

# Cardiff and Vale College



**The next generation of Welsh creative talent gets hands on with 4K video and immersive Ambisonic audio.**

As Wales' largest provider of vocational creative training, Cardiff and Vale College pride themselves on being able to deliver a practical, flexible arts curriculum that responds to the needs of the UK's media sector. With 4K video and immersive audio formats moving into mainstream entertainment, the college needed to upgrade their facilities so they could move with the times – and our Cardiff team were on hand to help.

"Our initial plan was to upgrade our camera setup to Blackmagic Design URSA Minis, so that we could get students shooting in 4K," the college's Creative Media Technician, Gwion Rowlands, told us. "But our editing facilities could only handle 1080 footage, which isn't a current format. We wanted to make sure we were teaching

students a workflow that was relevant to the industry, so we set out to build a studio space that would be future proof over the next five year cycle."

## The Avid advantage

As the third largest creative skills training provider in the UK, it was vital that the college have a facility that closely resembled the professional setup that students would find themselves in after graduation. After consulting with post houses in Cardiff, Glasgow and London, the Cardiff team made the decision to upgrade their editing and audio mixing facilities to an Avid workflow, and join the Avid Learning Programme.

## In a nutshell...

### Who are they?

Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) is Wales' largest provider of creative training and education, with over 800 students graduating from its creative courses each year. They aim to provide practical, vocational training, matched closely to the labour need of Wales' creative industries.

### What did they need?

A flexible, futureproof media hub that would let students get hands-on with the latest audio and video technology, including 4K video and Ambisonics audio mixing.

### How did we help?

We provided the college with multi-purpose workstations running Pro Tools and Media Composer, and helped them link their Avid NEXIS shared storage across multiple sites.

### What are the benefits?

- Students develop skills which will be industry-relevant long after they graduate.
- The college has a flexible setup which is future proofed for the next five years.
- The college can deliver content in the latest formats, including immersive audio and 4K video.



**“** The fact that Jigsaw24 were local to us in Cardiff was very important from a technical perspective – it meant that communication was much easier, which was important because we had so little time to complete the project, and having a local support network in place was very important to us. **”**

**Gwion Rowlands, Creative Media Technician,  
Cardiff and Vale College.**

**Want to find  
out more?**

**Call:** 03332 409 210 **Email:** [broadcast@Jigsaw24.com](mailto:broadcast@Jigsaw24.com) **Visit:** [Jigsaw24.com](http://Jigsaw24.com)

"Previously, we were teaching editing on PCs running Adobe Premiere, with any audio work being done in Adobe Audition or in our very music-centric sound facilities, where we used Logic Pro," explained Joe Sudlow, a Creative Industries lecturer at the college. "But we speak regularly to people from local post houses and national companies, and they confirmed to us that Media Composer is still leading the market in professional circles, and skills learned in Media Composer are more transferable to other NLEs than the other way round."

The college also decided to become an Avid Learning Partner, undertaking dedicated training so that they could deliver Avid's official education modules for Media Composer and Pro Tools. This meant that students would be expected to achieve a deeper technical mastery of the software involved, and leave the course with an industry-recognised Avid certification in addition to their academic qualifications.

## An industry-approved partner

As the college consulted with various professional companies on potential workflows, one name kept coming up: Jigsaw24.

"We found out about Jigsaw24 through word of mouth," Gwion said. "We were talking to various local companies and Jigsaw24 were supporting them, so we got in touch based on that recommendation. The fact that you were local to us in Cardiff was very important from a technical perspective – it meant that communication was much easier, which was important because we had so little time to complete the project, and having a local support network in place was very important to us."

We worked with the college team to specify and install eleven powerful iMac Pro workstations that would be capable of running Media Composer and Pro Tools, a combination that would allow students to experience an end to end 4K workflow, and carry out much more detailed sound for picture projects. The workstations were mounted on professional grade studio furniture, to create ten edit suites that closely approximate the kind of setup the students hope to work in in the future. We also added a Mac Pro workstation for the tutor.

"The students have all been excited to work somewhere that feels less like a classroom," Kristen Harries, head of the college's Creative Industries department, told us. "They feel like it's more of a work environment, a professional environment, and that's helping to push them. Our curriculum isn't set in stone – it's informed by our links to industry, the skills gap we see in the media sector, and whatever employers say they need from us – and the technology we have now is definitely helping us and the students rise to that challenge."

"I think at first students were slightly intimidated by the level the Avid Learning Programme expects them to reach, but they've picked it up quickly," Joe said. "We're seeing its impact move backward in the production process, because now they have a clearer understanding of what's needed in the edit, so they're making much more informed choices about things like shooting formats and shooting procedures. And as they're working through the programme, their confidence is building and they can see they're building the skills to produce something of the quality expected by broadcasters and film festivals."

## Channelling cross-site creativity

It's not just the new media lab that's inspiring students. The college have also invested in audio facilities that support Ambisonics, an immersive 3D audio format used in augmented and virtual reality content. The Ambisonic mixing and dubbing studio is on another site, but is linked to the media hub by an Avid NEXIS server, which Joe says "has been invaluable in bringing the two sites together. We can tap into the NEXIS from any building, so that projects made in Media Composer can move to Pro Tools for audio editing, and then over to our Ambisonics mixing suite for final dubs."

"It's imperative that we're making sure our students are skilled and employable when they leave us," Kristen told us. "There's no point in delivering something that's out of date, because then our students won't be equipped to go into the industry."

To that end, the college is undertaking extensive research into VR, and looking to forge links with various VR production companies to bring this emerging technology into their curriculum. "We always look at what's coming up and see how we can build transferable skills into what we do here," said Joe, "and Jigsaw24 have been beyond fantastic at supporting that and being reactive to the shifts in our needs as we develop the new space."

To find out more about our media and entertainment solutions for higher education, get in touch with the team on the details below.

**Call:** 03332 409 210

**Email:** [broadcast@Jigsaw24.com](mailto:broadcast@Jigsaw24.com)

**Visit:** [Jigsaw24.com/broadcast](https://Jigsaw24.com/broadcast)