

Unscripted Development Diploma: Term 1 Modules & Workshops

Term 1

Welcome & Brainstorming Workshop

The course commences with an in-person workshop to welcome students and take part in an initial brainstorming session.

Duration: 1 day.

The Unscripted TV Landscape / Meet the Commissioners

Understanding the market for unscripted programmes is fundamental to their successful development and production of unscripted programmes.

In this module we're going to review the unscripted output of some of the biggest commissioners of unscripted programmes in the UK and US with a cast of commissioners to discover what 'makes' an unscripted programme on, variously, Amazon, Sky, BBC, ITV, Channel 4 etc. How are they different?

We'll discuss current trends in unscripted programming in the UK and North America with reference to notable series; see how recent innovations in unscripted programming have been informed by other genres, advances in technology and the rise of the streamers, and weigh the importance of unscripted programmes in the inter-channel battle for audiences.

At the end of this module, students should be able to deconstruct the key signatures of unscripted programmes on each of the featured channels – an insight that will prove key when they come to explore the development of programme ideas for these channels in the next module.

Duration: 6 weeks.

Developing Unscripted Programmes – Proposals & Pitch Decks

Where do ideas come from, and how best to develop them and present them to commissioners? This module reviews the process of developing, researching, writing and pitching unscripted programmes.

We'll explore different ways of generating and formatting programme ideas through a series of

brainstorming workshops; learn how to research and write programme proposals and pitch decks; discuss the importance of talent and explore how to successfully pitch ideas to commissioners.

At the end of this module, students will have devised their own idea for an unscripted programme, created a programme proposal / pitch deck and pitched it to a panel.

Duration: 3 weeks.

Unscripted Development Diploma: Term 2 Modules & Workshops

Term 2

Developing Unscripted Programmes – Proposals & Pitch Decks

This module, which started in Term 1, continues this term.

Duration: 3 weeks.

Developing Pitch Materials – Sizzle Reels

Sizzles are short, impactful promos, often created using 'found' footage, and play a key role in the initial pitching process. In this module, students will participate in a day-long crash course in editing and produce a sizzle for an idea developed in the previous module. Senior creatives will share sample sizzles used to pitch their ideas, and we'll also explore lessons from narrative trailers, along with the creative and logistical considerations for working with archive material.

Duration: 6 weeks.

Development Masterclasses + Working with Talent

In this module, we'll cover the key steps for taking genre-specific ideas into funded development and working with talent. Guided by experienced development executives, students will gain insights into budgeting, scheduling, and the unique challenges of various unscripted forms—such as observational documentaries, fixed rig, formats and specialist factual. Industry professionals will provide expertise on managing and booking talent, with an emphasis on Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). Students will also participate in a two-day camera course and create a casting reel as part of their practical training.

Duration: 6 weeks.

Unscripted Development Diploma:

Term 3 Modules & Workshops

Term 3

Selling Unscripted Today & Tomorrow / The Commissioners Revisited This forward-facing module focuses on helping students explore alternative pathways for developing and exploiting unscripted ideas beyond traditional television. We'll examine formats like podcasts, digital platforms such as YouTube and social media channels, and gain hands-on training with emerging technologies, including AI, that are transforming content development and production. Students will learn how television companies maximize a programme's reach post-broadcast, from global rights and international distribution to FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV) channels. Emphasizing entrepreneurship, students will understand how a producer's commercial acumen is as crucial as creativity in today's global media landscape. The module also offers opportunities to connect with globally minded commissioners.

Duration: 6 weeks.

Graduation Project

This final module sees students create their own programme proposal and sizzle for and then pitch it to a Commissioning Executive. To prepare, students will receive a briefing from a commissioner and hear from producers who have successfully pitched and produced shows for that channel / streamer.

What insights do they have into the tastes and sensibilities of the commissioning team that our students should be aware of? Group tutorials provide an opportunity for students to hone their ideas, presentations and pitching skills before their final pitch.

Duration: 8 weeks.