Unit 1: Pre-production Techniques for the Creative Media Industries

Unit code: J/502/5694

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 5

Guided learning hours: 30

● Aim and purpose

This unit will develop learners' understanding of and skills in pre-production. The unit covers planning and resourcing requirements for production and post-production, how to locate resources and how to organise their deployment. Learners will also develop their understanding of health, safety and legal issues in relation to pre-production.

● Unit introduction

Pre-production, which mainly involves research and planning, is a vital ingredient of any successful media product. For example, the successful completion of a photographic fashion shoot for a magazine depends on locations, material and talent being available for the work to be undertaken. Successful location recording of video material depends on crew members and talent being in the right place at the right time. Good pre-production is vitally important where expenses are being incurred for people and materials and where budgets and deadlines are to be met.

Pre-production is generally undertaken by producers and their teams. A team could consist of a number of staff from location managers to set designers. All of them have a vital part to play in the production of a media product. Their work will include drawing up outline budgets and funding strategies, finding factual information, additional material and contributors, using archives, researching locations, undertaking risk assessments, and organising and coordinating logistics.

Through following this unit learners will develop an awareness that any media production operates within limitations regarding time, facilities, personnel and budget. They will learn how to identify the requirements of a media production, and how to plan for the provision of those requirements. They will also learn that successful pre-production involves ensuring that all the various elements for production are in the right place at the right time.

Additionally, the unit will enable learners to conduct production risk assessments and develop an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of producers and other media professionals.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1   Understand requirements for a specific media production

2   Be able to prepare pre-production documentation for a specific media production

3   Be able to apply pre-production planning for a specific media production.

Unit content

1 Understand requirements for a specific media production

Type of production: eg film, television, video, radio, audio, interactive media, web, computer game, print, photo-imaging

Finance: sources of finance; requirements, eg equipment, transport, talent, crew, materials, facility hire, clearances

Time: eg deadlines, availability of equipment, availability of personnel, timescales for clearances

Personnel: size of team; roles; skills and experience; resourcing; availability; costs; team or crew CVs

Facilities: eg production equipment, post-production equipment, facility houses, outsourcing; availability; costs

Materials: type, eg original materials, archive and library materials, photo-library materials, sound library materials, internet, assets, audio, script, animatics, graphics, interviews, costumes, properties, recorded music; sources; costs; clearances

Contributors: type, eg specialists, experts, talent, public; contributor biographies

Locations: identification; recces; limitations and risks, eg distance, access, cost, weather

Codes of practice and regulation: clearances, eg Mechanical Copyright Protection Society-Performing Rights Society Alliance (MCPS-PRS), model releases, location permissions; legal, eg copyright, health and safety; insurance, eg public liability, completion insurance; regulatory bodies, eg Ofcom, Press Complaints Commission (PCC), Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), Pan European Game Information (PEGI), Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), British Board of Film Classification (BBFC); trade unions, eg Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT), National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Broadcasting Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU); trade associations, eg The Independent Games Developers' Association (TIGA), Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers' Association (ELSPA), British Interactive Media Association (BIMA)

2 Be able to prepare pre-production documentation for a specific media production

Procedure: identify finance available; identify personnel needed; identify personnel available; identify resources needed; identify resources available; prepare budget; contract personnel; book resources; prepare schedules; identify health and safety implications; identify legal implications; identify risks to project

Documentation: production documentation, eg scripts, storyboards, mood boards, thumbnails, properties, contact lists, location recces; production schedules; budget; clearances; plans, eg location plans, studio plans; health and safety assessments; risk assessments; contingency plans

3 Be able to apply pre-production planning for a specific media production

Elements of production: logistics; finance; creative processes

Project management: personnel management; resource management; time management; monitoring progress; risk management; crisis management; maintaining documentation

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 outline requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production [IE]	**M1** explain in some detail and competently present requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production	**D1** comprehensively explain and present to a quality that reflects near-professional standards fully detailed requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production
P2 generate outline pre-production documentation for a specific media production with some assistance	**M2** generate competent, carefully presented and detailed pre-production documentation for a specific media production with only occasional assistance	**D2** generate thorough and comprehensively detailed pre-production documentation for a specific media production, working independently to professional expectations
P3 apply pre-production planning to a specific media production working with some assistance. [TW, SM]	**M3** apply pre-production planning to a specific media production competently with only occasional assistance.	**D3** apply pre-production planning to a specific media production to a quality that reflects near-professional standards, working independently to professional expectations.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit is designed to introduce learners to the pre-production process so that they understand the importance of careful preparation for successful production and post-production. They will also need to learn and follow the established codes of professional practice. As this is a mandatory unit teaching should be focused on the pathway being followed, and the finer detail of the content adapted accordingly.

It is intended that, after introducing learners to the basic content, this unit should be assessed through a production unit. Learners will be able to develop their pre-production skills through their work on productions done in several units and in this way they can practise their skills in pre-production any number of times. The tutor can then select the most appropriate evidence to use for assessment of this unit.

The unit could be introduced through group sessions where pre-production techniques are identified and analysed. Class exercises could include learners reviewing a range of media products in order to identify what the pre-production requirements might be for each of them. They could watch films or television programmes, list the job titles in the credits and then identify what each job role involves. Formal briefings should be used to initiate discussion and planning, leading to the development of proposals and treatments. The development of the proposal and treatment might be undertaken through another unit but the underlying detail of the requirements of planning would be identified in relation to the content of this unit.

Learners will need to be made aware of the range of constraints on their pre-production work. This might be through group discussions or individual or group investigations.

The pre-production process requires learners to use documentation to record their investigations or their planning. Tutors should use a range of pre-production document templates for this work. The range of pre-production documentation available should be determined by the tutor and the learner based on relevant industry practice. There are many different areas of the media industry using a wide range of pre-production paperwork. The tutor must ensure that the templates provided are suitable for the media products being developed by their learners.

NB: This mandatory unit has been designed so that it can be taught in the context of all the endorsed titles (or pathways) in the BTEC Nationals in Creative Media Production. If centres are unsure about how to cover or interpret any of the content in relation to a particular endorsed title they should contact Edexcel.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of teaching this unit. The assessment of this unit will ideally be based on assignments run in other units.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and unit assessment.
Introduction to pre-production: • the role of pre-production within the media production process • pre-production within various media forms.

Lectures on:
 	
• resources
 	
    ◊ money
 	
    ◊ time
 	
    ◊ personnel
 	
    ◊ facilities
 	
    ◊ locations
 	
• clearances
 	
• copyright (intellectual property)
 	
• health and safety
 	
• codes of practice and regulation.

Workshop Practical assessment of risks linked to specific locations, scripts, sequences.
Visiting speaker: producer or production manager from a recent production.
Workshop Study of pre-production documentation from an existing production.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities
Simulation exercise.

Learners create pre-production documentation using existing script, rate cards, unit costs, crew and location availability:

- templates used in centre
- equipment
- personnel
- materials
- time
- locations
- health and safety issues
- risk assessments
- post production requirements
- budgets
- schedules
- bookings.

Assessment – take responsibility for pre-production of a production taking place in connection with another unit.

Learners will

- hold a pre-production meeting
- identify requirements for the production and sources of those requirements
- create documentation
- source requirements
- carry out production
- write a report evaluating their pre-production work in the light of the production experience.

Tutorial to evaluate pre-production work.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

In order to achieve learning outcome 1 learners must identify requirements for a production and their sources. This can be done through a written report, presentation, or a structured audio or audio-visual statement.

A pre-production file, production log and personal evaluation should form the basis of the evidence for the assessment of learning outcomes 2 and 3. Learners will need to maintain a production log containing records of pre-production meetings, discussions, research and briefings. This evidence will be supported by recorded tutor observations.

Tutors should note that it is possible to combine verbal description of some elements of the content with practical demonstration of others.

For some elements of this unit, and for some learners, a formal viva voce assessment might be appropriate. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked equivalent questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Formal vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification and at least 50 per cent of such assessments must be internally verified.

All oral presentations must be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification.

Application of grading criteria

When applying the grading criteria, tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that any examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not exhaustive and the examples need not specifically be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

Pass

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve all the criteria at pass level. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

P1: learners will simply list the requirements for a specified production, giving brief indications of where or how the specified requirements will be sourced. This list may contain one or two minor omissions but will be substantially complete. It will not contain any explanation of why the requirements are as they are and there will be only minimal consideration of codes of practice or regulatory issues.

P2: documentation will cover all the procedures relevant to the type of production being undertaken, but will be brief and lacking in detail. It should be organised sufficiently well for any particular document to be found with reasonable ease.

P3: learners will apply their planning in such a way that it enables the completion of the product. It should be noted that the quality of the resulting product is irrelevant to the assessment of this unit.

P2 and P3: pass grade learners will need frequent assistance and support, though they will take note of and make use of this help when it is given. If they are in frequent need of such help but fail to make positive use of it they should not be considered for a pass grade for this unit.

Merit

To achieve a merit grade, learners must achieve all the pass and all the merit grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

M1: learners will show good understanding of pre-production requirements for the proposed production and these requirements will be set out in some detail. Some thoughtful consideration will be given to relevant codes of practice and regulatory issues. Learners will be able to explain why the requirements identified are important and will give reasonably well-detailed explanations of how they will be sourced.

M2: documentation will cover all the procedures relevant to the type of production being undertaken in some detail. It will be presented carefully and neatly, and will be organised clearly.

M3: learners will demonstrate that they can undertake pre-production work that enables the efficient completion of the product. It should be noted that the quality of the resulting product is irrelevant to the assessment of this unit.

M2 and M3: learners will need little assistance, though typically they will still need some support when dealing with more complex matters. Like the pass grade learner, they will respond positively to any help given.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction grade, learners must achieve all the pass, all the merit and all the distinction grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

D1: learners will show an excellent understanding of the requirements for the proposed production and will be able to explain fully why each element is required. Learners will give detailed explanations of how these requirements will be sourced. They will give full consideration to codes of practice and regulatory issues. Fuller and more extensive explanation and a higher standard of presentation will discriminate between this grade and the merit.

D2: documentation will be comprehensive and thorough with a detailed breakdown of all procedures relevant to the type of production being undertaken. It will be very well-organised and presented to a standard that approaches professional practice.

D3: learners will be able to apply their pre-production planning to the proposed production to a standard that approaches professional practice, for example, ensuring that all the resources are in the right place at the right time. Their planning will enable the successful completion of the product, though it should be noted that the quality of the resulting product is irrelevant to the assessment of this unit.

D2 and D3: learners will be capable of using their own initiative, will not need constant support or supervision, will give the work their full commitment, work positively and cooperatively with others, and meet deadlines. In other words, they will have the kind of self-management skills that would be expected of them in a professional context. Note also that this criterion should not be taken to mean that learners do not seek advice or that they work without discussing things with their tutor, but rather that they are not dependent upon the support of others and that when they take advice they weigh it carefully for themselves.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1 P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Dependant on the production assignment	For example, take responsibility for pre-production in the role of production coordinator for the production of a short single camera drama.	• Portfolio of pre-production documentation. • Production log. • Self-evaluation of the production process. • Assessor observation.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite:

Level 2	Level 3
All production units	All production units

There are opportunities to relate the work done for this unit to Skillset National Occupational Standards as follows:

- X1 Contribute to good working relationships
- X2 Ensure your own actions reduce risks to Health and Safety
- X3 Conduct an assessment of risks in the workplace
- X1 Contribute to good working relationships.

Essential resources

Learners will need access to a well-resourced library/media centre which has media contacts books, rate cards and access to the internet, telephone and email. If possible, this should be within a production office or workshop. Learners will need access to rate cards for facilities and crew and to a set of pre-production documentation templates, including production schedules and logging sheets. A realistic equipment loan system will enable 'virtual' budgeting. The use of 'credits' or 'production money notes' may allow learners to understand the need for careful budget control.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners will benefit greatly from contact with industry practitioners who have recent experience in codes of practice and regulation, archive research, and intellectual property matters.

A visiting speaker such as a producer or production manager from a recent production will also be very helpful, as will an opportunity to study pre-production documentation from an existing production.

Skillset's National Occupational Standards in Production also provide useful information on the various job roles in a production crew, as well as giving an overview of the knowledge, understanding and skills required – www.skillset.org/careers.

Further general information on work-related learning can be found at the following websites:

● www.aimhighersw.ac.uk/wbl.htm – work-based learning guidance

● www.businesslink.gov.uk – local, regional business links

● www.nebpn.org – National Education and Business Partnership Network

● www.vocationallearning.org.uk – Learning and Skills Network

● www.warwick.ac.uk/wie/cei – Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick – work experience and workplace learning frameworks.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Baylis P, Freedman A, Procter N et al – *BTEC Level 3 National Creative Media Production, Student Book* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 978-1846906725

Baylis P, Freedman A, Procter N et al – *BTEC Level 3 National Creative Media Production, Teaching Resource Pack* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 978-1846907371

Chandler H – *The Game Production Handbook, 2nd Edition* (Charles River Media, 2006) ISBN 978-1934015407

England E and Finney A – *Managing Multimedia: Project Management for Web and Convergent Media, Book 1: People and Processes, 3rd Edition* (Addison Wesley, 2001) ISBN 978-0201728989

England E and Finney A – *Managing Multimedia: Project Management for Web and Convergent Media, Book 2: Technical Issues, 3rd Edition* (Addison Wesley, 2001) ISBN 978-0201728996

Gates R – *Production Management for Film and Video, 3rd Edition* (Focal Press, 1999) ISBN 978-0240515533

Kindem G and Musburger R – *Introduction to Media Production: From Analog to Digital, 2nd Edition* (Focal Press, 2001) ISBN 978-0240804088

Millerson G – *Video Production Handbook* (Focal, 2008) ISBN 978-0240802398

Mitchell L – *Production Management for Television* (Routledge, 2009) ISBN 978-0415424813

Roberts-Breslin J – *Making Media: Foundations of Sound and Image Production, 2nd Edition* (Focal Press, 2003) ISBN 978-0240809076

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/dna/filmnetwork/Filmmakingguide – *BBC information about film making*

www.bectu.co.uk – *roles in the media industries*

www.celtx.com – *free pre-production software*

www.primary-film-focus.co.uk/filmpreproduction.html – *information about film production techniques*

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	investigating requirements for production in the media industries
	identifying resources required for a production
Team workers	applying pre-production planning to a group-based media production
	taking a role within a group production
Self-managers	taking responsibility for implementing a pre-production plan
	taking responsibility for tasks which are crucial to the success of a group project.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	finding creative solutions to identifying and sourcing requirements
Reflective learners	evaluating the success of the pre-production process for a project
Effective participators	taking part in a production which responds to or benefits the community.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching materials and resources for pre-production
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	presenting reports on pre-production techniques
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	using spreadsheets within production management
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: ● text and tables ● images ● numbers ● records	presenting production proposals and progress review of pre-production work designing sets, lighting and shot lists designing floor plans
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	preparing reports on pre-production techniques
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	producing schedules, budgets and call sheets for a production
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	planning schedules and budgets that fall within the resources available and analysing costs for materials and resources
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in meetings and presenting pre-production information to others
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching the techniques and conventions of pre-production work
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing treatments, scripts, schedules, and reports on pre-production techniques.