

Journalism education survey: South Africa

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1. What is the framework of higher education and situating journalism education in that?

South Africa's education system is divided into three levels – primary, secondary and tertiary which consists of universities, universities of technology and further education and training colleges. Journalism education is taught in the universities and universities of technology. The universities of technology are fairly recent additions to the tertiary education framework and many of them were “merged” into already-existing universities under a plan to revise the academic landscape by the SA Minister of Education in 2003. Before the mergers they were called technikons and their journalism teaching components had a strong focus on practical journalism without the theoretical media studies, cultural studies or communication studies components other universities were teaching. Typically two years of study with one spent in a newsroom resulted in a diploma in journalism. When they were merged with other institutions or became universities of technology they began to offer degrees and so revised their curricula adding more theoretical courses to reflect this enhanced status. Many of these institutions still produce graduates considered by many editors as more likely to “hit the ground running” when they apply for jobs in South African newsrooms (see <http://mg.co.za/article/2007-10-16-the-best-journalism-schools-in-sa>).

The universities consist of both public institutions and private institutions although there are few of these (among them Monash, an Australian university, Midrand and Varsity College) and private institutions did not exist in this arena until the post-apartheid era. In South Africa it is the public institutions which have the prestige of offering extremely good education and achieving very high research outputs and which consequently attract the top students from the high school system.

The universities who teach journalism practice and theory group their courses and emphasise their curricula in different ways: some teach journalism within communication studies (UNISA, UFS, UJ), some group their offerings as journalism and media/cultural studies (Rhodes, UKZN, UCT), some offer stand-alone journalism programmes at only post-graduate level (Wits, Stellenbosch, University of Pretoria). It is no coincidence that this bifurcation between communication studies and media/cultural studies had historical routes with the formerly white Afrikaans-language and formerly Bantustan universities aligning their teaching of journalism with intellectual trajectories in communications studies and the formerly white English-language universities aligning their intellectual trajectories with media/cultural studies. This has shifted since the 2000s with the historically Afrikaans institutions incorporating cultural studies into their curricula (for further details see http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no30/In_search_of_critical_engagement.pdf by Jeanne du Toit, an article based on her PhD study into journalism education in South Africa).

The other division between universities offering journalism is between those who offer undergraduate courses (usually as 1 major course in an undergraduate degree, which then means students combine the study journalism with a range of other pursuits from philosophy to economics

to drama and arts) and those who offer postgraduate courses which focus just on journalism (Wits, Stellenbosch and University of Pretoria¹ at honours level).

Usually the journalism courses are contained within undergraduate degrees and as students study further (honours, masters and doctoral levels) they take on work that is increasingly theoretical and abandons the practice of journalism for journalism studies, media/cultural/communication studies. A few universities allow students to do documentary-style journalism at MA level as a creative equivalence to research (Wits and UCT).

In the opinion of Prof Marc Caldwell at the University of Fort Hare, there are only six main centres of journalism in South Africa: Walter Sisulu University, Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, Wits University, Durban University of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology, because these offer specific degrees/diplomas in journalism.

2. What are the levels at which journalism education is offered?

- Undergraduate courses in journalism within communication/media studies degrees.
- Undergraduate degrees in journalism
- Post-graduate diplomas/honours degrees (after a first undergraduate degree offered by public universities like Rhodes, Wits, Pretoria and Stellenbosch)
- Diplomas (in lieu of a degree offered by technical universities and some private universities and colleges)
- Postgraduate degrees: honours, masters and doctorates.

3. How many institutions are offering these programmes and at what level?

Those that generally offer undergraduate and postgraduate communications/media studies degrees and which include courses in journalism within those offerings:

- University of Limpopo – School of Language, Communication and Media Studies
http://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=langcom_media_under
- University of Venda – Centre for Communication and Applied Language Studies
<http://www.univen.ac.za/index.php?Entity=Media%20Studies&Sch=5>
- University of South Africa (UNISA) – BA Communication Science
<http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=22353>
- North West University (NWU) – School of Communication Studies
<http://www.nwu.ac.za/school-communication-studies-about-us>
- University of Free State (UFS) – Communication Science Faculty
<http://humanities.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?DCCode=142> – offers a BA in Communication and Journalism
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) – Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy
<http://journ.nmmu.ac.za/Postgraduate-Study>

¹ The University of Pretoria is reviewing this programme and not offering it in 2016 see
<http://archivedpublicwebsite.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=13410>

- University of Fort Hare – <http://ufh.ac.za/faculties/social-sciences/departments/communication>
- University of Zululand (UNIZULU) – Department of Communication Science
http://oldsite.unizulu.ac.za/arts_com_sci.php
<http://www.comsci.uzulu.ac.za/>

Those which focus on communication/media studies but also offer courses in journalism across the years of the undergraduate degree:

- Johannesburg University (UJ) – Department of Film, Journalism and Television
- <http://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/school-of-communication/Pages/The-Department-of-Journalism,-Film---Television.aspx>
- University of Kwa-Zulu Natal on two campus (UKZN, Durban and Pietermaritzburg) – Media and Cultural Studies
<http://soa.ukzn.ac.za/ClustersDisciplines/MediaVisualArtandDrama/media-studies>
- University of Cape Town (UCT) – Centre for Film and Media Studies <http://cfms.uct.ac.za/>

Post-graduate degrees or diplomas in journalism practice (which include theoretical courses in journalism/media studies):

- University of Pretoria (UP) – Journalism programme at honours level
<http://archivedpublicwebsite.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=13410>
- University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) – Journalism programme at honours level
<http://www.journalism.co.za/want-to-study-2/> (Wits also offers certificates in financial and investigative reporting.
- Rhodes University (RU) – School of Journalism and Media Studies <http://www.ru.ac.za/jms/> – offers post-graduate diplomas in journalism, economics journalism and media management.
- North West University (NWU) – School of Communication Studies
<http://www.nwu.ac.za/school-communication-studies-about-us>
- Stellenbosch University (SU) – Department of Journalism
<http://sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Arts/Departemente1/Joernalistiek/Homepage>

Undergraduate degrees/diplomas specifically in journalism practice:

- Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) – Journalism programme
<http://www.tut.ac.za/students/facultiesdepartments/humanities/j/Pages/default.aspx>
- Durban University of Technology (DUT) – Media, Language and Communication
http://www.dut.ac.za/faculty/arts_and_design/media_language_communication/
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) – National Diploma in Journalism
<https://www.cput.ac.za/academic/faculties/informaticsdesign/prospectus/course?i=101&seo=TKQ6IEpPVVJOQUxJU00=>
- Walter Sisulu University (WSU) – Btech Journalism, National Diploma in Journalism
- Rhodes University (RU) – School of Journalism and Media Studies
<http://www.ru.ac.za/jms/>

Private institutions offering journalism courses:

- Monash University <http://future.arts.monash.edu/journalism/>

- Midrand Graduate Institute <https://www.mgi.ac.za/faculties-programmes/creative-arts-communication/bachelor-of-arts-in-journalism/>
- Varsity College <https://www.varsitycollege.co.za/programmes/vc-bachelor-of-arts-programme>
- Rosebank College – Diploma in journalism
<http://www.rosebankcollege.co.za/Courses/Pages/Diploma-in-Journalism-Full-Time.aspx?gclid=Cj0KEQIA7rmzBRDezri2r6bz1qYBEiQAg-YEtiWE3wZMRBzhCWsnD6b5cpcjz8yVod2H4wnIzIA0rvcaAvEc8P8HAQ>
- Damelin College – Diploma in journalism and media studies
<https://www.damelin.co.za/courses/diploma-in-journalism-and-media-studies>

4. What is the national intake of students at different levels?

By dividing the institutions listed above into three categories (according to an approximation of their intake) we have estimated that the national intake of students at first year into undergraduate degrees and into post-graduate study is roughly around 6200 [note we were unable to confirm any of these guestimates as most universities have now shut down for the summer holidays and very few answered email questions from us].

Estimated 1st year intake into undergraduate degrees/diplomas

±1000	±300	±100	Total
University of South Africa (UNISA)	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN)	University of Zululand	
Johannesburg University (UJ)	Rhodes University (RU)	University of Limpopo	
	Walter Sisulu University (WSU)	Rosebank College	
	Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)	Varsity College	
	Durban University of Technology (DUT)	Midrand Graduate Institute	
	University of Cape Town (UCT)	Monash University	
	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)	University of Venda	
	University of Free State (UFS)	University of Fort Hare	
	Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)	Damelin College	
	North West University (NWU)		
2000	3000	900	5900

Intake into postgraduate courses

Institution	Estimate
University of Pretoria (UP)	20
University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)	20
Rhodes University (RU)	40
North West University (NWU)	?
Stellenbosch University (SU)	20
University of Venda	20
University of Limpopo	20
University of South Africa (UNISA)	?
University of Free State (UFS)	20
University of Fort Hare	20
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)	20
University of Zululand (UNIZULU)	20
Total	Roughly 300

5. What are the main components of the curricula at different levels?

Within undergraduate degrees	Postgraduate journalism practice degrees/diplomas	Postgraduate degrees
Practice courses: viz Introduction to journalism/media production Introduction to digital media Conflict/peace reporting Writing-editing-design Broadcast journalism Media production skills Advanced print journalism Radio and broadcast Writing for the media Reporting digital news Video Television Feature writing Computer skills Photojournalism Web design Newswriting Subediting Opinion and specialist writing Investigative journalism Entrepreneurial skills for media Internship.	Diplomas/honours in journalism: a mix of practice journalism, support journalism and theory courses. Emphasis on practice.	Theory honours – usually four theory modules plus a research report. Masters: by 100% thesis or by programme and thesis. Programme will consist of theory modules plus 50% thesis. Practice-based MAs: usually 50% project plus 50% thesis. PhD: usually 100% thesis.

<p>Practice support courses: viz Media law Media ethics Communication law Intellectual property Intercultural communication Media institutions SA media histories News awareness and news knowledge Visual literacy African language and culture in practice The politics of contemporary Africa South Africa in international politics Politics as social activity The structure and functioning of public services Political economy of Africa New media technology Political and government communication</p>		
<p>Theory courses: viz Mass communication theory Introduction to media and society Audiences and reception Fundamentals of communication Communication contexts and applications Understanding political behaviour and participation Theories of social change Media studies, institutions, theories and issues Media studies, content audiences and production Semiotics and narrative theories Representation, identity and social change</p>		
<p>Research courses: viz Communication research methods Media research methods Research in social sciences</p>		

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6. What is the response/attitude towards these programmes by professional journalists and media industry?

The *Mail & Guardian* recently published a report (“The best journalism schools in SA” <http://mg.co.za/article/2007-10-16-the-best-journalism-schools-in-sa>) in which it gathered the opinions of a range of editors/senior managers from a variety of different media organisations on which institutions they typically recruited students from. The opinions varied widely depending on a range of factors including medium, geographical location and the needs of the media organisation. What did seem evident was that there seemed to be a preference for two particular types of programmes – those that offered journalism in conjunction with media/cultural studies (such as Rhodes, UKZN, UCT) and those that offered post-graduate level journalism programmes (Wits, Stellenbosch, University of Pretoria).

Very often media organisations based in particular geographical locations will prefer to hire students from universities close to them because these are the students who would have interned at their very newsroom. Beyond geographical practicalities, there is an emphasis on wanting students that are “newsroom ready” – these are students that either have experience of newsrooms through internships, or have been taught at university level the basics of routines, story generation, research and story management. Newsroom editors/producers want students that are able to work independently without too much time spent on the basics of journalism and how a newsroom works. This emphasis on students that are able to quickly adapt to a working newsroom may result from the wider implications of shrinking profits, the juniorisation of newsrooms, and downsizing across most media organisations in South Africa. A skills audit conducted by the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) in 2002 found that “limited resources prevented media institutions from taking junior reporters through a (traditional) process of mentoring, guidance and “osmosis” through which they could learn the “tricks of the trade” from their senior counterparts” (Daniels 2013: 56 http://www.journalism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/State_of_the_newroom_20131.pdf). The industry thus requires that journalism education at university level prepares students to enter newsrooms having the confidence, skills, and experience through internships to work independently among experienced journalists.

Technical skills are important and there is some agreement that students with online and new media/digital media skills are an asset in the newsroom. Prof Lizette Rabe from Stellenbosch notes:

It is a given that entry-level journalists today must have the practical technical skills to work in a multimedia environment. In other words, they need to know which buttons to push, and sometimes even all at the same time, for print, radio, TV and new media. Luckily, for the tech generation, this is almost like breathing, and “all” we have to do, is to teach them the necessary programmes according to which they should “do” for print, broadcast and new media (http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no30/rjr30.pdf).

This was echoed by many of the editors in the M&G survey which regarded online and new media skills as a strong motivation for hiring students from particular universities. In addition, those that

work in television and radio are expected to have the necessary technical skills to operate independently in those environments.

Beyond newsroom readiness, editors/producers/managers tend to respond positively to programmes that prepare future journalists to be critical thinkers, researchers and analysts. While technical ability is important and is certainly key in journalism education, there is also acknowledgement that understanding the media landscape, being able to critically engage with the media beyond simply the practice of journalism are seen as important values in journalism education curricula. Dr Tanja Bosch from UCT argues:

Broadcast journalism education is about much more than simply teaching students how to use recording and editing equipment. Practical skills are critical, but a theoretical foundation is essential to encourage critical journalism practice (http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no30/rjr30.pdf).

7. Give a profile of the human resources involved in teaching/training in terms of permanent faculty and visiting faculty.

The universities that teach journalism practice for the purpose of graduating students who will work in the journalism industry employ the following types of staff:

- Practice teachers with specific skills (writing and subediting, video, film, television news, print, design, digital media, photography) who have typically come from the media industries. These teachers very often only have undergraduate degrees or honours level degrees. These teachers will also offer practice support courses in newsroom practices, sociology of news, media history, law and ethics.
- Theory teachers (most often with Masters and Doctoral degrees) who lecture theory and research courses – semiotics, audiences and reception, ideology etc. These lecturers very often work in the postgraduate sections of their departments because they have the qualifications to supervise and conduct research.
- Technology experts – digital, web, video, audio, editing support for practice courses.
- Academic administration – course co-ordination, mark inputting.

At a university such as Rhodes which is not based in a major media hub and is far from easy access to media professionals, all the human resources have to be located in the department with a few visitors either inputting knowledge and skills on a very short-term basis or attached to the School for a specific length of time. In the major media centres, Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, sometimes a majority of the practice-based courses are run by part-time staff who have full-time jobs in the media industries.

8. Provide a short assessment of journalism education in your country.

The context of journalism education in South Africa is an extremely important background to any curricular activities. Journalism education has been involved in a fierce, ongoing debate in South Africa particularly since the transition to democracy in 1994. Prior to '94 the tensions within the teaching of journalism were primarily about its fit for the industry and there was a schism between

liberal universities with an anti-apartheid stance and those who were considered to be supporting the apartheid press. As soon as the ANC came into power it began to put pressure on the media to transform its personnel and content, and some of this pressure devolved onto the training and education institutions. In 1997 the white Conference of Editors and the Black Editors' Forum formed a new non-racial body called the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef). This body made possible the membership of senior journalism educators at universities so that the interface between editors and educators was facilitated. In 1997 Sanef hosted the first of many conversations with journalism teachers on journalism education and transformation of the media (see http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr_no15/new_paradigm.pdf). Sanef also made possible the interactions between educators from formerly Afrikaans-language and English-language institutions as did the South African Communication Association (Sacomm), the academic body, with Prof AS de Beer (then at Stellenbosch) and Prof Keyan Tomaselli (then at UKZN) playing a strong role in uniting the communication studies/journalism studies/media studies academic community under the banner of Sacomm. In the late 90s and early 2000s Rhodes University played an important role in hosting a series of colloquia on journalism curriculum. These debates, conferences, colloquia and issues are captured in the pages of *Rhodes Journalism Review* (www.rjr.ru.ac.za, in particular see http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/supplements/Teaching_African_Journalists_Supplement.pdf and <http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/no30.html>) and in journal articles in *Equid Novi* (now *African Journalism Studies* in particular see vol 26(2) of 2005). Since the transition to democracy, the pressing question has been how to indigenize journalism and journalism education so that it speaks to democratization, the restoration of dignity to those oppressed by apartheid, and the important documenting of political and social transition, without losing the public role of calling power to account. Media and journalism remain popular choices of study for South African students but the digital revolution and the increasing capitalization of the media (as in the case of Independent Newspapers used by Tony O'Reilly to subsidise his Irish operation and to make huge profits) have slashed the number of jobs available for graduates (see Glenda Daniels' *State of the Newsroom* reports which document this situation in a longitudinal study, <http://www.journalism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/State-of-the-newsroom-2014.pdf>).

Journalism educators are under constant pressure to revise curricula to take account of the major upheaval of the digital revolution and subsequent shifting financial basis for the media, the political stresses brought to bear by the ANC and South African government, and the most recent demands by the 2015 student uprising which calls for Africanisation of curricula and theory. Transformation of South African society is an issue of extreme importance and directly impacts on teaching and the practice of journalism in academic institutions (see Daniels' *State of the Newsroom* reports).

As referred to under point 1 above several bifurcations run through journalism education in South Africa but probably the most interesting of these is the practice/theory combination and where each university and curriculum places emphasis. The universities of technology and the universities offering honours degrees in journalism practice still adhere strongly to a practice-based curriculum which has as its goal fit-for-purpose journalists who are ready for newsrooms. In contrast, Rhodes, in particular, (but one can see that UKZN and UCT also wrestle with this) has spent many years on curriculum revision so as to offer practice and theory courses that interweave and produce a more critical-minded student. The debate in the latter universities is whether journalism education should "follow" or "lead" industry. In many cases the universities do lead in their students' ability to understand and use digital and social media technologies, in particular, although many institutions still offer practice specialisations based on the old broadcast/print division.