1 Pre-production techniques for the creative media industries

Creative media production is a complex process that requires lots of different elements to come together for it to be a success. Careful planning and preparation at the pre-production stage is important so that you have everything in place to monitor and control the production process itself.

The aim of this unit is to introduce you to the pre-production processes that underpin any successful media product so that you will then be able to develop and apply these to your own production work.

You will learn about the key activities, documentation and sources of information that you will need to understand and be able to use in order to work in pre-production within your chosen media sector. You will then have the opportunity to practise and apply your knowledge and skills to the production work that you are undertaking in some of your other practical units. All of them will benefit from a carefully structured and planned approach to the work. A comprehensive and well-managed pre-production stage should provide a firm foundation for the production itself and ensure that you are able to deal effectively with any issues or problems that crop up along the way.

Learning outcomes
After completing this unit you should:
1. understand requirements for a specific media production
2. be able to prepare pre-production documentation for a specific media production
3. be able to apply pre-production planning for a specific media production.
## Assessment and grading criteria

This table shows you what you must do in order to achieve a pass, merit or distinction grade, and where you can find activities in this book to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that you are able to:</th>
<th>To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, you are able to:</th>
<th>To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, you are able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **P1** outline requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production  
See Assessment activity 1.1, page 12 | **M1** explain in some detail and competently present requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production  
See Assessment activity 1.1, page 12 | **D1** comprehensively explain and present to a quality that reflects near-professional standards fully detailed requirements and sources of requirements for a specific media production  
See Assessment activity 1.1, page 12 |
| **P2** generate outline pre-production documentation for a specific media production with some assistance  
See Assessment activity 1.2, page 16 | **M2** generate competent, carefully presented and detailed pre-production documentation for a specific media production with only occasional assistance  
See Assessment activity 1.2, page 16 | **D2** generate thorough and comprehensively detailed pre-production documentation for a specific media production, working independently to professional expectations  
See Assessment activity 1.2, page 16 |
| **P3** apply pre-production planning to a specific media production working with some assistance  
See Assessment activity 1.3, page 18 | **M3** apply pre-production planning to a specific media production competently with only occasional assistance  
See Assessment activity 1.3, page 18 | **D3** apply pre-production planning to a specific media production to a quality that reflects near-professional standards, working independently to professional expectations  
See Assessment activity 1.3, page 18 |
How you will be assessed

This unit will be assessed by a number of internal assignments designed to allow you to show your understanding of the unit outcomes. These relate to what you should be able to do after completing this unit. Most of the assignments that you will complete for this unit will relate to the practical production work that you are doing in some of your other units. This means that the pre-production work that you undertake will relate directly to the media products that you are developing and producing within the other practical units of this course.

Your assessments could be in the form of:

- presentations
- case studies
- practical tasks
- written assignments
- pre-production documentation.

Karen, creative media production student

My college’s marketing department gave us a presentation on the services that they provide and they highlighted the need for a new area of the website that specifically targeted 16–19-year-olds. A group from our class decided we would form a production team and use this idea as one of our main production projects.

Because the website had lots of different elements to it, the pre-production stage was particularly important to us as it allowed us to think about all of the things that we needed to get into place before production could begin.

This was quite a high-profile project that would be seen by hundreds of potential learners at the college. The pressure was on to get it right and so we were really pleased that we had the time to go through a pre-production stage.

Some people in the team were impatient and just wanted to start producing the video clips, photographs, written content and graphics for the website but we soon realised that this simply would not work and we were all really glad that we had the time to plan and prepare things properly. It really did make a difference and the production stage ran so much more smoothly than some of our earlier projects had done.

Over to you!

- Why do you think a pre-production stage is so important?
- What processes and activities do you need to undertake in the pre-production stage?
- What skills do you think you will need to develop and then apply throughout this important stage?
1. Understand requirements for a specific media production

Pre-production skills
The process of pre-production is a vital one that you and your team will need to undertake in all of your practical units before the actual production stage begins. To start you thinking about this process, list all the practical units that you will be undertaking on this course. For each unit identify the potential production projects that you might be involved in. Discuss with your class all of the activities that you will need to do during the pre-production process before you actually get your hands on the production equipment. Write the list on the board and discuss with the rest of the class what order you think they should go in and which ones are the most important. Are all of them generic (i.e. they apply to any sort of creative media production) or are some specific to particular types of production? Discuss what skills you already have that will help you with this stage and also what skills you will need to develop.

1.1 Type of production
In the Set up activity you should have identified the range of different types of production that you will be involved with throughout the course. It does not really matter which pathway you have chosen, or what products you have chosen to work on, as pre-production is a vital stage of any creative production process. The processes and activities that you learn about in the early parts of this unit should be applied to one or more of the productions that you are working on in your optional practical units. All of them will benefit from careful pre-production planning.

Case study: Single-camera drama
When a filming budget is tight, one way to reduce costs is to shoot using a single camera. This reduces the equipment costs and crew costs. Single-camera production methods are often used in dramas, documentaries and comedies. Two examples of comedy shows that used single-camera techniques for filming are My Name is Earl and The Office.

Careful pre-production planning needs to be in place for low-budget productions to save time and money during the shoot. Locations need to be carefully chosen to minimise set-up and travel times. Using natural lighting where possible can also reduce crew and equipment costs and again save set-up time.

1. In what ways can careful pre-production planning help if you have a small budget?
2. What are the advantages of undertaking a single-camera production?
3. What problems might be encountered when planning a single-camera production?
from a carefully structured and planned approach to the work, and a comprehensive and well-managed pre-production stage should provide a firm foundation for the production itself.

1.2 Finance
An important part of the pre-production process is to assess the financial viability of the proposed production. There are two aspects to this: first, the potential sources of finance (such as advertising, sponsorship, subscription fees, cover price, sales, rental charges) and second, the expenditure (covering such elements as equipment, materials, transport costs, crew, personnel, facility hire, clearances and legal costs).

It is likely that the productions that you will undertake for your practical units will be subsidised by your college, as you will be using their equipment and materials and you will not have to pay for the personnel on your team. This means that your financial needs will be minimal and you will not necessarily need to secure funding for your projects. However, you need to demonstrate that you are able to work in a realistic vocational context and you should explore the potential funding for your project as well as the potential costs, as both of these factors are critical to all creative media productions if they are to be viable.

1.3 Time
The timescale is an important factor for any media production and deadlines can often be very tight. A journalist working on a daily newspaper will have a very tight deadline to research and write a story for the next edition of the paper; the production team who plan and produce the evening television news programmes must have all of the news items completed and ready for broadcast by the specified schedule time.

The timescale and deadlines for your practical projects are likely to be less pressured, but you will still need to think carefully about the availability of your crew and equipment, the timings of the different stages of the production process and the final deadline for the project when you are undertaking your pre-production planning.

1.4 Personnel
Sourcing the right personnel for a media production is another important aspect of the pre-production process and you will need to ensure that your production team is the right size for the job and that each member has the right balance of knowledge, skills and experience to undertake the specific role that is needed.
An important first step is to assess the initial skill level that each member of your team has. You will then be able to plan what skills you need to develop further and how you will be able to do this. This process can also help identify any skills gaps you have and those areas in which you might require extra help and support from other people.

**Activity: Skills audit**

Carry out a skills audit of your production team.

To do this you need to:

- list all the equipment each member of the team already has experience of using
- identify the level of media production skills and techniques they already have for each item of equipment
- identify any gaps and any areas that you need to develop further.

Draw up an action plan to further develop the team's existing skills and to fill any gaps that you have identified.

Try to use **SMART** targets in your action plan. This means the targets need to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable and **R**ealistic, and carried out within an appropriate **T**imescale.

You might wish to use a **SWOT** analysis when doing your initial skills audit. Here you identify your **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, the **O**pportunities that are available to you (resources, workshops, support) and any **T**hreats (barriers) that might get in the way.

1.5 Facilities

Any creative media production will involve the use of production equipment and facilities to capture, record, edit and manipulate the raw material into the finished product. Moving image, audio and photographic products will need equipment and perhaps studios to record and capture the sounds and images that you require. Computer hardware and software is now at the heart of the production and post-production processes that are used to create all digital media products. Professional production companies will either use their own equipment and facilities or hire what they need for a specific production from facility houses. They might even outsource some of the work, such as post-production special effects, to a specialist company.

**Activity: Facilities**

1. What will you need for your own project?
2. What is available within your school or college?

Do some research to find out what your local facility houses offer and what the costs are.
1.6 Materials

All media products require raw material for the actual content and you can plan to gather and generate this raw material in various ways. Some will be original material that you are planning to produce yourself. Undertaking a series of test shoots or recordings can help you further develop your ideas during the pre-production stage, help you to decide what original material you will be able to include in your final product and what is the best way to get the effect that you want.

For example, for a multimedia production project you might need some country sounds, so you would need to look for a suitable location to undertake the recording. After doing a test recording in a local park you might discover that the traffic noise is too loud and, through additional research, discover that you can use some copyright-free sound effects instead.

You may also want to use some existing archive material, such as photographs or film footage, material from a sound or photographic library or sourced from the Internet, or some existing music or graphics. In all of these cases you will need to be aware of copyright. Copyright owners can choose to grant permission or license others to use their work, usually for a fee, while retaining ownership over the rights themselves. Like other forms of intellectual property, copyright can be bought and sold.

When you are developing your ideas, think about the permissions that you will need to get before the production process can begin. This might include clearing rights, agreeing royalties or paying fees for copyright material that you are planning to include. You will need to write to the copyright holder and ask for permission to use the material. You will often have to make a payment for the right to use the material. You can find more information on copyright and other forms of intellectual property, such as logos and trademarks, on the Intellectual Property Office website (www.ipo.gov.uk).

Activity: Test shoots and recordings

If your practical production involves photography, moving image or audio recording, write down a list of the test shoots or recordings that might help you to develop and test your ideas. Plan what you will need to do to undertake the test shoots or recordings and discuss your ideas with your tutor.

Key term

Copyright – an automatic right that protects a piece of written or recorded work from being copied or used by anyone else without the copyright owner’s permission.

Did you know?

Performing rights royalties are paid to a writer, composer or publisher whenever their music is played or performed in a public space such as on television, radio, on the Internet, in a shop or restaurant, or at an event such as a concert or a football match.

Mechanical rights royalties are paid to a writer, composer or publisher when music is reproduced and used in a physical product or artefact such as a television programme or a video game.
1.7 Contributors
As well as needing a production team, you may also need other people to contribute to your project. You might be able to acquire the services of actors, presenters or voice-over artists (referred to as talent) to make your product look and sound more professional and might also include contributions from experts in the area that you are dealing with in your media production or the general public. Remember that you will need to get permission from people who are featured or quoted in your media production and you should get them to sign a release and consent agreement form so that you have documentary evidence of their permission to be featured. You should also include a biography of the contributors in the supporting documentation that you produce.

Key term
Talent – the professional people who feature in a production such as actors, presenters, dancers and voice-over artists.

Figure 1.1: How might you need to adapt the wording of a release and consent agreement form to cover different situations and uses?

Release Form

Model’s Name: ……………………………………………… Model’s Age: ……
Photographer/Recorder’s Name: …………………………………………………
Contact Number: ………………………………………………………………………
Project Title: ……………………………………………………………………………

I hereby agree to the use of my Photograph and/or the recording of my voice in the above-mentioned project (the name of which may change), the nature and content of which have been fully explained to me.

I agree that [INSERT NAME] does not have to use the Photograph but, if they do so, they may cut and edit it as they wish and use it in any manner including in any publicity or advertising for the project.

I understand and agree that, unless I give my express permission to the contrary, the Photograph is not specifically intended to represent me and will be used to represent a fictional person.

I hereby grant a licence for use in this project in print and electronic format to [INSERT NAME].

The term “Photograph” as used herein includes still photographs, voice recordings and video recordings.

Signed by the Model: ………………………………… Date: …………………

Signed on behalf of [INSERT NAME]: ………………………………………
Print name: …………………………………………… Date: …………………
1.8 Locations

It is important to check out appropriate locations during the pre-production phase. This can save lots of time and money during the production stage. Having crew, talent and equipment out on location can be very expensive and so you need to maximise the amount of material that you can produce in the shortest time possible. You also need to ensure that the locations are suitable for your purpose, that you can obtain permission, if necessary, to work at the location, and that you are aware of any risks and health and safety issues that may be present. You will also need to secure permission from any people who might feature in your product (for example, people working at a location that you intend to use).

A location reconnaissance (or recce) is a visit to a potential production location that is carried out during pre-production to ascertain its suitability. The information that you bring back from the recce will inform the production schedule as you will be able to find out about distance, access, power supply, potential problems over weather, health and safety issues and any costs associated with using that particular location.

Details from the recce should be recorded on a location visit sheet and attached to your production schedule so that all members of the production team are aware of the information that has been gathered.

Key term
Recce – a planned and structured visit to a potential production location during pre-production to ascertain its suitability for use.

1.9 Codes of practice and regulation

One of the reasons that media companies undertake pre-production work is to make sure that what they are planning to produce adheres to the relevant codes of practice, laws and regulations that govern and control their industry.

We have already looked at some of the legal issues that you must consider during pre-production, including obtaining permission to use any copyright material, the health and safety considerations that you should be aware of before production can begin, and gaining permission from people who may appear in your work.

Public liability

Public liability is another legal requirement for companies and organisations who are involved in creative media production, particularly when they are recording on location where members of the public may be at risk from the production activities. Because you are a learner, your school or college should already have public liability insurance for your production work, but you should check this out just to be sure. Commercial companies will also have a range of other forms of insurance to cover their employees, their equipment and even the products that they are working on.

Activity: Filming in London

London is the third busiest city in the world for filming and there is a film or TV crew on the streets almost every day of the year.

The Film London website is an important source of information for companies in the pre-production stage who are looking to film in the capital and contains lots of invaluable information and links to support the planning process.

Visit the Film London website (www.filmlondon.org.uk) and find out more information about the clearances, permissions and legal requirements that are needed before a crew can start filming.

Regulatory bodies, trade unions and trade associations

During pre-production you also need to be aware of the relevant codes of practice and industrial guidelines and regulations that relate to your specific area of production. You will need to undertake some careful research to find out what the constraints are for the media sector that you are working within.

Table 1.1 shows some of the main regulatory bodies that limit and control what a media sector can and cannot produce. Table 1.2 lists some of the trade unions and associations that represent people working in media industries.
BTEC’s own resources

Table 1.1: Main regulatory bodies in the media sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media sector</th>
<th>Regulatory body</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television and radio</td>
<td>Ofcom</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ofcom.org.uk">www.ofcom.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>British Board of Film Classification (bbfc)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bbfc.co.uk">www.bbfc.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer games</td>
<td>Pan European Game Information (PEGI) Entertainment</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Software Rating Board (ESRB)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.esrb.org">www.esrb.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and</td>
<td>Press Complaints Commission (PCC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pcc.org.uk">www.pcc.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.asa.org.uk">www.asa.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.w3.org">www.w3.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: Trade unions and associations in the media sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade union / association</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pact (Producers’ Alliance for Cinema and Television)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pact.co.uk">www.pact.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUJ (National Union of Journalists)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nuj.org.uk">www.nuj.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECTU (Broadcasting Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bectu.org.uk">www.bectu.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIGA (The Independent Games Developers’ Association)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tiga.org">www.tiga.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELSPA (The Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.elspa.com">www.elspa.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIMA (The British Interactive Media Association)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bima.co.uk">www.bima.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit the websites of the organisations associated with your area of interest to find out what they do.

Did you know?

Computer games are becoming an increasingly popular form of digital entertainment all over Europe, though they are more popular in some countries than others. In 2008 the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE) reported that 37 per cent of the UK population aged 16–49 described themselves as ‘active gamers’, playing games on a console, a handheld device or a PC. In comparison, in Spain and Finland the equivalent figure was only 28 per cent (Source: Video Gamers in Europe 2008, ISFE/Nielsen Games).

Computer games are becoming ever more sophisticated. Do some research to find out what the next generation of computer gaming is likely to bring.
Case study: Pan European Game Information

In June 2009 the Department of Culture, Media and Sport made the decision that the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) would be the sole classification system for computer games and software in the UK. In the past the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) had started to classify computer games as well as films and DVDs.

The PEGI system is now used in more than 30 European countries and is based on a self-regulatory code of conduct to which every games publisher is contractually committed.

The PEGI classification consists of five age categories and eight content descriptors that give advice on the suitability of a game for a certain age range based on the game's content.

Icons are used to indicate each of the content descriptors in Table 1.3.

1. Why is it better to have a pan-European classification rather than each country having its own system?

2. Find out from the PEGI website what the age classifications are, and what they mean. Do you think that the age classification system works?

3. Can you think of examples of computer games that fit each of the content descriptors?

Table 1.3: PEGI classification system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Content descriptor</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>May contain scenes of violence and people getting injured or dying, often by use of weapons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Profanity (bad language)</td>
<td>May contain swearing and sexual innuendo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>May contain scenes that are considered too disturbing or frightening for younger or more emotionally vulnerable players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>May contain nudity and references to sexual activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>May contain references to illegal drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>May contain scenes of cruelty or harassment based on race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>May contain games that are played for money (real or simulated).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Icon]</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Contains an online game mode.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from information on PEGI website: www.pegi.info/en/index/id/23)
Assessment activity 1.1

Choose one of the production projects that you are undertaking in one of your practical option units. Take the role of production co-ordinator for this project and plan and produce a report that describes the requirements and the sources of requirements for the specific media production you are undertaking. You should make sure that your report covers all of the following aspects:

- type of production you are undertaking
- finance
- timescale
- personnel
- facilities
- materials
- contributors
- locations
- codes of practice and regulations.

Your report should be well written, using appropriate terminology, and be carefully checked through for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Grading tips

For a merit grade your report needs to demonstrate good understanding of the relevant issues. These should include the relevant codes of practice, laws and regulations that apply to the production work that you are planning, together with a detailed explanation of where the information can be sourced from. Your report should be clearly and carefully produced and explain in some detail the relevant pre-production requirements for your proposed production and why they are important.

For a distinction grade your report needs to reflect near-professional standards and be fully considered and detailed. It should demonstrate an excellent understanding of the requirements for the proposed production and explain fully why each aspect is required. This includes a full and detailed consideration of the relevant codes of practice, laws and regulations that apply to the production work that you are planning, together with a fully detailed explanation as to where the information can be sourced from.

PLTS

Investigating the relevant pre-production requirements for your proposed production will help develop your skills as an independent enquirer.

Functional skills

Producing your written report on the relevant pre-production requirements for your proposed production will help you to develop your English skills in writing.
2. Be able to prepare pre-production documentation for a specific media production

Having established which key aspects of pre-production are important to your particular production you can now begin to plan your production in more detail and begin to prepare the appropriate documentation.

2.1 Procedure

The specific pre-production processes and procedures that you follow will be dictated by the particular production that you are planning. However, whatever your production is you should ensure that you cover all of the following key areas.

- Identify finance, personnel and resources that are required and are available to you and your production team.
- Prepare a budget.
- Book personnel and resources.
- Prepare a detailed production schedule.
- Identify relevant health and safety issues, risk to the project and any legal issues.

A production schedule is a planning document that brings together all of the information needed for a particular production. It is referred to and monitored throughout the production stages and shows the production team where they are against the planned schedule and what resources and personnel they need to have in place for the next part of the process. It is an important document for you to include in your final portfolio and you will need to ensure that it is detailed and comprehensive if you are aiming for a high grade.

A production schedule should contain the following key elements:

- details of the original proposal
- key dates as agreed with the client for the different stages of pre-production, production and post-production, together with a final completion date
- details of production equipment required and where it is being sourced from
- location details and any transport required
- full details of the crew, talent and other personnel with contact details
- any props and other materials and resources required.

The production schedule is often supplemented with a sheet that details the specific plan and resources for a single day of production – this is called a call sheet. A call sheet is often given to the crew, talent and personnel required for each day of production so that everybody is clear who is needed where and what they need to do.

Key terms

Production schedule – a planning document that brings together all of the information needed for a particular production. It gives an overview of the whole production.
Call sheet – details the specific plan and resources needed for a single day of production.

Activity: Production schedule

Start to put together the production schedule for one of the practical projects that you are working on in your other units. Make sure that you include all of the elements identified above and that it is clear and detailed.

2.2 Documentation

The pre-production documentation that you develop will vary depending on which production medium you are working in and will form an important part of your completed portfolio.

For example, if you are planning a moving image production you will develop and refine your ideas through a storyboard and script. For a printed product such as a magazine or newspaper you will produce ideas sheets, rough drafts, concept drawings, sample designs and thumbnails of the pages you are planning.
to produce. For an interactive media product you might use all of the above together with a mood board to give you an idea about the overall look and feel of the product. A web-based interactive product might also need a structure diagram (a way of planning out the structure of the different web-pages that need to be produced) to show the links between the different web-pages and the order in which they are accessed by the user.

Figure 1.2: This is a structure diagram that a student produced for a website for a band. What additional pages could be added to the structure to further improve the website?

Which forms of pre-production documentation will be most appropriate for your production medium?
As your plans come together, and before you actually start the production process itself, you will need to put together a detailed production schedule showing what you are going to do and when and how you are going to do it. This schedule is the plan that you will take with you through to the production stage. It will help you to keep track of where you are in the process and what you need to do next.

You will also need to undertake risk assessments and consider the relevant health and safety issues. You should also have a contingency plan just in case things go wrong.

The contingency plan should cover all aspects of the production including personnel, equipment and locations. You need to have alternative arrangements ready in case things don’t quite go to the original plan so that your project stays on track and will still be completed within the specified time frame.

Table 1.4 shows you examples of the types of pre-production documentation you might use for each production type, together with an explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production type</th>
<th>Pre-production documentation</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types of production</td>
<td>Production schedule</td>
<td>A detailed plan that brings together all the information needed for your particular production to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Call sheet</td>
<td>A document that details the specific plan and resources needed for a single day of production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk assessments</td>
<td>Details of things that could go wrong and relevant health and safety issues (see Unit 4 Creative media production management project for more information).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contingency plan</td>
<td>This links to your risk assessment and shows what your alternative plan is if some of the things that could go wrong actually do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permissions</td>
<td>Forms that give you permission to film in the places that you want to and to include the people that you want in your final product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving image</td>
<td>Storyboard</td>
<td>A visualisation of each shot of your finished programme that includes timings and details of the soundtrack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Script</td>
<td>What the people in the programme are going to say, together with how they are going to say it and any music or sound effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shooting script</td>
<td>A more detailed script that includes camera angles, locations, types of shot, dialogue and soundtrack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio and sound recording</td>
<td>Script</td>
<td>What the people in the programme are going to say, together with how they are going to say it and any music or sound effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print and interactive media</td>
<td>Concept drawings</td>
<td>Drawings of what a picture or page might look like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thumbnails</td>
<td>Rough sketches of a proposed page layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mood boards</td>
<td>Collection of different examples of colour, text and styles to show how the finished product will look and feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based interactive media and games</td>
<td>Structure diagrams</td>
<td>Similar to a storyboard for a web-based interactive product; shows the hierarchy of the pages and the links between them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment activity 1.2

The assessment activity for this element of the unit will be the pre-production work that you undertake for your specified media production.

The evidence for the achievement of the learning outcome will be the pre-production documentation and paperwork that you complete, together with a production log that contains records of pre-production meetings, discussions and research, supported by tutor observations and witness statements where appropriate.

Grading tips

To achieve a merit grade your pre-production work must be carefully presented, well developed and well organised and demonstrate some depth and detail in the pre-production documentation produced, with only occasional assistance.

To achieve a distinction grade you must generate thorough and comprehensively detailed pre-production documentation, working independently to professional expectations. This means that you must demonstrate good self-management skills, showing that you can work on your own initiative and work positively and cooperatively with others to meet deadlines.

PLTS

Undertaking your pre-production work in your chosen area of creative media production will help you to develop your skills as a creative thinker.

Functional skills

Producing your pre-production documentation will help you to develop your English skills in writing.
3. Be able to apply pre-production planning for a specific media production

Everything should now be in place so you can apply and use the pre-production planning as you work through the production and post-production stages of one of your option units.

3.1 Elements of production

The pre-production work that you completed earlier in this unit should provide a secure framework for the production to be undertaken, but the production process will still need careful management if it is to produce a successful final product.

You will need to keep a careful eye on the finance as the production unfolds and ensure that the different elements such as crew, talent, personnel, equipment and resources all come together in the right way, at the right time and in the right place.

3.2 Project management

Clear communication and good organisational skills are perhaps the two most important aspects to successful production management. You should ensure that you fully record and document all of the meetings and briefings that you have with your team and keep all the relevant paperwork and documentation up to date. Make sure that all decisions are noted and any action points for individuals are clearly written up so that everyone knows exactly what is expected of them.

Did you know?

James Cameron, the director of Titanic (2007), forfeited his $8 million director’s salary and his percentage of the gross profits when the studio that had set the budget and provided the finance became concerned at how much over budget the film was running. The film was initially budgeted at $135 million but after going two months over schedule required an additional $65 million to be completed.

Activity: Most expensive film?

James Cameron’s film Avatar (2009) is reported to be the most expensive film ever made with estimates of the budget ranging from $230 million to $500 million.

How would you keep track of your project budget?

What plans do you need to make for contingency?

How can you make sure that everyone understands what is expected of them in your team meetings?
Assessment activity 1.3

For the assessment activity for this element of the unit you will apply your pre-production planning to the production of your specified media product that was the focus of the first two assessment activities.

The evidence for the achievement of the learning outcome will be a production log which documents and records the ways in which you used and applied the pre-production planning throughout the production process. You should also include a personal evaluation in your final portfolio together with any relevant tutor observations and witness statements where appropriate.

Grading tips

To achieve a merit grade you must apply your pre-production planning to your particular media production competently and with only occasional assistance. This means that you need to demonstrate good organisational skills in the work that you are undertaking.

To achieve a distinction grade you must apply your pre-production planning to your particular media production to a quality that reflects near-professional standards, working independently to professional expectations. This means that you must demonstrate good self-management skills, showing that you can work on your own initiative and work positively and cooperatively with others to meet deadlines.

PLTS

Applying your pre-production planning to your media production work will help you to develop your skills as a creative thinker, a team worker and a self-manager.

Functional skills

Producing your production log and records will help you to develop your English skills in writing.
My role as a production assistant (PA) for a broadcasting company is very varied and involves me with all stages of the pre-production and production processes.

I have to work closely with other members of the team and get involved with lots of different aspects of production. Being a PA means that I have to have a good overview of the whole production and have good technical, creative and administrative skills and knowledge. I also have to be a good communicator as I have to deal with lots of different sorts of people and make sure that information doesn't get lost or confused.

This means I have to be very organised and listen carefully to what the production team want me to do and what information they need next. I also have to keep the pre-production documentation well organised as a member of the team often asks me for the production schedule to see what is happening next and the latest version of a storyboard or script so that some changes can be made.

I also have to get the call sheets out to the relevant people in time for them to get themselves organised and make sure they are at a location on time.

I have learned that having a positive attitude and a ‘can do’ approach is very important to working in the industry and that you have to be able to work well on your own as well as being an effective team member.

Think about it!

- What skills do you have already that would help you to play a positive role in a pre-production team? Discuss with the rest of your class and then produce a written summary of your key points.
- What further skills might you need to develop to be successful in pre-production? Write a list and discuss with the rest of the class.
- Why is pre-production such an important stage of the creative media production process?
Just checking

1. Why is the pre-production stage so important?
2. Identify the main aspects that need to be considered when undertaking pre-production.
3. Why is copyright an important issue to consider?
4. What is a recce and why can it be an important part of the pre-production process?
5. Identify the main regulatory bodies for your chosen media sector and explain what their remit is.
6. Identify the eight content descriptors used in the PEGI classification system.
7. What is a production schedule and what should it contain?
8. What pre-production documentation should you use for your chosen area?
9. What evidence should you generate to show that you have successfully applied your pre-production planning to your media production work?

Assignment tips

- Link the work you are doing for this unit with one of the practical productions that you are undertaking in one of your optional units.
- Make sure your team meetings are minuted so people know what was decided, what is expected of them, and that you have good evidence of pre-production work and team work for your final portfolio.
- Spend time planning your production and use the correct pre-production documentation to help you develop your ideas.
- Make sure your production schedule and other written documents are detailed and comprehensive and cover all of the required elements.
- Allow some time at the end of the unit to ensure that your final portfolio of evidence is well organised and presents your work in the best possible way.