

Runner/Junior Researcher

3 Stage Plan

If you are considering a career change, currently studying TV broadcasting or you're a recent media graduate wishing to pursue a career in the TV industry then it's time to get organised.

After you have meticulously ploughed through the MFJTV [Career Guides](#) and settled on a potential career path that suits your personality and future ambitions, it's time to start making a plan, and we're here to help you do that.

This three stage career plan is designed to break down the initial steps for gaining experience and finding paid work in the industry. Obviously everyone has varying degrees of success finding work depending on their approach and determination - so we have based this plan on our experience dealing with CVs, and feedback from companies and productions posting their requirements for candidates. This checklist should increase your chances of getting where you want to go.

Stage 1:

Experience

- Look for work experience positions
- Look for internships at production companies.
- Read the Creative Skillset [guidelines](#) that define both of the above.
- Gain a few credits as a runner on short films.
- Continue to work on student productions.
- Write stories for a local newspaper, or work on a regional radio station.
- Look to the MFJTV board every day for opportunities.
- Look at the collaborations board and work with other MFJTV members on their projects.
- Volunteer at TV and Film Festivals (Delegate registration or info points so you learn names of top industry professionals and get your face known).

Skills

- Get a driving licence.
- Get a first aid certificate.
- Practice interviewing friends and family with a dictaphone or iPhone.
- Watch TV documentaries and analyse director interviewing techniques.
- Keep a scrapbook of interesting stories from newspaper and magazine articles.
- Create a development portfolio/notebook of TV programme ideas based on stories you've put in your scrapbook.

Knowledge

- Use MFJTV CV and covering letter advice.
- Use MFJTV CV builder to help create an industry-specific CV.
- Use [The Knowledge](#) and/or [Televisual online](#) to find lists of the top UK production companies.
- Research production companies in your area that specialise in documentary and factual.
- Read *How to get a job in Television* by Elsa Sharp.
- Read *Greenlit: Developing Factual/Reality TV Ideas* by Nicola Lees
- Read http://creativeskillset.org/job_roles/308_researcher_tv
- Use MFJTV industry essentials to find training courses.
- Download the Junior Researcher Manual from MFJTV (In development)
- Read 10 Essential Tips for New Entrants (see Career Guide).
- Learn what everyone in the Editorial Department actually does.

Stage 2:

Experience

- Create a network of contacts on your phone and/or in a little black book.
- If positions become available in the production companies or daily work on location: take them.
- Continue to work on short films, and start directing/producing your own short documentaries.
- At least 3-6 TV credits as an office runner (Reality/Factual/Docu)
- Check MFJTV jobs board every day for opportunities.
- Volunteer at TV and Film Festivals (Delegate registration or info points again, or a more senior position this time)

Skills

- Able to demonstrate a professional attitude in the office.
- Adaptable when working on different productions.
- Driving licence and your own car if possible.
- Make contacts and stay in touch with them on social media/regular emails.
- Know how to research using library and internet sources.
- Take multiple directions at once and know how to prioritise those tasks.
- Update and add to your development portfolio and story idea database.

Knowledge

- Know what all the job titles in editorial development and production actually do.
- Continue to look to the resources section of MFJTV for training opportunities.
- Know the role of office runner inside out.
- Know all the terms for the kit and equipment used in documentary/factual filming and the general office lingo.
- Ask to practice cleaning/packing kit, or prepping kits to go on shoots.

Stage 3

Experience

- Work consistently for 1-2 years as a Runner/Junior Researcher.
- Write, produce and direct your own short documentaries and work on friends short films.
- Work on TV documentary or reality productions - and try to gain location experience.
- Try to get on a talent development scheme such as [Ones to Watch](#), or try pitching ideas in front of an audience at [Sheffield Documentary Festival](#).
- If you are not going down the editorial route make sure you have attached yourself to the department you wish to progress into (eg. production).

Skills

- Skills listed in the previous two stages plus a hearty work ethic and drive.
- Able to create One Sheets, brief notes, interview questions and shoot interviews when working on short films
- Able to create a schedule and work to it.
- Perfect your phone manner.
- Make sure you know your way around a basic DSLR camera and sound kit.
- Know how to use Skype, casting websites and social media to find people.
- Be prepared to share your development ideas and pitch your programme ideas when the opportunity arises at work.

Knowledge

- Look for work before the job you're currently on finishes.
- Have a network of runners, production managers and assistant producers that know who you are and what you can do.
- Keep an up-to-date database of good research resources that you can dip into if called upon to carry out urgent research tasks.
- Attend free annual Industry events such as [BVE](#) and the [Media Production Show](#) to network and listen to panel discussions and seminars.
- Have business cards printed or set up a basic personal website.
- Sign up to [TV Mole](#), to receive weekly TV development news.