

A second-class honours degree (2:2) or above in any subject apart from journalism; other qualifications will be considered. Applications are encouraged from those with prior journalistic experience or other media experience, but this is not a requirement of admission.

If English is not your first language, an IELTS score of 7.0 or equivalent is required.

Course aims

The programme offers students the opportunity to acquire practical journalistic skills, the means to critically analyse the media and its industries, and the ability to develop their own research and analytical skills through autonomous study, while at the same time giving them a choice between two areas of interest: either general journalism or investigative journalism.

One distinctive feature for both pathways is a fast-track but thorough grounding in practical journalistic skills, adapted to the chosen pathway. This will enable graduates in other fields to gain detailed practical knowledge of – depending on their chosen pathway – either journalistic conventions of writing, researching and editing and an understanding of common formats and genres, or of the techniques of planning and conducting journalistic investigations, introduce them to collaborative work, an essential skill for investigative journalists, and provide them with an understanding of common forms of telling investigative stories.

The compulsory modules ensure that all students will be equipped with a solid understanding of media theories and of how digital technologies are shaping contemporary journalism.

Armed with the core skills of the pathway-dependent fast-track courses, and the foundational knowledge of the compulsory courses, optional modules offer students to specialise and to gain a range of practical skills relevant to a wide range of professional contexts, including strategic communications, design and digital media. Other modules offer high-level academic investigation of the media and creative industries.

Students undertake writing assignments of increasing complexity, demonstrating self-direction and originality in generating ideas, researching information and identifying target publications and audiences. Responding to the fact that many prospective students may not aspire to making their living as newspaper journalists but may instead move into other forms of writing and positions dealing with the writing of others, another distinctive feature is the opportunity to develop skills of web journalism and other online media production, public relations, professional communications and other skills relevant to the creative industries.

As well as the content offered in the existing PG Cert and PG Dip programmes, the MA incorporates a 60-credit dissertation which may be either academic or practical in form. In both cases the dissertation is based on original research, and includes an assessed component of critical reflexivity.

Course structure

All students apply to the MA Journalism initially, but once on the programme they can select one of two pathways MA Journalism or MA Investigative Journalism. Students are required to take a pathway-specific core module of Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills for the MA Journalism pathway or Introduction to Investigative Journalism for the MA Investigative Journalism pathway. Students are also required to undertake a 60-credit research project or a journalistic project that reflects their chosen pathway. On both pathways, students must take Theoretical Perspectives on Media and Digital Journalism as compulsory modules. Students can then select an option out of the programme list of options, which can be pathway specific but this is not a requirement. (Pathway-specific options are currently Advanced Sub-Editing, Layout and Design or Public Relations and Professional Communications for MA Journalism, and Introduction to Data Journalism for MA Investigative Journalism.)

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
MA Journalism OR MA Investigative Journalism, Full-time – 1 year, October start					
7	FDME011S7 ARMC237S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills OR Introduction to investigative Journalism	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and Data Journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
7		Option (see indicative list below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3*
7	ARMC047D7	Final Project/Dissertation/Portfolio	60	Core	T1-3 & Summer
<i>*No more than 60 credits taken in any term.</i>					
MA Journalism OR MA Investigative Journalism, Part-time** – 2 years, October start					
Year 1					
7	FDME011S7 ARMC237S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills OR Introduction to investigative Journalism	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and Data Journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
Year 2					
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2, 3
7	ARMC047D7	Final Project/Dissertation/Portfolio	60	Core	T1-3 & Summer
<i>**Note: on the PT structure, students can take either 60 or 90 credits of taught modules in year one and the final project plus 60 or 30 credits of taught modules in year two, taking not more than 30 credits in any one term. The structure shows 90 credits taken in each year</i>					

MA Journalism or MA Investigative Journalism, Full-time – 1 year, January start					
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2, 3
7	FDME014S7	Digital and Data Journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
7	FDME011S7 ARMC237S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills OR Introduction to investigative Journalism	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC047D7	Final Project/Dissertation/Portfolio (due Jan)	60	Core	T2, 3, 1 & Summer
MA Journalism or MA Investigative Journalism, Part-time – 2 years, January start					
Year 1					
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and data journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
7	FDME011S7 ARMC237S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills OR Introduction to investigative Journalism	30	Core	T1
Year 2					
7		Option	30	Option	T1, 2, 3
7	ARMC047D7	Final Project/Dissertation/Portfolio (due Jan)	60	Core	T2, 3, 1 & Summer
PG Dip Journalism, Full-time – 1 year, October start					
7	FDME011S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and data Journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
7		Option (see indicative list below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3*
<i>*No more than 60 credits taken in any term.</i>					
PG Dip Journalism, Part-time – 2 years, October start					
Year 1					
7	FDME011S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and Data Journalism	30	Compulsory	T3
Year 2					
7		Option (see indicative list below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3**
7		Option (see indicative list below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3**
<i>**Subject to a maximum of 30 credits to be taken in any one term</i>					

PG Cert Journalism, Part-time, 1 year, October start					
7	FDME011S7	Fast Track Practical Journalism Skills	30	Core	T1
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Compulsory	T2
Indicative options					
7	SSPO267S7	Political Communication and Citizen Engagement in a Digital World*	30	Option	T1
7	ARMC160S7	The Inside Out of Culture *	30	Option	T2
7	ARMC171S7	Advanced Layout and Design	30	Option	T3
7	ARMC222S7	Digital Culture	30	Option	T2
7	ARMC178S7	Public Relations and Professional Communications	30	Option	T3

Note: options for students taking the fully online route are limited to those offered online. Options marked with an asterisk are expected to be available with hyflex delivery (both online and in-person). All core/compulsory modules are offered in hyflex mode.

Interim exit awards: PG Dip/PG Cert Investigative Reporting are only available as exit awards to those who have passed ARMC237S7 Introduction to investigative Journalism.

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*

Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*

Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

How you will learn

Learning is student-centred through practical exercises, lecturer presentations, individual and group work, discussion, research, and critical evaluation of practice and skills. The programme is taught with a mix of on-campus and online modules available. At least four of the taught modules are taught fully online with a mix of pre-recorded lectures, live online seminars and other digital resources. This ensures that an online route is available through the programme but with restricted optionality.

How we will assess you

Assessment methods range from journalistic articles and essays to strategic plans and critical reflections. The dissertation will require a higher degree of independent learning, as well as distinct teaching delivery in the form of dissertation supervision.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

Subject Specific:

- Be aware of the language and aesthetic practices of journalism and knowledge of the main theories relating to journalistic production
- Apply journalistic techniques to the communication of ideas in specific formats
- Understand the historical, social and political context of media production, markets and institutions.

- Understand the practice and theory of print culture and digital media in a variety of historical, cultural and commercial contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of mainstream journalistic forms and alternatives to the mainstream

Intellectual:

- Ability to learn as well as critique current institutional practices and offer alternatives.
- Ability to assess a wide variety of information in media form, and to present them in practical projects
- Critically evaluate practical journalistic work Ability to evaluate own work critically
- Ability to communicate ideas in different media formats Ability to plan own learning and skill development

Practical:

- Skills in journalistic techniques and the communication of ideas in print or electronic form; Skills in communicating ideas
- Ability to analyse a creative brief and to identify appropriate formats Ability to analyse the effectiveness of their own creative work.
- Through discussion groups and through team work develop ability to work with others and to respect their views.
- Ability to write clearly and concisely Ability to make informed decisions
- Ability to evaluate appropriate uses of new technologies for researching areas of the media

Personal and Social:

- Interpersonal skills such as the ability to work in a group or as a member of a team. Communicate effectively using different media and appropriate interpersonal skills
- Take responsibility for own learning and time management Work under pressure and to deadlines

In addition, in relation to the MA dissertation students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a high level of skill in a chosen specialisation
- Demonstrate an ability to work autonomously to a high level of research and critical reasoning
- Demonstrate an ability to formulate, construct, organise and deliver a large scale piece of professional work

In addition for the pathway specialising in investigative journalism, students will be expected to be able to

- conduct investigative research and interviews
- Develop sources
- Produce long-form and in-depth investigative news features
- Engage in collaborative and multi-platform reporting

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue career paths in journalism, the media, or public relations. Possible professions include:

- broadcast/newspaper journalist
- press sub-editor

- publishing copy-editor/proofreader
- public relations officer
- market researcher
- writer.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our

Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

Copyright, Birkbeck, University of London 2022 ©