



TV & FILM DEVELOPMENT



01 WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?



Development

ROLES:

Development assistant, development coordinators, script editor, Head of Development, producer, executive producer, commissioner.

JOB:

- Find stories and scripts and get them into good enough shape to be **commissioned** and financed.
- Read screenplays, analyse their strengths and areas to develop whilst also **assessing** whether there is an **audience** for the project.
- They collaborate with writers and directors, supplying **script notes** on where the project could be improved. This is a collaborative process.

Production

ROLES:

Anything you would need to make the project a reality and to capture and edit the project.

- Director
- Producer
- Production department.
- Production Designer
- Editor
- Sound
- Lighting
- Locations
- Hair and Make Up
- Accounts
- DoP
- Camera
- Music
- VFX
- Props
- Costume
- Facilities
- Suppliers

TASKS YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF DOING IN DEVELOPMENT

Creating databases to track and monitor submissions.

Reading a new iteration of a slate project. This requires in-depth script notes and a follow up discussion with the wider development team.

Having slate meetings with the entire company to discuss the state of the slate and discuss strategic priorities moving forward.

Attending film festivals to spot talent you want to work with.

Reading submissions. Compiling a script report of thoughts and whether it fits the company's slate and what the industry is looking for.

Keeping up to date with what commissioners and financiers are looking for and making.

Keeping an eye out for new talent coming through talent schemes and what they are making.

Researching rights (books, films and theatre plays to see if they can be adapted for screen)

TASKS YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF DOING IN DEVELOPMENT

Attending **networking events** to nurture relationships with wider industry.

Attending **commissioner briefings** to hear the latest news from broadcasters.

Drafting applications to pull down on funding from certain schemes.

Developing positive **relationships with writers, agents, and commissioners**

Attending **readthroughs**

Creating, reviewing, and editing documents, timelines, reports, pitches, and presentations to support all projects on the slate. Including story, visual, audience and financial research.

Meet with writers and directors to hear their ideas or to give feedback on scripts.



02 THE INDUSTRY



HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT

SCREENDAILY

BROADCAST

TELEVISUAL

IndieWire



DEADLINE





‘fewer, bigger, better’

Snapshot



CHARLOTTE MOORE - Chief Content Officer (leaving BBC soon - Feb 2025)

Major concern is understanding the huge variety of content that UK audiences – particularly under-represented and underserved groups – want to watch and giving them something that feels relevant to them.

“Some shows are particularly designed to reach an audience we feel we don’t give enough value to”.

- **Character-led** commissioning over concept.
- The team would like to see ambitious **projects that encourage cross-generational viewing**.
- Shows with a “strong flavour” and “**specificity of place, tone and voice**”.
- **Diversity is essential** to the drama slate
- Authentically representing the nations and regions.
- “**Britishness**” is key - **British stories with a global resonance**.



“Brilliantly populist and
unashamedly mainstream”



Snapshot

KEVIN LYGO— Director of Television

- Projects for ITV need to be mainstream, broad and popular.
- Their aim is to 'entertain the nation'.
- Huge investment into ITVX and changes and their online platform.

- Should feel **broad, authored and British**. We want to represent stories of the UK. They can have an international feel, but for ITV it must feel rooted in the UK.
- Programmes must be easily accessible for a broad audience. Then we take them on a **journey to somewhere completely unexpected**.
- ITV shows may be **quirky but not niche**.



“Altogether Different”

Snapshot

ALEX MAHON – CEO of Channel 4



Due to the reduction of the linear audience there is a "strategic shift" in how C4 is approaching the streaming space: "We're going to speed up even more".

"People want to see who they are and where they're from represented on screen. People want to see the West Country on air, they want to see Scotland on air... they want real representation."

- We want drama that **changes a conversation**, looks at the world in a new way and makes a lot of noise". (IT'S A SIN)
- **Younger-skewing programming**, and the team would like to bring in 16-34-year-olds with younger protagonists. (QUEENIE or THE GATHERING)
- Innovative, envelope-pushing and unexpected drama.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

- Always have more than one script ready to show a company.
- Have different scripts in terms of genre. You should always prioritise your voice but show that you have range.
- Social media is a huge ally. Twitter and LinkedIn especially. Follow writers you admire, follow the broadcasters and the industry publications. Follow production companies who are making things you like.
- All production companies work differently. If someone asks you for something (a treatment, a deck, a pitch) and you're not sure what it should look like, ask them to clarify. **E.g. Would they like a 1 page, 2 page, 5 page or 10 page treatment?**

Always remember:

- Story is character.
- Drama is conflict.

Common areas to be aware of:

- Not enough is going wrong for your characters.
- Characters need to **build**.
- Never use dialogue to tell us what we can see through actions.
- Don't let the character tell us what they actually want through dialogue ... people rarely do this. Use subtext.
- Characters should always want something.
- Too much plot set up. (Make us root for character instead).

SLIDES DESIGNED
BY
BEN MURRELL