

Royal Holloway, University of London  
Course specification for a postgraduate award  
MA Screenwriting for Television and Film (Retreat) (1503)

**Section 1 – Introduction to your course**

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

MA Screenwriting for Television and Film (Retreat) (MASTFiR) 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.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

*Degree course* – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

*Module* – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
<b>Date of specification update</b>	November 2023	<b>Location of study</b>	Egham Campus / Central London Campus
<b>Course award and title</b>	MA Screenwriting for Television and Film (Retreat)	<b>Level of study</b>	Postgraduate
<b>Course code</b>	1503	<b>Year of entry</b>	2024/25
<b>Awarding body</b>	Royal Holloway, University of London		
<b>Department/ School</b>	Media Arts/School of Performing and Digital Arts	<b>Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course</b>	N/A
<b>Mode(s) of attendance</b>	Full-time / Part-time	<b>Duration of the course</b>	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two to five years (104 - 260 weeks) part-time
<b>Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)</b>	N/A	<b>For queries on admissions:</b>	<a href="https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery">https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery</a>
<b>Link to Coursefinder for further information:</b>	<a href="https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/">https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/</a>		

### Section 3 – Degree course structure

#### 3.1 Mandatory module information

The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study

Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (see section 6)
MA5800	Script Craft	30	7	MC
MA5801	Story and Theme	90	7	MNC
MA5802	Development Lab	30	7	MNC
MA5803	Contexts: Current Film and Television Practice	30	7	MC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module to successfully graduate with a particular degree title, or before you can proceed to the next year of your course where studying part-time. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them (see [Academic Regulations](#) on condonable fails). Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example; where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

**3.2 Optional modules**

There are no optional modules on this degree course.

**Optional modules.**

Module Title	Credits	Module Title	Credits
N/A			

**3.3 Optional module requirements**

N/A

**Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course**

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to be awarded. The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who otherwise meet the requirements for award as stipulated in the [College's Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#) (Section 15: Consideration and classification of candidates for the award) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. 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.

## Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

- 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'.

## Section 6 – Course learning outcomes

In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (*Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (\*)*)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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 <b>(K)</b>;</li> <li>2. Advanced understanding of the processes of writing a screenplay, from initial concept to final draft <b>(K)</b>;</li> <li>3. Advanced understanding of the various stages of script development and how each is documented outlines, treatments, pitch documents and so on <b>(K)</b>;</li> <li>4. 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 <b>(K)</b>;</li> <li>5. An understanding of the UK film and television industries, including their structure, institutions and working practices <b>(K)</b>;</li> <li>6. 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 <b>(K)</b>.</li> <li>7. Develop original fictional ideas, which can be developed into cinema/TV screenplays able to be produced for the UK and other markets <b>(S)</b>;</li> <li>8. Write outlines, pitches, and treatments of these ideas <b>(S)*</b>;</li> <li>9. Write Film and TV screenplays in a variety of screenplay lengths and formats (feature film, single TV drama, series, serial) to a professional level <b>(S)</b>;</li> <li>10. Recognise the film/televsual 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 <b>(S)</b>;</li> <li>11. Hone their research skills in order to fully translate their screenwriting ides into practice <b>(S)*</b>;</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Give constructive verbal and written feedback on their peers' work <b>(S)*</b>;</li> <li>14. Learn the fundamental skills of co-writing and produce co-written work for formative assessment <b>(S)*</b>;</li> <li>15. Develop a basic awareness of the production consequences of their writing: staging, location, production values, genre, audience, marketing, rights, censorship <b>(S)*</b>.</li> </ol> |
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12. 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 **(S)\***;

### Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning in the course are closely informed by the active research of staff. Teaching and learning are concentrated into six periods of intensive learning in a residential context. The course 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. Much care has been given in constructing a balance of different module 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 other's work in progress. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework in the form of script writing or screen plays. Details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the departmental web site: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/media-arts/>

### Section 8 – Additional costs

This course is taught primarily at our Egham campus, but also involves some classes at Bedford Square. There will be personal travel costs associated with this. For all four of the retreats, students will need to arrange and pay for accommodation in Egham.

**These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our [website](#).**

### Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	7
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Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent programmes of study.

**QAA Characteristics Statement (Master's Degrees) – September 2015**

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources>

Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.

**Section 10 – Further information**

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [module catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during the course of your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

**Section 11 – Intermediate exit awards (where available)**

You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
PG Diploma	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 40 credits condonable (with the exception of any course specific requirements).	
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails.	

**Section 12 - Associated award(s) with Banner Codes**

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