

Course outline: Marketing, Distribution, Sales & Exhibition

The Marketing, Distribution, Sales & Exhibition (MDSE) MA provides students with the skills, knowledge and experience to sell, market, distribute, retail and exhibit films, television shows and games. It emphasises the practical application of these competencies, through seminars and workshops with industry experts, field trips to key industry events and conferences and the opportunity to embed learning in work placements.

The course focuses on 8 modules over 2 years, in addition to other workshops and exercises. Each module will produce an assessed piece of work and some will provide an opportunity to work with students from other NFTS courses.

Year One

The first year contains four assessed modules, and a wealth of other exercises and workshops:

- Module 1 – Marketing & Distribution Planning: Film, Television & Games;
- Module 2 – Audiences: Defining, Finding & Reaching Them;
- Module 3 – Work Placement & Company Analysis 1;
- Module 4 – Territory Analysis Part 1: Film

Module 1: Marketing & Distribution Planning: Film, Television & Games

This module introduces students to the marketing and distribution landscape of films, television and games, through a series of seminars on:

- The Value Chains – Film, Games, TV, Online Content;
- Audience and Consumer Behaviours, Analysis;
- Business Processes of Distribution, Exhibition, Broadcast, Re/e-tail;
- Key Players in the Entertainment Industry;
- Marketing Filmed Content and Games at each stage of the distribution, sales and exhibition cycle;
- Campaign Creative – Poster and Trailer Creation;
- Press and Publicity in the Entertainment Industry;
- Harnessing the Power of Social Media;
- Release planning and models (inc. direct to consumer innovations);
- Financial, Budgeting (inc. P&L, P&As);
- Understanding Content Creation Process and Creatives from a MDSE Perspective;

- Working with Agencies and Third Parties.

During the first year students will also prepare two marketing and distribution plans for assessment as part of this module.

The first marketing and distribution plan (Part 1) centres on a game, with each student working with a second year NFTS Games MA student to support their project with a marketing and publicity plan culminating in the game's showcase at EGX.

The second marketing and distribution plan (Part 2) centres on a fiction short film, with each student working with a first year NFTS Producing MA student to produce a comprehensive distribution and marketing strategy for their First Year Fiction film.

Module 2: Audiences: Defining, Finding & Reaching Them;

In this module, students will select, or be allocated, a demographic segment (e.g. Females aged 18-24), identified by the British Film Institute (BFI) as a challenging audience to reach. Students will analyse their given sector including behaviours, consumption habits, values and influences, to form recommendations on how to reach them and convert them into film and television audiences, or games and home entertainment consumers. The module starts in Term 1 and continues in Term 2, concluding with each student submitting their written report on their given sector containing key evidence and research such as national statistics, exit poll analysis, reports on audience and sales figures and trends, their own market research, analysis of how other brands and products have reached this demographic or otherwise, together with a series of informed observations and recommendations.

Module 3: Work Placement & Company Analysis 1:

During this module students will undertake a 6 week, full time (5 days a week) work placement, which the Head of Department will take the lead in allocating and securing in consultation with the student. Teaching on the placement will primarily be delivered through on-the-job training and workplace experience. The employer will be encouraged to provide some mentoring support throughout the placement. They will be advised of the subjects covered in the previous modules and the placement will look to embed some of this learning. The HoD will have regular check-ins with the student to provide advice and support as necessary. As well as job-specific knowledge areas, students are expected to develop the following key skills during their placement:

- Breadth of view;
- Communication skills;
- Experience of office environment;
- Interpersonal skills;
- Project management;
- Teamworking;
- Networking;
- Time management;
- Personal effectiveness;
- Working with third parties.

At the beginning of Term 3, each student will present an analysis of the business in which they spent their work placement, covering the nature of the business, its objectives and structure, a SWOT analysis, present and future key projects, reputation, research on competitors and the company's place within the industry. Each presentation will also include the key things the student has learned from their work placement. Students will also receive employer feedback on their work placement that is included as part of their assessment.

Placements cannot be guaranteed and, in the event of one not being secured despite reasonable efforts, an alternative opportunity to demonstrate the learning outcomes will be provided by the Head of Department.

Module 4: Territory Analysis Part 1: Film

This module augments the knowledge from Modules 1 and 2 with more in-depth seminars on the subjects introduced in them. It also includes seminars and case studies on the following topics:

- International Perspective - Distribution and Exhibition in Key Territories;
- International Sales & Acquisitions;
- Navigating and Exploiting Markets, Conferences and Festivals;
- Impact of Awards & Festivals on Product Success.

Students will produce a written research report & presentation on a key territory, covering the Film industry in that territory. The report must include, but not be limited to, history, structure, trends and quirks, strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities, developments and key players, audience/consumer analysis, future predictions, and recommendations to an MDSE industry executive looking to conduct business in this territory.

Other Seminars

Alongside and in between the Modules there are a number of exercises, workshops and seminars including sessions on Presentation Skills, Personal Effectiveness, Project Management, Networking and:

- The Evolving World of Exhibition;
- Playing the Games – Dedicated focus on Gaming Industry;
- Living Online – Dedicated focus on Online Content;
- Resources, research and information (e.g. ComScore, Nielson, BARB, official charts);

Springboard Cross Specialisation Introductory Weeklong Workshop;

A cross-school and interdisciplinary introduction to film and television, looking at cinematic language and televisual language through the prism of storytelling. It investigates how the main crafts of cinema and television, screenwriting, cinematography, visualisation, editing, sound and music relate to the way filmmaking puts across narrative ideas.

Poster Collaboration Workshop;

MDSE students are teamed with the Motion Graphics and Titles students to recreate the real-life scenario of a film distributor working with a design agency to produce the theatrical poster for a film release, targeted at a pre-allocated audience segment. The MDSE students formulate a briefing document and meet with their designer to discuss the requirements for the poster, the designers produce some options in response to the brief and the teams then work together to present a final version to their peers at the end of the exercise. A renowned UK distributor supplies the pre-release film and any available materials to support the project.

Trailer Lab Workshop;

Trailers are the most effective marketing tools to engage audiences and consumers, both B2C and B2B, with creative content. The ability to work with editors and agencies to create and deliver successful trailers is an essential skill of any MDSE executive, as is the ability to move between delivering the strategic objectives of a campaign and release, and the intricacies of the scene and music elements of the trailer itself. The Trailer Lab project aims to recreate the 'real world' experience of the trailer-making process. In teams, students will work with an experienced A/V creative agency and their editors to brief and produce a teaser trailer for the fictional UK theatrical release of a film. Each team will be assigned a different genre and must ensure the teaser reflects the film in this way. A renowned UK distributor supplies the film and the materials to support the project.

Field Trip 1: EGX Convention;

EGX London is one of the biggest games conventions in Europe and provides a valuable opportunity to see this sector of the industry in practice first hand. Students will have been collaborating with the 2nd Year Games students for several months before the event, and this is the culmination of their work to showcase the project to the industry, embedding live marketing skills and essential networking and communication skills. Students are required to attend the full duration of the event, with accommodation and passes provided by the course. The work here forms part of the assessed presentation deliverable of Module 1.

Year Two

Year 2 augments the skills, knowledge and experience which students have gained from Year 1, with a more industry focus and the expectation that students will immerse themselves more fully and demonstrate executive potential. This year includes a focus on the television sector of the industry in the build up to the MIPCOM field trip. Students will also produce their graduation portfolio which is intended to be a culmination of everything they've learnt on the course.

The second year contains the following four assessed modules:

- Module 4 - Territory Analysis, Part 2: Games and TV;
- Module 6 – The Acquisitions, Sales & Commissioning Process;
- Module 7 – Work Placement & Company Analysis 2;
- Module 8 – Graduation Portfolio Project.

Other workshops, seminars and events are also included during the year, providing valuable further opportunities to learn and network.

Module 4 - Territory Analysis, Part 2: Games and TV;

This module includes the second part of the Territory Analysis focussing on the MDSE landscape for Games and Television in the designated territory, providing an international perspective on students' games work from the first year and providing valuable preparation for their field trip to the TV market MIPCOM in Term 3 of Year 2.

Students will provide a written report to include, but not be limited to, for each sector: history, structure, trends and quirks, strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities, developments and key players, audience/consumer analysis, future predictions, and recommendations to an MDSE industry executive looking to conduct business in this territory. These will then be discussed in a moderated panel event in front of invited students from the Games and TV courses.

This module also includes preparation for attendance at MIPCOM TV market in Cannes in Term 3 of Year 2. This is a 4 day trade event, where students will attend scheduled events, meetings and sessions. There will be an emphasis on students own networking skills to arrange their own meetings and attend events.

An NFTS tutor accompanies the students to provide 'on the ground' feedback and to ensure students are making the most of the valuable opportunities provided.

Module 6 - The Acquisitions, Sales & Commissioning Process;

This module augments the knowledge from Year 1 with more in-depth seminars on the subjects introduced then. It also includes seminars and case studies on the following topics:

- Film and games acquisitions process;
- TV acquisitions and commissioning process;
- Legal & Business Affairs;
- Windows and Holdbacks;
- Programming buying and points of negotiation;
- Scheduling and audience figures;
- Forecasting and budgeting.

Module 6 also includes preparation for and attendance of a field trip to the European Film Market in Berlin, in Term 1 of Year 2. This will be in the form of an 8 day placement with a film company secured by the 2nd Year Lead Tutor.

Module 7 – Work Placement & Company Analysis 2;

This module augments the knowledge from previous modules with more in-depth seminars, case studies and workshops on the subjects introduced in them. It also includes discussions and case studies on the following topics:

- Communication, presentation and negotiation skills;
- Marketing, publicity, sales case studies;
- Strategic planning;
- Teamworking and team management;
- Time management.

The module will also include a 6 week work placement, which each student will be expected to secure themselves, harnessing the networks, connections and skills they have developed over the duration of the course. The HoD and Lead Tutor will support this with their advice, contacts and tutorials. The placements secured must be full time, 5 days a week.

• **Module 8 – Graduation Portfolio Project.**

This final module will bring together and build on all the learnings from previous modules.

Additional subjects covered in seminars, workshops and case studies will include:

- Best Practice – Learnings from Other Industries
- Funding and Grants for MDSE and the Application Process;
- Legal & Business Affairs;
- Production and Technical aspects in Distribution and Exhibition.

For their final graduation project, students must produce and present a comprehensive plan for the international sales and domestic release and marketing of a 'live' feature film or game. The title will be a pre-release title from a distributor or sales company in the UK. Graduation Projects are secured by the Head of Department and the Lead Tutors. The outcome will be a presentation to an industry panel, supported by a more detailed document of strategies and campaigns for festivals, launch, release, exhibition and digital, marketing, publicity, social media, media planning, sustain campaign, asset creation, and events, together with a timeline, audience/consumer profile, performance comps and forecasts, positioning, and budgets. Students will also be asked to submit a self-reflective diary from the duration of their work on this project. The presentation and document may be supported by creative materials such as key art, poster, ad designs, and trailer. Students will start work on this project this term, continuing in Term 3, submitting it for assessment late in Term 3.

MDSE Dissertation

During the year the students also complete their Dissertation module (the outline of which dissertation is delivered in Year 1).

As part of the work necessary to qualify for an MA, each student is required to produce an independent written dissertation or video essay. This runs from the start of the 1st Year to May of the 2nd Year. Following discussions with the MDSE Department Dissertation Tutor, and Screen Arts tutors in the first half of the 1st year, students deliver 500-word outline proposal by June of the 1st year; 2000-word detailed proposal and structure by November of 1st Year (students may not progress into 2nd year if they fail to deliver this). Full draft dissertation of 7,000-10,000 words (including sources and bibliography) must be delivered by February of 2nd Year and following discussion with tutors, final version of dissertation by May of the 2nd Year.

An alternative option of a twenty minute video essay is also available to MA students.

The aim should be to undertake original research of an investigative nature, which extends the boundaries of specialist knowledge within particular areas of Marketing, Distribution, Sales & Exhibition.

The purpose of the dissertation is to give you the opportunity to explore the nature of your discipline through working on a subject of your choice and increase your knowledge of the creative aspects of film, television or games. It gives you the time and opportunity to think about and develop your ideas on the aesthetic and conceptual aspects of your work at the NFTS, and to reflect critically on your own and others' practice.