

Course outline: Diploma in Production Management for Film and Television

This unique 13-month diploma course aims to give you the skills and capabilities for a successful future career as a Production Manager. It is delivered in partnership with the BBC and with the support of the Production Guild.

This course aims to provide you with the skills, knowledge and experience to become a highly employable production employee in the film and television industries. The emphasis will be very much on the practical application of these competencies, delivered through seminars and workshops with key industry experts and is enhanced by the opportunities to embed this learning in valuable work experience placements that will form a solid part of your CV and prepare you for the job market before graduation. You will primarily learn through personal practical experience on a series of varied film and television productions, collaborating with other NFTS specialisms to produce short films and television shows. It is expected that you will contribute to the production management of eight to nine productions through the duration of your course, with all production costs met by the School.

By the end of the course you will have evidence of work in:

- pre-production paperwork;
- booking and negotiating with crew, cast, equipment, resources and facilities;
- practical experience on a location based set and in a TV studio including
- managing crew and the production team;
- production logistics;
- managing and maintaining budgets and cost reporting.

Course Elements

The course consists of a logical progression of classes, practical workshops and modules, taught and overseen by industry professionals run over three terms starting in September each year. Teaching sessions usually takes place during Monday to Friday within 9.30am until 5.30pm timeframe.

Knowledge is imparted and experience gained through workshops and production experience. You will compile a personal folder (part of your Graduation Portfolio) of written work submitted during the course and your final assessment will be based on this as well as your performance in your Progress Reviews. Please see the sections on Assessment Criteria and Assessment and Final Classification below for more information on how you will be assessed throughout the course.

Core workshops taught to all students

- Health & Safety and First Aid;
- Production logistics, and paperwork;
- Budgeting, scheduling and cost reporting;
- How to use industry relevant software, including Movie Magic and Final Draft;
- Legal requirements and compliance;
- Contract and copyright requirements;
- Managing fiction, animation, documentary and TV productions;
- Post-Production processes and delivery;
- Sustainable production processes and Albert Carbon Calculator;
- Working in the industry and being a freelancer.

Induction and Introduction to the Diploma (Term 1)

A series of seminars and practical workshops form an introduction to the School, to the Production Manager's role, the roles within the production department, as well as other heads of department within film and television. Compulsory training in First Aid and Health & Safety prepares students for the practical productions ahead. These introduction workshops and seminars provide many opportunities to meet tutors and students from across the school in preparation for the TV, film and documentary productions in Term One. As paperwork and logistical planning form a large part of production management, a number of seminars and workshops are provided to prepare you for the productions.

Practical workshops delivered alongside the Assistant Directors & Floor Managers, Script Supervisors, and Sounds Recordists, focus on set protocol on a drama set. You rotate through the various departments of a film set and gain hands on experience working in a variety of different roles e.g. boom operator, camera assistant and gaffer.

A similar workshop in the TV Studio provides you with practical experience of a multi-camera television show, with hands-on training in the professional standard TV Gallery and on the studio floor.

Modules

Term One

First Year Film productions (assessed module)

This is a collaborative module which brings together students across all departments to produce a short fiction film shot on S16mm film over a four-days on location within two hours of Beaconsfield.

First Year Film (FYF) is the first opportunity for the MA students to join together and make a film from a script they have developed. The Production Management (PM) students join in late pre-production and are assigned roles as either Production Coordinator (PC) or Production Assistant (PA), reporting

to the student Producer who takes on the full responsibility of the production and manages the production team.

The PC and PA roles are integral to the organization of the shoot and they support the Producer with the logistical planning and preparation of essential paperwork.

FYF is a chance for you, as a newly joined PM student, to see the working of a fiction film up close, and to become positive and useful member of a production team.

Documentary Question Film productions (assessed module)

This is a collaborative film-making module with the Documentary Directors and Sound Recordists, which begins with the Director identifying a question about something that intrigues them. The short film (approx. 20 minutes) will be their attempt to arrive at an answer.

You join the Directors in the later stages of research and provide production support throughout pre-production and production, working as a Production Manager (PM). Sometimes you will be required to help with researching ideas and helping source possible contributors. This is a good opportunity for you to work closely with Directors and see the creative challenges at first hand.

The documentary may be shot in the UK or overseas, and across multiple locations, it is filmed over a period of three weeks, with a small crew consisting of the Location Sound Recordist and Director.

5pm Show TV productions (assessed module)

The 5pm Show is a series of five magazine shows recorded live in the NFTS TV studio at 5pm each evening. You work closely with the Directing and Producing TV Entertainment students who provide the format for the series, and the scripts for each individual show.

This is a collaborative module with the students from TV Entertainment, Camera, Sound & Vision Mixing (CSVM) and Assistant Directing & Floor Managing (ADFM), Script Supervisor, and the Location Sound Recording courses. The ten TV Entertainment students will be divided up into Producer/Director teams, each team will have two allocated PM students to production manage the show. The other PMs will be available to offer additional production support.

Planning is a key part of this module, you must also adhere to a demanding production schedule with regards to casting presenters and designing the set, and work inside an environment where decision making is fast and furious as the TX deadline gets closer. This module is designed to allow you to gain experience managing a tight budget, arranging and implementing the logistics of a shoot, working to tight deadlines and under the pressure of a live show environment.

Term Two

Digi Fiction productions (assessed module)

You will work as PMs on these films, with the Fiction Directors, Producing, ADFMs, Cinematography, Location Sound Recording, Assistant Camera, and post production students, to produce a 20-minute short fiction film shot on a digital format over four days.

Unlike First Year Film, the Producers will not be involved in physical production processes, so you will be responsible for production on these films. The Producer's role will be as development executive during development, guiding and providing supportive commentary; but it is not anticipated that they will lead the line production process of the shoot itself.

There will be two PM students allocated to each production, you will divide the workload depending on the nature of the film project and be jointly responsible for the Production Management. You will lead the production process and be in control of the cost reporting throughout. Attention will be paid to the wrapping of floats and preparation of an accurate cost report.

Post Production & Delivery

A detailed workshop on post production routes for film and television from editing through to delivery. Using practical exercises and case studies, the tutor will introduce you to budgeting and scheduling for post-production and the delivery requirements for broadcasters and film distributors. Opportunities for you to attend edits and have a half day workshop in the Sound Dubbing Theatre form part of the workshop, embedding a creative understanding of the workflow and processes of post.

Terms One, Two and Three

Budgeting & Scheduling (assessed module)

A multi-part module focusing on the creative, logistical and technical aspects of scheduling and budgeting using the industry standard Movie Magic software.

This module incorporates two practical workshops, the first workshop is delivered over 7 days, and starts with breaking down a short film script provided by the tutor. The resources required are scheduled and then a budget created using a set of parameters and assumptions. You will be given licenses for the Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling software and training on these is provided throughout the workshops.

A second workshop delivered over four days, by a professional line producer, focusses on a larger scale film or TV drama case study.

During the course you will also gain further experience budgeting on the NFTS productions.

Health & Safety

During the Introduction workshops, you will complete the Screen Skills 'Production Safety Passport' accredited course delivered by 1st Option Safety Group.

In addition to this, you will also be trained to assess production risks and implement suitable and sufficient risk management strategies and risk assessments. Further training forms part of the practical productions throughout the course and you are assessed on the H&S plan and Risk Assessments. You are expected to adhere to the NFTS Health & Safety Policy at all times and implement this into your production H&S strategy.

A further one-day workshop with 1st Options introduces the legal and practical requirements of more ambitious and higher budget shoots using case studies and exercises.

An important part of the course is a one-day First Aid training programme, which will provide you with the 'Emergency First Aid Responder' qualification.

Applied Skills for a Sustainable Screen Industry

The NFTS is one of the founding partners of the BAFTA albert Education Partnership and is committed to developing and implementing sustainable production methods. The module is delivered over two sessions and includes: the science and global impact of climate change; an overview on international, national and industry action; carbon foot-printing the industry's negative impact; sustainable production solutions; creating content with a strategic environmental purpose; use of the industry standard *albert carbon footprint tool*.

You will be expected to develop your sustainable production knowledge and implement this throughout the diploma, with your *albert carbon calculations* forming part of your Graduation portfolio paperwork.

Terms Two and Three

Graduation Productions (assessed module)

This is a collaborative module with students on the Producing, Assistant Directing & Floor Managing, Directing Fiction/Directing Animation/Directing Documentary/Directing & Producing for TV Entertainment, Directing Commercials, Screenwriting, Cinematography, Assistant Camera, Production Design, Location Management, and Location Sound Recording courses, in which a short film or TV show is produced and delivered within strict parameters.

- Documentary Graduation Film (Term 2 & 3)
- Graduation Fiction Film (Term 3)
- TV Graduation Project (Term 3)
- Animation Graduation Film (Term 3)
- Commercials (Term 3) may be available in addition

From March through to the end of the course in September, you will work as a Production Manager and Production Coordinator on a number of Graduation Productions as listed above and these will form the base of your individual Graduation Production Portfolio. You will decide your portfolio with consultation from the Head of Department and then assemble and execute the productions.

There are four main different genres to work on:

- Summer Fiction Films (4 weeks' prep, 2-week shoot)
- Television Entertainment Shows (4 weeks' prep, 1-week shoot)
- Documentary Films (part time over a period of 12-15 weeks)
- Animation Films (part time from March until September)

Each student's Graduation Portfolio is made up of a number of significant productions from different genres, typically Production Managing one major production (either Fiction or TV) and also one of the Documentary or Animation films. In addition, you will also be expected to work as Production Coordinator on other productions. For example, a Production Manager of a Fiction film might also work as Production Coordinator on a TV project.

Decisions about which projects are assigned are on a negotiation basis between yourself and the tutor and are also dependent on the timing of productions and their requirements.

You will have a specific schedule determined by the shooting dates for each of your portfolio productions and throughout the module you will be expected to work on multiple productions simultaneously - usually wrapping a production whilst another is in early pre-production. Animation and Documentaries are longer running and often overlap, but the workload is less intense.

Other Components of the Diploma

Meet the Industry

You will meet numerous professionals, visiting tutors, alumni and lecturers from a wide range of industry backgrounds throughout the course during workshops, seminars, and on productions. Where possible case studies and specific meetings are used to ground your learning in an industry context. Workshops covering networking, how to get a job in production, interview training and CV preparation, and how to work as a freelancer, prepare you for work in the industry.

A full day's training with a team of BBC production and talent team members provide interview and CV training, with 1-1 sessions for individual and tailored feedback and support.

Optional Productions

In addition to the productions that are mandatory during the year, there are often many opportunities to work on additional student projects, including Games, and PM students are encouraged to do so when time permits with the Head of Production Management's consent.

Work Experience

Each student should aim to broaden their industry network and undertake some work experience during the course, or if the schedule does not allow then this can be done at the end of the course and will form part of the exit procedure. Suitable work experience should test the skills and capabilities you have gained whilst on the course. By the final assessment you should have completed approximately 5 days or more of relevant work experience. This is not formally assessed but you will be asked to provide a self-assessment to outline your learning and self-reflection.