

## **Unit 10:**

# **Developing Audio Production**

**Unit reference number:** **T/601/2174**

**QCF level:** **1**

**Credit value:** **4**

**Guided learning hours:** **40**

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### **Unit aim**

The aim of this unit is to give learners basic knowledge of different audio products, sound recording techniques and technology and the skills to enable them to produce an audio product.

### **Unit introduction**

The term 'audio production' encompasses a wide variety of production activity, whether recording a local band's demo tape, community radio, podcasting or programmes on national radio.

Learners should develop a basic understanding of sound recording through investigation and experimentation. While learners will develop a basic understanding of various styles, techniques and technologies, they will also gain a basic understanding of broadcast audio production. In creating their own audio product learners will develop basic skills in sound recording, editing and mixing.

### **Essential resources**

Learners need access to a range of facilities that may include portable recording equipment, studio facilities, a range of microphones with varying pick up patterns and mixing desks or computers with multi-track mixing facilities.

Examples of professional recordings and scripts should be made available.

Learners will need internet access for research purposes as well as access to books on radio production and industry journals

## Learning outcomes, assessment criteria and unit amplification

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria	Unit amplification
1 Know types of audio products	1.1 Describe at least three different audio products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Products:</i> items for broadcast, e.g. news, commercials, drama; music recording; audio books</li> <li>• <i>Audio delivery formats:</i> types, e.g. CD, music TV, digital sound files, e.g. MP3, wav</li> </ul>
2 Be able to generate ideas for audio production	2.1 Use different sources to generate ideas for an audio production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sources:</i> e.g. news items, commercials, drama, music</li> <li>• <i>Ideas:</i> e.g. message or purpose, subject, information to be communicated, story, who it is for; methods e.g. brainstorm ideas; exploring how others/professionals use audio production, content e.g. scripted voice, unscripted voice, music, sound effects</li> </ul>
3 Be able to use recording techniques and technology to produce an audio product	3.1 Use appropriate recording techniques for agreed audio production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pre-recorded sources:</i> types, e.g. CD, digital sound files, interview material, commentary</li> <li>• <i>Audio environment:</i> location; studio; voice; atmosphere</li> <li>• <i>Mixing audio:</i> types, e.g. for radio production, live, recorded, studio, analogue, digital</li> <li>• <i>Technical conventions:</i> microphones (handling noise, wind noise); digital recording, e.g. file type, file size; analogue recording, e.g. reel to reel, cassette</li> </ul>
	3.2 Use appropriate recording technology for agreed audio production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Production:</i> techniques, e.g. recording, monitoring levels, location</li> </ul>

<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>	<b>Unit amplification</b>
	3.3 Use appropriate post production techniques for agreed production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Post-production:</i> mixing, e.g. live, recorded, multi-track; effects; atmosphere</li> </ul>
4 Be able to review own work	4.1 Collect feedback on work from different sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collecting feedback:</i> asking questions; listening to others; feedback from peers, from tutor</li> </ul>
	4.2 Review aspects that went well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Format of review:</i> e.g. verbal, presentation, discussion, audio, audio-visual, written annotations</li> </ul>
	4.3 Review aspects that could be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Performance:</i> aspects, e.g. own work, time management, fitness for purpose of process and product; what was achieved; how it was achieved; how it could be improved</li> </ul>

## Information for tutors

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### Delivery

This unit has been designed to give learners an opportunity to undertake focused projects in the specialist area of audio recording. The intention is to focus the learner's attention on the wide-ranging opportunities provided by the medium. This, in turn, will inform them when addressing other mediums associated with audio production, for example video, music, etc.

As a starting point, the learner will need to research existing audio products and formats. Learners should be encouraged to investigate the many and varied applications of audio in a variety of contexts from news to music, drama to advertising. Learners should be encouraged to experiment with different technologies in different conditions and for varying purposes. Through workshops and mini-briefs learners will understand the suitability of various recording devices to environment and conditions, e.g. what microphone to use outdoors for atmosphere or dialogue. In response to an agreed brief or topic, learners should produce short audio products in a broadcast format either individually or as part of a group. Product quality and time management should be taken into consideration during commenting on their work.

Learners should be encouraged to listen to a wide range of radio productions to understand the creative possibilities of the medium.

Technical skills could be developed in practical workshop sessions giving learners the opportunity to experiment with techniques and technology. While some activities could be centred on individual learning much of the production work could be team based.

Activities could be organised in the form of mini-assignments that allow learners to focus on special aspects of audio production such as interviewing, vox pops, editing, recording voice pieces, etc.

Classroom discussion is a vital element in both generating ideas and evaluating skills.

## **Outline learning plan**

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance.

<b>Topic and suggested assignments/activities</b>
<p>Introduction to unit and programme of learning.</p> <p>Tutor delivery – what to look for – different audio products, audio uses and formats.</p> <p>Learner investigation into professional work.</p> <p>Presentation of learner findings.</p> <p>Learners describe different audio products, in discussion or on worksheet. (learning outcome 1)</p>
<p>Workshops – audio capture indoors and outdoors, mixing audio, adding effects, using pre-recorded sources and exporting.</p> <p>Learner investigation into sources. Learners use different sources to identify ideas for audio production, in discussion with the tutor. (learning outcome 2)</p> <p>Mini-brief – work in groups to plan and record vox pops, for example, about a new movie release.</p> <p>Class feedback on work produced.</p> <p>Introduction to assignment – for example plan and produce a radio commercial.</p> <p>Assignment work.</p> <p>Presentation of product to the class. (learning outcome 3)</p>
<p>Group discussion for learners to receive feedback from peers and tutor and comment on own work. (learning outcome 4)</p>

## **Assessment**

To achieve a pass, learners should demonstrate understanding and use of pre-production and production techniques in relation to an agreed brief or and be able to comment on the process appropriately. At this level the work produced should be an appropriate response to an agreed brief or topic but will not necessarily be complete. Learners may need guidance and assistance but should make constructive use of it to be considered for a pass. When commenting on their own work they will be able to list the strengths and weaknesses of their work and suggest how it could be improved.

To achieve assessment criterion 1.1, learners need to describe at least three types of audio products. Evidence could be in the form of a completed worksheet, an oral presentation or a discussion with the tutor with a signed witness statement.

To achieve assessment criterion 2.1, learners must show evidence that they have used different sources to generate at least two ideas. This can be evidenced through written evidence of discussions, drawings, and visual references, observation of group discussions or one-to-one discussions with the tutor with a signed witness statement, or through written evidence of a thoughtshower, drawings and visual references.

To achieve assessment criteria 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, learners must create an audio product. Evidence can be the product recorded, with a log of techniques and technology used. Achievements can be confirmed through observation of learners' work with signed witness statements. Samples of recordings should be kept on tape or disc so that learners are able to monitor their skills development. Learners should at all times be encouraged to evaluate their own performance and receive feedback from peers as well as tutors.

Evidence for assessment criterion 4.1 could take the form of learners' reflections on their work and the changes they would make to their audio production. This could be achieved through a group discussion where the learner gathers feedback on work from peers and the tutor. To achieve assessment criteria 4.2 and 4.3, the learner should consider two aspects that went well and at least one aspect that could be improved. Observation records and witness statements must be retained for verification purposes.

## Suggested resources

### Books

Kinnaird M – *Sounds Like a Good Idea* (Network Continuum Education, 2008)  
ISBN 978-1855394483

McLeish R – *Radio Production, Fifth Edition* (Focal Press, 2005) ISBN 978-0240519722

Nisbett A – *Sound Studio: Audio Techniques for Radio, Television, Film and Recording, Sixth Edition* (Focal Press, 2003) ISBN 978-0240519111

### Journals

Broadcast

Radio Magazine

### Websites

[www.broadcastnow.co.uk](http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk)

Broadcast – online magazine dedicated to news and features on broadcasting

[www.mediacollege.com/audio](http://www.mediacollege.com/audio)

Media college – educational and resource website for electronic media

[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk) Ofcom – the regulator of the radio industry

[www.radioacademy.org](http://www.radioacademy.org)

The Radio Academy – site dedicated to senior industry figures and academics with background features and careers.