

As a student working in Media Arts you are required to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of yourself, and of other persons whom your acts or omissions may affect. This guide offers instruction for applying safe working practice when using our media labs, editing rooms and sound design studios.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment is essential to effective health and safety management. A [general risk assessment for post-production operations](#) has been conducted and is published on our website.

There are a number of significant hazards that need to be controlled when using the post production facilities.

- Preventing slips and trips
- Lone working
- Fire safety
- Electrical safety
- Using display screens
- Stress at work

In general, there is relatively high incidence of injury caused through poorly configured computer workstations. All members of College staff who use computers are required to have their workstations assessed by trained assessors so they may be configured to suit individual requirements.

While we have taken on board some guidance for the post production rooms you will be using, by nature of the multiple user provision we are unable to tailor them to suit individual needs. Please refer to the HSE guidance on using display screens so you are aware of common problems and how to reduce their impact:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>

The following instructions have been written so you may apply the relevant safe systems of work when using the Media Arts Centre facilities.

Planning

Post production can turn into a frustrating and emotionally demanding activity if you fail to allow adequate time to do the work. Many potential issues can be eliminated if you seek advice from technical staff while you are planning your shoot so that particular post-production techniques can be managed effectively when you are recording your footage. You will also be better able to gauge the proportion of time you will need to allow for the various stages of post-production.

Because others will be making demands on the facilities when you are most likely to need to use them yourself, you are advised to keep ahead of schedule as best you can. You can help reduce the potential pressure by keeping your personal schedule as clear as possible during the periods you expect to be in post-production and by taking as much opportunity as possible to complete other course work early so you can focus your attention on this intensive task.

The length of each editing session is, to a certain extent, a matter of personal choice. Some prefer to work continually for intensive periods while others like to break the work into stages so they may reflect on a completed session and return to the next session refreshed. Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of both and try and book a pattern of work that best suits your needs.

Consider also the time of day when you find you are best able to concentrate and try and book times to match.

Before you arrive for your session

If the session is during an evening or weekend, you may potentially be working alone. The hazards associated with this are:

- you may suddenly fall ill or have an accident and will be unable to seek immediate assistance;
- there may be an incident or emergency occurring in the building that may put your personal safety at risk, for example a fire breaking out or a burglary taking place, or an incident affecting personal safety, such as being subjected to verbal/physical abuse.

You can reduce the level of risk by taking the following precautions before you arrive for your session:

1. Try and work together with a fellow student on the course – this may also be helpful in sharing ideas and opinions about your work.
2. Try and arrange your session to run at the same time as another student so you can work in adjacent areas.
3. If you are unable to do either of these, make certain a friend or relative knows your whereabouts and how to contact you. For example, you might ask them to phone or message you at regular intervals to ensure you are still working in the building.
4. Make certain you know the layout of the Williams building, in particular where to locate the emergency telephone in the foyer and where the fire alarm call points and emergency exits are located (see plan on final page of this guide).
5. Make certain your mobile phone is fully charged and operational. **Keep it with you at all times!** Also programme in the campus Security number so you may seek urgent assistance in the event of an emergency: **01784 443888**
6. Take time to read the guidance on using computer workstations so you know how to reduce the risk of injury.
7. Plan your sequence of work for the session so it flows in a logical manner. This includes labelling your source materials and making log sheets of the recorded footage you need to ingest onto the system.
8. Seek advice from the technical staff so you are confident in what you are planning to achieve.
9. Make certain you know the opening times of any campus catering facilities so you can take breaks at regular intervals and obtain refreshments.
10. Ensure you have had a recent eye test and, if you need to wear spectacles or contact lenses, a current prescription which is appropriate for using computers. Remember to bring them with you when you come to edit.
11. Be aware of any high risk situations arising from travelling home from the Media Arts Centre during the hours of darkness and make appropriate arrangements, for example asking some friends to meet you at the end of the session and making use of well-lit pathways.

During your session (i)

When you arrive and enter the building, make certain nothing unusual has occurred, such as signs of doors or windows having been forced open, items or debris left in the corridors, alarm signals sounding, etc. Report any such issues to Security immediately.

Take a few minutes to do a brief tour of the building to find out if anyone else is working in any of the rooms. If so, it may be helpful to be sociable and share information on the times you will be working in the building.

Do not let anyone else into the building. Anyone having a right to use the facilities should have a swipe card or key. If in doubt, refer them to the College Security team in the Founders Reception area.

When you start work, take a few moments to ensure the layout of your workstation is properly set up. Remember you may be working for a number of hours and you will be at risk of physical strain, including eyestrain, if you are sitting incorrectly.

If you prefer to work in a darkened room, be aware of the increased risk of tripping on unseen objects. This can be reduced by storing bags under the workstation in such a way as to allow sufficient legroom, and making certain any cables are arranged so they are clear of any walkways.

When working in the media labs, always use headphones as others may be disturbed by hearing your audio.

There are certain risks in using headphones to monitor sound:

1. Hearing loss by sound monitoring at a loud level over a period of time;
2. Hearing loss caused by accidental exposure to loud noise. A typical incident is when you can't hear a known signal source (i.e. you can see it on a VU meter) and you push up the volume levels in an attempt to 'find' it. Then you discover a 'switch' that has muted the signal and when you activate it the sound comes through at the loud volume setting you have just made. Ensure you are familiar with the equipment prior to using it by reading our [guidance notes on using headphones](#), or ask for assistance from a member of the Technical Team.
3. Being exposed to a dangerous situation because you are unable to hear an alarm or other form of warning.

You can reduce these risks by getting used to monitoring sound at a relatively low level and by ensuring level controls are returned to a low setting when testing signals.

You must respect the needs of other media lab users by refraining from excessive chatter. If you want to talk socially to friends or on your mobile phone, do this elsewhere so those working on sound design don't have to raise their headphone monitoring level unnecessarily.

During your session (ii)

Organise your work effectively by using suitable file names for your clips and designing a suitable structure for your work folders. This will reduce the risk of material being mislaid, overwritten or deleted and avoid consequent anxiety.

Take regular breaks away from the workstation, say ten minutes in every hour, so you may walk, have a stretch, give your eyes something different to do and rest your ears. You may for example take an opportunity to get refreshments.

Food and drink, other than bottled drinking water, is not allowed in any of the post production areas, including the media labs, so please use the Common Room facilities provided.

Do not lock the door while you are inside any of the post production areas, including the media labs. This will set off the burglar alarm.

If you need to leave the room, even for a short period, take your personal belongings with you to avoid the risk of theft and make certain the door to the edit room or lab is secure.

Smoking is prohibited within 5 metres of any College building as well as inside, so please use the ash bin area by the disabled parking spaces in the Williams service road if you choose to smoke during a break.

If you fall ill or become aware of an emergency situation such as an intrusion, burglary or disturbance, call Security immediately on 01784 443888 or key 444 if you are using the emergency phone provided in the foyer. They will provide immediate support and, if necessary, contact the relevant emergency services.

If you discover a fire, raise the alarm at the nearest call point (see floor plan), leave the building immediately and go via the pedestrian crossing to Assembly Point 9, which is the grass area across the road from the Computer Centre.

Reporting of accidents and incidents

In compliance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), and the associated College policy and procedure, all accidents and any incidents that could have resulted in an accident must be reported as soon as possible using the relevant procedure and report form, which is available from the Equipment Store during opening hours.

All RIDDOR reportable accidents should be reported to the H & S Office who will arrange for a RIDDOR report to be made to the HSE.

Please note that the Department imposes a fixed penalty to discourage contravention of the Media Arts Centre rules, which are there to protect everyone's safety and access to facilities. This includes taking food and drink into post production rooms, leaving rooms unsecured, or activating the intruder alarm system by locking doors from inside.

Fire exits and call points

Williams Building Floor Plan

