Programme Specification: PGCert / PGDip / MA Online Journalism

Date of Publication to Students [Enter date]

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at http://www.bcu.ac.uk/pme, (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Awarding Institution / Body:	**Birmingham City University**
Teaching Institution:	**Birmingham City University**
Interim Awards and Final Award:	**Post-Graduate Certificate; Post-Graduate Diploma; Master of Arts**
Programme Title:	**Online Journalism**
Main fields of Study:	**Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies**
Modes of Study:	**Full-time; Part-time**
Language of Study:	**English**
JACS Code:	

Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:

Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies

Programme philosophy and aims

This award is part of a wider suite of postgraduate programmes within the Birmingham School of Media. They all seek to develop reflexive professionals in the media, creative and cultural industries, who can operate at the forefront of the academic discipline and of professional practice. The content and approach of the curriculum has a strong emphasis on enterprise skills, engagement with new communication technologies, and promoting innovation. Each award in the suite is part of a wider community of postgraduate students, and a culture of learning and investigation. Each module in the award is integrated into a systematic process of professional development and students are encouraged to organise and extend their learning in a way that suits their individual ambitions and needs.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide an appropriate range and depth of theoretical and professional knowledge to enable students to understand the key issues and challenges within online journalism;
- Create challenging simulations of professional practice in which students can work as online journalists;
- Ensure that students engage with academic and professional debates, and evaluate the current state of academic knowledge, professional practice, and their own scholarly work;
- Encourage students to become reflexive online journalists with a commitment to continuing professional development.

Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated:

Learning Outcomes.

At the end of this award students will be able to:

1. map the core knowledge of the key theoretical approaches to understanding online journalism, and the professional practices in the field, along with current intellectual challenges, and scholarly and entrepreneurial techniques;
2. work independently and in teams to systematically develop online journalism opportunities in the media and creative sectors, developing strategies for innovation by applying traditions of research and enquiry to deal with complex issues in original cases;
3. critically evaluate professional practice in online journalism, along with associated research traditions and current scholarship, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
4. Reflect on the implications of critical evaluations, in order to develop knowledge, understanding and skill in online journalism and its scholarly context.

Learning teaching, and assessment methods used

Each taught module consists of ten class sessions, in which students will be introduced to topics through lectures, seminar discussions and workshop activities. There will often be guest lectures from leading practitioners in the field. We place a strong emphasis on lecturer and peer review of student presentations and work-in-progress. These sessions are supported by structured material available on the university's Moodle on-line system. Each week, students are set independent study tasks, often based upon production activities, and there are two further weeks of directed study. Many modules make significant use of new social media, and students are often asked to post to fora, write blogs, or produce podcasts to chart personal and professional development, and to engage with the work of others.

Each student will also participate in three tutorials as the taught module progresses, to support their professional development and plan their learning. Two weeks of each semester are set aside for key extension work, which can include a work-based placement.

Assessments usually emphasise scholarly or professional practice through which the key learning objectives are tested. Three weeks are set aside for assessment work.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The structure of the course, the modules, levels and credit values, and the awards which can be gained are shown in the diagram below.

<table>
<tr><td>Online Journalism
(30 credits)</td><td>Enterprise
(30 credits)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Multimedia Newsgathering, Production and Distribution
(30 credits)</td><td>Production Lab
(30 credits)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">MA by Practice
(60 credits)</td></tr>
</table>

Awards

Postgraduate Certificate awarded after 60 credits achieved

Postgraduate Diploma awarded after 60 credits achieved

Master of Arts awarded after the completion of the full 180 credits

Modes of study

Full-time: one year

Part-time (fast-track); two years [120 credits in taught modules over three semesters; MA in fourth semester and summer months]

Part-time (mid-track); three years [120 credits in taught modules over four semesters; MA in third academic year]

Part-time (slow-track); within five year [one 30 credit taught module per semester as appropriate within professional career development; MA in final academic year]

Taught modules are also available for study as stand-alone courses.

Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect upon their own learning needs, and are offered the support detailed hereafter as appropriate to meet those needs.

There is an organised spine of professional development planning which structures the student experience of the award. This is based upon five phases of development:

- Professional audit, diagnose areas for development, set objectives, produce plans for period of study and development;
- Participate in communities of interest, engage in debates, present in public and on-line;
- Participate in, and reflect on, professional practice; work independently and in teams;
- Explore and evaluate current issues and problems in professional or academic practice;
- Reflect on personal development and prepare plans for the future.

Full-time students will go through phases 1&2 in the first semester; 3&4 in the second semester; and 5 in their MA work. Part-time students go through successive phases to structure their learning. As part-time students can take most taught modules in any order, progression is assured through the PDP process.

In each phase, the student will have three individual tutorials to help plan their study and personal development. Each module contains a learning outcome related to personal development planning, and students are often asked to produce a piece of reflective evaluative work.

Criteria for admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme.

The current admission requirements can be found under the 'Entry Requirements' tab of the web page for this course.

Methods for evaluation and enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students

All modules and awards within the Birmingham School of Media are reviewed regularly, and the views of all students are taken into account when learning and teaching are planned.

Informal feedback is elicited from students throughout the programme and students are invited to evaluate their learning experience at the end of each module. There is a Programme Board of Studies which meets twice a year with student representatives from each award and mode of study. The teaching team will produce an annual report evaluating quality and standards on the award each year, and this will contain the views of students and will outline a plan for continuous enhancement of the organisation of learning and teaching on the award.

The marking of all modules within the award will be subject to moderation in line with university procedures, and external examiners will check the process of marking and moderation. The external examiners will produce an annual report, and this will also form part of the annual programme report and plan.

The university's registry and the Quality Assurance Agency will audit the processes of evaluation and enhancement in the programme.