

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 and is delivered in partnership with the BBC.

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 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;
- delivery paperwork.

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 from 9.30am until 5.30pm.

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 (production paperwork) submitted during the course and your final assessment will be based on this as well as your performance in your Progress Reviews.

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 scripted, animation, factual and unscripted 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 Production Management (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

The following NFTS modules are mandatory except where indicated by the Head of Department.

Term One

During the first term you will work on either a First Year Film (fiction) OR Documentary Question film, as your main assessed production. All PM students are expected to work on a FYF providing additional production support to the team, and to gain more experience on a drama production.

First Year Film (assessed module)

This is a practical film making exercise working in full teams to produce a 15 minute short fiction film. You will join as Production Coordinator, reporting to the Producer who is responsible for the production and manages the production team, and gaining

as much experience of pre-production, production and wrap as possible. You will work collaboratively to deliver a short film which is shot in four days either at the NFTS Studio or on location and uses a maximum of 8 rolls of 16mm film.

This module will allow you to gain experience in a single camera drama environment and to develop a critical awareness of the PC's role in the context of the wider crew.

The PC's role on this project is to:-

- Develop your understanding of the role of the PC and production team;
- Gain experience of how a fiction film is prepared and executed;
- Develop your logistical, organisational and planning skills, communicating well with the Producer and wider crew.

Documentary Question Film (assessed module)

This is a collaborative film making module with the Documentary Directors and Location 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 will join the Directors in the later stages of research and provide production support throughout pre-production and production, working as Production Manager. Sometimes the PM is required to help with researching ideas and possible contributors, and so 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 across multiple locations. It is filmed over three weeks, with a small crew consisting of the Location Sound Recordist and Director.

5 o'clock & Sky TV Shows (assessed module)

This module is made up of a number of TV shows – namely the 5 O'Clock Show recorded in the NFTS TV Studio and Sky TV Shows recorded at Sky Studios in London. Two PM students will be allocated to production manage each show, and the other PM students will provide additional production support. This is a collaborative module with various other courses.

The 5 O'Clock Show is a series of five magazine shows recorded live in the NFTS TV Studio at 5pm each evening. The TV Entertainment students provide the scripts and format for the series and for each individual show, and direct the shows. The three Sky TV Shows comprise a music show, a quiz show and a sit-com. Professional directors provide the scripts and format for the shows, and direct the shows at Sky Studios in London.

Term Two

Digi Fiction Film (assessed module)

You will production manage a 15 minute short scripted film, shot over four days on digital format, team are encouraged to push film language and creative boundaries. Unlike First Year Film, the Producers will not be involved in physical production processes or Line Producing, so you will be paired up with another PM student and be jointly responsible for production on these films. You should lead the production process and be in control of cost reporting throughout, attention will be paid to the wrapping of floats and preparation of an accurate cost report.

This module has been designed to allow students to take full responsibility for the Production Management of a fiction film. You will work collaboratively with a Director and a Cinematographer, which is a fantastic opportunity to get close to the creative processes from early pre-production, casting, locations, managing a team, managing the film through to post production and delivery. You are expected to develop a deep understanding of the role of the PM within the fiction genre, and to demonstrate logistical, organizational and planning skills to execute a successful production whilst adhering to schedule and budget requirements.

Post Production & Delivery

A detailed multi-day 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 are available for you to attend edits and other post-production elements from Digi Fiction films, and there is a half day workshop in the Sound Dubbing Theatre to embed a creative understanding of the workflow and processes of post.

Terms One, Two and Three

Budgeting & Scheduling (assessed module)

This module incorporates two practical workshops based on the Production Manager's main area of responsibility, the budget, and how it is intricately linked with the schedule. The first workshop starts with breaking down a short film script provided by the tutor. The resources required are scheduled and a budget created using a set of parameters and assumptions. The second workshop is delivered by a professional line producer/Production Manager or Producer, and focuses on a larger scale film or TV drama case study. Students are provided with licences for the Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling software and training is provided throughout the workshops.

This module will allow you to develop your skills in successfully budgeting and scheduling a short film within specified parameters, using the professional standard Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling software. These are key skills which you will use on future NFTS filming modules (such as Commercials, Digi Fiction and Graduation Fiction Films) and in professional employment. You will then look in more detail at a more complex, or longer-form, drama or feature budget, and the industry practices and processes involved in budgeting at this level.

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

Health & Safety

During the Introduction workshops, you will complete the Mark Millsome Foundation 'Production Health & Safety' course, and have training to use the NFTS Risk Assessment software 'RiskPal'.

In addition to this, you will also be trained to assess production risks and implement suitable and sufficient risk management strategies and risk assessments, as 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 North Star Safety introduces the practical requirements of H&S for overseas filming 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 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 module will see you work as Production Manager (PM) and/or Production Coordinator (PC) on a number of Graduation Productions forming your individual portfolio. You will decide your portfolio with consultation from the Head of Department, before assembling and executing the productions.

Your portfolio will be made up of a number of significant productions from different genres, typically on both Fiction and TV Shows, and a selection of Documentary, SNH or Animation films. You will gain PC experience on some of those productions also.

You will have a specific schedule determined by the shooting dates and will be expected to work across multiple productions simultaneously - often wrapping one, whilst another is in pre-production. You must contribute to all phases of production including budget and scheduling, greenlight meetings, the Production Safety Meeting, the shoot and wrap, and delivery paperwork.

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)
- Science & Natural History Film (Term 2 & 3)
- Graduation Fiction Film (Term 3)
- TV Graduation Project (Term 3)
- Animation Graduation Film (Term 3)
- Commercials (Term 1 & 2)

There are four main different genres to work on:

- Fiction Films (4 weeks' prep, 2-week shoot)
- Television Entertainment Shows (4 weeks' prep, 1-week shoot)
- Factual films – Documentary, and/or Science & Natural History Films (part time over a period of 12-15 weeks)
- Animation Films (part time from March until September)

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, visits 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 normally 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.