



# POST-PRODUCTION TECHNICAL OPERATOR APPRENTICESHIP

The Post-Production Technical Operator Apprenticeship is aimed at:

- Technical operators
- Edit assistants
- Media assistants
- Machine-room operators

Working in:

- Post-production facility companies
- Indie production company in-house post departments
- Broadcasters
- Content delivery and international localisation companies

By industry, for industry

- Available now for employers to train their staff
- Written by industry experts & employers to exactly fit our needs
- Teaching not just the “how” but also the “why”
- Rigorous and relevant training fully funded by government and industry
- Fully accredited qualification which will be recognised as the gold standard by apprentices and employers
- Theory training delivered in blocks at a specialist training provider, to ensure minimal disruption in the workplace, and reinforced by on-the-job practical experience at employers’ premises



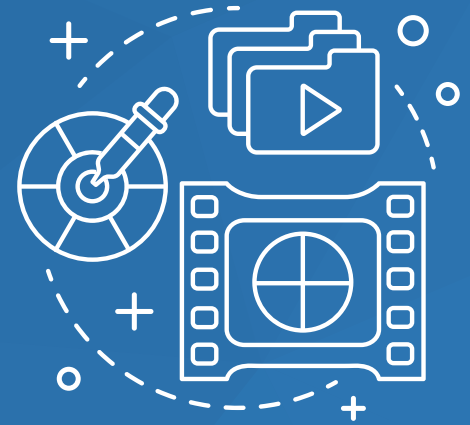
# What's In The Apprenticeship Course?

All post-facilities have their own bespoke working practices, workflows and choice of software and hardware. Apprentices will gain this local knowledge on-the-job. However, the underlying technical theory is the same for all and this is what will be taught off-the-job by the training provider.

You can view the full course content online:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/post-production-technical-operator-v1-0>

but here are some of the highlights...



## Video technology

The nature of light, image capture devices, pixels, resolution, aspect ratio, greyscale and gamma, RGB, YUV, colour sampling, colour gamut, HDR, LUTs, interlace and progressive, frame rates, fractional frame rates, alpha channels, SDI connections, picture monitoring and waveform measurement technology.

## Audio technology

The nature of sound and hearing, microphone to loudspeaker signal path, audio metering, PPM and R128 loudness, A to D and D to A, dynamic range compression.

## Metadata and timecode

EBU/SMPTE timecode, DF and NDF, VITC, BITC. Descriptive and technical metadata. The use of metadata and other forms of content documentation. Unambiguous labelling of content, clock numbers and file names.

## Codecs and files

The structure of and appropriate application of audio, video and graphics file formats in common use in production, post-production and delivery. The principles of encoding, transcoding and compression of digital audio and video. Encode and transcode audio and video data to required specifications.

## Edit assistant operations

The principles of non-linear editing systems. Ingest and export media content, syncing audio to video and applying LUTs. Arrange media content in agreed folder structures, using consistent file naming conventions. Export finished content or work-in-progress with metadata. Manage access by clients to shared storage systems. Transfer data securely between client supplied sources and post-production storage systems,

performing data integrity and virus checks. Prepare graphics and still images for ingest using software such as Photoshop where basic manipulation is required. Dispatch and Receipt protocols.

## Troubleshooting

Set-up post-production editing equipment using appropriate cables and connectors. Think creatively and logically to solve technical issues. Contribute to a process of continual improvement of workflow and technique. Provide operational assistance and first-line support to creative personnel and problem solve within agreed governance constraints.

## Networks and storage

The principles of computer systems, IP networks and shared storage systems as applied in post-production. High speed file transfer across LAN and WAN. The media data lifecycle including production storage, shared storage, nearline storage and archive, whether on premises or in the cloud. Bandwidth requirements and disk configurations necessary to ensure reliable playback and record performance at the required resolution for one or more clients from shared storage or directly connected storage. Good digital content governance, resilience, RAID, security and confidentiality. Backup, archive and restore media, sequences and metadata.

## Data conforming and finishing

Perform and check data conforms of sequences prior to colour grading or online editing. Transfer picture data accurately between grading and editing systems, ensuring the data integrity of content and sequences. Relink ingested media to updated sequences as editorial changes occur. Prepare and transfer audio data to the dubbing suite. Perform basic editing





functions for the preparation of media and sequences for creative processes, or for formatting of finished content for delivery (e.g. adding line-up signals, idents, patching in QC fixes, audio laybacks)

### **Quality control**

Technical standards and customer specifications used for UK and international delivery of programmes, films and commercials to cinema, broadcast and online distribution platforms (e.g. AS-11 DPP, IMF, DCP etc). Textless backgrounds and audio stems. Flashing images and stimuli causing photo sensitive epilepsy. The intelligibility of dialogue. Consistent quality control using eyes and ears and real time measurement. AQC devices. Decide what is acceptable and what is not, depending on the context of the material, its intended use and the required technical specifications. Produce accurate and concise QAR reports with indications of mandatory failures, advisory warnings and client approved exceptions

### **Legacy technology and archive material**

Legacy video standards (e.g. SD PAL and NTSC) and their conversion to contemporary standards. Legacy video and audio tape formats and how to integrate into contemporary file-based workflows (e.g. Digitising and playout).

### **Working practices**

Understand the commercial context of post-production with the film, TV and advertising industry. Develop a strong work ethic and commitment to meet the standards required. Deliver good customer service in a creative environment. Understand the importance of accurate, effective and timely communication with own team, other departments and customers to ensure efficient progress of the work in hand. Ensure a safe working environment for themselves, colleagues and customers. Demonstrate a passion for post-production, the media industry and its productions - proactively keeping up to date with latest developments within the industry.

The apprenticeship standard which the industry Trailblazer group have created, has been approved for delivery by the government's Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. The full standard defines the technical knowledge, working behaviours and industry skills which will be taught. There's also a detailed plan for the depth and range of the assessment which the apprentices are expected to pass at the end of the course. These are both published in full on the IfATE website:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/post-production-technical-operator-v1-0>

# What's Is An Apprenticeship?



## How is an apprenticeship different from in-house training?

The government have defined an apprenticeship as 80% on-the-job training with an employer plus 20% off-the-job learning from a registered and approved training provider. The course content meets an agreed high quality “apprenticeship standard” which has been developed by a group of industry experts and is government approved.

Apprentices undergo an external independent assessment at the end to demonstrate whether they have achieved full operational competence and receive an officially recognised qualification. Because an apprenticeship course is tightly regulated and monitored for quality, it can be funded by public money so employers can get full or partial subsidy to cover the training and assessment costs.

## Who can be a post-production apprentice?

Anybody, even if they already have a degree as long as it is not in post-production, if the apprenticeship teaches them new skills, they can be enrolled on the course.

## Is there an age limit?

There's no upper age limit but apprentices must be at least 16, although for the post-production apprenticeship we anticipate most will be between 18 and 23. It's up to employers to decide according to their recruitment preferences.

## How long does the post-production apprenticeship last?

The apprenticeship is 12 months in duration plus a little time to take the assessment.

## Can an existing member of staff become an apprentice?

Yes absolutely. You don't have to recruit someone new specifically to be an apprentice. You can use an apprenticeship to upskill an existing member of staff, or for promoting your runners. It is important that the apprentice performs the job that they are training for. They shouldn't be runners who are training as tech-ops in their spare time.

## Can I employ an apprentice in any job role?

This brochure is specifically about apprenticeships for Post-Production Technical Operators, but there are now a wide range of apprenticeships available to meet the business needs of the film and TV industry.

Apprenticeships available now include:

- **Junior 2D VFX Artist**
- **Junior 3D VFX Artist**
- **Assistant Technical Director (VFX)**
- **VFX Supervisor**
- **Junior Animator**
- **Storyboard Artist**
- **Junior Content Producer**
- **Broadcast Production Assistant**
- **Production Manager**  
(incl. VFX, animation and post-production options)
- **Production Coordinator**  
(incl. VFX, animation and post-production options)

... and more are in development like VFX Technical Director and Post-production engineer.



# Funding Training

## Who pays for the training and assessment?

The good news is that you can get up to 100% funding to cover the off-the-job training and assessment costs.

Large employers who are Apprenticeship Levy payers can use funds that they have already committed to their own levy accounts. In other words, if your payroll is greater than £3m per year, you have already paid for this via your levy contributions, so you're probably keen to reclaim it to cover your training costs.

Non-levy paying employers can access full 100% funding to cover the training and assessment costs via UK Screen Alliance's Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund (ALT Fund), where unused apprenticeship levy contributions made by large companies are recycled for use by small companies. It's effectively free training.

## What does it cost?

The cost of this Post Production Technical Operator Apprenticeship and End Point Assessment (EPA) totals £9,000 for about 40 days training which is very cost effective and an absolute bargain once you factor in the potential 100% subsidy or the fact that you have already paid for this via your levy and can claw it all back.

## Could I get this subsidy to cover my existing in-house training scheme?

Unfortunately, not really. You could apply to become your own in-house approved training provider but that's an arduous process involving OFSTED regulation and inspection. You would also need to teach the approved apprenticeship standard and your apprentices would need to be assessed by an independent external examiner. Overall, it's very unlikely to be a cost-effective option, unless you are training several dozen apprentices every year.

*"This Apprenticeship course has already delivered both technical and operational knowledge at a much higher level than can be taught on-the-job, within the rigour of a structured syllabus.*

Rowan Bray, MD, Clear Cut Pictures



## UK Screen Alliance ALT Fund

Funding for training apprentices is not just available for Apprenticeship Levy paying companies. Employers who don't pay the levy or have only a small amount in their levy pot, can also access funding. Government will pay up to 95% of training costs for SMEs, but UK Screen Alliance has an even better offer and can arrange for 100% of the training costs to be funded.

Large employers have found it difficult to spend all the credits they have made to their own Levy accounts. In order to stop money being returned to HM Treasury and to benefit the wider industry, UK Screen Alliance have set up the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund, or ALT Fund. Large employers have pledged a minimum of £150,000 of unused levy to the ALT Fund to enable smaller employers to train apprentices and increase the skills-pool of the entire industry.

For further details see:

[www.ukscreenalliance.co.uk/campaigns/alt-fund-transferring-apprenticeship-levy-to-smaller-companies/](http://www.ukscreenalliance.co.uk/campaigns/alt-fund-transferring-apprenticeship-levy-to-smaller-companies/)

## Employing Apprentices



### Who employs the apprentice?

Apprentices are part of your staff as full-time PAYE employees. They can have permanent employment or be on a fixed-term contract to cover the period of their apprenticeship which is at least a year in duration. If you employ them beyond their apprenticeship that's up to you but having invested in their training, it's likely that you will want to do this.

### Do apprentices get paid?

Yes, apprentices' wages are paid by their employers and cannot be paid out of the Apprenticeship Levy funds. It's up to the employer to set the rate which must be above the national minimum wage.

The apprentice is paid as a full-time member of staff, so they receive their salary even when they are attending their off-site training. Additionally, they are entitled to all of your usual benefits - holidays, paid sick leave, pensions, etc.

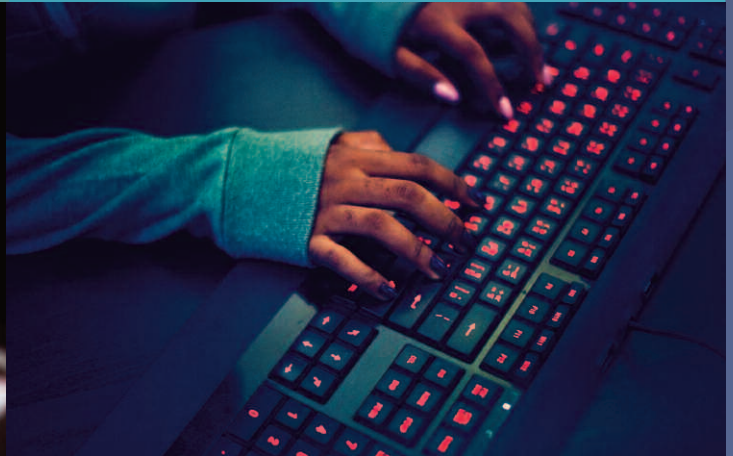
### Are apprentices the same as other employees?

Apprentices should keep the same hours as your other employees and are subject to the same HR policies and procedures and appraisals.

*“Our apprentice has been able to fast track into the technical team. Knowing that he has the theory behind the work provides an increased level of confidence.”*

Jo Beighton, MD, Platform Post Production

## Learning On-The-Job And Off-The-Job



### Will my apprentice spend all their time at my company?

80% of their time will be in work learning on-the-job and 20% of the time they will be in formal education at London South Bank University's (LSBU) Southwark Campus at Elephant & Castle. LSBU have been chosen as the preferred training supplier for this apprenticeship by an industry panel to ensure the quality, viability and cost effectiveness of this bespoke training.

### When are the off-site training days? I can't have someone being out of the facility every week.

The apprentice's time at LSBU is scheduled as block release three times over the year, and you will receive the schedule in advance so that you can plan ahead. They certainly won't be disappearing on you every week! The off-the-job learning will total 40 days over a 12-month period.

### What does the off-the job training cover?

The off-the-job training at LSBU will cover the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the approved apprenticeship standard which can be downloaded from the IfATE website. LSBU will be delivering this in conjunction with recognised industry trainers. This learning is expected to be reinforced on-the-job by the employer. Each business will have its own workflows, systems and practices, so employers will teach local knowledge. The off-the-job training, whilst rooted in practical operations, will concentrate on the theory behind the practice. We are aiming to create technical operators that have real in-depth knowledge rather than just button-pushers.

# The Trailblazer Employers

The Post-Production Technical Operator apprenticeship has been developed by a Trailblazer group of employers led by Rowan Bray, the MD of Clear Cut Pictures. Leading post-production companies which provided their knowledge and insight to shape the course include Framestore, Molinare, MPC, Technicolor, Company3, Encore, Fifty Fifty, Edit Store, Motion Pictures Solutions, Platform Post, Run VT, Flix Facilities, Pinewood Studios and West Digital.

The UK Screen Alliance has been deeply involved in the development from the start and highly recommends this apprenticeship to the industry.



## AIM Assessment

AIM has over 30 years' experience in the assessment and qualifications industry and as an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO), specialises in the assessment of apprentices across the creative and cultural industries.

All assessors are industry practitioners so you can be confident that your apprentice(s) will be assessed with knowledge and understanding of their employment. Assessors are additionally trained in undertaking assessment.

AIM's role is to:

- **Work with the Trailblazer group to design the knowledge test and practical demonstration tasks to match the agreed Assessment Plan.**
- **Mark and grade overall apprentice achievement.**
- **Ensure a fair and equitable end-point assessment for all apprentices regardless of their work context.**
- **Provide support materials, including sample papers and guides for the apprentice, employer and training provider**

## End-Point Assessment

### When and how does an apprentice qualify?

Throughout an apprenticeship, the apprentice, the employer and the training provider review the progress of the apprentice against agreed milestones and the published apprenticeship standard.

This trio agrees when the apprentice is "ready" to progress to the End Point Assessment, (EPA) which includes a multiple-choice knowledge test, a professional discussion with an independent industry experienced assessor and a demonstration of practical tasks. Industry advisors have set the expected standards that must be demonstrated by each apprentice.

An apprentice's performance must be assessed by an assessor that is independent of the employer and training provider. The Trailblazer group have selected AIM Assessment to carry out this role.

### What qualification do apprentices receive?

A qualified apprentice will have achieved full operational competence. The Post-Production Technical Operator Apprenticeship is officially recognised as a Level 4 qualification, the same level as an HNC. An apprentice can achieve a Pass or a Distinction. If they fail any part of the assessment, they can be referred for a re-sit.



# The Application Process

## When do applications open for the Post-Production apprenticeship?

The Post-Production Technical Operator (PPTO) apprenticeship is open for applications until 15th February 2021.

## When does the course start?

The first day of off-the job training will be 29th March 2021 at LSBU.

Depending on demand there may be an opportunity to run further cohorts starting later in the year and in locations beyond London.

We are hoping that the 2021 training will be delivered in person at LSBU, but the course can be delivered remotely in the event of Covid-19 disruption. We achieved this in 2020 so we are confident that we can do so again if required in 2021.

## How many apprentices can I have?

As many as you like to fit the needs and capabilities of your business. Employers will need to work together to aggregate demand as a cohort of at least 10 is needed to make the course viable and cost effective.

## Does the apprentice need any prior qualifications?

The statutory minimum qualification required is Level 2 Maths and English (i.e. GCSE or equivalent) and applicants will need to be able to show their certificates as proof. Employers may decide to set their own higher qualification standards for employment and in practice we would expect the applicant to have at least some relevant A levels.

## How do I apply?

Employers interested in enrolling apprentices and using apprenticeship levy funds for the London based courses should initially contact UK Screen Alliance by emailing [apprenticeships@ukscreenalliance.co.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ukscreenalliance.co.uk) who will collate applications before passing on to LSBU.

*“The Post Production Apprenticeship has delivered outstanding training and education. Our apprentice has gained the skillset to make them a fantastic member of our technical team.”*

Alex Meade, Operations Director, Fifty Fifty Post Production



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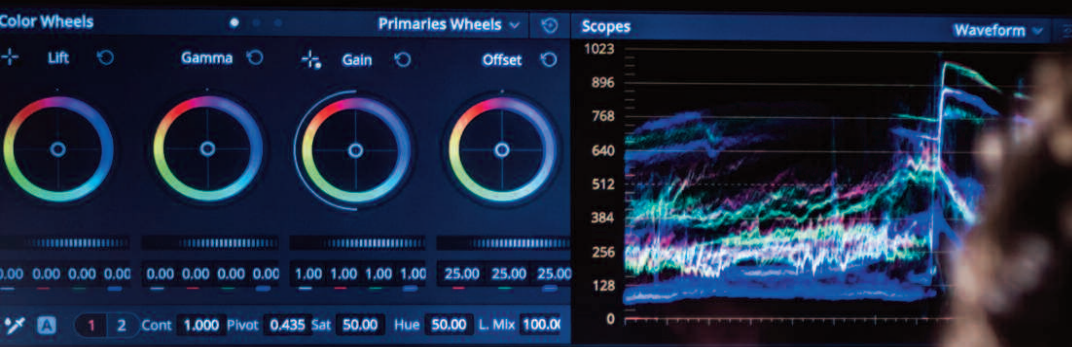
**London  
South Bank  
University**

## The Trailblazer Employers

London South Bank University (LSBU) has a successful history of supporting employer sponsored students, with one third studying part-time, one of the highest numbers of any university. LSBU has made a strategic commitment to champion vocational education including apprenticeships and currently works with over 1,000 organisations, training around 6,500 employees, and employer-sponsored students. The organisation is experienced at managing employer relationships and ensuring training meets employer and business needs.

LSBU already run a successful MA in Editing and Post Production and a BA in Film Practice with a focus on employability and industry engagement.





## Acknowledgments

The Trailblazer group wishes to thank the ScreenSkills High-end TV Skills Fund who funded the development of the Post-Production Technical Operator Apprenticeship, with contributions from UK High-end TV productions.

This prospectus is supported by ScreenSkills with National Lottery funds awarded by the BFI as part of its Future Film Skills strategy.

Special thanks to all the employers who gave up considerable time to provide invaluable insight, expertise and experience to the Trailblazer group during the development of the apprenticeship.

