

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	MA Documentary Production
2	Course Code	PT1879 PT1880 (PP)
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)	
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	N/A

6	Course Description
	Developed and delivered in partnership with the BBC, our MA Documentary Production course allows you to capture reality and tell stories that matter. This Master's course is designed for aspiring documentary producers who want to develop a distinctive creative voice while gaining the advanced professional skills needed to succeed across today's media industries. The world of documentary storytelling has never been more diverse. From short stories, feature documentaries and broadcast television to streaming platforms, podcasts and immersive media, factual storytelling continues to shape how audiences understand the world. Through a combination of creative practice, industry engagement and critical reflection, you'll build the skills, confidence and portfolio needed to pursue a career in documentary production across a range of sectors and platforms. Along the way, you'll refine your own unique perspective as a storyteller, learning how to craft compelling, impactful documentaries that stand out in a rapidly evolving media landscape. Teaching will take place at BCU's City Centre Campus and, subject to final planning approval, at the BBC's new Midlands headquarters at the Tea Factory, located just a short walk away in Birmingham's creative quarter. What's covered in this course? You'll develop your skills through a blend of specialist industry input, real-world production projects, independent production and academic study, gaining the knowledge and experience to create compelling documentary content for a range of platforms and audiences. Working alongside BBC staff, experienced academics, technical specialists and visiting industry professionals, you'll explore every stage of the production process, from research and development to production, post-production and delivery. Opportunities to collaborate with external partners on live projects will help you build industry experience and strengthen your professional portfolio. Using industry-standard television and radio studios, you'll gain hands-on experience of producing content in both studio and on-location settings. You'll plan, produce and deliver content across documentary, television, radio and on-demand platforms, developing an understanding of the complete production process from initial concept to final delivery. You'll develop practical production skills while learning the craft of storytelling to create engaging

	factual content. You'll also gain experience of live broadcasting and streaming, as well as the integration of audio and video production. Alongside hands-on production, you'll examine the creative, ethical and cultural dimensions of documentary practice. Through research, pitching, critical reflection and editorial development, you'll investigate documentary form, representation, authorship, audience engagement and distribution, informing your own approach to nonfiction storytelling. The course places a strong emphasis on independent creative practice, enabling you to develop, produce and realise original documentary projects that reflect your interests and aspirations. As your studies progress, you'll build confidence in your ability to develop and realise original documentary projects while establishing a distinctive voice as a documentary maker. Whether you plan to work within established media organisations, independent production companies or as a freelance creator, you'll develop the collaborative, entrepreneurial and professional skills needed to navigate a rapidly evolving media landscape. You will benefit from studying in one of the world's leading centres for television and radio production, while the BBC partnership provides valuable insight into contemporary British broadcasting and professional practice.
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7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	MA Documentary Production	Level 7	180
	MA Documentary Production with Professional Placement	Level 7	240
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Post Graduate Certificate Documentary Production	Level 7	60
	Post Graduate Diploma Documentary Production	Level 7	120

8	Variation from the University Regulations
	Not applicable

9	Delivery Patterns		
	Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study
	Full Time	City Centre and BBC Tea Factory	1 year
	Full Time with Placement	City Centre and BBC Tea Factory	18 months
			Code(s)
			PT1879
			PT1880

10	Entry Requirements
	The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk/ or may be found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website.

11	Course Aims
	• Develop advanced, critical thinking, professional documentary, television and radio skills - including technical and editorial, which are necessary to produce traditional and contemporary media content. • Equip students with skills and knowledge that facilitate long-term employability through industry-informed learning in partnership with the BBC. • Build professional networks, industry positioning and creative ambition, supporting progression into specialist roles across documentary, television and radio. • Establish and develop professional production practices across a range of modes and platforms including experimentation with mediums and formats. • Foster an understanding of critical issues and debates within the media production industry and factual content. • Cultivate applied knowledge of the legal, regulatory, and ethical contexts within which media content is produced. • Understand distribution processes including copyright, licensing and film festivals. • Explore advanced approaches to documentary form, practice-based methodologies, research and storytelling techniques.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	Knowledge and Understanding
1	Critically analyse and synthesise current research and industry practice to evaluate the technical and editorial factors involved in advanced documentary, television and radio production.
2	Demonstrate understanding of audience engagement and evolving distribution, broadcasting and digital media platforms, using critical enquiry to inform original creative practice.
3	Critically evaluate legal, ethical, regulatory, and professional frameworks governing documentary production, applying these principles to complex production contexts and decision-making.
4	Evaluate and apply advanced research methodologies appropriate to media production, demonstrating an understanding of how research informs creative and professional practice.
5	Demonstrate understanding of industry production documentation and professional practices.
	Skills and other attributes
6	Design, plan, and manage complex television and radio productions by applying advanced production methodologies, demonstrating originality and professional judgement throughout the production process.
7	Operate strategically within professional broadcast contexts, applying advanced understanding of commissioning, funding, branding, monetisation and regulatory frameworks.
8	Apply advanced technical, creative, and editorial skills across a range of television and radio production genres, integrating digital technologies and professional production workflows to produce industry-standard work.
9	Demonstrate self-direction, teamwork and leadership in planning, managing, and completing independent and collaborative television and radio productions that evidences advanced scholarship and professional competence.
10	Develop and produce original television and radio productions that demonstrate innovation, critical reflection, ethical and legal awareness, and responsiveness to professional, cultural, and societal challenges.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	<i>Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 7 / the PG Cert, students will be able to:</i>
1	Engage with documentary, television and radio production practices and develop an awareness of professional conventions and industry contexts in relation to your practice.
2	Develop and evaluate techniques and methods for the production of different genres, modes and conventions.
3	Engage with debates in media scholarship and industry, from global and local perspectives including case study analysis.
4	Communicate ideas creatively demonstrating an understanding of audiences and distribution.
5	Evaluate your individual performance, learning and media skills.
	<i>Upon completion of 120 credits at Level 7 / the PG Dip, students will be able to:</i>
6	Engage critically with a range of scholarly research, media and creative industry debates.
7	Analyse and synthesise industry standard documentary, television and radio production and planning skills to develop solutions to media problems.
8	Apply creative and advanced level knowledge and skills within real world contexts to create original media work and compelling non-fiction stories.
9	Situate your media practice within scholarly and / or industry contexts.
10	Reflect critically your professional and personal development as a media practitioner.
	<i>Upon completion of 180 credits at Level 7 the Masters Degree, students will be able to:</i>
11	Demonstrate a systematic and critical understanding of current and emerging issues, theories and practices at the forefront of documentary, television and radio production.
12	Originate and independently produce a substantial, original piece of documentary, television or radio work that makes a distinct contribution to professional practice.
13	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in planning, managing and delivering complex, self-directed creative and research-informed work.
14	Critically evaluate complex, incomplete or contradictory industry, audience and research data to inform sophisticated production and strategic decisions.
15	Communicate complex ideas and outcomes with authority to specialist and non-specialist audiences, including industry and academic stakeholders.
16	Demonstrate the professional judgement, strategic insight and industry readiness expected of a practitioner operating at Masters level within the television and radio industries.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	All our taught postgraduate courses align with the university's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This ensures that your learning is shaped by the research, professional practice and industry expertise of our academic staff. The relationship between research and teaching means that your course reflects current developments in media and creative practice while encouraging critical enquiry, innovation, experimentation and the development of new approaches to professional practice. Our strategy also supports interdisciplinary and STEAM approaches to learning, encouraging students to draw on creative, technological and analytical perspectives within their practice. Students will also engage with emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), considering its opportunities, limitations and ethical implications within contemporary media practice. Our strategy also ensures that the curriculum is designed and delivered inclusively, enabling all students to participate, contribute and succeed. Our inclusive approach to curriculum and pedagogy reflects the diverse experiences, perspectives and aspirations of our student and staff community. This creates a learning environment that encourages thoughtful discussion of contemporary social, cultural, environmental and ethical issues while promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Ethical and sustainable practice is embedded throughout the curriculum, encouraging students to consider the responsibilities and impact of their creative practice. Through industry-informed approaches, including BAFTA albert training, students will develop an understanding of sustainable media production and the environmental impact of creative work. We aim to foster collaborative learning communities and support students in becoming confident,

reflective and professionally engaged practitioners. Throughout your studies, you will develop distinctive graduate attributes, including creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, digital capability and ethical awareness, that will prepare you for further study, employment, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

How you will learn

Your learning will combine advanced seminars, lectures, practical workshops, studio production, collaborative projects, industry engagement and independent creative practice. The course has been developed in partnership with the BBC, providing opportunities to engage with industry professionals and explore contemporary approaches to broadcasting, audio production and digital media. This is complemented by our wider network of industry, community and research partners.

You will be encouraged to critically reflect on established industry practices, explore emerging technologies and develop your own creative identity as a media professional. Through independent projects and collaborative activities, you will apply advanced knowledge and skills to real-world creative challenges, developing solutions that demonstrate originality, critical understanding and professional awareness.

Opportunities for industry engagement with practitioners from across the industry and not just the BBC and for professional networking are embedded throughout the course, enabling you to apply your learning within relevant creative contexts. Flexible approaches to learning are integrated across the curriculum, including blended learning, recorded materials, online activities and intensive practical sessions where appropriate.

As a postgraduate student, you will be expected to take increasing ownership of your learning journey, developing the independence, resilience and reflective practice required of advanced creative professionals. Academic staff will support your development through supervision, tutorials and specialist guidance, while guest speakers, technical demonstrators, industry practitioners and academic researchers will contribute to your learning through workshops, masterclasses and professional engagement activities.

Throughout the course, you will build a professional portfolio of creative work that demonstrates your developing expertise, critical thinking and ability to produce work suitable for professional, research or further academic contexts.

How you will be assessed

All assessments are designed to enable you to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for each module and the course. Assessment methods may include critical essays, research-informed reports, case studies, practical productions, creative portfolios, presentations, project proposals and independent creative projects.

Assessment is mainly coursework-based, reflecting the applied and reflective nature of postgraduate study. Assessments are designed to test technical ability and to encourage critical analysis, creative experimentation, problem-solving and the application of advanced knowledge to professional practice. While many assessments are completed individually, there are also collaborative projects which reflect authentic industry practices and encourage the development of professional communication, teamwork and leadership skills. Each module provides opportunities for formative assessment, enabling you to develop your ideas, refine your practice and respond to guidance before final submission.

Tutorials and in-class support provide opportunities to discuss your work in progress, explore ideas and receive constructive feedback. Following submission, feedback will support your continued academic, creative and professional development, helping you to refine your practice beyond the course.

What we expect of you

Your course is designed to support you in becoming an independent, reflective and critically engaged creative practitioner. Through questioning, researching, experimenting, producing and evaluating your own work, you will develop the advanced knowledge, confidence and professional skills required to contribute meaningfully to contemporary audio industries.

As a postgraduate student, you will be expected to actively engage with debates within your discipline, challenge existing approaches and take responsibility for your own creative and intellectual development. You will be encouraged to develop an individual perspective, make informed creative decisions and demonstrate a sustained commitment to professional growth.

Your final project will provide an opportunity to integrate your learning through a substantial independent piece of creative or research-informed work, supported by academic supervision. This will enable you to demonstrate your ability to conceptualise, plan, produce and critically evaluate work to an advanced professional standard.

15 Course Requirements

15a Level 7:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
	Television and Radio Production	30
	Formats and Programme Development	30
	Documentary Production and Form	30
	Professional Practice	30
	Production Lab	30
	Major Project	30

Level 6:

In order to qualify for the award of MA Documentary Production with Professional Placement, a student must successfully complete Level 7 modules listed above, totalling 180 credits, as well as the following Level 6 module:

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
PLA6003	Professional Placement	60

15b Structure Diagram

Level 7

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE
Core Television and Radio Production (30 credits)	Core Documentary Production and Form (30 credits)	Core Production Lab (30 credits)

Core Formats and Programme Development (30 credits)	Core Professional Practice (30 Credits)	Core Major Project (30 Credits)
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16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Overall student *workload* consists of class contact hours, independent learning and assessment activity, with each credit taken equating to a total study time of around 10 hours. The following information gives an indication of how much time students will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the course.

- *Scheduled Learning* includes lectures, practical classes and workshops, contact time specified in timetable
- *Directed Learning* includes placements, work-based learning, external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning
- *Private Study* includes preparation for assessments

The approximate percentage of the course assessed by coursework, exam and in-person is shown below.

Level 7

Workload

13.7% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	248
Directed Learning	700
Private Study	852
Total Hours	1800

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	89%
Exam	0%
In-Person	11%