



Many media graduates go into areas such as teaching, archiving, social and community work, management, or the civil service. For those who do choose to go into one of the media industries, research suggests that what employers value above all is, as one reported:

"the opportunity to bring some fresh ideas, fresh blood, fresh questioning attitude in, that's the main thing. Somebody who would come in here and have the confidence, on their first day, to say 'why on earth do you do that?'...That's the main thing I'm looking for, people with the critical faculties that have been sharpened by having done the course".

(Sue Thornham and Tim O'Sullivan, 'Chasing the real: "employability" and the media studies curriculum. In Media, Culture and Society Vol. 26 (5): 717-736, 2004)

What will help you to establish a career in the media industries?

- The media industries are rapidly changing. Specific skills taught today may well be redundant in a very few years. What you will need is an understanding of this fast changing context and a proven capacity to learn and use your initiative.

- Work placements and other links with industry professionals will help you understand the contexts in which people work in the media. This knowledge could also help guide your choice of career once you leave university.
- Specialist training is available at postgraduate level where you can opt for courses that prepare you for direct entry into employment, building on the broader skills you acquired as an undergraduate.

A university education, however, means a great deal more than training for a specific job. Media studies, and related subjects, are of most value where they develop a range of abilities, that enable you to understand the most dynamic sectors of the modern economy, offer skills in research, presentation, communication and team-working, plus the ability to think critically and creatively and so become one of the innovators of the future.

To find out more, visit our website at www.meccsa.org.uk which offers answers to some common queries.



MeCCSA with AMPE
Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association
www.meccsa.org.uk
The Association of Media Practice Educators
www.ampe.co.uk



Media Programmes at University

Choosing the right course for you



"Representing lecturers and researchers in higher education"





In an age when media and communication systems have become such a prominent part of the way we live and work, it is not surprising that they are an important field of study, with over 100 universities now offering programmes in these areas. The mistaken perception that media courses are a soft option and lack academic credibility is based on prejudice. The reality is that they offer a challenging, interdisciplinary education, enabling you to develop a wide range of practical and intellectual abilities that are relevant to the contemporary world. You can find useful listings at <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/search/index.html>, and <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/coursesevents/mediacourses/>.

'Media' is a catch-all term. Although quite commonly used as a title there are many others, in fact so many that it can be confusing to know what course would suit you best and what the differences are between them. There are media programmes under a variety of subject headings including: Advertising, Art, Communications, Cultural Studies, Digital Media, Documentary, Film Studies, Film Production, Interactive Media, Journalism, Games Design, Graphic Design, Media, Media Studies, Multi-media, Photography, Screenwriting, Television Studies, Video Arts, and so on. Some courses have very specific entry requirements, but others accept a wide range of A level subjects or vocational qualifications.

This means that you should think carefully about what kind of course you want to do and how it might relate to your existing qualifications and your ambitions for the future. This brochure aims to help you to do this.

How do media programmes vary?

Degree programmes in media have different emphases and purposes.

- Some place more emphasis on creative production, and may be located in an art and design or performing arts department. These may be focused on one medium or area of employment such as graphic design or television production, or they may offer a variety so that you can develop a broader range of skills.

- Other courses are almost entirely analytical, exploring, for example, how media content affects the way people think about themselves and other social groups, cultural changes such as globalisation and consumerism, or technological developments and the impact they have on everyday life. Studying these kinds of topics uses forms of research and analysis from across the humanities and social sciences.
- Often there is a mix of approaches, although with varying emphases, so that you can gain a broad understanding of the media in relation to the changing contexts of the modern world whilst simultaneously developing practical skills, using digital technologies to construct media texts for yourself.

You should think carefully about how much emphasis you would like on practical or analytical work in the programme you choose and how much flexibility there would be for you to change this emphasis as you progress, once you have found out where your main talents and interests lie.

What careers do media programmes lead to?

All of these programmes will improve your employability. Indeed official surveys show that graduates from such programmes do exceptionally well in the career market. A recent survey of graduates showed that 70 per cent of media graduates found employment within six months. This compared with 68 per cent for business studies graduates, 64 per cent for information technology, 55 per cent for English graduates, 49 per cent for chemistry, and 61 per cent for graduates overall (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, 2004).

The concept of employability is broader than just skills training for a specific job. The knowledge and skills acquired by media students lead to a wide range of careers. While about 1 in 7 go into art, design, culture, and media professions, many do not. As the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, has written recently,

"A degree alone is not enough. Employers are looking for more than just technical skills and knowledge of a degree discipline. They particularly value skills such as communication, teamworking and problem solving. Job applicants who can demonstrate that they have developed these skills will have a real advantage."