

## Different Models of Higher Education in Journalism

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### Abstract

#### Theses:

1. Classical Independent Model which incorporates three levels of education and gives relevant degrees such as bachelors' degree, master's degree and Ph.D. in Journalism.
2. Mixed Model where as journalism education is being included in social or art studies with three levels of education and gives relevant degrees such as bachelors' degree, master's degree and Ph.D.
3. Special Master's Degree program offered to individuals with bachelors or master's degree in any other field.
4. Special Journalistic Educational Institutions which do not give the academic degrees and diploma's and concentrate on development of professional skills. These types of institutions exist in the fields of arts, music and etc.
5. Higher Education of Journalism in Georgia – history, traditions, and contemporary reality.

**Key Words:** Classical Independent Model; Mixed Model; Special Master's Degree; Special Journalistic Educational Institutions; Higher Education of Journalism in Georgia.

The End of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by deep and radical changes in the history of the mankind. These changes have an important impact on science of journalism, its methodological experience and even lifetime practice.

The growth of areas of activities of journalism and strengthening the role of journalism in contemporary world sets new goals for media. Contemporary journalism also sets new objectives for media studies and media science. The grounds for successful execution of these goals and objectives are humanity, democratic values and integrity in the actions of the journalist.

Among the social institutions, journalism is of the most dynamic sociopolitical areas of activity, mirroring reality based on facts, arguments and logic.

We will try to briefly describe the goals and objectives of all three educational levels of journalism:

At Level 1, the bachelor's degree proves that general base for social studies was received, as well as expertise in the media overall, or its specific sub-branches of activities. At the same time, the holder of the degree was educated on media law and professional ethical standards, and has professional journalistic skills. Overall, the first level of journalistic education prepares reporters.

At Level 2 the master's degree programs are designed and geared to deepen the theoretical knowledge, to enable the participants to do scientific research, and finally, to create high level professional journalists such as an editor, journalist, and in number of cases, the manager of a specific field or the area of journalism.

At Level 2, the grounds and foundation are prepared for Level 3 – doctor's degree program that will prepare the researchers and “teachers” (professors) in journalism.

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The resume of the aforementioned extremely brief descriptions is the following:

Level 1 – prepares reporters

Level 2 – prepares not only reporters, but high level professionals in other fields, as well as pedagogical resources

Level 3 – prepares the researchers and teachers in the field of journalism

Based on the aforementioned main ideas, we will try to describe and present higher journalistic education.

It is impossible to set or design the goals and objectives of any educational level without consideration of contemporary media market demands. In any other case, the media education and its products will be out of the activity field and far away from reality. Employment in the field of media and specifics of the media markets set definite demands that often influence the curriculums within the educational process. This allows us to create the following chain: market – goal – tools (curriculum, academic programs etc.) in which the market could be global, specific or regional. The goals derive from the markets. The curriculum and academic programs are designed for implementation of these goals.

It would be unjustified to describe the goals of the media education without the basic functions of journalism. Regarding this issue there are several approaches among specialists of the theory of the subject.

One group of researchers has the approach according to which the main function of media is communication. In this case, media is considered to be one of the tools of the mass communication.

The second group of researchers gives media the function of manipulator, meaning that in the first place, journalism creates the public opinion and then manages it.

A third group of researchers believes that journalism is the “fourth branch of government”. In other words, the public influences and controls all three branches of government.

Another group of researchers identify journalism as a completely independent entity; by itself involved in social and political processes.

All of the above mentioned approaches could be included in the specific academic program or curriculum, and could be considered while setting the goals and objectives of the journalistic education.

There is one more important aspect that also influences the goals and objectives of journalistic education. It is the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical experience at each education level. It is extremely important that the educational program is set with right proportions, and the so called “golden mean” is found.

There are two threads regarding the aforementioned:

1. The curriculum should not be set with theoretical courses that will result in distancing from the reality and market demands; and
2. The curriculum should not turn the educational process into practical training seminar therefore eliminating the main function – basic education.

The exact balance is set by academic program and goals.

Deriving from all of the above discussed aspects of higher education such as understanding of functions of journalism, identifying goals and objectives at all three levels, adequacy to market demands, right balance between theory and practice allows several models of journalistic education to exist.

1. The first model is the one that incorporates all three levels of journalistic education – bachelors degree, masters degree, and post graduate studies/doctors degree and has curriculum geared towards journalistic disciplines.
2. The second model is the one in which journalism is included as a component of a wider field of study. These fields could be humanitarian or social studies. Mainly, this model is used at Level 1 of education, and includes Bachelor's Degree Diploma, such as BA in Arts or BA in Social Studies with major in journalism. It should be said that in this system a student could have a BA Degree in humanities, with a specific major in some field, with a minor in journalism. This model is widely used and is incorporated in the curriculums of those universities that are moving towards the Bologna process. As a professor of Tbilisi State University, I would like to underline that our educational process is the same at the Level 1 – bachelor's degree program. Mixed models such as this one (with major and minor) does not necessarily mean that the second and third levels of education could not be specific and in journalism only, which means that in this case the master's and doctor's degrees will be in journalism only.
3. The third model is widely spread journalistic programs offering only the second level of education (Level 2) – master's degree programs. This happens due to the fact that journalism is a field where people come from different backgrounds and achieve great success. Doctors, economists, physicians and others could become journalists, but it almost never happens vice versa.

These kinds of master's degree programs are designed for those individuals who are willing to change their professions for one reason or another and have the basic – first level higher education. The curriculums of these programs mostly involve the subject that develop practical skills ,since it is assumed that an individual already has the general foundation received with his/her bachelor's degree program. These kinds of programs usually issue a degree: Master of Arts in Journalism.

4. The fourth model is the rarest one, although it is extremely important. This is so-called author schools that do not have the ego or intention to issue any kind of diploma confirming the qualifications of a graduate. In some cases “Journalism Schools of . . . “ or “Media Academia of. . . “. The key point in this model is that the educational institution is connected with one specific name – person that has an important expertise and recognition in journalism, or instance successful and famous organization such as “BBC”.

There could be a comparison made with such schools in the fields such as Fine Arts (1), Ballet (2), Music (3), and etc. Becoming a doctor, economist, or lawyer requires expertise and professionalism, as opposed to arts, where a great deal is dependent upon on talent, sharing and learning from the experience of other already successful individuals in the same field.

Journalism has ambitions to somehow to belong to arts; in any case it has the same grounds to be part of it. Therefore, it is quite logical that such au schools exist in our field: For example School of Pozner in Moscow, or different kinds of BBC Media School.

It is interesting to overview how journalistic education is represented and developed in Georgia.

The Department of Journalism at Tbilisi State University (TSU) should be identified as the first school of journalism in Georgia. It existed as an independent faculty for over 30 years. Its development was quite difficult, and interesting at the same time. Today, the faculty is a part of the Faculty of Social – Political Studies and has the status of a department. Within the past 15 years there were a large number of private higher education schools and universities established who were and are offering the journalistic education in one form or another at different levels. It would be impossible to list all of the schools involved in journalistic education in Georgia, but the following are the most successful ones:

- ! Tbilisi State University
- ! Media School of Caucasus University
- ! Ilia Chavchavadze Institute of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Journalism
- ! School of Journalism at Caucasus University if Social Studies
- ! Tbilisi G. Robakidze University, Faculty of Journalism
- ! Batumi State University, Journalism Division
- ! Technical University of Georgia, Faculty of Journalism
- ! Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management

At all of the above listed universities, the first two levels of journalistic education exist in different ways. In some of them, the doctor's level program is delivered as well. Currently, the parliament of Georgia is working on legislation regarding the professional schools of higher education. I would expect the possibility of having another form or model of journalistic education become present in Georgia within this legislation.

I believe that only one model would not be able to exist in Georgian educational system in the nearest future, and there will be other models that I have discussed above brought to our country, such creative writing programs, and others.

Our country is on the path towards democracy and democratic principles, and values being established and incorporated in different fields of social and political life of the society. Our educational system is developing, geared towards Bologna process. Journalistic education in Georgia is also developing, and is also searching for the process of further development, based and oriented on successful results.

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- ! Lee Strasberg Actors Studio, New York, USA
- ! Greenwich Academy – Arts and Drama, New York, USA
- ! New York Acting School headed by Mike Nichols, George Morrison and Sills, New York, USA
- ! Madison Academy – Drama, New York, USA
- ! European Film Academy, France & Italy
- ! Bristol Old Vic School Arts, UK
- ! National Academy of Drama Silvio D'Amico, Italy

2.

- ! Academy of Ballet, San Francisco, USA
- ! A. Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, Russia
- ! National Dance Academy, Italy

- ! Ballet National de Marcel, France
- ! Ballet de l'Opera National, du Rhin, Strasburg, France
- ! Allonco Dance Academy, Cuba

3.

- ! Ferenc List Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary
- ! Bartok Academy of Music, Check Republic
- ! Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland
- ! Academy of Music, Bologna, Italy
- ! Julliard Academy of Music, USA