MFA Programme Specification for Students Registering from 1 January 2027

Award	Programme Title	Duration	Mode of Study
Master's	Master of Fine Art in Film, Television and Games	2 Years	Full Time only

Teaching Institution	**The National Film and Television School**
Awarding Institution	**The National Film and Television School**
Qualifications Framework	**Level 7 on the FHEQ (Master's Degree)**
Date of most recent validation	**April 2025**
Programme Specification Date	**January 2027**

1. Educational Aims of the Programme

The NFTS MFA Aims

The MFA is designed to nurture talent, to provide the highest calibre education, and to empower graduates to play leading roles in the media industries by:

- Developing students' practical skills;
- Developing students' abilities to devise creative and innovative approaches;
- Developing students' knowledge and critical abilities;
- Developing students' communication skills in a range of modes and contexts;
- Developing students' personal and interpersonal skills;
- Developing students' professional skills and qualities.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Key attributes are:

- Practical Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Communication

- Personal Development
- Professionalism.

Having completed a Master of Fine Art programme at the NFTS, students should be able to:

Practical Skills

- Produce work which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their professional discipline;
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of technical processes and practices in their discipline;
- Command a range of techniques in the service of making and/or sharing stories.

Creativity and Innovation

- Experiment with techniques in order to extend their own abilities;
- Explore and test the boundaries of their discipline;
- Translate innovative ideas into practice;
- Have the courage to take creative risks.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Critically evaluate the aims, success and/or failure of their own work and that of others;
- Be able to solve problems and plan complex projects independently and collaboratively;
- Investigate and apply theories, concepts and principles relating to their discipline;
- Understand the contexts of their discipline (e.g. historical, contemporary, aesthetic, cultural, technological and ethical).

Communication

- Communicate with clarity to a range of people;
- Communicate appropriately in a range of contexts;
- Communicate with honesty, integrity and consistency;
- Provide well-argued justifications for creative decisions;
- Give positive and negative feedback to others constructively, clearly and respectfully;
- Respond to positive and negative feedback from others constructively, clearly and respectfully.

Personal Development

- Work with a range of collaborators effectively and respectfully, as both a leader and a member of a group;
- Demonstrate resilience when problems and difficulties are encountered;
- Practise independence and confidence in a range of complex situations;
- Take responsibility for their work through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively, demonstrating flexibility and agility where required;
- Identify and acknowledge personal strengths and weaknesses, and work on improvements;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of personal-goal setting and modify plans when necessary.

Professionalism

- Understand the range and limits of their own, and others', professional responsibility and act accordingly;
- Evaluate possible career paths in their discipline;
- Develop and maintain industry contacts;
- Identify and exploit professional opportunities;
- Recognise and act on the need for continuing professional development;
- Create and maintain a high-quality public-facing professional profile;
- Exercise 'professionalism' in their chosen field, however this is defined, modifying their practice where necessary.

3. Programme Structure and Curriculum

Specialisations

There are 14 specialisations on this Master of Fine Art degree:

- Cinematography
- Composing for Film and Television
- Costume Design for Film and Television
- Directing Animation
- Directing Fiction
- Directing Documentary
- Directing & Producing Science and Natural History
- Editing
- Film Studies, Programming and Curation
- Games Design and Development
- Producing

- Production Design
- Screenwriting
- Sound Design for Film and Television

Credit Framework

The NFTS operates a credit framework (as set out below) in accordance with which the course is rated at 300 credits. Students who attain an insufficient number of credits for the award of a Master of Fine Art degree may be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma.

MFA

Year One			**Year Two**		
Term 1	**Term 2**	**Term 3**	**Term 4**	**Term 5**	**Term 6**
120 Credits			120 Credits		
Dissertation (50 Credits)					
	Progress Review 1	Progress Review 2 (5 Credits)		Progress Review 3	Progress Review 4 (5 Credits)
		Exit qualification: PgDip in Film and Television Requires 120 credits at Level M and successful completion of PR2			Exit qualification: MFA in Film and Television Requires 300 credits at Level M and successful completion of PR4

Students shall be eligible for the following awards based on the number of credits attained:

- Postgraduate Diploma (120 Credits) - all first-year modules, workshops and projects must have been completed satisfactorily and the student must have completed the PR2.
- Master of Fine Art (300 Credits) - all first year and second year modules, workshops and projects have been completed satisfactorily and the student has received a Pass grade in their dissertation. The student is then able to participate in the final Progress Review and be considered for the award of MFA.
- Each specialisation has different quantities of modules and workshops reflecting the varying demands of each course. Modules are assessed on a pass/fail basis and credit is awarded at the end of each year.

Teaching Weeks and Contact Time

MA courses are full-time and require in-person engagement. In the first year, students receive some 40 weeks of teaching, normally with 10-20 contact hours and, typically, an additional 25 guided learning hours per week over approximately 45 weeks. They are expected to follow the Screen Arts module as well.

In the second year of the MFA programme, students are encouraged to refine and develop a distinctive voice as creative practitioners. Building upon the foundations laid in

the first year, which focuses on mastering technical skills and understanding the fundamentals of storytelling, students develop greater independence, engaging in more complex projects that challenge their creative boundaries. Taught contact time will vary from course to course, but Guided Learning Hours will increase to approximately 45 hours per week, as students work on more complex, synoptic projects. Students must also complete a written or video dissertation.

Cross MFA Teaching and Learning Strands

Screen Arts, Masterclasses and the Cinema Club

Screen Arts is a unique programme designed to give each student at the NFTS the opportunity to engage with the history, contemporary experience and wider culture of the moving image. Throughout the year the department provides a series of talks, discussions and screenings, encouraging students to explore, debate and reflect upon questions of creative practice. This in turn can inform and inspire students' own development as practitioners, enabling them to understand their work in context. Screen Arts creates a forum where students with differing experiences and backgrounds can meet and engage with a wide range of ideas from informed and expert speakers, and watch and discuss a broad variety of films and other forms of moving image material.

Screen Arts aims to provide a broad-based understanding of key concepts and concerns, helping students to develop confidence in their informed judgement and critical reflection. This will help them to assess and evaluate their own and other people's work independently and effectively. Screen Arts encourages dialogue between departments, and can assist MFA students in developing ideas for the Dissertation or other research. The programme aims to be inclusive, multi-disciplinary, provocative and participatory.

The Screen Arts programme of talks, events and screenings takes place on Mondays during term time. Attendance is encouraged throughout the year.

The Screen Arts programme also underpins the tutorial and practical support given to all NFTS students during the writing of the MFA dissertation.

Masterclasses

The NFTS regularly arranges Masterclasses for students, at the School, online, at the NFTS Hubs throughout the UK and at venues in London. Masterclasses and Q&As with filmmakers and industry professionals give students the opportunity to learn from, interact with and be inspired by established and experienced professionals as they discuss their approach to filmmaking. Held throughout the year, Masterclasses are optional and open to all students.

Cinema Club

Every week during term time, usually on a Tuesday, Cinema Club screens forthcoming or newly released films for students in the NFTS's cinema. Films cover the spectrum of international production, from Oscar nominated shorts, low-budget independent features,

foreign language features to Hollywood blockbusters and include all genres including animation, documentary and fiction feature films.

4. Learning and Teaching Methods

Although there are variations between disciplines, every course at the NFTS is underpinned by the following principles:

- *To nurture, develop and challenge the individual voice of each student:* Each student brings with them a unique set of talents, experiences and expectations, and we provide an environment that enables them to develop their creative and professional identity. As such, each department and specialisation has its own distinct methods and outcomes, and each student has the opportunity to shape how they progress through that curriculum.

- *To support students to marry inspiration with skill:* Our challenge is to enable our students to produce innovative work that demonstrates command of the intellectual, imaginative and technical processes involved in its creation whilst also allowing for creative alchemy to occur.

- *To instil the value of collaboration and team work:* The worlds of film, television, and games are inherently collaborative. We stress at all times the importance of respectful collaborative work, and the creative benefits of different specialisms combining to make something greater than the sum of their individual parts.

- *To encourage creative risk taking:* In encouraging students to push at personal and professional boundaries, we expect them to take risks. The freedom to make mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

- *To value process as much as outcome:* The process through which students make their film, television and games projects is as important as the final creative product. For example, research, experimenting with techniques, developing ideas, and collaborating professionally and ethically on a shared project are vital skills in their own right, regardless of outcome.

- *To ensure students reflect on the cultural impact of their work:* We believe that the integration of thought and technique enables our students to appreciate the wider cultural context in which their work is situated, to challenge boundaries, and to find their voices.

- *To promote diversity and equality for all:* We aim to sustain a community of practice where students and staff can be their true selves and learn from each other as they seek to meet their full potential. This means respecting different perspectives, developing empathy, and recognising everyone's value in the School.

We put these principles into practice through a range of teaching and learning methods, such as workshops, lectures, visiting speakers, production work, seminars, work experience, reflection, feedback, reading, viewing, peer learning, individual tutorials and supporting students to take responsibility for their own learning. Courses are led by professionals with extensive industry experience, teaching to industry standards, helping students to 'learn by doing' and encouraging them to challenge themselves whenever possible.

5. Assessment

General

Each module is assessed and graded on a Pass/Fail basis, through a variety of methods ranging from individual and group assignments, oral presentations, portfolio work, and essays, to practical work in the appropriate medium and other creative outputs. Any deliverables required to be submitted for assessment in a module will be described in the relevant module brief. In order to pass any element of assessment, students must demonstrate that they have met the associated learning outcomes. Assessment is carried out by the tutors who teach the module. All modules on your course must normally be passed in order for students to be considered eligible for the MFA.

Dissertation: Students are also assessed though the dissertation, where they must achieve at least a Pass. The dissertation grade will affect the overall grade for a student's MFA. To be eligible for an overall grade of Excellent, students must achieve a minimum grade of Good for their dissertation. Failure to submit the final draft of your dissertation by the specified deadline means that students cannot achieve a higher grade than Pass, regardless of the dissertation's quality.

Screen Arts: Students are also assessed on their participation in Screen Arts, where attendance is compulsory as noted above.

Continuous Monitoring: Student progress is continuously monitored throughout the course, in order to:

- encourage each student to develop their maximum potential and enable them to improve their skills and understanding;
- recognise each student's commitment to their advancement in the course through their attendance, level of interest and ability to collaborate with their colleagues;
- highlight areas where additional help, tuition or guidance may be needed in order for the student to progress;
- ensure each student attains the required academic standard before being awarded their MFA.

Self-Assessment: Self-assessment is an important element of every course and, in addition to the formal requirements of the Progress Reviews, students are asked to give their own feedback on modules and to discuss their progress with tutors on a regular basis.

Retrieval of Failure: If a student's work on a module is incomplete or fails to meet the

required standard, they may be invited to resubmit the work on no more than one occasion for re-assessment by an agreed date. Only one re-submission is allowed to ensure students do not fall behind in their course.

Grading Criteria:

- Students' overall performance is assessed against the key attributes and learning outcomes referred to above.
- Students' achievement is graded against each of the key attributes using the generic grading criteria set out in Appendix A of the NFTS's Academic Regulations for Taught Courses of Study. An overall grade is determined based on these and the student's achievement in the dissertation. Grades are determined from the range Excellent, Very Good, Good, Pass, Fail.

Written Feedback: Students will receive written feedback from their Head of Department and tutors in the six-monthly Progress Reviews. They may also receive interim written feedback on individual pieces of course work, depending on the content of the course, and this will be highlighted in the course module briefs if so.

Oral Feedback: Students will also receive a great deal of oral feedback during their course, on their work, their collaboration with students and tutors and their development. This kind of feedback may take many forms, for example a conversation during a shoot, tutor comments on a presentation, a review session in which peer feedback is given and received, or a one-to-one tutorial.

Progress Reviews

Progress Reviews 2 and 4 are credit-bearing and must be passed in order to progress into the second half of the MFA (in respect of Progress Review 2) and pass the MFA (in respect of the Final Progress Review). Each of these progress reviews carries 5 credits, which are necessary in order to gain 300 credits for the MFA. It is necessary to meet the School learning outcomes at each of these progress reviews at threshold level in order to progress and pass.

- **Progress Reviews – First Year:**
  - **Progress Review 1** This takes place at the end of Term 2 in the first year. Students will receive a written report from their Head of Department summarising their performance in the previous six months and the modules in that period, and they complete a corresponding self-assessment form. They will meet with their Head of Department and the Director of Curriculum to discuss their progress and be informed if they are reaching the required standard.
  - **Progress Review 2** This takes place at the end of Term 3 in the first year. Students will receive another written report from their Head of Department summarising their performance since Progress Review 1, and will complete a corresponding self-assessment. They will meet with your Head of Department and the Director of Curriculum to discuss their progress. They must have satisfactorily met the first year module learning outcomes at the end of the first year in order to progress into the second year. This includes having met the

dissertation requirements at that point and having achieved a satisfactory industry reviewer report.

- **Progress Reviews – Second Year:**
  - **Progress Review 3** This takes place towards the end of Term 2 in the second year. This is an informal review consisting of a meeting with the Head of Department which follows a checklist of key points. Students are not required to complete a self-assessment form at this point, however, either they or their Head of Department may request a formal meeting if there is any concern over progress.
  - **Progress Review 4 (also known as the Final Progress Review)** This takes place at the end of Term 3 in the second year. Students will receive a written report from their Head of Department summarising their performance over the course and on their final project, and they will complete a corresponding self-assessment. Students will meet with their Head of Department and another Head of Department to discuss this, and they will give a short presentation detailing their progress over the course. The Final Progress Review Student Presentation Guidelines set out guidance on this. Subject to demonstrating satisfactory achievement of the School Learning Outcomes, after the Final Progress Review students are recommended to the Final Examination Board for an award. This includes having met the dissertation requirements at that point and having achieved a satisfactory industry reviewer report.

The full Academic Regulations can be found here.

6. Admissions

Entry Requirements

These are detailed on the website - https://nfts.co.uk/entry-requirements

Further information can be found on each of the specific course webpages.