

Unit 2: Communication Skills for Creative Media Production

Unit code:	Y/600/6609
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	5
Guided learning hours:	30

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to ensure that learners are able to communicate effectively in creative media production contexts in writing and orally.

● Unit introduction

This unit aims to improve the functional communication skills of learners and should be taught in production contexts through other mandatory and optional units. The unit not only relates to wider communication skills as a whole, which are an essential part of everyday life, but also specifically targets skills that learners can expect to use on a regular basis within the creative media sector such as pitching ideas, writing proposals and constructing reports. They will therefore develop their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas through pitches, proposals and reports to a range of audiences using appropriate modes of address and forms of technology. Learners will also develop skills in checking and proof-reading written materials.

Through this unit they will learn how to select from and summarise information gained from sources when conducting research for assignments or productions.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to extract information from written sources
- 2 Be able to create a report in a media production context
- 3 Be able to pitch a media production proposal using appropriate technology.

Unit content

1 Be able to extract information from written sources

Written sources: eg books, journals, websites, magazines, newspapers, handouts

Reading: with concentration; skim-reading: scanning; using index; using word search; using phrase search

Extract information: eg write notes, summarise, highlight text, annotate document, underline passages, copy and paste extracts

2 Be able to create a report in a media production context

Create report: content; structure; linguistic register; summary; index; presentation; visuals, eg illustrations, graphics, charts, graphs

Contexts: eg for client, for employer, market assessment, market analysis, product analysis, self-evaluation

Revision: proof-reading (spelling, punctuation, grammar, clarity of expression, structure of content); electronic checks (spelling, punctuation, grammar, thesaurus)

3 Be able to pitch a media production proposal using appropriate technology

Proposal: outline of idea; costs; requirements, eg locations, talent, crew; audience; USP (unique selling point)

Technology: presentation software, eg PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Presentation, SlideRocket, Adobe Acrobat; slide design; transitions; visual aids, eg animations, video clips, audio clips, clip art, charts, graphs, screen shots, web pages; copyright issues

Address: clarity of voice; tone of voice; register, eg authoritative, humorous; clarity of expression; use of technical language; maintaining engagement, eg eye contact, reinforcement of points, reference to screen

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 use appropriate techniques to extract relevant information from written sources	M1 use appropriate techniques to extract information from written sources with some precision	D1 use appropriate techniques to extract comprehensive information from written sources
P2 present a media production report which conveys relevant information [IE]	M2 present a structured and detailed media production report which conveys information and explains conclusions with clarity	D2 present a well-structured and substantial media production report which conveys information with precise exemplification and justifies conclusions with supporting arguments
P3 review reports to make changes with occasional beneficial effects [RL]	M3 review reports to make changes with frequent beneficial effects	D3 review reports to make changes with consistently beneficial effects
P4 deploy and manage appropriate technology to pitch a media production proposal [SM]	M4 deploy and manage technology to pitch a media production proposal effectively and with some imagination	D4 deploy and manage technology to pitch a media production proposal with creativity and flair and to near-professional standards
P5 employ appropriate forms of address in a media production pitch to communicate ideas. [CT]	M5 employ forms of address in a media production pitch to communicate ideas effectively.	D5 employ forms of address in a media production pitch with flair to communicate ideas with impact.

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 encourage and develop sound communications skills amongst learners and as such will need to be placed in a vocational context. It is recommended that communication skills be tracked within as many other units as possible to ensure a good coverage of the learning outcomes and to allow learners to achieve as highly as possible across the grading criteria. Attention should be given to teaching communication and formal presentation skills in order to help learners achieve this unit, but the assessment of the unit will not require the production of unit-specific evidence as this can be derived from any units in the programme in which learners are required to communicate their ideas or other information, whether formally through a presentation to an audience or informally to their tutors or a client.

The programme of suggested assignments and outline learning plan, whilst not exhaustive, detail and highlight areas in which teaching of the unit can take place. Practical units will offer numerous opportunities for learners to plan, prepare and give oral presentations in a vocational context. There will also be opportunities for written reports, assignments and essays to be produced within the optional and mandatory units which will allow for the use of written communication, evaluative techniques and reviewing processes.

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.

Class discussions outlining the need for good communication skills:

- oral communication
- personal interaction
- written communications
- presentation techniques
- annotation and note-taking techniques.

Paired exercise in note taking techniques:

- sourcing information in different formats
- making relevant copies in preparation for annotation and note-taking
- annotating work using relevant formats and techniques
- taking notes
- checking through partner's work sharing ideas and information.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities

Writing techniques:

- report writing
- essay writing
- constructing production paperwork
- writing copy
- revision techniques.

Reviewing production work – written and oral:

- looking at how to use correct phrases and terminology depending on medium
- discussing evaluative processes and techniques
- summarising and reviewing own processes and productions
- reviewing and feeding back to others on their work.

Understanding presentation techniques:

- discussing possible presentation techniques
- reviewing recorded presentations
- paired exercise practising presentation techniques.

Presentations:

- to clients
- to tutors
- to peer group.

Preparation of work done in response to client briefs (contextualised in other units):

- recording ideas generation
- preparing proposals
- preparing pitches
- giving pitches.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

Assessment evidence for individual criteria need not come from the same work for a single unit and should be drawn from as many different areas as possible to allow for greater learner achievement overall. The final grade awarded for this unit should reflect a learner's highest achievement across the whole programme. For example, written communication skills can be effectively covered through units that require learners to produce such items as newspaper or magazine copy or final articles for publications. Similarly written skills can also be utilised when learners are writing assignments, pitches, proposals, treatments etc.

Evidence of achievement for learning outcome 1 will take the form of print-outs and copies of the work from which information has been extracted with evidence of annotations being made throughout. There could also be some form of write up that outlines and highlights the relevance and purpose of the research undertaken.

Evidence of achievement of learning outcome 2 and 3 can be recorded in a number of ways as there are many forms of documentation that can be used for written assignment work including, reports, articles,

leaflets, flyers and other relevant formats. It is also important that evidence is provided to show that relevant spell checking and proof-reading has been carried out.

Evidence of achievement of learning outcomes 4 and 5 will, when assessing oral presentations, most likely be drawn from tutor observation of learners working on client pitches. Such observations must be carefully recorded, and wherever possible final assessment should be based on a number of observations undertaken by different tutors. Written materials, such as printed copies of presentation slides, can also provide assessment evidence, as can audio or audio-visual copies of pitches. Some learners might wish to experiment with alternative ways of pitching, using, for example, video diary formats or web-based presentations. Provided this enables them to produce suitable evidence for their assessment against criteria 4 and 5, such approaches should not be discouraged.

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: when conducting research for assignments and reports learners will be able to select and review information from different sources such as books, the internet and appropriate materials that will aid them in their work. Information will be selected from these sources with some attention to its suitability and relevance to the work being undertaken.

P2: learners will produce a report in the appropriate context that contains information relevant to the topic being studied. Their use of language will be sound but somewhat basic and restricted more to description rather than exemplification and may contain some basic errors of spelling. Similarly, evaluative work will be basic and tend more towards descriptions of decisions and processes such as, 'for this task we decided to work in a group of two, which I was happy with as I like Jan and we get on.'

P3: work will have been reviewed and revised using both a grammar and spell checker as well as being individually proof-read. As a result, spelling errors will have been corrected but there may still be mistakes such as 'where' for 'were', 'super' for 'supper' or 'their' for 'there' that have not been picked up. Work will also still contain some basic punctuation and grammatical errors where learners have not adequately reviewed their work.

P4: choices of presentation technology for a pitch will be generally sound and appropriate use will be made of that technology throughout. Learners at this level will tend to choose more simplified software such as PowerPoint and though visual aids or graphics will be unsophisticated and typically not be clearly linked to the content of the pitch they will nonetheless provide the basic relevant information.

P5: in assessing 'appropriateness' the context of the pitch needs to be taken into account. For this grade it is sufficient for learners to understand and use the right tone, style and register for the occasion.

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: when conducting research for assignments and reports learners will be able to select and review relevant and appropriate materials from a variety of different sources such as books, magazines, articles and the internet. Information extracted from these sources will be focused on the purpose of the research and will be recorded and summarised with precision and accuracy.

M2: learners will produce written work that contains information highly relevant to the topic being studied. Their use of language will be good, going beyond mere description and providing more detailed exemplification. Similarly, evaluative work will be less descriptive and focus more on discussion of decisions and processes such as, 'for this task we decided to work in a group of two, which I was happy with as I like Jan and he always takes a positive attitude to work.'

M3: again all work will have been reviewed and revised using both a grammar and spell checker as well as being individually proof-read. As a result, spelling errors will have been corrected and only minor errors will remain. Work will occasionally contain punctuation and grammatical errors where learners have failed to adequately review their work.

M4: the presentation technology selected will also be generally appropriate and will be utilised correctly, containing relevant text and supporting materials such as web pages, screen-shots, clip art, animations, graphs and charts, though this illustrative material may not always be explicitly linked to the pitch. The structure of presentations will be sound, though transitions may sometimes be used inappropriately.

M5: when undertaking oral presentations learners' language skills will be generally good and they will be able to express intentions and ideas clearly; there may, however, be occasions when they are less clear. Register will be appropriate to the situation or audience and engagement of the audience will be generally good, with only occasional lapses. Attention will be paid to any questions the client or tutor may ask them although these may not always be fully responded to. Overall language skills will be adequate for learners to communicate ideas and deal with more complex material.

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: when conducting research learners will select and review highly relevant and well-targeted materials from a wide variety of different sources such as books, magazines, articles, leaflets, journals, television and radio programmes and the internet. Detailed and precisely focused information will be selected from these sources and will be fully and precisely recorded. The information extracted will reflect a thorough understanding of its relevance and suitability.

D2: in written work learners will always choose an appropriate format. Sentence structure will be very good and show increasing complexity. Evaluative work will be of a high standard and contain detailed and precise exemplification, with justification of decisions and processes such as, 'when we first reviewed our product with the focus group we found that we received some negative feedback regarding our use of generic codes. In particular over three quarters of respondents associated the iron bar used as a murder weapon with a mindless thug rather than an intelligent psychopath. Because of this we decided to change the murder

weapon to a sword stick. This suggests cunning as it is easy to conceal and then produce suddenly in front of the victim. We also thought it had a bit more class to it.'

D3: effective use of appropriate software and proof-reading will mean that work contains very few or no spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

D4: the presentation technology selected will be appropriate and will be utilised with a high level of competence, containing highly relevant text and supporting materials such as web pages, screen shots, clip art, animations, graphs and charts which are explicitly linked to the content of the pitch. Slide shows will be well structured and fluent, transitions being used to support the flow rather than being a distraction from it.

D5: personal communication skills will be consistently good and when undertaking oral presentations, learners' language skills will be of a high standard. They will be able to express themselves clearly using a wide range of vocabulary, speak with clarity using a good vocabulary and deploy that vocabulary with accuracy and confidence. Register will always be appropriate to the situation or audience and learners will engage and maintain their audience's attention throughout the presentation. Language skills will be adequate for learners to communicate complex ideas and material. Listening skills will also be good with learners showing a readiness to take in and respond fully to questions.

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	Undertake Research for an Assignment or Project	Conduct research for a defined purpose and extract relevant information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research log. • Collated research notes.
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Complete a Report	Write up results of research or complete a project report and revise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of research in a report with drafts. • Final written assignment and drafts.
P4, M4, D4 P5, M5, D5	Respond to a Client Brief and Pitch Ideas	Produce a proposal and pitch in response to a client brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal. • Pitch slides, speaker's notes and handouts. • Recording of pitch. • Tutor 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 links with all the units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite.

Essential resources

Spelling and grammar checkers should be available on the software packages being used, as well as formatting and page layout facilities. Centres should provide standard forms for treatments, scripts, location recces, risk assessments, and production and research logs for learners to work with.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local media organisations and agencies.

Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media sector, has a substantial section of its website dedicated to careers, including job descriptions – www.skillset.org/careers/.

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 978-846907371

Bradbury A – *Successful Presentation Skills, 3rd Edition* (Koogan Page, 2006) ISBN 978-0749445607

Condrill, J and Bough, B – *101 Ways to Improve Your Communication Skills Instantly* (GoalMinds Inc, 1999) ISBN 978-0966141498

Cottrel S – *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) ISBN 978-403996855

Hargie, O – *The Handbook of Communication Skills, 2nd Edition* (Routledge, 1997) ISBN 978 0415123266

Jeffries L and Mikulecky B – *More Reading Power: Reading for Pleasure, Comprehension Skills, Thinking Skills, Reading Faster* (Pearson, 2003) ISBN 978-0130611994

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills – online resources for practising communication skills

www.learndirect.co.uk – government website with links to online courses

www.mindtools.com – free online tools which help you discover and develop essential communication skills and 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	presenting information orally and in writing using reasoned arguments and evidence, and providing supporting evidence planning and carrying out research which involves gathering information from written sources
Creative thinkers	generating ideas for pitches asking questions in production contexts to extend their thinking
Reflective learners	presenting ideas, inviting feedback and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism communicating ideas for different audiences using oral presentations and written formats setting goals and success criteria for their development, reviewing their own progress and acting on the outcomes
Self-managers	organising time and resources to create effective reports or pitches responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed.

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 ...
Team workers	providing constructive support and feedback to others during focus groups and presentations.

● 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	using ICT to plan and prepare oral and written presentations in a variety of formats
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	using the internet to conduct research and find content for presentations and written work
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	storing research information, screen-shots and web pages
Troubleshoot	resolving basic search errors without assistance
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using the internet, CD ROMs, PowerPoint and other ICT-based sources to research and produce presentations, pitches and treatments
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	presenting research results appropriately using graphs, charts, screen-shots, clip art and animations
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	collating research effectively to suit purpose
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	using ICT to present information in a variety of formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pitch • treatment • mind maps • PowerPoint
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	using email and messenger to communicate effectively with client, tutor and peers
Mathematics	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	checking and evaluating information used in charts and graphs

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	making valid contributions to class discussions and focus groups communicating effectively to audience during oral presentations
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	gathering and annotating research from a variety of sources proof-reading and spell checking documents before submission
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing work in a relevant written format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essays • reports • PowerPoint • production documentation.