



So you want to be a journalist?

University Degree

Australian universities offer a range of degrees in journalism, communication or media studies to prepare school leavers for careers in the media. These are well regarded by a majority of employers, if you can back them up with relevant industry experience.

Graduates enter media organisations at a higher level of pay than non-graduates. Both graduates and non-graduates serve a “cadetship” - a period of on-the job training in which their pay is less than that of a qualified or “graded” journalist. However, the length of time they can be classed as cadets is different. While non-graduates generally work three years in a cadetship, graduates work just 12 months in the cadetship.

If you’re looking to break into the industry with a degree under your belt, choose an appropriate course to study. Some newspapers require that graduates undertake a one year cadetship (*on the third year rate). However, this does vary greatly.

For the most up to date information on relevant courses consult your school careers advisor or the Universities Admission Centre in your state.

Cadetship

Cadetship allows you to learn the trade of journalism while working on the job. Cadets are like the apprentices of journalism. They are in constant training, learning how to write for newspapers - how to report the news and “smell” a story and find news.

The NSW Higher School Certificate or its equivalent is the minimum entry requirement for a cadetship.

Cadets are paid less than qualified or “graded” journalists and must spend between one and three years learning the job before being graded.

The best way to get a cadetship is to approach the employer directly. Put together a CV, demonstrate an interest in journalism and show you want to learn more.

You might do this by writing for your school magazine or local paper, reporting news events that you have seen on TV or read about in newspapers and so on.

Cadets undertake regular on-the-job training and receive progressive instruction in practical journalism, and may also need to undertake off-the-job training courses as required by their employer. In addition to learning the trade, cadets are also taught shorthand and skills relating to the occupation.

Cadets normally perform basic routine journalistic duties under close supervision with limited responsibility for the final outcome.

For more information on cadetships, contact the media company you would like to work with, as most media organisations and publications offer unique programs for their cadets.

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