



Postgraduate Programme Specification

Session	2025/26	Last Modified	
Named Award Title	MA Filmmaking		
Award Title for Each Award	MA Filmmaking PG Cert Filmmaking PG Dip Filmmaking		
Date of Approval	Jan 2022		
Details of Cohort Applies to	25/26		
Awarding Institution	University of the West of Scotland	Teaching Institution(s)	University of the West of Scotland
Language of Instruction & Examination		English	
Award Accredited by		Screenskills UK	
Maximum Period of Registration		3 years (inc. authorised interruption)	
Duration of Study			
Full-time	1 year (inc authorised	Part-time	2 years
Placement (compulsory)	n/a		
Mode of Study	☒ Full-time ☒ Part-time		
Campus	☒ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☐ Paisley	☐ Online / Distance Learning ☒ Other (specify) Film City Glasgow
School	Business and Creative Industries		
Divisional Programme Board	Arts Media		
Programme Leader	Professor Nick Higgins		

Admissions Criteria

Candidates must be able to satisfy the general admission requirements of the University of the West of Scotland as specified in Chapter 2 of the University Regulatory Framework together with the following programme requirements:

Appropriate Undergraduate Qualifications:

Applicants will typically possess a degree or equivalent. In the absence of a degree, where entry requirements do not conform to the general entry requirements, other evidence can be considered on an individual basis in line with Regulations 2.13 – 2.36 (Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL / Recognition of Credit).

Other Required Qualifications/Experience

English language proficiency is also a requirement, with candidates expected to achieve IELTS average standard of 6.0.

Admission based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will comply with the University's Regulatory Framework (Section 6), as well as University regulations on postgraduate study and guidance on RPL. Credit transferred into the programme through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) must have been subject to reliable and valid methods of assessment at a recognised HEI. Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) entry is also permitted. The amount of credit transferred through RPL (APL and APEL) will comply with the maxima set out in the Regulatory Framework. Candidates should note that transferred credit does not carry a grade, therefore, award with distinction cannot be granted for awards where credit is transferred in at level 11.

Further desirable skills pre-application

Experience of directing, writing, producing, sound recording, editing or cinematography for film, television or on personal projects.

General Overview

The UWS MA Filmmaking is a ScreenSkills Select degree programme designed specifically to support the development of students wishing to work professionally in the independent and world cinema sectors of the film industry, whether in fiction, documentary or experimental filmmaking, including immersive Virtual Reality productions.

Students will benefit from spending substantial periods of time learning from and working alongside internationally-recognised filmmakers as they produce three ambitious and distribution-ready short films that enable them to demonstrate their skills and creative vision that can act as their "calling card" to launch, or reorient, their professional career.

The course is built around three major practice-based modules: Advanced Documentary Film Practice (40 credits T1); Advanced Fiction Film Practice (40 credits T2); and the Masters Film Project (60 credits T3).

In the first term (Advanced Documentary Film Practice), students will work under the direction of the programme core team to explore the boundaries of creative documentary film practice, and its intersection with other genres (fiction, essay film, transmedia practice). In the second term (Advanced Fiction Film Practice), students will explore cutting-edge fiction film practice, including working with actors. Both these modules are launched by immersive one-week full-time hands-on workshops. Students will complete one short film in each term under guidance of our core tutors – a non-fiction film in term one, and a fiction film in term two.

In the final term, students undertake a major creative project – either fiction or documentary or potentially an immersive film – as their Masters Film Project under the guidance of the programme team.

This creative core represents 140 credits, and is supported by two 20-credit modules in the first two terms: Film as an Industry (20 credits T1) and Development Lab (20 credits T2). Film as an Industry in term one provides a professional insight into the contemporary film industry, looking at every aspect of the planning and logistics of complex low-budget film shoots, from concept to new distribution models and marketing, placing these key activities within their economic and artistic context.

Development Lab in term two puts students through a professional industry-endorsed development process, in which they prepare their final Masters film project under the supervision of leading professionals active in the practice of the short film form. The MA Filmmaking also offers flexible part-time routes that have been designed to cater to a broad range of student profiles and priorities. Students can undertake the four T1 & T2 modules in a distinct order. All four core modules must be completed before students can proceed to the Masters Film Project.

For example, a part-time student may undertake the Advanced Documentary Film Practice module (40 credits) or the Film as an Industry module (20 credits) in T1 of their first year. Students can then proceed immediately to the Advanced Fiction Film Practice (40 credits) in T2 of their first year. In this way, the part-time student have a choice in their first year between completing two film projects (if they desire a more practical emphasis), or one film project plus a deep insight into the film industry value chain. In their second year, the part-time student may take Development Lab (20 credits) in T2, preceded by whichever T1 module they have not yet completed. This also gives students proceeding to Masters level a choice as to how much they wish to frontload their learning process in terms of module size. Of course, the part-time student may opt for a different module sequence, however, the Development Lab module (20 credits) must be taken in the term that precedes the final T3 Masters Film Project.

All modules use a supportive yet flexible delivery model that replicates real-world working conditions, and are compatible with ongoing professional activity. Teaching is based on intensive periods of workshop-based delivery separated by periods of individual and group development, practice-based research and reflection.

MA Filmmaking builds on UWS' in-house strengths in film both as a creative industry and as an academic discipline. Excellence in cutting-edge professional practice and research is promoted through the UWS Creative Media Academy. MA core staff are actively involved in research and creative practice that underpins our teaching strategy at every point. The course is also closely integrated with the local film industry, and several modules are delivered in close cooperation with industry partners at Film City Glasgow. In addition to UWS staff, MA students will also have the opportunity to work alongside and be mentored by industry professionals from across the UK and, on occasion internationally, who will join us as "guest faculty".

By drawing on the national and international networks of key staff, we are able to bring world-class talent to UWS to pass on their skills and experience to our students. Students will learn to situate their own work in the context of both the most creative trends in contemporary international film production, and the larger social, political and cultural scene of which film is only one part. On exit, graduates will be well positioned to pursue a career in independent filmmaking, and will be highly employable thanks to the strong practical emphasis, the direct

exposure to cutting edge industry practice, and the opportunity to build a strong personal portfolio.

While firmly rooted in the Scottish film industry, the programme has a strong international character, both in the kind of cinema that is taught, the people who teach it, and the kind of student it is designed to appeal to. Core UWS staff all have extensive experience of working as filmmakers in a range of languages and cultures, both inside and outside Europe (including Africa and Latin America). The programme team place particular importance on welcoming international students wherever they may come from, and facilitating their integration into the MA Filmmaking community.

Pointers to further study – Progression Routes

For those whose practice is research-intensive, the MA provides a privileged gateway to a practice-based PhD, whether at UWS or at another institution. Research methodologies are integral to the way filmmaking is taught at Masters level, and reflexive and theoretical elements form part of every module. (This integration is reflected for example in the “indicative resources” listed in the module descriptors, which in each case combine practitioner perspectives with reference to landmark theoretical and reflective work in film and media scholarship.) Members of the MA Filmmaking team are currently engaged in PhD support within UWS and at other HEIs, including the supervision of studies that have a strong film practice component, and can offer interested students personally tailored advice on how to make the transition to doctoral research. Professor Higgins, whom previously introduced the practice-based PhD programme at the University of Edinburgh, has supervised 8 students to successful completion, resulting not only in the academic qualification of Doctor of Philosophy but also with industry recognition through selection of doctoral work at film festivals such as Rotterdam, Dubai and Glasgow.

Teaching and Learning

Your learning and teaching in Arts & Media aligns to principles set out in the UWS Curriculum Framework 2022. Module and programme design is therefore guided by a flexible, hybrid and student-centred approach. We design module assessments to be authentic both in terms of their academic rigour and relevance to the creative industries. The journey through your chosen programme of study is designed to be simple and coherent, developing a full range of academic, creative and conceptual skills required to develop exciting and sustainable careers in the creative industries. Your voice is important in helping us shape learning and teaching that is inclusive and contemporary, so we encourage you to engage with opportunities to feedback on your experiences.

The programme is designed to maximise the value for students of our strong links with both the Scottish and European/international industries. With UWS Ayr as its home campus, the MA Filmmaking also makes extensive use of the UWS teaching space in Film City Glasgow, thus enabling us to draw on the skills and facilities of other professionals working out of Film City in order to expose our students to industry-standard practice, and to open the door to opportunities for internship/employment. Much of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy reflects the expectations of the film industry, and their requirements in terms of autonomy, creativity, lateral thinking, personal vision and imaginative engagement.

Distinctive features include:

- Each term’s programme incorporates immersive/experiential/hands-on learning-through-practice led by industry professionals.
- UWS core staff are practicing filmmakers and research-active academics, whose teaching demonstrates reflection, critique and research as integral to creative practice.

- The course includes elements of practice that are not assessed directly, so as to encourage risk-taking and experimentation;

Extensive use of non-standard methods of assessment (self and peer-evaluation; presentations before industry panels; non-verbal documentation and outputs, including the use of videographic and other multi/mixed-media formats for analytical and reflective essays; and the articulation of creative output with reflexive practices such as production/writing logs and personal essays).

Typical Delivery Method

In person

Any additional costs

No

Graduate Attributes, Employability & Personal Development Planning

The programme is fully aligned with institutional priorities around the development of graduate attributes and with the institutional policy on personal development planning. The mapping of programme and module learning outcomes and employability-integrated assessment ensures the visibility of graduate attributes, employability and citizenship competencies. Personal development is embedded and explicitly signposted in the curriculum, with students provided with regular opportunities to capture and evaluate progression and development, stimulating reflection, self-regulation and a more constructive engagement with employability. It is recognised that personal development planning is an essential component of lifelong learning and continuing and professional development. To support this activity, all students are provided with access to personal development planning tools and enabled to develop a personal e-portfolio across the programme.

The programme places the highest possible value on producing graduates who are not only employable in the traditional sense of the term, but also capable of creating their own career opportunities through the initiation of innovative creative projects that are able to attract funding from a range of private and public sources.

The practice dimension of the programme is built around familiarising students with cutting-edge industry practice, not only in the UK, but internationally, and is largely delivered by UWS staff and invited filmmakers, screenwriters, producers and craft specialists, who are themselves successful practitioners with active national and/or international careers. Students will graduate with a portfolio of personal work (three short films, including both documentary and fiction) that demonstrate their creative and practical capacities, and with a sound knowledge of how the film industry works and what steps they can realistically take to advance their careers. The programme is specifically designed to attract filmmakers who are ready to explore and express their own individual vision, and who are looking for a supportive context in which to develop “proof of concept” work beyond the limits inevitably imposed by undergraduate education, and/or free of the competing demands of their professional careers.

The UWS Creative Media Academy is particularly well-placed to facilitate the most able graduates in making the transition to professional film production in the shortest possible time span, and the Film as an Industry and Development Lab modules specifically expose students to industry-standard processes for developing, funding and producing new work,

thus ensuring they are ready to engage with the profession with full knowledge of its working methods.

The entire course is conceptualised to encourage students to think of their work in terms of developing a practice that is both personally satisfying, and economically and artistically sustainable in the long-term. To that end, Personal Development Planning is embedded at every level leading to and including the Masters programme.

The delivery of personal development planning will be based on encouraging reflective practice. The principles of PDP and e-Portfolios will be introduced within the Advanced Documentary Film Practice and Advanced Fiction Film Practice modules in Trimesters 1 and 2. Students are asked, for example, to submit a reflective log along with each film submitted for assessment. Although PDP will be linked to learning outcomes at every opportunity it will be predominantly formative, while also drawing on assessed activities. The aim is not only to encourage students to develop skills such as numeracy, language, study skills, employability and analytical thought, but also to raise students' self-awareness and confidence through a process of critical reflection and planning. Guidance by staff should be in the form of articulation of goals, support in actions to achieve goals, and encouragement to monitor and reflect on progress.

The nature of the programme ensures that ICT and communications skills are developed in several modules, including the advanced software skills that are required for different specialist roles within the film industry. The core emphasis is, however, on developing the student's capacity for creative thinking and artistic imagination, through a combination of disinhibition and constructive critique, with a consequential emphasis on empathetic understanding of others, enhanced social and cultural awareness, and sensitivity to the ethics and politics of human choice and action. These are seen not as secondary competences, but as core skills without which the potential for high-level creative work is seriously compromised. They are also eminently transferrable skills which will continue to serve graduates well as both employees and citizens, even if they should in the future decide to leave the film industry and seek alternative employment elsewhere.

Work Based Learning/Placement Details

Because of the highly practical nature of the course and its employment focus, all of the modules to a lesser or greater extent can be classified as being work-based learning. All modules contain elements that simulate, or actually are, activities carried out at a professional level, and the learning outcomes have been drawn up accordingly. All three trimesters are built largely or entirely around learning through practice, and it is hoped that many of the student projects engaged through the core practical modules will go on to receive industry confirmation through distribution to festivals, broadcasters, independent cinemas, and online (VoD).

Attendance and Engagement

In line with the [Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#), Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this programme, academic engagement equates to the following:

Students are required to take on a role of significant responsibility in at least three productions throughout the year (1 per term minimum) and there is an expectation that professional standards of conduct will be aspired to on all productions.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: [UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code](#).

The MA Filmmaking programme welcomes students from diverse backgrounds and seeks to nurture and support the development of original creative voices reflecting the experiences and exploring the cultures of diverse communities.

Programme structures and requirements, SCQF level, term, module name and code, credits and awards ([Chapter 1, Regulatory Framework](#))

Learning Outcomes

SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)	
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of one form of filmmaking (documentary or fiction).
A2	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of documentary and fiction film.
A3	Critical knowledge and understanding of creative research practice methodologies.
A4	Critical knowledge and understanding of the economic and technological context of film aesthetics.
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	A range of technical skills in creating a collaborative creative output.
B2	Practical knowledge and understanding of contemporary film workflow practices from pre- to post-production.
B3	In using a range of advanced technical skills, some specialist, in creating a collaborative creative output.
B4	In applying knowledge of legal, financial and ethical dimensions of creative practice.
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to professional audiences
C2	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to professional audiences.
C3	Construct and present analytical arguments using appropriate academic conventions and media
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Some originality in devising and making a creative output.
D2	Contribute to original research utilising ethical research methodologies and participating responsibly in peer review.

D3	Demonstrate imagination and/ or originality in devising and making a creative fiction output.
D4	Capacity for critical reflection on own creative outputs and those of others.
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	An ethical and reflective understanding of your own role and the roles of others in a collaborative context.
E2	Contribute to successful planning and management of creative project in context of substantial autonomy.
E3	Demonstrate commitment to reflective practice and professionalism.
E4	Openness to professional mentoring, advice and supervision.
E5	

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	FILM11001	Advanced Documentary Film Practice	40	☒	☐	☐	
11	FILM11002	Advanced Fiction Film Practice	40	☐	☐	☐	
11	FILM11003	Development Lab	20	☐	☐	☐	
11	FILM11004	Film as an Industry	20	☒	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
				☐	☐	☐	

				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 11- Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

There is no progression within stages at SCQF Level 11.

In line with the Regulatory Framework, for the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) in Filmmaking, at least 60 credit points must be achieved of which a minimum of 40 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10.

Those students who achieve 60 credits shall be eligible for the Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) in Filmmaking.

No Distinction is awarded at PgCert level (Regulation 3.25).

Links: UWS Regulatory Framework; and Student Experience Policy Statement.

SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of one form of filmmaking (documentary or fiction).
A2	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of documentary and fiction film.
A3	Critical knowledge and understanding of creative research practice methodologies.
A4	Critical knowledge and understanding of the economic and technological context of film aesthetics.
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	A range of technical skills in creating a collaborative creative output.
B2	Practical knowledge and understanding of contemporary film workflow practices from pre- to post-production.
B3	In using a range of advanced technical skills, some specialist, in creating a collaborative creative output.
B4	In applying knowledge of legal, financial and ethical dimensions of creative practice.
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to professional audiences
C2	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to professional audiences.
C3	Construct and present analytical arguments using appropriate academic conventions and media
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Some originality in devising and making a creative output.
D2	Contribute to original research utilising ethical research methodologies and participating responsibly in peer review.

D3	Demonstrate imagination and/ or originality in devising and making a creative fiction output.
D4	Capacity for critical reflection on own creative outputs and those of others.
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	An ethical and reflective understanding of your own role and the roles of others in a collaborative context.
E2	Contribute to successful planning and management of creative project in context of substantial autonomy.
E3	Demonstrate commitment to reflective practice and professionalism.
E4	Openness to professional mentoring, advice and supervision.
E5	

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	FILM11001	Advanced Documentary Film Practice	40	☒	☐	☐	
11	FILM11002	Advanced Fiction Film Practice	40	☐	☒	☐	
11	FILM11003	Development Lab	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	FILM11004	Film as an Industry	20	☒	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules Students can only proceed to the Masters Film project on completion of all four core modules. Furthermore, for part-time students Development Lab must be completed in the term (T2) preceding the Masters Film Project (T3).							

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
				☐	☐	☐	

				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 11- Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

There is no progression within stages at SCQF Level 11.

In line with the Regulatory Framework, for the award of Postgraduate Diploma (PgD) in Filmmaking, at least 120 credit points must be achieved (including all 4 core modules) of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10.

Those students who achieve 120 credits shall be eligible for the Post-graduate Diploma in Filmmaking.

Distinction will be awarded in line with University Regulations and no imported credit can be used. (Regulations 3.35 & 3.26)

Links: UWS Regulatory Framework; and Student Experience Policy Statement.

SCQF LEVEL 11 – Masters	
Learning Outcomes (Maximum of 5 per heading)	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of one form of filmmaking (documentary or fiction).
A2	Critical knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of documentary and fiction film.
A3	Critical knowledge and understanding of creative research practice methodologies.
A4	Critical knowledge and understanding of the economic and technological context of film aesthetics.
A5	Integrated and critical knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical context of filmmaking.
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	A range of technical skills in creating a collaborative creative output.
B2	Practical knowledge and understanding of contemporary film workflow practices from pre- to post-production.
B3	In using a range of advanced technical skills, some specialist, in creating a collaborative creative output.
B4	Apply a range of advanced specialist technical skills in completing a creative output to professional standard.
B5	Apply integrated and critical knowledge and understanding of the creative practice research process.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to professional audiences
C2	Communicate complex ideas in appropriate forms to peer crew members.
C3	Construct and present analytical arguments using appropriate academic conventions and media
C4	Communicate complex concepts and ideas from the leading edge of the discipline to a specialist audience.
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	

D1	Some originality in devising and making a creative output.
D2	Contribute to original research utilising ethical research methodologies and participating responsibly in peer review.
D3	Demonstrate imagination and/ or originality in devising and making a creative fiction output.
D4	Capacity for critical reflection on own creative outputs and those of others.
D5	Substantial imagination and/ or originality in devising and making a creative output.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	An ethical and reflective understanding of your own role and the roles of others in a collaborative context.
E2	Contribute to successful planning and management of creative project in context of substantial autonomy.
E3	Demonstrate commitment to reflective practice and professionalism.
E4	Openness to professional mentoring, advice and supervision.
E5	Autonomously plan and manage a substantial creative project from initiation to completion.

Masters Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	FILM11005	Masters Film Project	60	☐	☐	☒	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Masters Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 11- Masters

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

In line with the Regulatory Framework, for the award of Masters Filmmaking, at least 180 credit points must be achieved (including 5 core modules) of which a minimum of 150 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10.

Those students who achieve 180 credits shall be eligible for the Masters in Filmmaking award.

Distinction will be awarded in line with University Regulations and no imported credit can be used. (Regulations 3.35 & 3.26)

Links: [UWS Regulatory Framework](#); and [Student Experience Policy Statement](#).

Regulations of Assessment

Candidates will be bound by the general assessment regulations of the University as specified in the [University Regulatory Framework](#).

An overview of the assessment details is provided in the Student Handbook and the assessment criteria for each module is provided in the module descriptor which forms part of the module pack issued to students. For further details on assessment please refer to Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

To qualify for an award of the University, students must complete all the programme requirements and must meet the credit minima detailed in Chapter 1 of the Regulatory Framework.

Combined Studies

There may be instances where a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the award criteria for the named award and for other more generic named awards existing within the School.

For students studying at Level 11, they will normally be eligible for an exit award of PgCert / PgDip / Masters in Combined Studies.

Change/Version Control

[illegible]