

For electronic resources, links to relevant websites, and for further information on this occupational sector, visit the 'I want to work in' section of the Careers Centre website:

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/students/careerchoices/iwanttoworkin/

Overview

Journalism is a competitive career area with more people attracted to the occupation than there are jobs. It is not hard to see why journalism is such an attractive career choice: journalism is a fast paced, ever changing sector with constant variety. There are however some less attractive features to consider. Journalism is not highly paid when compared to many other graduate careers, working hours can be antisocial, and often vacancies are for a fixed term rather than being permanent posts. An important recent development within the media industry has been the rise of multi-media groups with print, broadcasting and internet interests, and there is consequently a closer relationship between them with growing opportunities for journalists to move between media. Journalists can work in a number of settings with the most popular being print journalism (newspapers and magazines) and broadcast journalism (radio and television). Journalists also work for internet based publications, within organisations producing in-house publications, for press agencies, public relations and in media liaison. Journalists can be hired or freelance.



How do I find out more?

- Use the Careers Centre website to begin an on-line search and find links to information on courses and vacancies and to find professional organisations relating to Journalism– [eg The National Council for the Training of Journalists] www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/students/careerchoices/iwanttoworkin/.
- Visit the Careers Alumni Network on the Careers Centre website (Networking section) and find alumni of the university who work in journalism.
- Read BBC Ariel – available at the Careers Centre and the related TV & Radio wiki page
- Read the Journalism case studies on Prospects.ac.uk
- Visit Hold the Front Page www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk

Is it right for me?

Have I spoken to someone who actually works in journalism to find out more about it?	✓
Have I got a genuine passion for news and current affairs?	
Do I have experience of writing articles for publication in the student newspaper or other forums?	
Do I regularly read newspapers and current affairs magazines?	
Have I really found out what's involved and am I sufficiently motivated to go on to gain further professional qualifications eg postgraduate diploma or Masters course?	
Can I confidently communicate why I am interested in journalism and why I am suited to it?	

(continued overleaf)

Do I have what it takes?	Evidence
A genuine passion for news and current affairs	
Wide ranging general knowledge	
Curiosity about the world and a need to deliver information to the public	
Excellent written communication (shorthand is still useful)	
Excellent analytical skills and ability to absorb, extract and present information in a clear and understandable way	
Resourcefulness and creative problem-solving skills	
An eye for a story, with an ability to generate original ideas and the confidence to pitch to senior editors	

Tactics for success

- It is likely that you will need to do a postgraduate qualification so make sure you investigate which one is right for you and that you meet the necessary criteria in plenty of time before the deadlines for these courses. Use www.prospects.ac.uk to help you.
- It is likely you'll be tested on your knowledge of current affairs at interview for postgraduate courses. Make sure you're ready for this.
- There are few opportunities to gain work experience in this area so you need to start networking. You can find contacts through the Careers Alumni Network on the Careers Centre website and you'll need to make speculative applications for work experience. Read the Careers Centre *Quick Guide on Networking*.
- Remember to get your CV and covering letter checked at the Careers Centre. It is unlikely that an editor will look favourably on any requests for work experience / shadowing which contain spelling mistakes or poor grammar!
- If you're genuinely interested in becoming a journalist then it's likely that you will have been writing articles during your time at university. If you haven't been doing this then ask yourself why not? Do you have the necessary motivation to pursue a career in journalism?
- In order to build up more experience, write some articles based on a current issue facing your local community and send them to local newspapers. You may be lucky and get them published but even if you don't you will be developing experience and an editor might be willing to provide you with useful feedback on your article.

Next Steps

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Helen Butt is the careers adviser responsible for this occupational area.

Visit the Careers Centre website to check when Helen is drop-in adviser.

**THIS SHEET CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE (EG LARGE PRINT) FORMATS
PLEASE ASK AT RECEPTION**

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