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CAREERS IN JOURNALISM

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OVERVIEW

Industry Definition

Journalism is a broad but competitive field that includes most careers related to researching, interpreting, and disseminating information to the public. Journalists specialize in communication and research, and thus also take positions in a variety of related fields, such as publishing, advertising, and public relations.

Digital and multimedia are becoming increasingly important to occupations in journalism, and more corporations are dedicating resources to digital content production and social media management.

Journalism: Magazine

There are as many ways to get into magazine journalism as there are magazines. At the same time, there are few direct routes to a job. Some publishers hire for entry level positions on an annual basis, but most don't; it's a case of trawling the internet job sites and writing speculatively to magazine editors and publishers. Unfortunately, it's a highly competitive industry and the number of applicants for most jobs is considerable, particularly at popular consumer titles.

Two of the most common entry level roles are editorial assistant and sub-editor, but both can encompass a huge variety of tasks. An editorial assistant can sometimes be a secretary with responsibilities that are limited to administration and frankly un-journalistic jobs. However, they can also be the go-to person in the office, through whom all enquiries go and with whom PR consultants and writers liaise. Furthermore, they can be the person who ensures the flow of the magazine is spot on when it is formed every week or month. Similarly, a sub-editor, who traditionally would simply edit all the features going into the magazine for spelling, grammar, punctuation and readability, might well be involved in writing features or going out on the job; visiting exhibitions or reviewing films.

Journalism: Newspaper

Becoming a newspaper journalist is tricky as there are often hundreds of people competing for the same jobs. Successful candidates will usually have a portfolio, a blog, some 'signature' pieces in decent publications and a long list of unsuccessful attempts at securing a position. Newspaper journalism is all about collecting information, chasing stories and investigating sources. Whether you're a reporter, editorial assistant, sub-editor, columnist or editor, you need to be good at hunting down information. Most people begin as an intern. Everybody needs to have work experience on their CV, almost as a badge of honour, but more importantly as a statement of intent.

Journalism: Online

Generally, online journalists and print journalists are like two peas in a pod. They're not too dissimilar at all. An online journo's job involves getting stuck into plenty of research, writing stories and interviewing people. You'll be required to attend press conferences, read press releases, attend events and handle phone calls from people who are giving you the lowdown on breaking news stories or interesting article ideas. For people starting out, freelance work can be a pretty good way of getting up and running. If you're interested in music, go to a gig, write a review and send it off to a music website. It may sound simple, but it's a good way for you to refine your writing skills. If the article doesn't get published, there's no reason why you can't follow up and ask them for tips on how to improve your style.

A degree is by no means a necessity, but a BA in English or journalism can provide you with the techniques that you'll need to become a superstar of the online journalism world. If you haven't done a degree that's directly related to journalism, you could always consider doing a journalism-related masters.

Depending on the size of the website, there are a number of different roles you could pursue, including:

- Web editor
- Reporter
- Specialist reporter
- Deputy editor
- Sub-editor
- Assistant editor.

Journalism: Television

'Television journalism' covers a huge spectrum of jobs – from games journalism, showbiz and entertainment, to cutting edge current affairs documentaries and news. One thing's for sure: if you're picturing yourself standing in front of a camera, reporting from exotic places all over the world, then think again. In the world of television journalism, the free work experience placement is rife. In fact, without some kind of work experience, it is very unlikely you'll get that first vital foot in the door. The benefit of a good placement is that you'll get to see how everything works, close up. You'll be given the chance to try things out, without it mattering too much if you make mistakes.

Broadcast journalism is all about working in teams. If you're good at working with people and people like working with you, half the battle is won. Don't worry if people get snappy with you – in a high-pressure environment, it happens.

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WHO EMPLOYS JOURNALIST GRADUATES

Wondering where to jump start your career? Below is a list of employers who typically Journalist graduates.

- Human resources departments
- Market research companies
- Public relations and advertising firms
- Publishing companies
- Boards of education
- Libraries
- Financial institutions
- Not-for-profit agencies
- Government/courts/police
- Media companies
- Internet media
- Self –Employment - Blogging

PROGRAM RELATED SKILLS

As a Journalist student, you develop the following skills:

- Excellent communication skills (writing/speaking/presenting)
- Storytelling skills
- Curiosity
- Aptitude for research
- Investigation
- Data analysis
- Networking and social skills
- Ability to perform under stress and tight deadlines
- Entrepreneurial skills which are necessary for freelance work
- Skills in print, digital, and multimedia content production
- Fluency in more than one language is also an asset

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- Research & Editing
- Analytical skills
- Problem solving

POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS

There are many different career options available for students interested in Writing and Journalism. Your degree provides you with a variety of intellectual and applied skills that are valuable in a range of careers. The wide variety of careers that graduates have moved on to is a reflection of the diversity of skills gained through an undergraduate program. Involvement in extracurricular, volunteer and work experiences will also supplement your skills and focus them to a particular industry. Below is a sample of the types of positions graduates have gone on to.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list as there are many other careers available. Many positions require additional education or experience.

| | |
|---|---|
| Public Relations* | Lawyer* |
| Publisher* | Policy Analyst–Federal Government |
| Fundraiser* | Correctional Officer-Provincial Gov't |
| Advertising Copywriter* | Program Co-ordinator |
| Media Trainee - Advertising | Foreign Service Worker |
| Print Journalist* | Program Director |
| Editor* | Lobbyist* |
| Publications Specialist | Teacher* |
| Writer* | Professor* |
| Critic* | Academic Advisor |
| Researcher* | Principal/Director of Education or of Adult Education |
| Sign Language Interpreter* | Librarian* |
| Television and Radio Reporter* | Academic Advisor |
| Actor* | Special Events Coordinator |
| Director/Casting Director* | Marketing Assistant |
| Film, Television, or Journalism Broadcaster | Information Specialist |
| Human Resources Specialist* | Archivist* |
| Media Sales Representative | Event Planner* |
| Marketing Researcher | Motivational Speaker* |
| Account Coordinator | Corporate Trainer* |
| Insurance Underwriter* | Customer Service Representative* |
| Copy Editor | Technical Writer* |
| | Insurance Broker* |

*View these titles at Career Cruising, available on CLN under the Resources tab

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE

Portfolios

For journalism and other writing careers, employers typically want to see samples of your writing. Start preparing a portfolio or e-portfolio of samples now. To market your skills and knowledge gained as a Professional Writing student, select a few short stories, interviews and other writing pieces to show the variety of your writing skills. You can make mention of the relevance of your portfolio in your cover letter and consider sharing a significant project you have worked on.

Volunteer

- Grant Writer Coordinator – Volunteer, Toronto
- Editorial Fellow – The Tempest, U.S.A
- Volunteer Publicist & Communications Coordinator – Journey to Diversity Workplaces, ON
- Social Media Coordinator – Volunteer, Toronto
- The Medium, University of Toronto Mississauga newspaper

Internships

- Broadcast Journalist – Intern, ILAC, Toronto
- Journalism and Social Media Interns – Eligible Magazine, Toronto
- Junior reporter – Nunatsiaq News, Ottawa
- Editorial Intern – Rathnelly Group, Toronto
- Public Relations Graduate Internship

Part-Time Jobs

- Journalist, Turtle Island News, ON
- Reporter Correspondent, APTN, ON
- Staff Writer, Rogers Communications, ON
- Assistant Editor, Current Affairs, Rogers Communications, ON
- Communications + Professional Writer, Bennett Design Associates, ON
- Writer- Breakfast Television, Rogers Communications, ON

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[Additional Related Social Organizations](#)

Join a student club or an academic society at UTM to meet like-minded people, explore your interests, and make valuable connections. To view a list of current clubs and societies, visit the Centre for Student Engagement's website. Some organizations you may consider are:

- English & Drama Students Society: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/english-drama/welcome>
- Language Studies Academic Society: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/language-studies/resources/language-studies-academic-society>
- Language Exchange at UTM: <https://ulife.utoronto.ca/organizations>
- UTM Drama Club: <https://www.facebook.com/UTMDramaClub>
- The Medium: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMediumUTM>

[Create a LinkedIn Profile](#)

Create a LinkedIn profile to connect with professionals in various fields, explore the career paths of UTM alumni, research employers, apply for specific positions, and more. Need help? Come to the Career Centre to book a LinkedIn profile critique

[Join a Professional Association](#)

There are many benefits of becoming a member of association(s), such as developing a network of contacts, learning about industry trends, accessing industry-related job postings, and stating your affiliation on your resume. Some associations related to this major are:

- Languages Canada: <https://www.languagescanada.ca/en/>
- Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC): <https://pwac.ca/>
- Association of Canadian College & Universities Teachers of English (ACCUTE): <https://accute.ca/>

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[Talk to Professors](#)

Connecting with your professors can be a great way to explore the different paths a major can lead you to, as well as learn about possible opportunities for research, volunteering, or becoming a TA. Drop by during their office hours or request an appointment.

[SAMPLE JOB POSTINGS FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS/RECENT GRADUATES](#)

Below is a sample of delisted positions that have been posted on UofT's Career Learning Network (CLN). To access current listings, login to [CLN](#) and click on *Jobs*.

- Media Librarians, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- Policy Analyst, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Marketing Specialist, ScribbleLive
- Editorial Assistant, Department of Language Studies, UTM
- Library Assistant, Career Centre, UTM
- Biology Proof-reader, Swift & Sellers Publishing Inc.
- Publishing Assistant, Mediacorp Canada Inc.
- English Tutor, Excel Learning Centre
- Freelance Creative Writers, Niche Lifestyle
- Historical Interpreter, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation, City of Toronto
- Content Editor, Toronto Life
- Graduate Recruitment Consultant, Mackenzie Stuart
- Account Executive, Titanium Logistics Inc.
- Communications Intern, Gairdner Foundation
- Investor & Treasury Services Intern, Royal Bank of Canada

[HOW CAN THE CAREER CENTRE HELP](#)

The Career Centre has a wealth of information, resources and services to help you along your career path. The Career Centre website (www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers) also offers some very helpful resources to help you explore careers. Sign up for the e-newsletter to keep you updated about the latest events and resources. Sign up for resume critiques online, or cruise through the CLN for posted jobs. Take a look at our events calendar to find out what's coming up in the next couple of weeks and sign up for workshops, employer events and more. Cruise through the careers that interest you the most by

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accessing Career Cruising on one of our computers. Look through Careers by Major –English to view a sample of types of positions that marketing graduates may obtain

Career Resource Library

The [Career Resource Library](#) contains information about a wide range of occupations in all industries, resume and cover letter resources, effective work search methods, graduate/professional school preparation guides, and more.

- Canada's Top 100 Employers
- Career Cruising (electronic career guide)
- Career Information Binders
- Careers for Writers...
- Careers for Bookworms...
- Great Jobs for Communications Majors
- Great Jobs for English Majors
- Careers in Culture Series
- Opportunities in Television and Video
- Career Information Binders: Desktop Publisher, Editor, Marketing, New Media, Writing, and many more

You can also visit our on-line library collection by going to the Career Centre website:

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/> Click on the Career Planning icon and then scroll down to Library Resources. Once you register, you can download a book for up to 14 days.

Appointments

Attend a one-on-one appointment with a career counsellor or an employment strategist to discuss what career options might work for you and determine a job search plan.

Meet with an academic or departmental advisor, who can guide you in achieving academic success. Contact the Office of the Registrar or your department for more information.

Career Planning by Year

Visit our [Career Planning by Year](#) page for ideas of important career related activities for each year. You can visit us in the Career Centre to find out more about career areas that interest you. The UTM program plans are also a good resource to learn more about how you can use your degree and to find out how to map out your academic career journey while at UTM. Visit: www.utoronto.ca/program-plans.

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The National Occupational Code Binders

The National Occupational Code binders in the Career Resource Library provide very detailed, specific and extensive information relating to hundreds of careers. From general overviews of the job, to working conditions, to sample job postings related to the field and related articles, the binders are sure to provide you with in-depth answers to many of your job-specific questions.

Tip Sheets

Do you like information in an easy-to-read, easy-to-digest, take-home format? Take a look at our tip sheets on subjects like Effective Interviewing, Networking, and Preparing for Graduate School.

Events

Would you like a chance to interact with prospective employers and expand your networking circle? The Career Centre offers a number of events that help you brush shoulders with professionals and experts from all fields. Attend the Get Experience Fair, Professional Schools Fair, Summer Job Fair. Practice putting those networking skills to use and land yourself a job! Check out the events and workshops section of the Career Learning Network to find out what is happening on campus

www.clnx.utoronto.ca/home

Extern Job Shadowing Program

Are you still curious about what career path is best for you? Would you like a chance to experience working in an industry to find out if it's really the path for you? The Extern Job Shadowing Program can help. This job-shadowing program grants you a one- to five- day placement in a career of your choice. Go to the Career Learning Network to register for the workshop that will help you to prepare for your placement. To register go to: www.clnx.utoronto.ca and then go to Workshops and Events to see when the next workshop is happening.

Career Counselling

Are you feeling lost, unsure and overwhelmed with finding out what career path you would like to choose? Or you've decided on a career or the type of job you want, but what are the next steps? Our Career Counsellors are here to help. Book an appointment with one of our professionals who can help

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you determine what paths you can take after graduation or how your area of study can relate to a career post-grad.

Job Postings

Are you graduating soon or a recent graduate? Sign up for the Graduating Students Employment Service (GSES) or the Recent Graduate Employment Service (RGES). These services allow you to gain access to full-time job postings while you finish your final year of study or access full-time job postings for up to two years after you graduate. To learn more, check out our Career Centre website.

Please feel free to come and visit us in Room 3094, South Building. You can also reach us by phone, 905-828-5451 or email at careers@utm.utoronto.ca.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Name: Sonya Malcolm

Grad Year: 2002

Degree: BA

Program: English & History

Title: Communications Specialist

update: Sonya Malcolm is a Communications Specialist

Sonya Malcolm works as a Communications Coordinator for Aon, a large insurance brokerage company.

“My main responsibilities are writing and developing ad copy, brochures, website content and other marketing material. I also occasionally plan conferences and events,” says Sonya, who is also a graduate of Sheridan College’s Corporate Communications program.

“The biggest challenge in this position is juggling a number of projects and meeting tight deadlines. Maintaining attention to detail and accuracy under these conditions can be tough. However, when a project is seen through to successful completion, this position can be quite rewarding.”

Among the characteristics that would make a successful communications coordinator, Sonya lists writing and research skills, organizational skills, multi-tasking skills, creativity, as well as diplomacy and a willingness to work as part of a team.

Sonya, who was also Communications Coordinator for Hamilton Health Sciences before her current position, participated in an internship as part of her Sheridan College program. She was then hired by the organization she interned with. But before choosing her post-graduate program at Sheridan, she did her research at the UTM Career Centre.

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“I participated in the Extern program, which allowed me to discover that the communications field existed and that it would be a good fit for me. I believe that having a degree in English has been a huge asset in obtaining jobs that are primarily based on writing. Highlighting the unique skills that an English degree provides have helped me in job interviews and in my resume,” she says.

“Students majoring in English should know that their degree, whether standing alone or with another major, is incredibly valuable. The ability to analyze information and express it clearly is a rare commodity, and if you can write well and meet tight deadlines there will always be a job out there for you.”

Sonya volunteers on the Communications Committee of Habitat for Humanity, Toronto and is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators. If she could do anything differently, she would have combined an English major with another major in the social sciences.

“My eventual aim is to work in communications for the government or an international NGO and I think a second major in Sociology or Political Science would be helpful in that regard,” she says.

ADDITIONAL WEB-RESOURCES

Selected Web Sites:

- Canadian Media Producers Association - <http://www.cmpa.ca/>
- Canadian Film and Television Production Association <http://www.cftpa.ca/>
- Canadian Association of Journalists - <http://www.caj.ca/>
- Professional Writers Association of Canada - <http://www.pwac.ca/>
- Jeff Gaulin’s Journalism Job Board - <http://www.jeffgaulin.com/>

Job Sites (Canadian):

- Media & Communications Job Postings - <http://www.mediajobsearchcanada.com/>
- Jeff Gaulin’s Journalism Job Board - <http://www.jeffgaulin.com/>
- Freelance Writing Job Postings - <http://www.freelancewritingjobs.ca/blog/category/canadian-freelance-writer-jobs/>
- PR & Communications Job Postings - <http://www.cprs.ca/careers/jobsandrfps.aspx>

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Labour Market & Career Information:

- National Council for the Training of Journalists, Qualitative Research Summary on the Journalism Labour Market
<http://www.nctj.com/downloadlibrary/NCTJ%20Emerging%20Skills%20FINAL.pdf>
- Core Skills for the Future of Journalism -
http://www.newsu.org/course_files/CoreSkills_FutureofJournalism2014v2.pdf
- Practical Advice for Young/Aspiring Journalists -
<https://newmediaubc.wordpress.com/contents/contents-by-category/>