

WINNER
CASE STUDY

SAM POPE
2019 BTEC CREATIVE MEDIA STUDENT OF THE YEAR

The winner of the 2019 BTEC Creative Media Student of the Year award, Sam Pope, hails from the Bath Studio School, where he has been studying for a BTEC Diploma in Creative Digital Media Production (TV & Film). Nominator Max Weedon, Head of Sixth Form at Bath Studio, describes what makes Sam such a deserving winner: "Sam has shown an unusual skill in creating short films and has been given a role in an upcoming professional feature film with award-winning director Kae Bahar. From starting with zero film ability in Level 2, Sam has absolutely flourished on the vocational BTEC Creative Media course to become a serious talent. Sam also makes high quality film posters and works tirelessly to improve."

Sam offers a great example of how transformative BTEC can be; helping students from all backgrounds develop an interest into a passion and indeed into a vocation. As a SEN student on the ASD spectrum, BTEC has allowed Sam to discover his talent and develop it, gaining recognition in the professional industry even before graduation and mentoring fellow students.

"Sam writes, directs, edits and produces short films of exceptionally quality," Max enthuses, adding, "He brings a love of the subject to every lesson, is always early and often stays behind late to work on new films. Sam is endlessly patient with other students and has mentored many of his classmates into becoming a highly effective film team."

Sam - who credits his passion for filmmaking to the work of Stanley Kubrick - chose to study BTEC because of its industry focus, and because the practical aspect gave him real life experience of film-making and TV production.

"BTEC has helped me to develop my career ambitions by encouraging me to create a portfolio of short films in different genres of my own choice, for which I created every aspect – from script to final edit. This directly led to me being recruited to join a feature film crew with international award winning director Kae Bahar who was so impressed with my BTEC portfolio that he has been mentoring me personally."

Of course BTEC courses are only as good as the professionals teaching them and the students following them, and Sam is keen to state his gratitude to Mr Weedon for his encouragement, and for stretching him to create industry standard films to submit to short film competitions. He is also justifiably proud of his own achievements, saying "I have overcome having Aspergers to succeed on this course and have been a role model to a lot of my peers who also have learning needs. I inspire them and help them to achieve in ways that they never thought were possible."

On top of his talent, it is Sam's desire to 'give back' and to help others that really tips him over the edge as the winner of this award. He has shared his success, helping two classmates get work experience on Kae Bahar's feature film crew after helping them improve their film work. He has also been using his filmmaking to raise awareness of local, national and global importance - from mental health awareness and local community issues to cancer research.

With 15 years' experience teaching BTEC, Mr Weedon has plenty of experience of recognising talent and commitment. "Sam shows the same level of talent and achievements as a previous BTEC student... UK number one single music student Gabrielle Aplin," he says.

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