

Unit 1: Research for Creative Media Production

Level: **SRF Level 2**

Notional Learning Hours: **50**

Unit value: **5**

SRF unit code: **30896H**

This unit is internally assessed

Unit aim

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to develop skills in the main research methods and techniques used within the creative media sector. Learners will do this through researching an existing media product and through undertaking research for one of their own production projects.

Unit introduction

Research underlies all media production, whether it be to gather materials for the content of a new production, assess technical and logistical requirements, or to establish the commercial viability of a proposed new product. Research is also undertaken into product sales and audience activity (what people buy, watch, listen to, and log on to, why they make the choices they make, what they like or dislike etc.) in order to help media production companies decide what they want to make and how best to place their products in the market or the programme schedules. This audience research is also vital to advertising companies. Whatever the purpose of the research, the basic methods employed are much the same.

This unit will enable learners to develop an understanding of the basic research methods and techniques used within the creative media sector by undertaking research on an existing media product as well as undertaking research for one of their own media production projects. Through undertaking these two distinct research activities learners will learn how to identify reliable sources of information and then use them to gather relevant material. Learners will also develop skills in collecting, collating and storing the material gathered. Learners will then have the opportunity to present the results of their research.

Outcomes of learning

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know about research methods and techniques
- 2 Be able to use research methods and techniques to investigate an existing media product
- 3 Be able to use research methods and techniques to gather material for a media production
- 4 Be able to present results of research.

Assessment and grading grid

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the outcomes of learning for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 outline research methods and techniques	M1 describe research methods and techniques with some detail and with reference to appropriate illustrative examples	D1 evaluate research methods and techniques with reference to precise and detailed illustrative examples
P2 use appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research into an existing media product	M2 use research methods and techniques competently to carry out reliable research into an existing media product	D2 use research methods and techniques skilfully to carry out substantial research into an existing media product
P3 use appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research for a proposed media production	M3 use research methods and techniques competently to carry out reliable research for a proposed media production	D3 use research methods and techniques skilfully to carry out substantial research for a proposed media production
P4 present research results.	M4 competently present research results with some detail.	D4 skilfully present research results with substantial detail.

Unit content

1 Know about research methods and techniques

Methods:

- primary
- secondary
- qualitative, e.g. opinions, attitudes, behaviour patterns
- quantitative, e.g. ratings, circulation figures, web hits.

Techniques:

- using libraries
- using the internet
- reading
- searching archives
- interviews
- observations
- questionnaires
- surveys
- focus groups
- recce.

Information trail:

- log of library
- internet and archive searches.

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Collate:

- sift and select
- organise, e.g. by name, by date, by type, by content, by information source
- index.

Store:

- secure storage
- easy of access.

2 Be able to use research methods and techniques to investigate an existing media product

Media product:

- e.g. film, television programme, DVD, newspaper, magazine, radio programme, audio product, advertisement, computer game, interactive media product.

Purpose of research:

- e.g. to identify composition of audience, to identify size of audience, to investigate reception of product, to compare to other similar products, to investigate production process or history.

3 Be able to use research methods and techniques to gather material for a media production

Media production:

- e.g. moving image production, print production, radio production, sound recording, computer game, interactive media production.

Material:

- e.g. data, information, archive material, visual, audio-visual, auditory.

4 Be able to present results of research

Format:

- e.g. written report, oral presentation, PowerPoint presentation, audio-visual presentation, individual presentation, group presentation.

Content:

- procedures
- summary of data and material, e.g. graphics, charts, tables
- analysis
- results
- conclusions
- bibliography of sources.

Expression:

- structure
- clarity
- linguistic register
- recognition of audience.

Information for tutors

Essential requirements

Learners will need access to a full range of research resources, both paper based and electronic.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local media providers who are willing to come in and talk about the research methods and techniques that they employ and the external sources of information that they use.

Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media sector, has a substantial section of its website dedicated to careers, including job descriptions – www.skillset.org/careers

Further general information on work-related learning can be found at the following websites:

- www.nebpn.org – National Education and Business Partnership Network
- www.vocationallearning.org.uk – Learning and Skills Network

Delivery guidance

The teaching of this unit should be linked to the other units that learners are undertaking for this qualification. This should allow learners to see more readily the relevance of the research tasks undertaken and will provide tutors with the opportunity to set the assignment briefs within realistic and meaningful vocational contexts.

For example, the research into an existing media product could be linked to the investigation that learners undertake in *Unit 3: The Creative Media Sector* unit or *Unit 4: Media Audiences and Products*. Specialist production units should also provide the ideal opportunity for learners to explore and develop their understanding of relevant research methods and techniques for gathering material for a specific media production.

Assessment evidence that is generated through work undertaken in other units will need to be collated and organised into an appropriate portfolio of evidence for this unit. This evidence must be cross-referenced so that its context is clear.

Many learners will already have undertaken some form of research before, but may be unfamiliar with the terminology that identifies the four key research methods: primary, secondary, quantitative and qualitative. It is important that learners understand these four key terms and realise that both primary and secondary research can generate both quantitative and qualitative information, and that most valid research contains a balance of all four.

Following a brief introduction to the appropriate terminology, learners can practise the relevant procedures and skills through a series of short exercises which concentrate on specific aspects of the process – for example, identifying reliable sources of information, searching for particular information within a set time, producing a set of questions for an interview, writing a questionnaire and collating the information derived from it, setting up a focus group and writing up the results etc.

As confidence and knowledge grows, learners can then begin to link these procedures and skills together and begin to undertake more comprehensive research tasks that are linked to the investigatory and practical production work that they are undertaking in their other units. This will help to develop their research skills and also, of course, provide the evidence for assessment of these aspects of the unit.

One of the key research skills at this level is to be able to sift through the information in the collation and storage process and then make use of only the genuinely relevant material. Learners should therefore be taught the need to discard information that is not relevant. This is particularly important in relation to internet research, where there is strong temptation for inexperienced researchers to print off reams of information, much of which is inapplicable and a good deal of which is likely to be of dubious relevance, and simply file it away with no further action and a rather complacent sense that 'the job has been done'.

Collation is not, of course, just about sifting. It is also about sorting, and this is probably the most difficult skill to learn. Tutors might find it useful to set up short exercises in which the information is already provided and learners are required to sort through it and sift out the material which is useful for a given purpose. Later exercises might then require them to list the material in order of value.

Learners will initially need guidance in structuring reports, whether written or orally presented. Again, clearly defined exercises using given material may be found useful in the early stages here. The importance of clear structure, clear expression and of adopting the appropriate formal linguistic register should be stressed at all times.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities/assessment
Introduction to unit, links to other units and unit assessment.
Introduction to primary research (two sessions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● interviewing techniques ● questionnaire design ● focus groups ● surveys.
Task 1 – evaluating primary research. Working individually and using the class as the sample group, learners research music preferences within the class using interviews and questionnaires. Learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● prepare interview questions ● conduct interviews ● collate data ● prepare questionnaires ● give out and collect back questionnaires ● collate data.
Introduction to sources of information.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities/assessment

Task 2 – evaluating secondary research sources.

Learners work in pairs:

- all pairs are given the same questions to find answers to
- each pair is allowed to use either internet or library, but not both
- pairs race to get the answers first
- plenary session evaluates the different sources in terms of
 - speed
 - accuracy
 - ease of use.

Assignment 1 – Methods and Techniques

Learners write up individual reports on the two tasks describing and comparing research methods and techniques.

Introduction to planning research.

Assignment 2 – Research into an Existing Media Product

Learners:

- plan research into an audience for and reception of a specified computer game using research methods and techniques already discussed
- carry out research
- collate results
- prepare presentations
- present results.

Assignment 3 – Research into a Proposed Media Production

Learners:

- plan research into a proposed media production using research methods and techniques already discussed
- carry out research
- collate results
- prepare presentations
- present results.

Assessment guidance

Assessment evidence for this unit will most likely be drawn from assignments written around other units. Where that is the case, the criteria from this unit must be referenced within those assignments.

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcome 1 is likely to be in the form of a written report or oral presentation, though it could also be in an audio-visual or electronic format.

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcomes 2 and 3 should come from work done for other units, as explained above. Documentation should include all research notes, research logs, and collated research data.

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcome 4 will be provided through the presentation of the results obtained through the work done for learning outcomes 2 and 3, either in a written report or oral presentation. Presentations must be recorded for internal and external verification purposes.

It should be noted that assessment evidence that is generated through work undertaken in other units will need to be collated and organised into an appropriate portfolio of evidence for this unit and must include any necessary cross-referencing.

Viva voces and tutor observations may be used to support the assessment of achievement of learning outcomes 1 and 4, but should not form the sole method of assessment, as the independent presentation of research processes and results is an important element of what is being learned here. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed by means of a viva care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked the same lead questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any suggested assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 – Methods and Techniques	Carry out exercises in research methods and techniques to evaluate them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview questions.• Questionnaires.• All notes and completed questionnaires.• All collated data.• Research notes and logs.• Completed report.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P2, M2, D2 P4, M4, D4	Assignment 2 – Research into an Existing Media Product	Employ a range of appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research into an existing media product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All research notes. • Research log. • Collated research data. • Presentation slides and notes. • Recording of presentation.
P3, M3, D3 P4, M4, D4	Assignment 3 – Research into a Proposed Media Production	Employ a range of appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research for a proposed media production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All research notes. • Research log. • Collated research data. • Presentation slides and notes. • Recording of presentation.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit links with all other units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite.

Suggested resources

Books

Baylis P and Procter N – *BTEC Level 2 First Creative Media Production, Student Book* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 978-1846906732

Baylis P, Freedman A and Procter N – *BTEC Level 2 First Creative Media Production, Teaching Resource Pack* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 978-1846907364

Baylis P, Holmes P and Starkey G – *BTEC First Media* (Heinemann, 2007) ISBN 978-0435464707

Berger A – *Media Research Techniques, 2nd Edition* (Sage, 1998) ISBN 978-0761915379

Hall K and Holmes P – *BTEC First in Media: A Practical Handbook* (Edexcel, 2007) ISBN 978-1846901980

Stokes J – *How to do Media and Cultural Studies* (Sage, 2003) ISBN 978-0761973294

Websites (Relevant websites applicable to learner's home country)

www.barb.co.uk	the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board
www.nrs.co.uk	the National Readership Survey
www.ofcom.org.uk	the independent regulator for the UK communications industries
www.rajar.co.uk	Radio Joint Audience Research Limited