

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

<b>Course Record Information</b>	
Name and level of final and intermediate Awards	Graduate Diploma in Medical Journalism
Awarding Body	University of Westminster
Location of Delivery	Harrow
Mode of Study	Full time
UW Course Code	
JACS Code	
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	
Date of initial course approval/last review	February 2011
Date of Programme Specification	February 2011

### Admissions Requirements

This is a unique and specialist course offering students a grounding in the intellectual and practical skills of medical and health journalism. It is aimed at those who are committed either to pursuing a future career as a medical and health journalist, or finding occasional employment in medical or health journalism, alongside their existing occupation. The course will equip you for reporting in a variety of ways on the many different aspects of what is one of the world's biggest industries – health care - and enhance your communication skills within your own profession.

We welcome applicants who have a qualification in and/or career experience as a health professional, so you could come to this from a wide range of backgrounds in delivering health care, whether in the public or private sector. You may be a medical doctor, a nurse, pharmacist or physiotherapist, occupational therapist or psychologist. Applicants with a first degree in a health related subject, or a strong interest in and knowledge of medical and health issues are also welcome to apply.

The course requires strong verbal skills, so for those whose first language is not English, we will expect you to have achieved a recognised English language qualification: the minimum would be an IELTS score of 7.0, which must include 7.0 for speaking and 7.0 for writing; or a TOEFL score of 627 / 263 or Internet-based TOEFL over 100. If you have had all, or a large part, of your education in English you will not normally be required to take an English test.

As part of your application, you will be expected to show a strong commitment to pursuing medical journalism as part of your career goals, as well as demonstrate an interest in and understanding of the news media. You will be asked to submit two short written assignments, then suitable applicants will then be interviewed (by telephone if abroad), before final selection for a place.

### **Aims of the course**

The course is designed to help you develop the practical, technical and intellectual skills required of a good journalist in any field; you will also acquire the specialist skills of written and broadcast journalism, together with the techniques of on-line journalism which can form a foundation for future professional practice. You will apply these skills to the journalism assignments which will form a large part of your assessed course-work. Alongside this you will also have the opportunity to study media law, public affairs and public health issues, and reflect critically on some of the ethical considerations facing professional journalists, both in general and with particular regard to medical and health issues.

We aim to educate you in the highest standards of British journalism practice; you will be taught by highly experienced professionals, including medical journalists, as well as have the opportunity to meet and network with guest speakers from the news media as well as contacts from the Medical Journalists Association.

### **Employment and Further Study Opportunities**

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e., "employability skills". The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

While on the course, you are expected to undertake a short work placement with a medical or health publication, as well as reflect on and research your own plans for your career development. You will be supported in these efforts by John Illman, the specialist medical journalism tutor, who has a wide range of contacts within the specialist field. He is supported by senior journalism lecturer, Dave Gilbert, who teaches print and online journalism and will be your personal tutor during the course.

It is anticipated that some graduates of the course are likely to return to their original careers, with the intention of continuing some freelance medical journalism either alongside, or as part of their professional role, or to use their new skills to communicate within their profession. Others, though, are likely to go on to make successful full time careers as medical and health journalists.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

Medical Journalism students are expected to show a good understanding of the concepts underpinning their chosen specialism. These outcomes are largely achieved through the specialist seminars led by the Medical Journalism tutor. These are shared with medical students who are taking an 'inter-calated' year as part of their medical degree course, as well as some post-graduate journalism students.

All medical journalism students take most of their classes alongside post-graduate students, taking the Print and Online Pathway on our MA Journalism course. You are also expected to develop some skills in broadcasting, which you will be able to demonstrate through practical assignments. Students are also expected to develop a critical appreciation of journalism practice in a wider context, and achieve a good general level of understanding of the practical and intellectual skills and techniques of professional level multi-media journalism, together with learning how to use the latest media technology. As part of your specialist study you will also develop a critical approach to the use and correct interpretation of statistics and other medical and health data. These learning outcomes will be demonstrated through your specialist medical journalism assignments, as well as assignments similar to those undertaken by the post-graduate journalism students, but tailored to your course needs. Students will also be assessed by essays in which they reflect on their own journalism practice or demonstrate their understanding of ethical and public affairs issues and how they affect medical journalists. There will be a test of their knowledge and understanding of media law. These outcomes are intended to lay the foundation for future professional practice in the medical and health journalism field..

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Medical Journalism students are helped to develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of both medical journalism as well as the practice of journalism in general, together with the social, economic and political context within which the media operate. You will also gain an appreciation of the key legal, ethical and public affairs issues affecting journalism professionals, and medical journalists in particular.

### **Specific Skills**

You will be expected to develop an ability to use in a professional manner the production software and technical equipment used by journalists; to effectively research and gather the source material necessary for journalistic assignments, using the internet, digital archives and other resources; to carry out your assignments with meticulous care; to be able to co-operate effectively in a team with their student colleagues on group practical assignments. These class colleagues will often be students on the MA in Journalism.

### **Key Transferable Skills**

The research skills, the process of gathering material, the communication and IT skills required of journalists, as well as team work skills, can also be applied to other professional roles.

### **Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods**

Teaching and learning takes place in lectures, seminars, 'hands-on' practical workshops and small group or individual tutorials, and specialist seminars. Assessment is done through course-work – 'real' journalistic practical assignments, either carried out individually, or as part of a group project; essays are set to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts, and their knowledge of the National Health Service, the General Medical Council, and other public institutions relevant to medical journalists; reflective reports on practical projects are also assessed, and there is an in-class test designed for you to demonstrate your understanding of the legal and ethical considerations facing journalists.

Much of the time you will be in class with postgraduate journalism students, who are studying for the MA in Journalism, Print and Online Pathway.. You will be following a similar syllabus, and working alongside them on team projects, though your syllabus will include specialist input from the Medical Journalism tutor, who will lead separate Medical Journalism tutorials. The levels of assessment will be different from the MA students, and the emphasis will be on medical journalism assignments, and other relevant course-work. There will also be some collaboration with MA Journalism Broadcast pathway students, when you undertake broadcast medical journalism assignments as part of your assessed portfolio of practical course-work.

### Course Structure

Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year.

Semester I	Semester II
<b>Multi-Media Journalism Skills (Medical)</b> <i>(15 credits)</i>	<b>Web Production: Westminster News Online (Medical)</b> <i>(15 credits)</i>
<b>Media Law and Current Affairs (Medical)</b> <i>(15 credits)</i>	<b>Magazine Project (Medical)</b> <i>(15 Credits)</i>
<b>Medical News and Feature Writing</b> <i>(30 credits)</i>	<b>Specialist Journalism – Health and Medical</b> <i>(30 credits)</i>

### Indicative Timetable

The timetables are the same as the MA in Journalism, which you will be following for most of the course; there will be variations, to be made by arrangement, for specialist seminars with John Illman, and for your broadcast course assignments.

#### Diploma in Medical Journalism: Semester One

Module title	Day	Time
Multi-media Journalism Skills (medical)	Mondays (all term)	1000-1300
	Tuesdays & Wednesdays (until week 4)	1000-1700
Medical News & Feature Writing	Mondays	1000-1300
	Tuesdays & Wednesdays (from Week 5)	1000-1700
Media law and Current Affairs (Medical)	Thursday s	1000-1700

#### Diploma in Medical Journalism: Semester Two Timetable

Module title	Day	Time
Westminster News Online (for Medical journalists)	Monday	1000-1300
	Tuesday	1000-1700

Module title	Day	Time
Magazine Project (for Medical journalists),	Wednesday	1000-1700
Medical and Health Journalism	Wednesday	TBC

### Academic Regulations

The Graduate Diploma in Medical Journalism operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they have and keep for reference a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called **Essential Westminster 2011/12**. This should be read in conjunction with the *Modular Framework for Undergraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations*.

### Support for Students

On arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the School Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters, as well as advise you on career development.

Learning support includes the Library which, across its four sites, holds printed collections of 412,000 books, 1,600 journal subscriptions and substantial audio visual collections. Access to over 6,500 electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books, exam papers and links to recommended websites) is facilitated through infoLinX, the library portal.

There are over 3,500 computers spread over the four University campuses available for students to use. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students can access course materials and communicate with staff and other students via message boards.

At University level, Services for Students provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The International Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

<b>Reference Points for the course</b>
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<b>Internally</b>
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University of Westminster Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2008-11, Media, Arts and Design School Plan, University of Westminster Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy 2008-11 etc)
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<b>Externally</b>
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.SEEC guidance on level descriptors, QAA Academic Infrastructure,
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## **Quality Management and Enhancement**

### **Course Management**

The course is managed by Course Leader, Deborah Vogel, who leads the teaching team for the **Diplomas** as well as the **BA(Hons) in Medical Journalism**. She also manages all the post-graduate journalism courses in the department. For much of the time, the medical journalism students work alongside the post-graduate print students and their personal tutor will be Dave Gilbert, who leads the Print and Online pathway for the MA in Journalism. The specialist medical journalism seminars are currently led by leading medical journalist, John Illman. The course is part of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Head of JMC is Geoffrey Davies. The Department is in the School of Media, Art and Design, led by the Dean, Sally Feldman.

### **Course approval, monitoring and review**

The course was validated in 2011 The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the School to ensure that it is running effectively and that issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the School action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

### **Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

Student feedback is important to the University and student comment is taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the course committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the committee to represent the views of their peer group in the discussions held at the committee. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

Students are asked to complete an online Module Feedback questionnaire at the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Module Leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which provides valuable feedback about a range of University services. Final year undergraduates will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which is administered by an external company.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from course Committees and the National Student Survey and the University's internal surveys are part of the Schools quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course go to: [www.westminster.ac.uk/mad](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/mad), or contact the course leader, Deborah Vogel. You can apply electronically through UK Pass



Please note – This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.