

Unit 5: Working to a Brief in the Creative Media Industries

Unit code:	M/600/6700
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to take the learner through the whole process of working to a brief from initial negotiations, through the process of developing and realising ideas to final self-evaluation on completion of the work.

● Unit introduction

A good deal of work in the media industries, especially in the case of small to medium size companies and freelancers, is done to a brief for a client. It is, therefore, vital for entrants to the industry to understand the requirements of working to a brief, whether one negotiated by a company or individual with a client, or one set as a competition. Common types of brief would include, for example, one for a corporate or marketing programme, a website, an audio guide, or artwork for a computer game. The client might be a large multinational company or a local small business but whoever it might be the skills involved in producing a media product to a professional brief are broadly the same.

Dealing with a brief requires a range of skills including the business skills needed to negotiate one, the creative ability to come up with ideas, and the specific technical skills needed to realise those ideas. Good interpersonal skills are also needed, as there is a need to be able to enter into someone else's mind to some extent in order to get to know what they really want.

This unit can be contextualised in any media sector. It provides opportunities for work placements, work experience, externally set live briefs and competition briefs to be included in the programme.

Working to a live brief could give learners the opportunity to work in a professional environment with or for people who earn their living in the print, audio, moving image or interactive media industries. Working to a real brief will enable learners to meet clients and work to deadlines. The feedback from the client will be invaluable in developing a professional approach to media work. Learners should experience the same types of demands and constraints as those encountered by professional people in their working lives as working to a brief represents a crucial aspect of professional practice.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand the requirements of working to a brief
- 2 Be able to develop a planned response to a brief
- 3 Be able to apply a response to a brief
- 4 Be able to review work on completion of a brief.

Unit content

1 Understand the requirements of working to a brief

Structure of briefs: contractual; negotiated; formal; informal; commission; tender; cooperative brief; competition

Reading a brief: recognise nature of and demand implicit in the brief; client and audience needs

Negotiating the brief: consultation with client; degree of discretion in interpreting brief; constraints (legal, ethical, regulatory); amendments to proposed final product; amendments to budget; amendments to conditions; fees

Opportunities: identify opportunities for self-development; new skills; multi-skilling; contributions to project brief; creative opportunities

2 Be able to develop a planned response to a brief

Plan: prepare plan to meet requirements; health and safety issues; relevant legislation to be followed; team members involved; role of team members; organisational structure; working practices

Timescales: deadlines; availability; resources; feedback

Develop: brainstorm; mind-map; identify possible solutions; treatments; scripts; programme/design formats, wireframe, flow chart; to meet requirements of brief; research potential of solutions; evaluate against requirements and constraints; select best option; discuss with client; agree final response

3 Be able to apply a response to a brief

Apply: pre-production phase; production phase; post-production phase; monitor progress; review; revise

Relationship with client: liaison with client; dealing with difficulties or complaints; revisions to brief; revisions to plan

4 Be able to review work on completion of a brief

Format: eg presentation; written report; viva voce

Constraints experienced: legal; regulatory; financial

Management: time management; leadership skills; communications; meeting requirements; achieving agreed outcomes; working to agreed timescales; recommendations for future tasks

Feedback: eg from peers, from client, from audience, from supervisor; contribution to workplace goals; own suitability for industry

Assessment and grading criteria

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 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 describe the requirements of working to a brief	M1 explain the requirements of working to a brief with reference to detailed illustrative examples	D1 comprehensively explain the requirements of working to a brief with elucidated examples
P2 plan a response to a brief working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance [CT, SM]	M2 plan a response to a brief competently showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance	D2 plan a response to a brief to near-professional standards showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations
P3 apply a response to a brief working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance [CT, SM]	M3 apply a response to a brief competently showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance	D3 apply a response to a brief to near-professional standards showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations
P4 comment on own work on completion of a brief with some appropriate use of subject terminology.	M4 explain own work on completion of a brief with reference to detailed illustrative examples and with generally correct use of subject terminology.	D4 critically evaluate own work on completion of a brief with reference to professional practice, and consistently using subject terminology correctly.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Initial teaching strategies might include devising situations in which learners have access to media professionals from a variety of industries. Local media companies may allow learners to visit the workplace and engage in research on particular job activities and procedures for completion of live professional briefs. It has to be recognised, however, that when learners go into a commercial working environment they may be given only basic responsibilities. It may also be the case that any work they produce may be regarded as the property of the organisation (or the client), or subject to release or circulation restrictions.

Wherever possible, learners should be encouraged to work with a real client, or within an actual working environment, so that they are required to negotiate and develop the brief in accordance with the needs of the client or organisation. Local companies, small business enterprises or voluntary organisations may be approached with a view to their developing a brief with the tutor which learners can then be given. These briefs may include, for example, negotiating the production of an in-house newsletter for a local company, designing a website for a local charity, or producing a music programme for the local hospital radio station. Other departments within the school or college may, of course, provide opportunities for suitable briefs to be developed.

The need to consult with and work alongside others must be a significant feature of any work set, as must the need to work within the limitations and constraints imposed by a third party, and the need to meet individual or team goals, and preliminary, intermediate and final deadlines.

Learner behaviour in this unit should be professional and responsible. Particular attention should be paid to issues such as attendance, behaviour, use of equipment, cooperation with others and the ability to work effectively with the client.

NB: This mandatory unit has been designed so that it can be taught in the context of all the endorsed titles (or pathways) in the BTEC Nationals in Creative Media Production. If centres are unsure about how to cover or interpret any of the content in relation to a particular endorsed title they should contact Pearson.

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 of planning the teaching and assessment of this unit.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and structure of unit assessment.
Introduction to understanding the requirements of working to a brief. Learners will have classes on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the different types and structures of briefs• how to read a brief (reviewing examples)• the processes and practices of negotiating the brief• how to identify opportunities for self-development through working on a brief.
Assignment 1 – Understanding and Interpreting a Brief Learners will write an entry on working to a brief for a guide to working in the creative media sector.
Assignment 2 – Responding to a Brief Learners will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• receive and consider a brief• develop an initial proposal and budget in response to the brief• produce project management documentation• meet with and discuss proposals with client• develop ideas as a result of client feedback• produce production documentation• revise project management documentation• continue to liaise with and respond to client• produce product in response to the brief.
Assignment 3 – Evaluation Learners will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review overall effectiveness of work with client• annotate and evaluate client review• gather other responses to work• complete individual evaluation of own work• produce review presentation• give presentations.
Unit learning and assessment review.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

Work undertaken for this unit – and hence the evidence produced to assess it – should replicate as nearly as possible what learners would produce working in a live situation. Where learners are able to undertake work placements which involve working on a brief, they should also document their activities in an appropriate form and obtain, wherever possible, witness statements from employees they have worked with.

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 1 can be in written or oral form (such as a report, presentation, or a structured audio or audio-visual statement). Alternatively, it can be done through the application of the relevant concepts or procedures in a practical context. In this latter case, in order to achieve the merit grade learners will need to explain, with reference to specific aspects of their work or examples of what they have done, why they have acted as they have. In order to achieve the distinction grade they will need to show precisely how their examples demonstrate the application of the concept or procedure, and be able not only to explain but to justify their actions. Evidence for the achievement of the two higher grades might be in the form of audio or video recordings of conversations between a tutor (or assessor) and the learner. If the conversations are recorded in writing (as witness or observation reports) care must be taken to ensure that at least 50 per cent of such assessments are subject to internal verification.

Tutors should note that it is possible, of course, to combine oral or written description of some elements of the content with practical demonstration of others.

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 2 will vary depending upon the nature of the brief itself. In a work placement or live situation, this will be dictated by the nature of the organisation and its current projects. Project plans, appointment books, planned communications, and planned activities would all provide suitable evidence for achievement of this learning outcome. In addition, learners may demonstrate planning skills in the form of treatments, production schedules, planning resources and personnel, budgeting, sketches, proofs etc as evidence of working towards an actual production.

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 3 will be the finished product and relevant production documentation. For work done outside the school or college, witness statements would also be an acceptable form of evidence; work experience or work placement mentors should be encouraged to discuss input and development with learners over the period of the brief.

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 4 will most likely be a written or orally delivered report done as a presentation, or a structured statement in an audio or audio-visual format.

All presentations must be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification.

For some elements of this unit, and for some learners, a formal viva voce assessment might be appropriate. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked equivalent 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. Formal vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification and at least 50 per cent of such assessments must be internally verified.

Application of grading criteria

When applying the grading criteria, tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that any examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not exhaustive and the examples need not specifically be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

Pass

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve all the criteria at pass level. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

P1: learners will describe the requirements of working to a brief accurately, covering the topic substantially though not necessarily absolutely completely. Typically they will demonstrate a limited understanding of the range of skills involved and of the purpose and constraints which form the parameters of the brief itself. Demonstration in a practical context will show understanding of all the main requirements but will be limited in scope (for example learners will demonstrate limited involvement in the negotiation and will require considerable guidance on their role and the extent of the brief) and though learners will be able to act in accordance with these requirements, they will be unable to explain why they need to be taken into account or how they apply to their own work.

P2 and P3: planning will be purposeful but limited, with a lack of detail in the documentation. The outcome will have some shape, some sense of design, or the deliberate application of some technique behind it, but will not be entirely successful. In terms of the aesthetic or imaginative qualities of their work, learners will not move beyond the conventional, but the conventions applied will be appropriate to the form or genre within which they are working so that the final outcome will be formulaic or derivative. Learners will need frequent assistance and support, though they will take note of and make use of this help when it is given. If they are in frequent need of such help but fail to make positive use of it they should not be considered for a pass grade for this unit.

P4: learners will consider their own work in such a way that they move beyond just describing it. They will make evaluative comments upon what they have done but these comments will be assertions that are not supported by evidence or exemplification. Although process will be considered, constraints and contingencies will be largely disregarded. Typically the views of others will not have been actively sought and so the learner's personal evaluation of the product will take little account of the views and assessments of other interested parties. Evidence will show a basic understanding of technical terminology but learners will generally be unsure about this vocabulary and will make fairly frequent mistakes when they do use it.

Merit

To achieve a merit grade, learners must achieve all the pass and all the merit grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

M1: learners will provide an explanation of the organisation and extent of a brief and will demonstrate knowledge of how their role will impact on the work of others and on the brief itself. Demonstration in a practical context will show understanding and careful consideration of all the requirements. For example learners will show sound interpersonal skills in the negotiation and will have considered the wider implications of the brief. They will explain how and why specific aspects needed to be taken into consideration, pointing to relevant instances of where they have done this in their work, though they will not elucidate these examples to show how they illustrate the points they support.

M2 and M3: all work will be approached methodically and with adequate preparation, and ideas will be worked out and presented neatly. Processes will be undertaken with care and, generally speaking, thought will be put into the work. Learners will make careful plans appropriate to their particular areas of responsibility and will demonstrate a clear understanding of the limits of the brief with respect to appropriate codes of practice. Learners will show facility and some confidence in relation to skills and the handling of equipment. They will still be working within recognisable generic conventions, but there will be some imaginative thought behind the work so that technical skills and relevant codes and conventions will be employed with some inventiveness. Learners will need little assistance, though typically they will still need some support when dealing with more complex technology or trying to apply more sophisticated techniques. Like the pass grade learner, they will respond positively to any help given.

M4: learners will explain what they have tried to accomplish and how they have worked to try to achieve what they have set out to do. They will explain decisions made and will exemplify these explanations through relevant and detailed reference to their own work, though the examples they give will not be further elucidated. Learners will have produced a detailed evaluation of role, process and the effectiveness of their organisation. This review will be informed by the feedback of others which will have been actively sought. Typically they will be able to evidence some changes to the product resulting from various constraints and unforeseen challenges. Learners will use technical vocabulary for the most part correctly, but may make mistakes or be unsure about usages at times.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction grade, learners must achieve all the pass, all the merit and all the distinction grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

D1: learners will provide a full explanation of the organisation and extent of a brief informed by extensive research that could include interviews, work shadowing, company information etc. They will reveal a detailed insight into their own role, duties and responsibilities together with a sophisticated understanding of the personal and professional qualities required to fulfil the brief. Demonstration in a practical context will show thorough consideration of all requirements and learners will give detailed explanations of how and why they need to be taken into account, exemplifying these explanations with fully elucidated instances of where they have done so in their work. Learners will also demonstrate excellent communication skills in their consideration or negotiation of the brief itself.

D2 and D3: learners will provide thorough research and planning which fully considers the outcome of the brief and their effective performance within it. They will demonstrate a full understanding of their own role and of the planning required to effectively fulfil this within the parameters of all relevant codes of practice. They will show an intelligent grasp of task requirements and a committed approach to their role within the brief. Their planning and execution will demonstrate near-professional skills resulting in a product that also approaches professional standards. Learners will apply their technical skills not just with imagination but with ingenuity and even elegance, and relevant codes and conventions will be used with occasionally surprising results. Distinction grade learners will be capable of working autonomously and effectively. The term 'working independently' means that they are able to work on their own initiative, do not need constant support or supervision, give the work their full commitment, work positively and cooperatively with others, and meet deadlines. In other words, they have the kind of self-management skills that would be expected of them in a professional context. Note also that this criterion should not be taken to mean that learners do not seek advice or that they work without discussing things with their tutor, but rather that they are not dependent upon the support of others and that when they take advice they weigh it carefully for themselves.

D4: learners will make an accurate and critically objective assessment of their own achievement with detailed reference to elucidated examples taken from that work. They will make critical comparisons of their own work with current or past practice in a relevant area (that is, the same genre or format as they have worked in). They will have played an important role and will fully evaluate their personal development in relation to brief and role requirements. They will actively seek out the views of others going beyond the obvious sources of feedback (the client and their tutor) by showing their product to likely members of the intended audience and will address the more complex issues such as the impact of professional and legal constraints upon their work. Technical vocabulary will be secure and used correctly and confidently at all times.

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 Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 – Understanding and Interpreting a Brief	Learners write an entry on working to a brief for a guide to working in the creative media sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class notes. • Preparatory notes for article. • Finished article.
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Assignment 2 – Responding to a Brief	Learners will work to a brief put forward by a client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All development notes. • Project schedules. • Proposal. • Budget. • Minutes of all meetings with client. • Production documentation. • Finished product
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 3 – Evaluation	As above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All review materials. • Presentation slides and notes. • Recording of presentation.

Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite:

Level 2	Level 3
	All production units.

Essential resources

Links with media industries would be the ideal resource for this unit if it were to be undertaken through work placements.

Work on competition briefs or external client briefs will require the use of studio and workshop facilities across a range of media activities such as print, journalism, photography, audio, video or publishing.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

If it is not possible to actually visit workplaces, guest speakers could be invited to talk to learners about specific briefs they have worked on. Alternatively, case studies, career conventions and work shadowing opportunities may provide opportunities for learners to understand the process by which professional briefs are negotiated, developed and completed.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	generating ideas and exploring possibilities when developing ideas to fulfil a brief trying out alternatives or new solutions and adapting ideas as circumstances change whilst working on the product asking questions during lessons to extend their thinking
Reflective learners	inviting feedback and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism throughout the process of working on a brief reviewing progress and learning to inform future progress when evaluating their work on completing a brief setting goals with success criteria for their production work
Self-managers	trying out alternatives or new solutions, following ideas through and adapting ideas as circumstances change while working on the brief dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work related demands throughout the process of working on a brief.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research when developing ideas for a brief
Team workers	if working in a group to produce a response to a brief, taking responsibility for their own role and managing discussions to reach agreements and achieve results
Effective participators	acting as an advocate for views and beliefs that may differ from their own if working on a brief that addresses social or political issues.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	developing background research from data provided through the internet or, through primary research, gathering data for use in understanding key areas of the professional brief including the needs and aspirations of the client, audience and market
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	storing and backing up all research data
Troubleshoot	able to overcome minor ICT issues such as difficulty with search engines and refining internet searches
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	developing background research from data provided through the internet or, through primary research, gathering data for use in understanding key areas of the professional brief including the needs and aspirations of the client, audience and market
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	preparing presentations as a result of research in response to client brief
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	collating research data
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	using a suitable format to present research data to a client in response to a brief
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	emailing important data and updating client regarding progress of brief
Mathematics	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	planning and interpreting data gained from audience or market research, or financial information such as budgets

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	consulting with others to identify suitable opportunities to work on professional briefs, and developing a variety of appropriate responses to a professional brief
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	analysing and interpreting research data
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	annotating research data writing up responses to client briefs.