



International Journalism MA – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The below FAQs have been put together following a CityChat session on 5th July 2018. Due to technical issues, our students Roy and Alessia were unable to connect to the chat and answer attendee's questions.

To ensure that you make an informed choice on where to further your study and if this is the right course for you, this document presents Alessia's and Roy's replies to your questions based on their experience at City.

Q: What can we expect in the first week of our International Journalism MA?

A: The first week of the International Journalism MA is going to be an induction week on the logistics, on how to get help and support from the administration and on the basics of journalism. They will also teach you how to use a camera and tripod.

Q: In your experience, was there anything about the programme that you didn't necessarily expect at the onset?

A: I was not expecting to have two academic modules (International News in the term one and Global Journalism in term two), but after all it is a master's degree so it makes sense that there were two.

Q: Is there any preparation we can do beforehand as well for the course in September?

A: I would suggest you to observe international events closely and work on news article writing skills. Read extensively about journalism – look for 'reading list for journalist' on Google. It will help you familiarise with the concepts and topics you will study next year. Also, produce as much "journalism" as you can. Write a blog, shoot a short film. You might not know about journalistic standards yet, but it will look good on your CV when you will be looking for work experiences!

Q: Is the International Journalism MA useful for people who are already professionals – in terms of learning new tools in the classes?

A: I would not suggest it to professionals. The MA tries to cover as much ground as possible, but there are more specialist MA at City for people who already know if they want to work in broadcast, print or online that will be more specific than MA International.

Q: How much time students spend on coursework, on average, during term time? How many hours of classes do you have per week?

A: The amount of time spent in class varies depending on the term and on the pathway. Term one will be the same for everybody and it has on average 20 hours a week. I chose the print pathway, which was not particularly busy in term two (about 10 hours in class, many hours of work at home) and super busy in term three! We produced a magazine from scratch and we were in class from 9am to 6pm every day. When press day was drawing closer we stayed in the newsroom even more, working weekends as well.

Q: How many contact hours are there and how are they structured? Lectures? Seminars?

A: 1,800 hours split between teaching and self-study. You can expect to have an average of 21 hours per week of teaching and self-study.

Q: How many days a week are dedicated for the MA programme?

A: The course is like a full-time job. During term one you are given one day a week to gather news stories, while there is not contact time that day this is not a day off and you will be busy.

Q: Is it common for students to work part-time while studying?

A: I was one of the few people who kept working part time during the entire nine months. It was hard! Eventually I moved to remote / freelance work because keeping up with a weekly rota (I was working in a café) was impossible.

A: It is not very common and quite discouraged by the academic staff. Unfortunately London is really expensive and we all have to pay rent somehow. I've worked for the entirety of the course. It was not easy, but I tried to favour freelance work, especially towards the end of the course, when it gets really busy.

Q: What does the final project entail?

A: The students research and write a piece of long form journalism either in Print, Broadcast, or Multimedia journalism.

A: In more detail: you will complete an original journalism project under supervision that has the potential to contribute to the public's understanding of the topic addressed, and reflect on the process. There are two components to the assessment for this module:

1. Project: you will create ONE of the following individually:
 - Text: 5,000 words (one or a series of single authored written articles) with illustrations, including graphics, where required
 - Video: 7 mins single authored film
 - Audio: 10 mins single authored radio documentary
 - Web: website with text (c. 2,000 words), audio (c.3 mins), video (c.2 mins) and still images (c.2-4), links and interactive elements.
2. Reflection: you will write a 500 word reflection.

Q: Is the start date the 10th September because online it says the 17th?

A: Induction week which is compulsory starts on 10th of September with teaching starting on the 17th.

Q: When will we know our timetables?

A: It will be provided to you during induction week starting 10th of September.

Q: What can we expect in terms of class sizes?

A: 90 students for lectures and 20 for tutorials.

Q: How many elective modules do students take?

A: 2 x 15 credit and one 30 credit one.

Q: How many specialisms (Sciences, Politics, and Business) are we allowed to take?

A: Only one if you chose the 30 credit Dissertation. None if you chose the 45 credit one.

Q: When do we make the final decision to major in print or broadcast? Also, is there any limitation on how many people can be on the print or broadcast selection?

A: At the end of term one, while there is no limit necessarily broadcast is limited to even numbers.

Q: Is it possible to join classes that are not on my timetable, but I'm interested in, as a listener, if I have free time?

A: While students can audit modules (where space allows) owing to the high amount of contact time this is usually impossible.

Q: How much practical experience is there in this course? It's not just about lectures and studying on books right?

A: The course is quite practical, but there are some theoretical modules where the only thing you will have to do is do the reading, attend class and produce an essay or research at the end of term (International News, Global Journalism, Journalism Ethics).

Q: In your experience, are the expectations you had of the programme ended up differing from the reality "on the ground"?

A: When I started the course I was expecting for it to prepare me to the real journalistic world. Overall I would say it did, but the digital aspect of journalism was not up to my expectations.

Q: In the various modules, how much emphasis is placed on theory vs. practice?

A: The practical modules are really practical, but they all tend to have one or two hours a week for "theory". For example, in term two in the print pathway we had a lecture about different type of features every week, with dos and don'ts and notable examples to read, and then a four-hour workshop where we read each other's' pieces and gave useful feedback.

Q: Is there any subject in the course that helps you master your skills in video shooting and editing?

A: Yes, there is. Everyone learns basics shooting and editing skills in term one, then the “broadcasting people” will learn more in term two and three.

Q: What are the professors' backgrounds? Are they (or some of them) working in the news industry as well?

A: The majority of the lecturers and tutors are either retired journalists or still work as journalists, especially those in the broadcast pathway.

Q: Is there any teaching on utilising social media in producing news content as well as social media analysis?

A: Social media was briefly touched in the Digital Journalism module, but I found it not up to standards (I'm an avid social media user and have worked in social media marketing in the past).

Q: What does the university expect from us in terms of academic competencies during this course?

A: You will be expected to produce some essays for the theoretical modules.

Q: How often are students encouraged to produce news or special reports during the classes?

A: It is usually required on a weekly basis for the entirety of the course.

Q: I'm working with a podcast. Since it's related to my studies, I would like to continue on the team for some hours while I do my studies. I'm trying to figure out what's realistic to commit to for the fall?

A: That is invaluable work experience! I suggest you try to keep it if you can, especially if your workplace allows you a bit of flexibility. In fact, some days you will be almost free and other days will be extremely busy.

Q: Can you tell us more about job prospects after graduation – what sort of positions are this year's cohort moving on to do?

A: It really varies on every person's interests and abilities. I am moving towards production in print and online. I was the deputy subeditor of the course's magazine and I discovered I really like this job!

Q: How is the networking?

A: There are some opportunities to network through the department. They will also send out special invitations to events and conferences.

Q: Would you say that most students use their winter break for placements?

A: Yes I would say so. I didn't for personal reasons, but I did a work experience during the Easter break and immediately after the end of the course.

Q: Is it true that people tend to choose broadcast over print for recruitment reasons. Are you more likely to be hired if you specialise in broadcast journalism?

A: I hope not! I'm job hunting at the moment. It is not easy, but I think it is going somewhere. I think what helps me is the fact that I know a little bit of everything: I know how to write, how to subedit and design a page, but also how to shoot and edit a video and how to use social media.

Q: Would you recommend to choose print or broadcast to work for a news agency (AFP, Reuters)?

A: It really depends what you like and what you would like to do.

Q: Does the university provide opportunities to find part-time jobs in the media sector?

A: The department sends out job opportunities throughout the year. There were a couple of part-time jobs advertised.

Q: Do you have any tips to find work placements?

A: Don't be afraid to email the editor of the desk you are interested in. Make sure your CV and cover letter are clear and show exactly the message you want to convey and then send them out, as many as you can.

Q: Do you think London is a smart choice to start our journalism career?

A: I think so. The main news outlets are here in London. But, again, it all comes down to what you want to do. If you are interested in working at your local newspaper, maybe studying in the area might help you more than moving all the way to London.