



NATIONAL FILM AND  
TELEVISION SCHOOL

# The National Film and Television School

## RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY 2024-2029

## **PURPOSE**

This document articulates the commitment of NFTS to research, innovation, and knowledge exchange. It states our principles, aims and the specific actions which we will take over the next five years in order to enhance these areas, and will be used to direct our planning and practice.

## **CONTEXT**

The National Film and Television School was established in 1971 as The National Film School – the culmination of work by the Industry and government to create an institution to educate and train talent for the British film Industry.

In just over 50 years the School has established itself as not only one of the world's best film schools, but as a centre of excellence for television and games design and development. It was honoured by BAFTA with the 2018 Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award, the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education in 2017, and in 2022 it was granted its own Postgraduate Taught Degree Awarding Powers.

Historically the NFTS has been a teaching institution, focused primarily on practice. The strategy for 2029 has two key drivers which will change this: a growth in funding for research and development; and a growing recognition of how existing work can be valued, developed and articulated as research.

In recent years the School has been successful in co-bidding for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding for the StoryFutures project – an innovative collaborative piece of work designed to explore the place of immersive technologies in new modes of storytelling. It is now, along with core partners, such as Royal Holloway, Pinewood Studios and Abertay University leading the Convergent Screen Technologies and performance in Realtime (CoSTAR) National Lab. It is through such projects (and others) that the School can leverage its R&D activities.

## **STRATEGY STATEMENT**

The NFTS will build on its expertise in delivering excellent education in film, television and games, by developing: new technologies; new applications of existing technologies; new knowledge from and about creative practice/research; and approaches to practice-based pedagogy. It will share these innovations with wider audiences and industry stakeholders.

## **AIMS**

Over the next five years, we will seek to be at the leading edge of the creation of knowledge and innovation in the film, television and games sectors through the production and dissemination of research undertaken through the School's curriculum, production, and R&D activity, where appropriate, in partnership with others.

### **We will develop a research and innovation culture by:**

- Identifying existing practices in the School which constitute the production of new knowledge.
- Devising ways of sharing these practices to enhance understanding and appreciation of the value of research.
- Continuing to identify appropriate bidding opportunities in collaboration with others for research funding which drives creativity and innovation in the UK's screen industries.
- Developing plans for the School's presence at Pinewood Studios to showcase and nurture professional practice and scholarship.

### **We will support staff to engage in research by:**

- Supporting staff to identify innovation in their practice and to articulate it as knowledge production.
- Supporting staff to produce a range of 'research outputs' (or 'contributions to knowledge') using a variety of forms, techniques, and platforms to communicate with a wider audience.

**We will support students to engage in research by:**

- Identifying opportunities for research produced by students to be shared more widely.
- Exploring alternatives to the written dissertation for MA students.
- Encouraging students, where appropriate, to develop novel techniques and working practices and to reflect critically upon them.

**We will build a research profile for the NFTS by:**

- Sharing our practice more widely with industry, other film and TV schools, and the HE sector generally.
- Devising and utilising a range of vehicles for this dissemination, including blogs, behind the scenes videos, 'explainer videos, and written articles in academic and/or trade journals, all of which will enable us to speak to a wider audience and further our standing in the field of knowledge production and innovation in creative practice.

**We will enhance our knowledge exchange and impact through:**

- Building and maintaining an infrastructure with industry and HE partners, via the CoSTAR project, to support research around emerging technologies for the creative industries.
- Disseminating R&D through graduates and industry partners, responding to gaps in knowledge and understanding, and proactively identifying possible futures.
- Contributing to the public understanding of creative industries education in general and the work of the NFTS in particular, through marketing and PR initiatives which focus on the creation of cultural, intellectual and economic value.

**IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The implementation and development of this strategy will be led by the Director of Curriculum, reporting to the Academic Standards Committee and the NFTS Board of Governors.

We will monitor the success of this strategy through:

- Quantity and quality of outputs;
- Feedback from key stakeholders;
- Feedback from Industry Advisory Boards.

**DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

***Research***

We take the UKRI definition of research as a principle; research is defined as: “any form of disciplined inquiry that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge” ([UKRI, 2023](#)). This strategy is designed to identify opportunities and activities which can be framed as disciplined inquiry contributing to a body of knowledge, which will elevate the work of the School. Some of this enquiry will be categorised as 'Research and Development', but the strategy will also identify, nurture, and promote other forms of knowledge production which relate to understanding lived experience through creative practice, ethical working practices, interrogations of curriculum knowledge, and pedagogic research.

***Innovation***

By innovation we mean the development of new approaches and new ways of working (such as ethical and participatory practice), as well as products, technologies, tools, services and processes which solve problems, generate insights, and create value.

***Knowledge Exchange***

Knowledge Exchange is broadly understood as a process by which Higher Education Institutions come together with wider groups, institutions, and communities in order to exchange research, experience and expertise. It might take the form of: participatory workshops and conferences; commercialisation and licensing; incubation and digital hubs; festivals; curatorial investigations; socially and culturally inclusive projects.