

Unit 8: Production for Theatre Performance

Unit code:	F/600/0142
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	20
Guided learning hours:	120

● Aim and purpose

This unit develops learners' knowledge of the range of skills and processes required to successfully mount a major performance, with learners becoming part of the production team.

● Unit introduction

This unit is all about the backstage and offstage activities that have to happen so that a performance can take place in front of an audience. It acknowledges the fact that there are more jobs in the performing arts industry in the support areas than there are onstage and that all performances need a range of creative, production, technical and administrative support staff to make them happen.

Learners are given an opportunity to focus on their individual specialisations and strengths in a production role within the context of a full-scale theatre performance. The term 'theatre' is used here to mean any live performance event that takes place before an audience, in an appropriate venue. Learners are able to gain a realistic experience of carrying out a defined production role or roles.

The time allocated to the unit equates to the pre-production period leading up to a performance event and operations during the performance itself, and is a realistic comparison to the preparation time available to anyone undertaking a production role. Learners will bring the production skills they have already acquired and use this unit as the vehicle to engage in realistic tasks associated with putting on a show. The nature of the performing arts profession is such that skills have to be transferred and adapted to fit the demands of each new production that is encountered. This unit reflects the fact that each and every show has its own unique set of creative problems and challenges. The experience gained through this unit will provide a firm foundation to enable learners to meet such challenges in the future.

The requirements of this unit suggest that the delivery period and style may need to be flexible to cater for the needs of the production. Learners may need to work additional hours to support the rehearsal and production phases towards the end of the production process.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to implement plans for a performance to an audience
- 2 Know the requirements of an identified production role
- 3 Be able to undertake a production role
- 4 Know how to implement safe working practices when carrying out processes and using tools and equipment.

Unit content

1 Be able to implement plans for a performance to an audience

Making: presenting plans/ideas/processes to other members of the performance company; realising designs, marketing, publicity, financial ideas, technical ideas; working with other design, administrative, technical, craft and/or artistic practitioners; making adjustments to plans and ideas as a result of feedback; working within budget and time constraints

Communication: awareness of organisational structures; links between different individuals and departments; taking part in discussions and meetings; producing letters, memos, emails, drawings, plans, appropriate and meaningful documentation; making relevant phone calls

2 Know the requirements of an identified production role

Identified role or roles: eg set designer, costume designer, props designer, puppet designer, mask designer, makeup designer, hair designer, lighting designer, multimedia designer, sound designer, set builder, scenic artist, props maker, wig maker, puppet maker, mask maker, costume maker, makeup artist, hair stylist, company manager, production manager, stage management (SM, DSM, ASM), technical manager, wardrobe manager, marketing/publicity manager, event manager/front-of-house manager

Skills: eg visual, aural, manipulative, intellectual, creative, imaginative, communication, collaborative, conceptual, technical, organisational, physical, management, administrative, financial

3 Be able to undertake a production role

Role: fulfil the requirements of a role as a member of a creative, production or administrative team

Creative team: preparing and modifying the work ready for an audience leading up to opening and during run as appropriate

Production team: supervising final installation of production elements; making adjustments and corrections; note taking during technical, dress-runs and performances; reviewing and evaluating any problems or weaknesses; carrying out pre-show checks as required; use of production documentation during the performance eg cue sheets, prompt copy, show reports

Administrative team: organising photo calls, press night, front-of-house displays; preparing the auditorium; welcoming the audience; maintaining publicity campaign; producing financial returns

4 Know how to implement safe working practices when carrying out processes and using tools and equipment

Safe procedures for: handling; lifting; flying; communicating and coordinating with others; hazard identification; risk assessment and reduction

Tools and equipment: access equipment; hand tools; power tools; mechanical stage equipment

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 implement production plans [CT]	M1 implement production plans that show an awareness of different possibilities and requirements with minimal support and guidance	D1 independently implement production plans that show consideration of a range of different possibilities and requirements
P2 identify the requirements of a production role including the duties and responsibilities [IE]	M2 describe the requirements of a production role including the duties and responsibilities	D2 explain the requirements of a production role including the duties and responsibilities
P3 carry out a production role with support and guidance [TW, SM]	M3 carry out a production role with minimal support and guidance	D3 carry out a production role in a manner which demonstrates a high level of autonomy
P4 demonstrate safe working practices in pre-production and production, showing a basic awareness of relevant health and safety regulations, with support and guidance. [RL]	M4 demonstrate safe working practices in pre-production and production, showing a clear awareness of relevant health and safety regulations, with minimal support and guidance.	D4 demonstrate safe working practices in pre-production and production independently, showing a consistent and acute awareness of relevant health and safety regulations.

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

Learners will be part of a performance company and will be undertaking one of the roles indicated in the unit content.

The focus of this unit is that learners will carry out the production process in a practical manner. The actual production may be managed by centre staff or another group of learners, such as those studying *Production Management for Live Performance*. In this scenario, one group of learners, perhaps in the second year of their study, carry out the managerial and planning elements, and then learners on this unit take these plans and make the production happen. This will normally create a number of problems that must be solved, and generates a realistic, typical work-based simulation of professional practice.

There is scope within this unit for learners to modify the supplied plans if necessary to ensure success, and this can be assessed using the criteria descriptors.

The scale of the project undertaken will reflect the 120 guided learning hours available. There are variable factors regarding the nature of the production. These can be venue, target audiences and cohort/programme sizes, etc. Tutors will need to balance these concerns with the objective that learners should be afforded a realistic opportunity to engage with production roles and tasks they would expect to encounter working in the profession. The nature of the work undertaken will be determined by the requirements of the role. Members of the design or production management team, for example set, costume, sound, lighting, etc will be working closely with the production and technical team to ensure that their design ideas are realised and ready for opening night and subsequent performances. Members of the production and technical team will be supervising and implementing production plans and will take over the running of the show from technical rehearsal into performances. Members of the administrative/production management team will carry out the production and distribution of publicity material, manage the marketing campaign and ensure that the box office and front-of-house functions operate effectively. It is likely that the tutor will be in the role similar to that of an executive producer or artistic director for a production and will therefore have overall supervision and responsibility. It is also possible for learners to undertake a production role as part of a work placement or work-related project under the supervision of an employer (subject to age limitation and legislation).

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 and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme – whole class.
Health and safety primer.
Production Meeting 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">meeting with director and production manager(s) – ‘the vision’ideas and explanationsperformers’ needsbudgetvenue.
Work on initial concepts begins – learners’ first thoughts
Assignment 1: Initial Ideas – P1, M1, D1
Likely to be plans, sketches, drawings – offers assessment of P/M/D 1.
Production Meeting 2 – short presentations of initial ideas or solutions.
Production Meeting 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">tutor guidance on: venue, date, budgetagreement on selected treatment.
Assignment 2: Roles, Duties and Responsibilities – P2, M2, D2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">exploration of roles required for productionrole distributionproduction timeline produced.
Assignment 3: Workshop Sessions Commence (in parallel with rehearsals) – P3, M3, D3
Set construction and build starts.
Work continues.
Work continues.
Technical get-in day.
Set and prop finishing – technical continues.
Production Week – P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">technical rehearsal daydress rehearsal dayshow 1show 2show 3show 4show 5.
Post-production – P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">de-rig and strikede-brief.

Assessment

Criterion 1 could be evidenced through consideration of events that took place during the initial production planning stages. Learners will be producing all manner of plans, sketches and formal documents. Some may be produced as a response to designs provided, others may be independent products. Their contribution verbally at these meetings is equally important. In the context of this unit, which is intended as real work on a production, the word 'plans' could be understood as either conventional drawn or written plans or as a statement of a course of action, perhaps agreed at a meeting. As evidence will be required, recording these meetings is important, but it is also suggested that a more formal 'minute' style approach is taken, ensuring that courses of action agreed to are recorded for future reference (or used as evidence of learner contribution). The required feature for P1 is that the plans produced must be workable. Learners may need support and guidance from a member of staff or another learner to achieve the goal. Learners who are aware of alternative methods to reach the goal, and requires minimal support and guidance, has access to the M1 grade. Learners who can work independently, considering alternative approaches have the requirements to be awarded D1.

In this section it is important for the assessor to be able to isolate who actually did the work being assessed. As an example, consider a production where a learner is presented with a virtually complete plan by the director, production manager, or other learner carrying out the role of designer. Their own contribution is what is being assessed may be alterations, changes, modifications or additions to the supplied plan, not the design itself. Assessors will need to implement systems to ensure credit is correctly awarded.

Criterion 2 relates to production roles that the learners will be carrying out. They need to be aware of exactly what their role requires them to do. Some learners will be able to identify the requirements of their role, and produce a simple list of duties and responsibilities. This is required for P2 to be awarded. Adding further information about the role and being able to describe what their role entails gives access to the M2 grade. To achieve D2, the learners are required to be able to explain the role in some detail, the duties involved, and the responsibility that is attached to the role.

Once the production phase begins, and learners start to take on their role, it is possible to commence assessment for criterion 3. From this point, learners start to produce elements that can be assessed. As an example, learners carrying out the roles of carpenters and scenic artists may start to build the scenery (or if it is a small team the scenic designer may have to complete these tasks), the costume team start collecting, hiring and producing costumes, the sound team may start to produce sound effects, etc. Some learners may require continual guidance and may find the work difficult because everyone seems to be working on different projects. If they carry out the role, with continual guidance, then this is sufficient for a P3 grade to be awarded. The likely scenario would be that they ask what they have to do. The tutor explains, and suggests methods to achieve the goal. Eventually the goal is reached, with the assistance of staff and perhaps other learners. To gain access to M3, learners will demonstrate they can carry out the role with minimal support. The D3 grade is reserved for learners who can operate independently – once given the task they operate with autonomy, only requesting support in areas that require the authority of the staff. As an example, learners tasked with preparing the list to be supplied to a hire company, who carry out research into who may be able to offer the equipment, get prices and then suggest a course of action to the tutor or budget holder have shown evidence of autonomy, even though they are not able to complete the process – placing the order. In contrast, learners who produces the hire list which contains incomplete data, or has errors in it that require correction by the tutor cannot be awarded D3, even if it is a complex document, due to the additional support required to complete it.

Criterion 4 is concerned with safe working practices. To achieve a pass, learners must be able to work safely. It is suggested that as these safe working practices are embedded in the work being carried out, assessors regularly check their progress. The requirement for learners being aware of health and safety regulations is paramount in the delivery of this unit. Assessment of P4 should be by direct observation (by the assessor) or by recording their work processes in some manner, for later assessment. As safety is so important, it may be useful to design a simple check list that allows the assessor to record what was seen and at what level – during the workshop sessions and while the production is taking place.

For P4, basic awareness of regulations is required, and the manner in which learners carry out their role must be safe. Learners that have demonstrated awareness of safety rules have access to M4. Consistency and acute awareness of health and safety are the requirement for the D4 grade. It is important to note that for all grade levels, learners must demonstrate safe working practices – it is not possible to have levels of safety. They are either safe or not.

It is unlikely, but there could be learners who are unable to fulfil certain roles due to the impact of criterion 4. For example, learners with a fear of heights may be unable to meet P4 for valid reasons. In this case the centre should find an alternative role for them, or perhaps modify their role, as long as the modification does not then exclude them from achieving one of the other criteria.

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 Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 Initial Ideas	The first thoughts on the production – in response to the production management brief, learners will produce plans, sketches drawings initially in a production meeting, expanded individually.	Learner-produced documentation. Tutor observation. Video and/or audio recording. Photographs.
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2 Roles, Duties and Responsibilities	At this point learners are starting to take on their selected roles for the production.	Learner-produced documentation. Research.
P3, M3, D3	Workshop Sessions Commence	Learners begin to carry out the duties of their selected/ allocated roles.	Physical artefacts. Tutor observation. Learner-produced documentation. Video/photographic evidence.
P4, M4, D4	Health and Safety	The continuous process of maintaining and monitoring the health and safety.	Tutor observation. Video/photographic evidence.
P3, M3, D3 P4, M4, D4	Production Week and Post-production	Learners carry out duties during tech and dress rehearsals, through five performances, and in post-production.	Tutor observation. Video/photographic evidence.

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

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Presenting Performing Arts Work	Crewing for Stage Performance	Production Management for Live Performance
	Production Arts Production Process	Production Arts Planning
	Design for Performance	Production Arts Workshop

This unit also has links with the following National Occupational Standards:

Live Events and Promotion

- LE3 – Support the licensing and permissions application process for a live event
- LE6 – Support the planning of live events
- LE7 – Identify suppliers of materials and equipment for the running of a live event
- LE12 – Assist with the implementation of safety and security at a live event
- LE16 – Manage changes to a live event schedule

Technical Theatre

- CPD1 – Improving your skills
- CPD2b – Ensure that you and your team keep up to date with the technical and production areas of the live arts
- CPD4a – Contributing to technical production work for performance
- CPD4b – Overseeing technical production work for performance
- HSI – Working safely.

Essential resources

Learners will require access to:

- suitable production equipment and materials
- workshop and rehearsal space
- a range of library, video, sound, photographic and historical materials
- a performance venue for the production; the chosen venue for the production may be a suitable performance space within the centre, or an outside venue with appropriate facilities
- a range of appropriate technical equipment is essential as is access to ICT facilities and the internet.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local theatres and other entertainment venues. Centres with learners aged under 16 need to be aware that placements or real work experience is rarely available in theatres due to legal restrictions.

The Stage newspaper is a source of information and situations vacant in the UK and Europe. Backstage, performance and music positions are frequently advertised – there is also an online facility at www.thestage.co.uk.

Details of summer schools and other training opportunities can be found at www.abtt.co.uk.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Fraser N – *Stage Lighting and Design: A Practical Guide* (The Crowood Press, 1999) ISBN 9781861262486

Ionazzi D A – *The Stagecraft Handbook* (North Light Books, 2001) ISBN 9781558704046

Palmer S – *Essential Guide to Stage Management, Lighting and Sound* (Hodder Arnold, 2000) ISBN 9780340721131

Parker W, Wolf R et al – *Scene Design and Stage Lighting* (Wadsworth, 2002) ISBN 9780495501909

Piper T and Orton K – *Model Making for the Stage: A Practical Guide* (The Crowood Press, 2004) ISBN 9781861266903

Thomas K – *Backstage Guide to Stage Management: Running a Show from First Rehearsal to Last Performance* (Backstage Books, 1999) ISBN 9780823088102

Websites

www.abtt.org.uk

Association of British Theatre Technicians

www.ald.org.uk

Association of Lighting Designers

www.blue-room.org.uk

Blue Room Backstage Forum

www.psa.org.uk

Production Services Association

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 ...
Independent enquirers	considering the individual role they will be carrying out and the attached duties and responsibilities
Creative thinkers	producing the production plans
Reflective learners	researching health and safety issues
Team workers	carrying out their role in the production process
Self-managers	carrying out their role in the production process.

● 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 their ideas drawing CAD plans and producing production documentation
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching roles considering how the ideas formulated will meet the production needs investigating health and safety legislation
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 	compiling order forms, collecting and re-ordering supplying company price information
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	communicating with other members of a production group
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	producing budget requirements using estimation and calculation to assist the development of the production using calculation to scale drawings to be used by themselves and other team members dealing with planning their time

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responding to ideas formulated by other learners doing planning and preparation work attending production meetings giving presentations
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responding to written cues and scripts considering written requirements from other learners using production documentation
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing cue sheets and lists writing responses to the criteria involving roles producing production documentation.