

Journalist or Reporter

A journalist or reporter gathers information on news, current affairs, important events and matters of public interest and writes articles about them for newspapers, magazines and the internet.

The Work

Newspaper journalists report on events for a local, regional or national newspaper.

Magazine journalists write longer articles of general interest for a weekly or monthly trade or business journal or consumer magazine.

Broadcast journalists (See [Broadcast Journalist](#)) write reports for radio and television, adapt it for speech and may present it on air.

Online journalists produce reports and articles for the internet, most commonly for news websites.

You could be:

- interviewing people either face to face, by telephone or email
- looking for, researching and investigating possible stories
- attending court cases, press conferences and other important events and reporting on them
- recording interviews and meetings using shorthand or a recording device
- producing copy (the article or report) in the style required and to deadline
- working on the news desk, answering phones and dealing with breaking stories
- researching media for ideas or following up potential leads for new stories, and submitting to an editor for approval
- possibly specialising in the arts, business, crime, economics and finance, education, foreign affairs, health, politics, science and technology, social affairs or sport
- carrying out sub-editing, (See [Sub-editor - Journalism](#)) which can involve checking articles for accuracy, legality and the correct use of English as well as writing headlines and designing pages.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the kind of publication you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay for trainee journalists in a local news organisation can be from £18,000 to £20,000 a year upwards. This can then rise with experience up to between £24,000 and £40,000 a year. Very successful journalists can earn more than £60,000 a year, and even higher in the top jobs in national organisations.

If you are freelance you will negotiate a fee for each piece of work you do. You can get advice from the [National](#)

[Union of Journalists \(NUJ\)](#) about fees.

Conditions

- You would normally work from an open plan office which can be busy and noisy, or sometimes from home.
- Hours vary widely. Few journalists work regular 9.00am - 5.00pm shifts.
- You may have to travel long distances nationally or even internationally and spend time away from home.
- You will work to tight deadlines in a pressurised environment.
- Journalists working as foreign correspondents may have to visit conflict zones and be exposed to danger.

Getting In

You can enter journalism through many different routes.

- You could study the HND (SCQF Level 8) in Practical Journalism offered by Glasgow Clyde College, which is accredited by the [National Council for the Training of Journalists \(NCTJ\)](#). For entry you need Higher English to at least C, or other relevant qualification such as an NQ in Media.
- Several universities offer a degree in journalism (SCQF Level 9) for which you normally need 4 Highers for entry. The BA Hons in Multimedia Journalism at Glasgow Caledonian University is the only course in Scotland accredited by both the NCTJ and the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC). Entry to this degree requires 4 Highers at ABB including English or Media.
- You could complete a degree in another discipline and then do a postgraduate course in journalism (SCQF Level 11). The MA Multimedia Journalism from Glasgow Caledonian University is the only postgraduate course in Scotland accredited by both the NCTJ and the BJTC. The MA Broadcast Journalism from the University of the West of Scotland is accredited by the BJTC. For entry to a postgraduate course you normally need a UK Honours degree at 2:2 or above.
- All courses would expect you to have a portfolio of your work to show at interview.
- If your degree is in another subject, you could enter the profession by completing the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism (Fast-track). This is available part time at Glasgow Clyde College. See the NCTJ website for details.
- It is helpful to have had paid or unpaid practical experience. You can get it through college, university or local newspapers or by contacting national newspapers directly.

Competition for entry to journalism is fierce. Direct entry to national newspapers is rare and nearly all journalists start work in local papers. Many journalists work freelance, for several publishers at once.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- able to write good, clear and fluent English
- adaptable and flexible in your writing style
- observant
- resourceful and persistent
- self-confident

- articulate
- good research and interviewing skills
- able to achieve speed at shorthand
- honest and accurate.

You need to have:

- an interest in current affairs and news
- a knowledge of current laws, press regulations and ethics
- a curious and enquiring nature
- good spelling, grammar and punctuation
- the ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines.

Training

- Most entrants will have done some training in journalism, either in their first degree or at postgraduate level.
- Thereafter, training is with an employer, through a structured training programme, typically lasting up to two years. The first 3 months is likely to be a probationary period.
- Trainees normally study for the qualifications of either the NCTJ or the BJTC.
- Rarely, some employers have their own in-house training and qualification schemes.

Getting On

- You may wish to work towards the National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ). This is the NCTJ's professional senior qualification that examines your competencies in a range of journalism skills. You must already have the NCJT Level 3 Diploma in Journalism (A - C in all modules) including 100wpm shorthand; as well as 18 months full time employment experience with a newspaper or news agency.
- You could become a sub-editor (see [Sub-editor - Journalism](#)), and eventually achieve a senior role such as news editor, features editor or chief editor
- Alternatively, you could move on to become a specialist correspondent, for example in business affairs, foreign affairs, politics or sport, or a columnist.

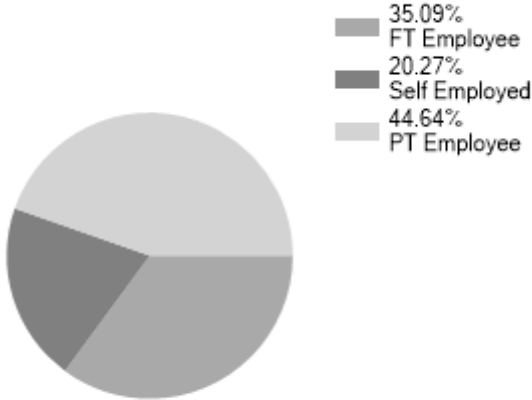
More Information

- [The Journalism Diversity Fund](#) was set up by a number of different organisations involved in journalism and is run by the NCTJ. It aims to support the training of people from diverse backgrounds who might otherwise not have the money to fund their training in journalism. A range of other bursaries may be awarded to individuals applying for NCTJ accredited courses.
- The Guardian Media Group's [The Scott Trust Bursary Scheme](#) also offers a number of bursaries to postgraduate students each year, to study newspaper, web or broadcast journalism.
- Young people aged 8-26 may be interested in the [Young Reporters Scotland](#) (YRS) programme, which offers young people an opportunity to build their skills and have their voices heard on the issues of sustainability. They also run an annual national journalism competition.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

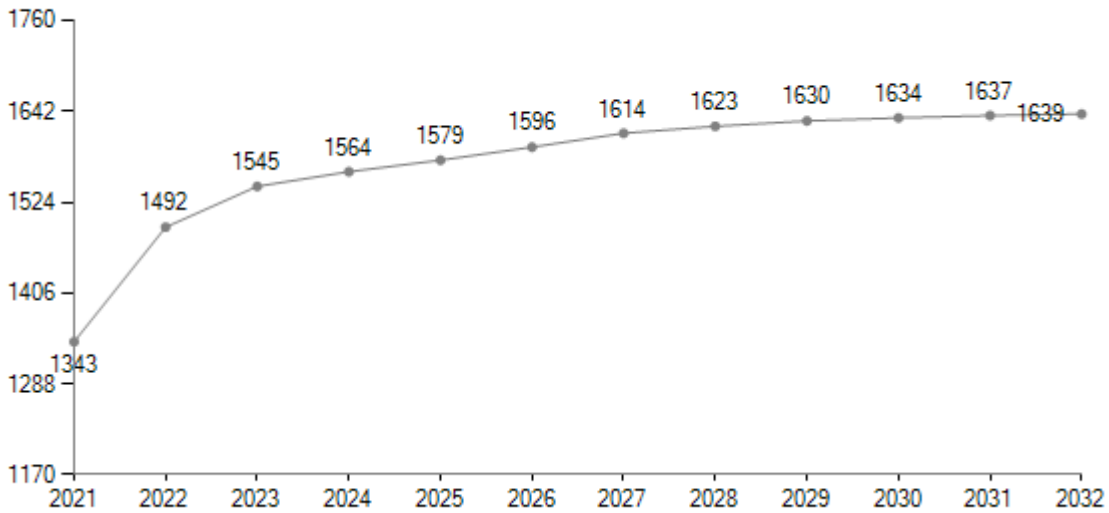


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)