

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Screenwriting for TV and Film (Retreat Programme) (MASTFiR)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2017**.

The aims of the programme are:

- To develop and deepen students' understanding of the nature of film and television fictional screenwriting;
- To develop students' ability to write film and television fiction screenplays to a professional level, able to be produced for UK and overseas film and television markets;
- To provide students with the tools to critique their own and their peers' work, and to assess the potential and progress of screenwriting projects at various stages;
- To give students a critical and historical understanding of the aesthetic traditions of the UK film and television industries; to encourage students to question the norms of current film and television production and seek to develop an original and informed voice within it;
- To familiarise students with current business and work practices and institutions within the UK film and television industries, and give them the opportunity to discuss creative and business issues with speakers from the industry and the 'independent sector'.

This programme aims to teach both film and television screenwriting at a high level, and provide an industry context for study of the current norms of UK cinema and television.

MASTFiR is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part-time study (260 weeks) and consists of six blocks of study, supported in the interim periods by online tutorials and discussion. It will provide an atmosphere appropriate for intensive and concentrated learning and group interaction, with dedicated distance-learning support during the interim periods. As well as teaching at Egham, MASTFiR includes periods of study in appointed Writers' retreats in Yorkshire Dorset and Shropshire, and discussion with industry experts in RHUL's Central London teaching space.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

For students first registered in or after September 2016

Version 4.3

Dated 15/07/2020

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- A broad and detailed understanding of the nature of the film and television screenplay- how it signifies, how it communicates meaning to the film producer, director, actor and to the audience.
- Advanced understanding of the processes of writing a screenplay, from initial concept to final draft.
- Advanced understanding of the various stages of script development and how each is documented- outlines, treatments, pitch documents and so on.
- Critical knowledge of the current genres and trends in film and television and how they have evolved in recent years, particularly in the context of economic and market developments in these industries.
- An understanding of the UK film and television industries, including their structure, institutions and working practices.
- A broad understanding of the group nature of writing and development, and how the roles played by the various parties- producer, script editor, director and so on- shape and influence the screenplay.

Skills and other attributes

Students following the programme will gain the ability to:

- Develop original fictional ideas, which can be developed into cinema/TV screenplays able to be produced for the UK and other markets.
- Write outlines, pitches, and treatments of these ideas.*
- Write Film and TV screenplays in a variety of screenplay lengths and formats (feature film, single TV drama, series, serial) to a professional level.
- Recognise the film/televisual potential in other primary source material- novels, plays and so on- and to be able to translate this into screenplay material in an original and distinctive way.
- Hone their research skills in order to fully translate their screenwriting ideas into practice.*
- Be able to discuss and debate their ideas within the group (Development Lab) and with staff and visiting industry professionals, and respond constructively to feedback and criticism. *
- Give constructive verbal and written feedback on their peers' work.*
- Learn the fundamental skills of co-writing and produce co-written work for formative assessment.*
- Develop a basic awareness of the production consequences of their writing: staging, location, production values, genre, audience, marketing, rights, censorship.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning are concentrated into six periods of intensive learning in a residential context. Much care has been given in constructing a balance of different course elements across each learning block, to maximise learning outcomes. MASTFiR is taught by a mix of lectures, seminars, screenings, individual and group writing exercises and group workshop analysis. Students will also receive a number of tutorials, some in person during teaching blocks, and some online in the interim periods. There will additionally be a dedicated Moodle site for the group, with course material, noticeboards and the facility for students to read and critique each others' work in progress. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework in the form of script writing or screen plays. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

The programme is delivered as six blocks, each of five-and-a-half days, spread over a two-year period, beginning in April, with distance learning tutorials and support in between. The learning blocks are residential: two at RHUL Egham Campus; two at residential writers' retreats (options include the John Osborne and Ted Hughes Arvon Centre retreats, and private venues in Dorset and the Cotswolds), and two in Central London, which will focus mainly on the film and TV production and industry issues. MASTFiR will be taught by a mix of lectures, seminars, screenings, individual and group writing exercises and group workshop analysis.

The programme has four elements and students are examined in all four. The brief outline of the programme is shown below. However, students can obtain further details from the [Department](#). Credits are indicated in brackets and the weightings of courses are proportionate to the credit values.

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

- (i) MA5800 Script Craft (30 credits)
- (ii) MA5801 Story and Theme (90 credits) [**non-condonable – must be passed in order to qualify for the award**]
- (iii) MA5802 Development Lab (30 credits) [**non-condonable – must be passed in order to qualify for the award**]
- (iv) MA5803 Contexts: Current Film and Television Practice (30 credits)

For the fourth element, students will register for MA5803, but there will be the option to complete a placement and submit a report on their experiences. Successful completion of the placement and the report will result in a transfer to:

MA5803P Contexts: Current Film and Television Practice (30 credits)

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Progression and award requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

Please note that if you hold a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

To pass the **Master's** programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which constitute up to a maximum of 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The Master's degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Master's degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% *and* has either

chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in courses which do not constitute more than 40 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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Student support and guidance

- Personal Advisers: All students are allocated a Personal Adviser with whom they meet when based at Egham or Bedford Square, and whom is contactable throughout the year during office hours. The Advisers role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Personal Adviser will normally be a member of RHUL Media Arts postgraduate teaching staff, but not the students' own Course Convenor or Tutor.
- Staff will be available via their e-mail addresses, which are published in the programme handbook.
- There will be a high degree of intra-student contact and support via the dedicated Moodle site.
- Detailed student handbook and course resources will be available both in the Media Arts Office and on the dedicated website.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries, as well as the Computer Centre.
- Computing equipment and office space at Bedford Square.
- Dedicated Departmental computing facilities and study room in Egham.
- The College Careers Service and Departmental Employability Lead Officer can offer individual careers advice and support.
- Students have access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and students with additional learning needs also have access to Disability and Dyslexia Services (DDS).
- The Postgraduate Staff-Student Committee meets three times per year with elected representatives from all Media Arts postgraduate courses. Minutes of these meetings are posted in the Department and communicated by e-mail.

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Admission requirements

For details of admissions requirements please refer to the [Course Finder](#).

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Further learning and career opportunities

The Media Arts Department of RHUL is developing a strong research culture and has a growing number of Practice-based M Phil and PhD students. Further study to research degree level is therefore one option. Advancement in the film and television industries in areas of writing, development, agency and production would be likely. Other areas of media-related careers which would be enhanced by this degree are work for bodies such as for the British Film Institute and the UK and regional Film Councils; for Festivals and for other training programmes in the field. The MASTFiR programme will raise issues of career progress at various points throughout the course, especially in Block Four which deals with the structure and practice of the film and TV industries. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour and 3* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31st overall in the UK for 4* and 3* research and 33rd based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

The Department of Media Arts is ranked 8th in the UK for research for 4* research. Staff are leading writers in their academic fields, and several maintain professional media careers as directors and screenwriters. Staff are frequently called upon to serve on national bodies including the HEFCE, AHRC, Skillset, UK Film Council and BFI advisory committees etc.

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List of programmes with details of awards, teaching arrangements and accreditation

The programme is taught by staff of Royal Holloway, University of London (with visiting speakers), and leads to an award of the University of London. The programme is not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme code is given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in Screenwriting for Television and Film (Retreat Programme)

MA in Screenwriting for Television and Film (Retreat Programme) (1503)

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