

**BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF MEDIA**

**STUDENT GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN  
THE USE OF MEDIA RESOURCES**

This is not the definitive guide to the use of the School of Media's resources, but a useful document that will enable and encourage you to adopt good practice when using those resources. By doing this it will create an environment of greater care and safety for yourself and the equipment that you will be using.

You will find that these practices will also serve you well in your future media careers as they are common place in most working media environments.

Most of what you will read in this guide is 'common sense' and may seem quite obvious to you (our apologies) but by highlighting these issues it will help in reinforcing these methods in your mind and reduce the risk of harm and damage.

Specific areas to be covered are:

- Computer suites (including DTP, web design, photo, video and audio editing workstations)
- Radio studios.
- TV studio (including the gallery).
- Photography studio
- Use of portable equipment on and off-site.
- Loan of equipment during term time and vacation/ non-term time.

## **COMPUTER SUITES**

- **Please check the room timetable (on the door) before entering as there may be a class in progress**
- The opening hours for the computer suites are 9.30am – 5.00pm
- **All** mobile phones/PDA's must be **switched off** (not just put onto silent mode) when using computers. The active transmitters/receivers in these devices can interfere with data on the computer which may result in the loss of yours and other peoples work.
- It is paramount that **NO** food and/or drinks are to be consumed in the computer suites. This is a BCU policy and failure to comply with this can result in the loss of your network privileges.
- Liquids and electrical items combined can increase the risk of fire and electric shock. Foodstuffs dropped onto the equipment will in time build up and could cause equipment malfunction.

- It is beneficial to monitor the amount of time you spend in front of the computer screens. It is suggested that you should take regular breaks. The Health and Safety Executive recommends a **minimum of 15 minutes** away from a computer screen for every **3 hours** spent in front of it. Make sure you adjust your seat so you are sitting in a comfortable upright position and the top of the computer screen is at eye level.
- **A TIDY WORKPLACE IS A SAFE WORKPLACE.** Please tidy away your work area before leaving as other people have to use the resources.
- Please note that for Health and Safety reasons children under the age of 18 and non BCU students are not permitted to be in the computer suites at any time.
- Please report any lost/broken equipment that you see immediately to the technicians in room B201.
- Please be packed and ready to leave the computer suites by 5pm when the department is locked up unless otherwise instructed to do so by your tutor.

## **RADIO STUDIOS**

- **You will not be able to use a radio studio until you have been trained how to use it**
- You may only use a radio studio if you have booked it. An empty studio does not mean it is available.
- The radio studios are bookable between 9.30am and 4.30pm (bookings can be made at the hires and loans desk during its opening hours).
- **All** mobile phones/PDA's must be **switched off** (not just put onto silent mode) when using the radio studios. The active transmitters/receivers in these devices can interfere with the broadcast desk which may result in inferior recordings/broadcasting of yours and other peoples work in adjacent studios.

- Before you proceed to use any of the audio equipment in the radio studios please ensure that all the faders on the desks are down. This will prevent damage to your ears and equipment from unexpected excessive volume levels. When using the studios please keep volume to a sensible level. Prolonged exposure to high volume can cause irreparable damage to your hearing and may not manifest itself till later in life.
- Please do not adjust the settings on the studio amplifiers/ compressors and graphic EQ units. They have been fine tuned and set by the technicians for each specific studio's spatial qualities.
- **No** food or drink is to be consumed in the studios.
- Leave the studio clean and tidy when you have finished-other students have to use it after you.
- Please report any lost/broken equipment that you see immediately to the technicians in room B201.
- Please be packed and ready to leave the radio studios at the time specified at the time of booking so that the facilities are available for the next student/class.

## **TV STUDIO**

- **You will not be able to use the TV studio until you have been trained how to use it during class.**
- You may only use the TV studio if you have booked it. An empty studio does not mean it is available.
- The TV studio is bookable between 9.30am and 4.30pm (bookings can be made at the hires and loans desk during it's opening hours).
- Please be packed up and ready to leave the TV studio at the time specified at the time of booking so that the facilities are available for the next student/class.

### **TV Studio Gallery:**

- **All** mobile phones/PDA's must be **switched off** (not just put onto silent mode) as the active transmitters/receivers in these devices can interfere with the equipment and may result in the loss or inferior quality of yours and other peoples work.
- Adjust seating so that you are comfortable.
- Please keep audio volume to a sensible level. Prolonged exposure to high volume can cause irreparable damage to your hearing and may not manifest itself till later in life.
- Do not overcrowd the gallery, it distracts concentration, can create tension and stress and can increase the risk of accidents.
- **No** food or drink is to be consumed in the gallery.
- Please report any lost/broken equipment that you see immediately to the technicians in room B201.
- Leave the studio clean and tidy when you have finished-other students have to use it after you.

### **TV Studio Floor:**

- **All** mobile phones/PDA's must be **switched off** (not just put onto silent mode) as the active transmitters/receivers in these devices can interfere with the equipment and may result in the loss or inferior quality of yours and other peoples work.
- Spatial awareness is paramount in the studio. Please be aware of trailing cables from the studio cameras and floor staff. Trip hazards are increased by working in a low light environment.
- Make sure all set's and props are secure.
- **No** food or drink is to be consumed in the studio.
- When using the studios please keep headphone/communication volumes to a sensible level - prolonged exposure to high volume

can cause irreparable damage to your hearing and may not manifest itself till later in life.

- When you have finished please disconnect mics and return them to where you found them. **DO NOT** remove mic cables from the wall boxes.
- Please report any lost/broken equipment that you see immediately to the technicians in room B201.
- Leave the studio clean and tidy when you have finished-other students have to use it after you.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO:**

- **You will not be able to use the photography studio until you have been trained to use the facilities during classes.**
- You may only use the photography if you have booked it. An empty studio does not mean it is available.
- The studio may be booked for a morning session (9:30am – 1:00pm) or for an afternoon session (2.00pm – 4:30pm). Bookings can be made at the hires and loans desk during it's opening hours.
- **No** food or drink is to be consumed in the studio.
- Spatial awareness is paramount in the photography studio as you will be working alongside a lot of studio equipment including heavy studio lights on stands.
- Please take extreme care if altering the position of the weighted boom arms as these are very heavy as misuse may cause injury.
- Leave the studio clean and tidy when you have finished-other students have to use it after you.
- Please report any lost/broken equipment that you see immediately to the technicians in room B201.
- Please note that for Health and Safety reasons children under the age of 18 are not permitted to enter the photography studio.

- Please read the Health and Safety guidelines posted on the door when entering the photography studio and please adhere to any safety notices on the walls in the studio to avoid personal injury or damage to the equipment.
- Please be packed and ready to leave the photography studio at the time specified at the time of booking so that the facilities are available for the next student/class.

### **Compact Flash Card Care**

The digital SLR camera that you borrow will come with a compact flash card installed. Please make sure that you return the camera is returned with the compact flash card inserted in the memory slot on the camera.

- **ALWAYS** 'format' the card in the camera before use – the 'format' option can be found in the menu option on both the Nikon and Canon SLR's
- **NEVER** force the card into the memory card slot in the camera as this can bend the receiving pins and the camera will have to be sent off for repair at your expense. You will be advised how to insert the card correctly into the camera during class so please pay attention.
- **NEVER** delete single images off the CF card using the delete button– when the card is full or you have finished shooting then copy and paste the images from the card into a folder on your PC and delete unwanted images from this folder – images can be deleted from the card after this process by 'formatting' the card in the camera.
- **REMEMBER** to book extra memory cards if you think you will need them – better to have too much memory than not enough!

Misuse of the compact flash cards can result in the card becoming corrupted and thus the loss of your work. Don't learn you lesson the hard way – it may just happen on that all important never to be repeated shoot!!!

## **USE OF PORTABLE EQUIPMENT ON AND OFF-SITE.**

### **Loan of Equipment**

Towards the end of this document you will become familiar with the equipment loans booklet that contains detailed term, conditions and regulations pertaining to the lending of equipment and contains the borrowing contract. You must read this booklet and the borrowing contract **HAS** to be signed by you before any equipment is loaned to you.

Below is a summary of the main conditions:

#### **Term Time:**

When equipment is loaned to use on or off campus that equipment becomes the responsibility of the borrower. Equipment is issued via the Hires and Loans Desk in the Technical Centre (room B201) whereupon you will be asked to sign a release form for the equipment. The release form is an agreement between you and the School of Media that you will be responsible for the equipment and that you will replace/repair any equipment that is in your charge be it through loss/ theft or damage.

**It is advisable to take steps to ensure you have contents insurance that covers items kept at your address.**

#### **University Holidays/ Non-term Time:**

It is a requirement of the university's insurers that any equipment loaned to students during non-term time has to be insured by the borrower against theft/ loss and damage. Equipment will only be loaned upon proof of insurance in the form of an insurance policy document.

The document must show:

- The name of the policy holder
- The address at which the equipment is to be kept
- An insurance settlement value that exceeds the value of the equipment borrowed

Students are required to produce the policy document either when booking or upon collection of the equipment.

**Equipment will NOT be loaned without the production of relevant insurance documents-there are NO exceptions.**



**As YOU are the borrower of equipment YOU must return it and get it signed off. DO NOT give equipment to any other student to return or take responsibility for. In the event of them losing or damaging the equipment YOU will still be contractually responsible for its replacement.**

**Do not collect and sign for equipment on behalf of another student. Since you will be signing for it YOU will be responsible for it.**

### **Good Practices applicable to all production areas:**

- Make sure you are familiar with how to use the equipment.
- If you are using the equipment off-site be aware that you are carrying valuable equipment.
- If the equipment incurs damage and/ or malfunction return it to the technicians in room B201 ASAP. Do not attempt to repair it or continue using it as this may incur further damage and/or render the equipment irreparable leaving you responsible for its replacement.
- Try to work in pairs or more to increase personal safety.
- Do not leave equipment unattended or out of visual contact.
- Be aware of the environment you are working in-is it crowded? Is there the possibility of theft of equipment?
- Is there a risk of personal harm?
- If working outside after dark you may be at greater risk-are you accompanied?
- It is advisable to keep all equipment in their respective holdalls until it is ready to be used.
- Do not allow members of the public to handle any of the equipment or assist in your production-they are not trained to do so and will increase the risk of damage and/ or theft.
- If what you are doing attracts a crowd assess whether it is safe. Would be suitable to return at a later time/date?

At times, at the discretion of your lecturer, you may have to ensure a risk assessment is carried out at your chosen production locations. To enable yourself to do this you will be required to visit your location before production days. This will enable you to assess any potential risks involved in working at that location, and what controls you will put in place to reduce those risks.

For example: You may decide to do some filming in a nightclub. Typical risks involved could be:

(See next page)

RISK	CONTROL
Do you have permission to be there?	Get written agreement from owners
Low light	Carry a portable source of light (eg hand torch) to enable safe movement around location.
Loud music	Limit time spent at location to protect hearing and or use ear defenders.
Tripods and cabling	Make sure all cabling is securely fixed or trailing cables made the responsibility of a 'cable basher' someone who will hold the cables or keep members of the public at a safe distance to reduce trip hazard. Make sure all tripod legs are made visible by the use of white tape placed around their legs and base areas.
Intoxicated people	You may encounter intoxicated people. Ensure that you create a safe distance area around you and equipment to reduce risk of accidents and equipment damage, and personal harm.
Theft of Equipment	Do not work alone; be visually aware of suspicious activity and distractions. Do not leave equipment unattended or out of visual contact.

These are only a few of the potential risks that will require consideration in an off-site production. By visiting the location in advance you will be more aware of potential risks that may arise and be able to put controls in place and take steps to reduce those risks.

**WHEN A LECTURER REQUIRES A RISK ASSESSMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT, EQUIPMENT WILL NOT BE BOOKED OUT TO STUDENTS FOR ANY OFF-SITE PRODUCTION WITHOUT THE COMPLETION OF A RISK ASSESSMENT FORM. THESE ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE TECHNICAL CENTRE IN ROOM B201. STAFF WILL INSPECT THE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM AND WILL ONLY ISSUE EQUIPMENT IF THEY ARE SATISFIED THAT PERSONAL SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT SECURITY HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AND ADDRESSED APPROPRIATELY.**

**Photography specific:**

The setting up and placement of lighting tripods must be done with due care and consideration. Safeguard against potential trip hazards and tripods falling or being knocked over.

The lamps can get extremely hot, do not handle until they have cooled down. Do not allow others to handle the lamps unsupervised.

**Portable audio recording devices:**

Be aware of trailing microphone cables and microphone stands (if being used).

**T.V / Video specific:**

Be aware of trailing microphone and lighting cables.

The setting up and placement of lighting tripods must be done with due care and consideration. Safeguard against potential trip hazards and tripods falling or being knocked over.

The lamps can get extremely hot, do not handle until they have cooled down. Do not allow others to handle the lamps unsupervised.

**School staff are available to offer advice over any matter you may have regarding risk assessment, use of equipment etc. Please draw on their professional experience to clarify any doubts or queries you may encounter before or during your production.**

## **Returning Equipment:**

- Return equipment promptly and on the agreed due date.
- DO NOT give equipment to other students to return or renew on your behalf.
- DO NOT book equipment for other students using your ID and signature as you will be responsible for their use of the equipment.
- Even if you return your equipment to the Hires and Loans Desk, you will still be responsible for it until the duty technician has checked its condition and signed it back in.
- Leaving the equipment in the technician's foyer and walking out is not considered as being returned. You are required to check the condition of the equipment with the technician and make sure he/she has signed it back in.

If you breach the conditions of borrowing 3 consecutive times you will be banned from borrowing equipment for 2 weeks. 4 breaches carries a months ban and 5 breaches a semester ban on borrowing equipment.

This may seem harsh but the equipment is there for everybody to use and the selfish acts of a few can prevent others from progressing on their course.

If you require any further details or clarification on any matters arising from the loan of equipment please see the equipment loan guidelines or contact the technicians in room B201.

## **Technician Centre Guidelines (B201)**

### **B201 Office Hours**

9.00am – 4.45pm

The technical centre is open for support enquires (if staff are available) between these hours only. Please do not come to technician centre for these reasons outside of these hours.

### **Hires and Loans Desk Opening Hours (0121 331 7684)**

9.00am – 11.00am

1.00pm – 2.00pm

The hires and loans desk will issue and take back equipment at these times only unless you have made a special advance arrangement.

### **Equipment Returns**

Although the technician centre will accept returns during hires and loans desk hours only, some bookings specify a return time. For example video equipment loans specify a return time. If you cannot make a return deadline then you **must** contact us on **0121 331 7684**. If you are scheduled to return a kit at 1.00pm chances are someone else needs it at 2.00pm. We need time between loans to prepare the kit.

### **Edit Suite, Radio Studio and Photography Studio Bookings**

The edit suites are opened at 9.30am and close at 4.30pm. The only exception to this is timetabled classes where some facilities may remain open until 5.00pm.

A half day booking is:

9.30 am – 1.00pm **or** 2.00pm – 4.30pm. Please be aware that we generally book edit suites in half or full day slots.

### **Late Returns**

All of our equipment is in high demand. Please ensure you return your equipment at the arranged time. Please refer to your terms of loan agreement document for information on late returns.

## Equipment Loans from the Birmingham School of Media, Birmingham City University

The majority of equipment is loaned on a first come, first served basis, subject to availability – this equipment (which includes digital photography equipment and Marantz/Edirol audio recorders) may not be booked in advance, and all borrowers should be aware that this equipment is in significant demand at certain times of the year. Additionally, this equipment will be sometimes required for teaching purposes – during these periods, availability may be seriously reduced or loan facilities withdrawn to facilitate the teaching need. Loan times are negotiated on a case by case basis and subject to availability of the equipment.

Video equipment **must** be booked in advance and cannot usually be borrowed at short notice. As with other equipment, the period of loan is negotiated and subject to availability.

Loans and return of technical equipment is managed via an automated barcode system which requires every student to present **their own** valid student ID card at the time of borrowing and returning kit. This is a strict system and students who do not supply an ID card will not be able to borrow or return kit (please see terms and conditions for more details).

In order to borrow any equipment from the School, **you must sign and return the borrowing contract that has been sent out to you in the post**. By signing this, you accept that you are bound by the terms and conditions of loan set out in the following pages. In particular, you should be aware that, when you borrow equipment from the School, you hold that equipment *in trust* from the university. This means that, if the equipment is lost, stolen or damaged, the responsibility for repairing or replacing it rests with *you*. We would therefore strongly advise you to take out insurance which covers you against such an eventuality. As bailee to the university, you can insure equipment as if you owned it yourself.

All equipment is loaned out through the hires and loans desk in B201. The hires and loans desk opening times are displayed on the notice board outside B201; they are currently 9am -11am, and 1.00pm -3pm. Please note that equipment can only be taken out and returned, and facilities booked, during these hours.

**You will need to have your student card with you in order to collect equipment.**

## Term and Conditions of Loan

**All loans of equipment from the School of Media, Birmingham City University, are covered by the terms and conditions set out below.**

- The borrower acts as a bailee to Birmingham City University in respect of all equipment borrowed, holding said equipment in trust, and assuming any all legal liability and responsibility for any loss of or damage to said equipment, howsoever caused.
- Equipment remains the property of Birmingham City University.
- Educational need always takes priority of non-educational need.
- University equipment should not be used for any commercial purpose without express permission of departmental management.
- The borrower must:
  - ensure that all equipment is functional at the time of receipt, and should immediately report and problems encountered.
  - must report any faults with or damage to the equipment which occur whilst in her or his care.
  - return the equipment at or before the end of the agreed loan period in the same condition as it was received.
  - make appropriate security arrangements when using or storing the equipment.
- The borrower should be familiar with any university Health and Safety guidelines which affect the use of loan equipment. Where appropriate, a risk assessment sheet should be completed.
- The borrower **must** ensure that **their own** valid student ID card is presented at the hires and loans desk when borrowing or returning kit. Without this, loans cannot be authorised and returns cannot be validated. After the agreed return time for kit has passed, the procedures for the late return of equipment will be immediately automated on the system (see below for the procedures following the late return of equipment).
- Should equipment be returned after the agreed loan time, the borrower will be subject to the following procedures:



- i. equipment returned late is noted against the name of the borrower.
- ii. a single instance of late ness of 3 days or less counts as one 'strike' against the borrower(s).
- iii. for each subsequent 3 days (or less), and other 'strike' is recorded.
- iv. when a borrower records three strikes, their borrowing rights will be suspended for a period of 2 weeks..
- v. When the equipment has not been returned on the due date and the overdue periods exceeds ten days or more then the specified return date, this will prompt immediate and permanent suspension of borrowing rights for the borrower. Additionally, the borrower's network account will be deactivated and the borrower banned from bookable facilities (studios, editing suites, etc.) until the matter is resolved.
- vi. when the loaned equipment has not been returned on the due date and the overdue period exceeds one month or more then the specified return date, this will result in the borrower being invoiced for the cost of replacement (this will include a handling fee, and there will be a minimum cost of £100). At this point, return of the equipment is not an acceptable resolution, as the university Finance department will have levied a legally binding invoice for the cost of the equipment as new.
- vii. one strike will be removed from an individuals record at the end of each semester (in February and June). One strike will also be removed from an individual's record after a two week suspension period (for recording three strikes) has been completed.

**N.B: Suspension of borrowing rights and loss of facilities access may present problems for students in completing assessed work.**

Please note that, in all cases, the signatory remains responsible for equipment signed out to her/him. Loans should not be transferred between borrowers, and only the signatory is able to return the equipment to the borrowing desk. In the event of group work, it is necessary for all group members to sign their acceptance of the Terms and Conditions, as responsibility for the equipment rests with the signatories.

**Borrowing Contract**

I [Name]

of [Address]

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of loan of the School of Media, Birmingham City University, and agree to be bound by them in respect of all equipment borrowed from said school.

I understand that I will be unable to borrow or return technical equipment if I do not supply my own valid student ID card at the time of collection and return.

I acknowledge that that I will be acting as bailee to Birmingham City University and holding borrowed items of equipment in trust on behalf of Birmingham City University, and that I am legally liable and responsible for any loss of or damage to the equipment, howsoever caused.

Signed.....

Print name.....

Witness to signature.....

Print name.....

Date.....