

Course outline: Diploma in Assistant Camera (Focus Pulling and Loading)

There are three modules in the year, of six to eight weeks each. Each one starts three weeks before one of the three major films that are made by the MA students at the School. Students enrolling in the course are allowed to complete the three modules over a two-year period, although we encourage you to complete in one year if possible.

By the end of the course you will have evidence of work and skills in:

- Being a Trainee - part of a camera team
- 2nd A/C work - film and digital
- 1st A/C work - depending on progress

Course Elements

The course consists of a logical progression of classes, practical workshops and modules, taught and overseen by industry professionals run over three terms starting usually in January each year. Teaching sessions usually take place during Monday to Friday from 9.30am until 5.30pm.

Knowledge is imparted and experience gained through workshops and production experience.

Core workshops taught to all students

1. 16mm Camera
2. 35mm Camera
3. Alexa Digital Camera Familiarisation
4. H&S Training
5. First Aid Course
6. Assisting and Focus Pulling

Induction and Introduction to Assistant Camera (Focus Pulling & Loading) - Term 1**Modules****Module 1**

This provides a complete “back to basics” approach to both film and digital equipment. The course leader will take you through all you need to know from unpacking equipment to maintaining and returning it in the same condition you found it.

During the three-week introduction period, you will be both classroom and location based, and there will be opportunities to work with actors and block scenes, as well as shoot them. The Course Leader will continually assess your skills, and by Week Four will have chosen teams for the “Digi Fiction” shoots which are directed and shot by 2nd Year students on the Alexa Mini cameras. During the ten films in this module you will be led by a professional 1st A/C as a way of providing continuous training.

Module 2

After a 10-week break, you will return to the School for a three or four week prep period for Grad Fiction Film (SFF). These are longer shoots, again with the 2nd Year MA students, and may shoot on Alexa, 16mm or 35mm film. Prior to the shoots, you will be continuing with your training in both handling a further range of equipment and lenses, as well as further opportunity to practice your focus skills - for students who are deemed fit to take on this important role.

Those not acting as 1st A/C's on the shoots will be 2nd A/Cs or loaders, again under continual assessment from the Course Leader. Some shoots may be led by professional 1st A/Cs.

Module 3

After a further four-week break, you then prepare for the “FYF” (First Year Film) shoots, which are directed and shot by 1st Year students. These shoots are all on 16mm, which is a fitting finale to the course as 16mm is the most exacting format to work with, both from a focus point of view, and also the care and accuracy needed in the testing and preparation of the equipment.

By this point we would hope that some of the students on the course are now in a position to successfully carry out the role of 1st A/C.

However, it is likely the most students graduating from this course will be accepted in either trainee or 2nd A/C roles in larger productions, but will be more than qualified to fulfil any camera department role on small shoots.

Other Components of the Diploma

Assessed work

This is a practical course so you will be assessed on the work you produce each module / term, culminating with a final review in December.

Meet the Industry

You will meet numerous professionals, visiting tutors, alumni and lecturers from a wide range of industry backgrounds throughout the course during workshops, seminars, visits and on productions. Where possible case studies and specific meetings are used to ground your learning in an industry context.

Optional Productions

In addition to the productions that are mandatory during the year, there are often many opportunities to work on additional student projects, there are films such as Commercials, Bridges to Industry and other shoots that may take place in between your modules which you are welcome to participate in by private arrangement with

the DP's concerned. Between modules, the NFTS is not responsible for you, but welcomes you to continue to take part in its activities that take place outside of the various Curriculums. You can, of course, discuss anything you would like to be participate in with the Tutors.

Work Experience

There are no guaranteed work experience placements: however, the NFTS will endeavour to find you work experience if you let us know that you are looking for it. This might range from working for a limited time at Rental Companies, to brief on-set experience mostly with NFTS Alumni.

Commitment

It is important when you sign on for the modules that you are 100% available for both the teaching module (3 to 4 weeks) as well as the shoots which are spread over a 3 to 5 weeks period. Once you are signed on to a module, significant failure to attend may mean you cannot continue with the Diploma.