

film and television production

BTEC National Diploma

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Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



What is this subject about?

The BTEC National Diploma in Film and TV production is a course designed for young, creative producers who have their eye firmly set on a career in the creative industries. It is a nationally recognised technical and vocational qualification designed to provide the next generation of TV and filmmakers with a thorough understanding of industry techniques, trends and practice. This is achieved through the continual assessment of practical work and working to set briefs. The Diploma is the equivalent of two A Levels and involves the completion of ten units over two years.

What will I study in the two years?

There are a range of units covered that allow you to develop a professional understanding of the industry and the skills you will need to be successful in your future career. Through these units you will be developing practical capabilities in lighting, sound recording, cinematography and editing. You will also work both individually and in crews to script, storyboard, produce and edit documentary, music video film and television products. You will have the opportunity to practice multi-camera production techniques using industry-standard facilities.

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed throughout the two years by a number of coursework assignments, where students complete a series of tasks set in a work related scenario. Many of these coursework assignments are centre-assessed and then externally moderated by the exam board. Coursework assignments may include short reports, PowerPoints, presentations, portfolios and practical films and texts.

There is no external examination on this course, but you will demonstrate the skills you have developed through your coursework units to create a TV or film product responding to a brief, set by the examination board. This is externally assessed.

Skills developed and areas of study

You will gain academic, vocational, technical and practical skills. You will be taught how to critically analyse the media and learn about the practices and functions of the media industries focusing on film and TV production. You will be taught practical skills such as desktop publishing, digital photography, video, film making and animation work. You will learn how to research information effectively through the development of your independent learning skills. It is our expectation that industry related experience will form part of the course.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Progression to further qualifications, such as degrees in media production-related subjects, is a likely route. Recent alumni have progressed to degrees at Bournemouth, Bournemouth Arts, Ravensbourne, Portsmouth, UCA and Southampton Solent. Students have also been able to take short courses with the British Film Industry in short film production, documentary and animation.

This qualification also enables students to enter employment at a trainee level/apprenticeship, and the work-based learning component of the course equips them with relevant skills and experience to apply to workplaces. Possible stepping stones in to future production careers might include Technician, Researcher, Runner or Production Assistant.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry requirements that the College requires, you need to achieve a minimum of:

- Grade 4 in GCSE English Language
- Grade 4 in GCSE Media Studies is required to study the Diploma (if the subject is taken)

You will also benefit from having a good level of creativity as there is a strong creative component, and an interest in using filmmaking technology and software.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department has strong links with Southampton Solent University and University for the Creative Arts and other educational providers. We regularly seek guidance on how best to advise our students about progression opportunities. We also offer support and enrichment workshops, invite in guest speakers and enable students to build more of a practical portfolio during Wider Skills Week. At the end of the second year we celebrate student achievement with our own Esher Oscars.

All students taking this course will have the opportunity to take a work experience placement at the end of their first year of study.

Subject combination advice:

We expect students who are taking this course to be committed to a media-related degree or employment, and so in many cases a complimentary subject such as Film Studies, Music, Graphic Design, Art or Photography may be appropriate. However, the course is also enriched by subjects such as English, History, IT, Sociology or Psychology.

What are the main differences between and BTEC media courses, Media A Level and Film A Level?

The focus in Film and Television Production for the learner is the acquisition of professional media skills which are theoretically underpinned and this is a 'hands on', practical course. The dominant learning paradigm is to 'learn by doing'. The sharpest contrast between the two courses lies in the assessment of work.

With A Level, Media Studies looks at a range of media texts including music videos, radio, TV programmes, webpages, advertising etc. Film Studies only looks at films and requires a passion for watching a range of texts including black and white, independent and foreign language films.