

## **Course outline: Diploma in Factual Development and Production**

### **Module 1: The Factual Commissioners**

Understanding the different needs of factual commissioners is fundamental to the successful development and production of factual programmes. In this module we're going to review the factual output of some of the biggest commissioners of factual programmes to discover what 'makes' a factual programme on the BBC, ITV, Netflix, Channel 4, Channel 5 etc. *How are they different?* We'll discuss current trends in factual programming in the UK and US with reference to notable series; see how recent innovations in factual programming have been informed by other genre, advances in technology and the rise of the SVODs; weigh the importance of factual programmes in the inter-channel battle for audiences and review their scheduling and the ratings they achieve.

This module will feature contributions from channel commissioners who can account for the sensibilities of their channels/audiences. We'll also look at the online opportunities for factual content; see how producers have successfully embraced its potential and discuss the creative and commercial challenges it poses for traditional producers/broadcasters. At the end of this module, students should be able to deconstruct the key signatures of factual programmes on each of the featured channels – an insight that will prove crucial when they come to explore the development of programme ideas for these channels in the next module...

### **Module 2: Developing and Pitching Factual Programmes**

Where do ideas come from, and how best to develop them and present them to commissioners? In this module we're going to review the process of developing, pitching and ultimately selling factual programmes to broadcasters. We'll explore different ways of generating and formatting programme ideas through a series of brainstorming workshops; learn how to research and write programme proposals; weigh the importance of taster tapes and other supporting materials; discuss the contribution onscreen talent can make to the development process and explore how to successfully pitch your ideas to commissioners. At the end of this module, students will have devised, developed and created a programme proposal and pitched to TV executive.

### **Module 3: Pre-Production**

In this module we begin to plot the transition from script to screen. We'll review the various commercial arrangements that producers and broadcasters enter into and the programme tariffs that attach to different types of factual programme and slots. We'll deconstruct budgets and production schedules and review the varied paperwork that documents the production of a factual programme (call sheets, shooting scripts, risk assessments, access and location agreements, release forms,

shot logs etc.). These sessions will provide students with invaluable insights into the commercial aspects of factual programme production and the legal and editorial obligations of the producer.