
THE BECTU/PACT TV DRAMA AGREEMENT

A guide



BECTU and Pact have been in negotiations on a TV Drama agreement (**the Agreement**) that will cover all key working terms and conditions for crew engaged on indie UK drama and comedy. It is envisaged that most TV drama and comedy commissioned by independent producers will be covered by the Agreement.

A copy of the proposed agreement plus information on consultation events can be found on the BECTU website at www.bectu.org.uk/tv-drama-agreement

THE NEED FOR AN AGREEMENT

BECTU is **recommending that its members accept the Agreement by voting for it in a ballot** that will be issued to participating branches of the union in May 2017. The union believes that

- this agreement is the best one that can be achieved through negotiation
- the absence of an agreement over many years has resulted in a long-term erosion of terms and conditions and the long working hours used in TV drama are a consequence of that
- this proposed agreement also represents significant improvements in standard working practices in the UK TV industry

IMPROVEMENTS IN STANDARD WORKING PRACTICES

Under the Agreement, crew engaged on a TV Drama will have a full statement of their terms and conditions at the start of their engagement. They will be provided with a "deal memo" (examples will be provided during the consultation) that details pay rates, hours, planned locations and other important terms and conditions.

This will protect all crew working on the production, and under the Agreement crew will not be asked to start work without knowing their rates, terms and conditions.

IMPROVED TERMS AND CONDITIONS IN TV DRAMA FOR MANY

All of BECTU's production branches were invited to be represented in the negotiation and every branch is recommending acceptance of the Agreement on the basis that it consolidates and improves existing working conditions. Under the Agreement:

- every member of the crew will be working clearly agreed hours and at a transparent daily rate of pay
- unlimited unpaid overtime at the start and end of working days will be a thing of the past
- in many cases, crew will find that their overtime rate will be higher than the arrangements that they are currently working on as the Agreement includes a 1.5T overtime rate with a minimum of £35 per hour
- many members of crew (particularly prep and wrap) will be working on increased overtime rates
- "clawback" will be restricted and hours worked after midnight will attract paid compensatory rest (effectively meaning that it will be paid at a "double time" rate where rest is not given)
- the convention of the "weekly rate" will be replaced by a "daily rate" which will ensure that every day worked will be paid

- there will be a restriction on the number of 6 day weeks in a worker's shooting schedule along with a £100 penalty each time the cap is broken
- crew will receive "double time" for working a 7th day in a row
- grace periods are reduced
- travel time will be codified and applied consistently throughout a production

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKING DAY

The Deal Memo will stipulate the length of the working day (generally, 10 or 11 hour standard days). Crew will also know what prep/wrap work is expected of them - this will be stipulated and agreed upfront and crew will be paid overtime for all hours worked beyond that. There will be no more ad-hoc requests by production for extra unpaid prep/wrap work.

The negotiations focused on the length of the working day, when it starts, ends, and what breaks are provided, as well as delivering significant restrictions on "clawback" - the practice of moving late call-times forward each day. The agreement also clearly defines the "standard working day" along with the "continuous working day" in an unambiguous way. The "semi-continuous working day" will have to be negotiated locally when it is needed. BECTU branches will be making recommendations on what a reasonable response to a request for this would be.

ANY QUESTIONS?

During the consultation period, BECTU and Pact will jointly publish some guidance that provides more details on specific scenarios. If you have any questions, we will answer them and incorporate the answers into this document. Please email your questions to the London Production Division mailbox - LPD@bectu.org.uk - and a periodic update will be provided.

WHERE NEXT?

BECTU members will be consulted formally on this agreement. If the members vote to accept, it will be implemented within 6 months of the signature. 6 months after implementation, BECTU and Pact will begin the negotiation of a comprehensive rate-card covering all areas of production covered by the Agreement.

The Agreement will run for an initial period of two years from late 2017 onwards. It is a "whole agreement" which means that employers can not cherry-pick terms and conditions from it. There will be a review period at the end of the first year at which point the terms may be re-negotiated and BECTU will be in dialogue with Pact throughout this period to revisit any issues that are particularly pressing.

At the end of two years, the Agreement will continue until terminated either by the employers or by BECTU.

Because BECTU is a democratic union, every crew-member working on TV drama production is able to participate and shape this, and future agreements. BECTU urges all production workers to join the union and participate in the rate card negotiations that will follow any formal adoption of this agreement by Pact and BECTU.