

Options with film and photography

Your skills

Studying film and photography gives you a diverse range of skills including:

- creative expression;
- the ability to initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work in various media such as digital photography or audio visual formats;
- the ability to work flexibly and independently with self-discipline and self-direction;
- communication including interpersonal skills and the ability to present and argument;
- how to evaluate and reflect on your own work;
- teamwork including listening, contributing and leadership;
- project management including financial awareness;
- problem-solving;
- working to a deadline;
- entrepreneurship;
- research;
- technical skills such as IT, media production, multi-media and web-based technologies.

Courses are likely to explore the following:

- visual representation;
- modes of communication through various channels;
- cultural and communicative activities that shape everyday social, political and psychological life;
- how identities are constructed and contested through engagements with culture;
- an understanding of communication, representation and meaning within society;
- the economic issues that affect the creative and media industries;
- the construction of public and private culture and how people engage with it;
- access to and inclusion within the media;
- professional practice within these industries.

Courses also teach a blend of history, ideology, contemporary development and debate. Film and photography may be studied as part of a joint honours degree and students graduate with a wide and varied skills base, which they may apply in different employment sectors.

Consider the skills developed on your course as well as through your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile. Take a look at [applications, CVs and interviews](#) for some useful tips.

Job options

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Film/video production manager](#) - responsible for organising support for the team and resolving the day-to-day problems of filming. Typical work activities include organising the location/set, props and equipment, accommodation and catering, crew hire and employment contracts and tallying the running costs.
- [Location manager](#) - makes all the practical arrangements for filming and photographic shoots that take place outside the studio. Productions happen in a wide range of locations; location managers need to research, identify and organise appropriate sites. This involves working to

strict budgetary and time limits and maintaining a high standard of health, safety and security.

- [Programme researcher, broadcasting/film/video](#) - provides support to the producer and production team, contributing ideas for programmes, sourcing contacts and contributors, verifying and preparing information for film, television and radio productions. The researcher has a responsibility for fact checking, writing briefs for presenters and ensuring that there is adherence to appropriate legislation relating to the production.
- [Photographer](#) - produces images that communicate a specific message to the viewer. Their purpose may be artistic, commercial or editorial. There is no such thing as a general photographer; most professional photographers specialise in one area, e.g. fine art, fashion, advertising, editorial or social photography.
- [Runner, broadcasting/film/video](#) - an entry-level position, the most junior role in the production department. There is no single job description, as runners undertake whatever basic tasks are required to ensure the smooth running of the production process. Responsibilities generally include tea making, transporting scripts and hire equipment, taking messages and looking after guests.
- [Television camera operator](#) - works with digital, electronic and film cameras in multi- and single-camera operational conditions, producing pictures for directors by combining the use of complex technology with creative visual skills. Studio based or on location.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Advertising art director](#) - sometimes known as 'creatives', they are responsible for producing innovative concepts and ideas for advertising campaigns in all kinds of media, including television, radio, posters, press and direct mail. They are also involved in internet advertising including viral marketing and micro sites such as YouTube or Facebook.
- [Broadcast engineer](#) - a broadcast engineer operates, maintains, updates and repairs hardware and systems used across television, radio, podcasts and other channels, ensuring that programmes are broadcast on time to the highest possible level of quality.
- [Picture researcher/editor](#) - finds images for a range of print and electronic publications, including books, magazines, newspapers, television, multimedia products and internet websites. The picture researcher/editor is briefed on the image needed, the format, the target audience and the budget available.
- [Props manager](#) - helps to define the style and look of film, video and theatrical productions. Working as part of the art and design team, the props manager is responsible for the selection, management and preparation of a wide variety of furnishings, furniture, ornaments and other objects.
- [Vision mixer](#) - technicians who work at a console in the gallery or studio control room. They are responsible for controlling the vision mixing desk: the pictures that the viewer sees on their television are the work of the vision mixer.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Remember that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#), a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Graduates from film and photography degrees may find their subject useful in the following careers areas:

- the creative industries including broadcast media (television and radio including online and digital broadcasting);
- film making including feature films, indie (independent) and documentaries;
- fashion or interiors photography and styling;
- art direction for production including sets and locations;
- advertising and marketing;
- secretarial, clerical and administration.

Graduates enter technical, operational and creative areas, as well as taking on roles in support functions, immediately after their degree.

Statistics show that in 2008, six months after graduation, 30% of film and photography graduates were professionals in the arts, design, culture and sports sector while 22% were working in the retail sector. Just over half of graduates were working full time (including self-employment).

Where are the jobs?

Popular employers of film and photography graduates in full-time positions are:

- large broadcasters such as the Channel 4, Sky and the BBC;
- websites;
- communications companies;
- independent production companies;
- public sector organisations such as universities;
- charities;
- publishers;
- advertising and marketing agencies;
- self-employment.

For further details, look into the following sectors:

- [Advertising, marketing and PR](#);
- [Media](#);
- [Creative arts](#).

Opportunities within these sectors may be advertised via company websites, recruitment agencies and in magazines and newspapers, or through work experience. However in these sectors you are very likely to find employment through work experience, which allows you to develop your skills and build your own network of contacts. The ability to network is crucial to finding work within the media and creative industries.

See [industry insights](#) for further information on possibilities in other employment areas.

Statistics are collected every year by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>) to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree... what next?](#)

Further study

Over 5% of graduates from film and photography degree courses go on to postgraduate study.

There is a range of MA and postgraduate diplomas available in

the UK and internationally. These courses may help develop the skills needed for independent practice. Film making and photography are very competitive fields. Postgraduate study may demonstrate a level of commitment that could improve your employability.

Related areas of postgraduate research, study and technical training commonly entered by graduates in this discipline include sound and light engineering, production, editing, journalism and creative enterprise.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Find courses and research](#) of interest to you; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Types of work experience or voluntary work that may be particularly relevant for careers that follow on from this degree subject include:

- running for film, radio and television productions;
- assisting the photographer on a shoot;
- assisting a producer or director on set or location;
- assisting a broadcast engineer;
- making your own film or audio production;
- working in a photography studio, picture agency or retouching agency.

Volunteering in these areas will help you learn technical skills and make resources and facilities available to you which you might not access on your course.

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- See [industry insights](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- You may want to investigate [self-employment](#) or [flexible working](#).
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you are thinking about taking time out, volunteering or travelling consider a [gap year](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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