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Journalism masters programs

Editorial Note: We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations. Whether you're turning on the television, thumbing through a magazine or scrolling through social media on your phone, you see the work of journalists every day. Modern technology provides easy access to endless amounts of information, and journalists weed through this information to find the stories that inform and impact our society. Master's programs in journalism serve journalists who want to further their careers and professionals who want to pursue jobs in journalism after working in other fields. If you fall into either of these categories, a master's in journalism might be for you. What Is a Master's in Journalism? A master's degree in journalism is a graduate degree that can help you increase your proficiency as a journalist through focused training in broadcast journalism, investigative reporting, digital journalism or other forms of journalism. When you earn a master's degree in journalism, you learn how to refine your reporting skills and develop expertise in one of these areas of the profession. If you already have an undergraduate degree in another field and are wondering how to become a journalist, earning a master's degree in journalism helps you learn skills to build on your existing knowledge as you investigate, write and report compelling stories. The knowledge gained in this journalism degree program can help you become a better journalist with more specialized skills. Master's in Journalism Program Length Most master's in journalism programs involve between 33 and 50 credits, and you should plan to commit to about two years of full-time study. Some programs take a year or less. Part-time learners may need more than two years to earn their master's degrees. Areas of Specialization Journalism master's programs typically offer specializations. Since each program determines which specializations to offer, you should check with your prospective schools to see what is available before you enroll. Below are a few common journalism concentrations for master's degrees. Arts and Culture This specialization focuses on the arts in social and political contexts. Students in this track learn about tone of voice, imagery, scene-setting and how the arts represent cultural and historical aspects of our society. Choosing this concentration prepares you to write critical essays, reviews and news features relating to historical or cultural events and activities. Business and Economics This specialization concentrates on our national and global economies, the corporate world, financial markets, workers' experiences and governmental policies as they relate to business. Choosing this concentration helps you develop an inquisitive perspective, equipping you to investigate stories, uncover financial crimes and understand how government policies affect businesses. Digital Journalism This specialization covers the technology and tools that journalists use in digital storytelling. Choosing this concentration prepares you to use mobile app development concepts, data-mining strategies, multimedia, photojournalism and other digital communication strategies as you write stories that appeal to readers through digital media. Global Journalism This specialization addresses how journalists can report effectively in a global environment. Global issues, such as human rights, war and peace, global terrorism, social movements and ethics, are at the forefront of many news stories. Choosing this concentration prepares you to develop and report stories from foreign countries on a global stage. Admission Requirements Different universities set different admission requirements, so check with your schools of interest to find out their specific requirements. Below are typical requirements for admission to a journalism master's program. Bachelor's Degree A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution is a prerequisite to enrolling in a graduate program. While this doesn't necessarily have to be a bachelor's degree in journalism, some schools may require basic journalism or related coursework. Minimum GPA Universities typically require a minimum 3.0 GPA for admission to graduate programs. Check with your prospective university to verify its GPA requirements. Other Admission Requirements Depending on which program you choose, other requirements may include: Résumé or CV Letters of recommendation Transcripts for previous degrees or coursework Statement of purpose Writing samples Proof of English proficiency Accreditation Accreditation verifies that an educational institution or program meets high standards in academic quality and accountability. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the U.S. Department of Education oversee institutional accreditation, which applies to a college or university as a whole. Institutional accreditation is critical and can impact your eligibility for federal financial aid and even employment. Individual journalism programs may be accredited as well, but programmatic accreditation is not as common as institutional accreditation. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) administers accreditation for journalism and mass communications programs. Currently, only 119 programs are accredited by ACEJMC. Though programmatic accreditation is not vital, it may help set you apart from other job candidates. Common Courses for a Master's in Journalism Since each program is different, coursework may vary slightly among master's programs in journalism. Below we list some courses that are common among graduate journalism programs. Data Journalism This course teaches students how to gather, analyze and interpret data when writing and reporting evidence-based stories. Reporting the News This course employs a workshop method to help learners develop reporting, researching, writing and editing skills. Investigative Reporting This course focuses on common techniques used to gather and analyze data from various sources, such as online databases, legal resources and government agencies. Law and Ethics in American Journalism This course covers topics related to ethical reporting, such as media bias, sensationalism, diversity, public perceptions, use of sources, integrity in reporting and scandals. Why Pursue a Master's Degree in Journalism? Learn New Skills As technology continues to change and improve, so does the field of journalism, and earning a master's degree in journalism can help you learn new skills to advance your career. As you complete your coursework, you can build your knowledge to keep up with emerging technology such as social media platforms, data-driven journalism tools, broadcast media developments and podcasting. Pivot From Another Field If you already have a bachelor's degree in a different field but you want to become a journalist, earning a master's degree in journalism can help you launch your new career. For instance, if you already have a bachelor's degree in economics, political science or finance, a master's degree in journalism can help you learn the skills you need to report on financial, political or economic issues. Focus on a Specialty If you have an undergraduate degree and work experience in journalism, a master's in journalism can help you hone your skills in a specific area of the discipline. A bachelor's degree in journalism covers broader aspects of the journalism field, but if you want to learn more about a particular area of the profession, earning a master's degree can help you. Qualify to Teach at a College or University If you've built a successful journalism career and you want to teach journalism students at the postsecondary level, earning a master's degree in journalism may be an excellent choice. Some universities require faculty to hold doctoral degrees, but many accept master's degrees in journalism when hiring journalism instructors. Jobs for Master's in Journalism Graduates We sourced the below salary and job growth data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Payscale. Communications Manager Average Annual Salary: Around \$71,000 Job Description: Communications managers oversee internal and external communications for organizations or individual clients. They typically work with writers, marketing department staff, graphic designers and other staff members to promote an organization's image. Journalism or Communications Professor Median Annual Salary: \$76,250 Projected Job Growth (2022-2032): +3% Job Description: Professors, also known as postsecondary teachers, provide instruction to students at the college level. These professionals create instructional plans and lessons, teach courses, advise students and work with other faculty and staff members to develop curricula. Journalism and communications professors teach subjects related to their areas of expertise. Managing Editor Average Annual Salary: Around \$70,000 Job Description: Managing editors typically oversee the publishing process for print or digital media. They may approve and assign story ideas, manage editorial content creation and oversee beat editors or copy editors. Public Relations Manager Median Annual Salary: \$129,430 Projected Job Growth (2022-2032): +6% Job Description: Public relations managers are responsible for developing strategic plans and creating advertising and promotional materials to promote the public image of their organizations or clients. These managers communicate with the media, the public, stakeholders and other audiences. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Graduate Journalism Programs With a master's in journalism, you can work in a management or executive-level capacity in advertising, public relations, journalism, media relations or a related area. You may also choose to teach journalism at the postsecondary level. It typically takes about two years to earn a master's degree in journalism, and some programs offer accelerated paths that may be as short as one year or less. If you choose to study part time, the degree can take longer than two years. If you are just starting in your journalism career, a bachelor's degree in journalism is a great choice. If you already have an undergraduate degree and work experience in journalism or another field and you want to build or advance your journalism career, you might consider earning a master's degree in journalism. The NYU Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute offers an online master's degree in journalism as well as traditional graduate programs and concentrations in ten targeted areas of study. Most schools have rolling admissions and financial help so you can start your degree in a few weeks! Journalism is a dynamic field that changes and progresses with time and technology. A master's in journalism degree equips students with transferable skills and specializations that can give them an advantage in various competitive journalism, media, and communications jobs. Graduate journalism students develop expertise, gain practical experience, and establish network connections throughout coursework. Programs span between one and two years and cost approximately \$20,513 yearly. Journalism and media job opportunities for graduates include roles such as news reporters, media analysts, public relationship specialists, and writers. Media workers earn an average of \$66,320 annually, and reporters earn approximately \$57,500. The Intelligent.com Higher Education Team is dedicated to providing students with independent, equitable school and program rankings and well-researched resources. Our expert-driven articles cover topics related to online colleges and programs, paying for school, and career outlooks. We use data from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, the National Center for Education Statistics, and other reputable educational and professional organizations. Our academic advisory team reviews content and verifies accuracy throughout the year for the most current information. Partnerships do not influence rankings or editorial decisions. Analyzed over 2,000 national, accredited, and nonprofit colleges and universities 800+ rankings pages are reviewed and updated yearly Content is informed by reputable sources, surveys, and interviews with academic advisors and other experts Over 100 data points are reviewed for accuracy and quality throughout the year, including sources Our list features the best Journalism degree programs at top colleges nationwide. Each school featured is a nonprofit, accredited institution — either public or private — with a high standard of academic quality for post-secondary institutions. We evaluated each school's program on tuition costs, admission, retention and graduation rates, faculty, reputation, and the student resources provided for online students. We collected data from trusted sources like the National Center for Education Statistics, individual school and program websites, school admissions counselors, and other data sources. Then, we calculated the Intelligent Score on a scale of 0 to 100 based on the following criterion: Academic Quality: Admission rate versus enrollment rate Retention rate of students who return after year one Accreditation status (regional and programmatic) Nonprofit status, both private and public institutions Graduation Rate Overall graduation rate Total number of currently enrolled students, including diversity metrics Student-to-faculty ratio Cost and ROI In-state and out-of-state per-credit tuition rates and fees Required credits to graduate Earning potential after graduation Availability of federal student loans, scholarships, and other financial aid options Student Resources Available student services for online-only and hybrid programs On-campus amenities like tutoring centers and the number of libraries Read more about our ranking methodology. #1 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$57,864 Out-of-state: \$57,864 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$49,024 Out-of-state: \$49,024 Test scores SAT: 1460-1570 ACT: 33-35 #2 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$11,442 Out-of-state: \$41,196 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$11,442 Out-of-state: \$11,442 Test scores SAT: 1310-1530 ACT: 30-35 #3 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$9,330 Out-of-state: \$27,612 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$9,478 Out-of-state: \$9,478 Test scores SAT: 1110-1320 ACT: 23-29 #4 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$58,227 Out-of-state: \$58,227 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$56,067 Out-of-state: \$56,067 Test scores SAT: 1430-1550 ACT: 33-35 #5 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$8,824 Out-of-state: \$34,936 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$13,158 Out-of-state: \$13,158 Test scores SAT: 1270-1480 ACT: 30-34 #6 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$55,473 Out-of-state: \$55,473 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$54,315 Out-of-state: \$54,315 Test scores SAT: 1420-1570 ACT: 31-35 #7 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$52,204 Out-of-state: \$52,204 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$34,704 Out-of-state: \$34,704 Test scores SAT: 1370-1540 ACT: 31-34 #8 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$59,260 Out-of-state: \$59,260 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$47,880 Out-of-state: \$47,880 Test scores SAT: 1340-1530 ACT: 30-34 #9 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$6,930 Out-of-state: \$14,880 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$11,090 Out-of-state: \$11,090 Test scores SAT: 1170-1340 ACT: 25-31 #10 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$14,317 Out-of-state: \$33,824 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$15,016 Out-of-state: \$15,016 Test scores SAT: 1200-1460 ACT: 27-33 #11 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$53,432 Out-of-state: \$53,432 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$40,392 Out-of-state: \$40,392 Test scores SAT: N/A ACT: N/A #12 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$57,384 Out-of-state: \$57,384 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$53,136 Out-of-state: \$53,136 Test scores SAT: 1380-1550 ACT: 31-35 #13 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$56,854 Out-of-state: \$56,854 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$56,854 Out-of-state: \$56,854 Test scores SAT: 1310-1500 ACT: 30-34 #14 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$50,542 Out-of-state: \$50,542 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$34,533 Out-of-state: \$34,533 Test scores SAT: 1220-1390 ACT: 27-32 #15 Undergraduate Tuition In-state: \$52,080 Out-of-state: \$52,080 Graduate Tuition In-state: \$45,288 Out-of-state: \$45,288 Test scores SAT: 1250-1420 ACT: 28-32 Graduate journalism programs prepare students and current journalist professionals for print, broadcast, and multimedia journalism careers. Most journalism graduate degree programs fall under the arts designation. A Master of Arts in Journalism (M.A.) encompasses many topics and perspectives, such as politics, economics, fashion and lifestyle, science, and entertainment, and incorporates journalistic theory, critical thinking, law and ethics, and hands-on training. Students can pursue a range of advanced roles in journalism, English, communications, or similar fields, but many institutions accept any field of accredited degree. Most graduate programs require at least a 3.0 GPA. Select your program Programs and institutions offer varying experiences with different resources and opportunities. Career objectives, personal interests, financial resources, and many other factors can influence program choices. For example, students who continue working while completing a master's program may prefer the convenience of programs offering part-time, hybrid, and online options. Consider the following when selecting your program: Course content Course delivery method Final master's project Practical experience and work opportunities Tuition Location Determine how you'll pay for your degree Contact your chosen institution's financial aid office for information on tuition, fees, and other expenses. Regardless of your financial circumstances, verify that your program is eligible for federal financial aid, and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. FAFSA can assess students' financial needs and award federal loans, grants, scholarships, and other financial assistance. Graduate students may be able to work in journalism assistantship or fellowship programs at their university, which typically offer either tuition funding, stipends, or salaries. For additional financial assistance, graduate students can access direct unsubsidized and graduate Direct PLUS loans. Some institutions, non-profit foundations, and private organizations may also offer funding based on merit or workforce development. Employed students should also inquire with their employer about tuition assistance benefits. What Can You Expect From a Master's in Journalism Program A master's degree in journalism helps students refine their proficiency in storytelling and research for various media and audiences, preparing them for interdisciplinary careers in journalism, communication, content creation, and other fields. With a blend of theoretical and practical experience in academic and professional settings, students train specific skills, develop expertise in their designated journalism specialty, and graduate with a portfolio of journalistic work. Many graduate journalism programs emphasize practical experience and require students to complete various internships, work placements, and workshops through which they gain real-world experience and opportunities for networking. Students must also complete core seminars and lectures, receive either group or individual mentoring from journalism professionals, and complete a capstone project or thesis. Depending on credit requirements, graduation programs usually span one or two years. Some may count professional experience toward required credits. Potential courses you'll take in a master's in journalism program Media Law and Ethics: Students examine the U.S. legal system and the roles and responsibilities of news media. Course content may cover legal concepts and restrictions, legal concepts, and court case research with ethical and philosophical discussions. Multimedia Storytelling: This course gives students the narrative skills to create audio, visual, and written content for various platforms. Students work with technologies necessary for journalism in integrated media. Investigative and Data-Based Reporting: Data-based journalism courses explore the increasingly important role of numerical data in reporting. Students use digital tools and techniques to practice collecting and analyzing data, building digital maps, and producing data-based stories. Theories of Mass Communication: This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine how social, economic, technological, and political concepts influence mass communication in the digital age. Topics may include audience behaviors and psychographics, content, news accessibility, and the history of mass communication. Master's in Journalism Degree Frequently Asked Questions Most programs have a digital application page or portal that guides applicants through the process, and details required application materials and information, such as fees, transcript documents, and test scores. Admissions counselors can also verify eligibility and requirements, confirm application deadlines, and provide further insight and recommendations. Journalism master's degree programs cost an average of \$20,513 per year before housing, books, and other expenses. Tuition may also vary depending on whether the institution is private or public and whether students qualify for in-state or out-of-state fees. Living expenses may vary depending on the local cost of living. The average cost doesn't necessarily reflect your out-of-pocket obligations. Scholarships, grants, loans, and other assistance can reduce your upfront cost. Graduate journalism programs typically take between one and two years to complete. Programs vary in required credits, practical experience, projects, and other curriculum or course delivery details, which can shorten or lengthen the total duration. Real Madrid Graduate School - Universidad EuropeaBest programs for youAnswer a few questions and we'll match you with programs!SOAS University of LondonAcademy of Art UniversityVrije Universiteit BrusselKingston upon Thames, United KingdomUniversidade Santiago de CompostelaSantiago de Compostela, SpainVytautas Magnus UniversityFaculty of Social Sciences, Charles University (FSV UK)