

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
MA Screenwriting	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	MA1SCW1
UCAS Code:	N/A
Name of Final Award:	Master of Arts, MA
Level of Qualification:	Level 7
Regime of Delivery:	Attendance
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Full Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	1 Year (12 months)
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	N/A

Brief Description of the Programme

Taught in the stimulating environment of Pinewood Studios, on this programme students will obtain a practical understanding of the skills required to produce and assess industry-standard scripts for films and High End TV (HETV).

This is a highly demanding, intensive, but rewarding course. In a series of carefully designed workshops students will be guided through the difficult and daunting process of writing for the screen. They break down the intimidating task of writing a script into a number of helpful tasks to make the process more manageable.

Students will develop advanced research skills to demonstrate a systematic understanding of narrative techniques and their application for the development of their own projects. They will be required to produce a collaboratively written 55 page pilot for HETV as well as a 90-page feature film screenplay. The modules run in sequence as the development of ideas screenplays will build and smoothly flow from one module to the next.

The course will also deal with the overcoming the dreaded writers block and the practicalities of being a freelance writer, getting and dealing with agents and will introduce students to valuable networking strategies. The ability to pitch effectively is an essential part of being a writer and the course will give students the tools and experience they need to succeed and excel in this vital area.

Students scripts will receive feedback from industry professionals assessing their commercial and artistic suitability for both UK and international markets. They will also benefit from having them reviewed by professional screenwriters with extensive experience in the European and global market. Throughout the process students will be supported by staff to ensure their academic and emotional well-being.

Programme Aims

1	A sophisticated knowledge and application of narrative techniques to screenwriting and a critical awareness of the various methods used to write screenplays for feature films and High End TV.
2	The creative application of knowledge and skills, together with a practical knowledge of film and HETV genres.
3	An ability to critically evaluate the resources for screenwriting in order to deliver a fully developed 90-page feature film screenplay and a 55-page collaboratively written pilot for HETV.
4	The development of self-direction and originality in working collaboratively and professionally within a team.
5	An understanding of pitching techniques, introducing a project into the marketing and seeking production support.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Critically analyze key aspects of relevant industry sectors
K2	Systematically critique industry-relevant contemporary issues and debates in screenwriting
K3	Demonstrating competence and insight into the production and application of industry standards
K4	Deconstruct business practices and the political economy of creative industries
K5	Create innovative and challenging creative artefacts
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	Critical self-evaluation in relation to own creative output
C2	Link critique of own creative works to the practice of revision and editing
C3	Systematically critique possibilities of juxtaposing a script with other textual and documentary sources
C4	Defend decision making via deployment of inter-textual and cross references
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Demonstrate critical insight into social, cultural and political interpretations and perspectives
S2	Demonstrate critical and ethical insight into contemporary audiences and their interpretation of creative works
S3	Demonstrate social and ethical awareness when critiquing creative industries and professional practices.

Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)

L1	Produce work aimed at niche and mainstream audiences
L2	Systematically appraise operational effectiveness of businesses within creative industries and how these interrelate
L3	Critically evaluate the relationship between research into and development of creative works
L4	Systematically adhere to industry standards in the development, production, distribution and promotion of screenplay and related intellectual properties

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Level 7

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
TV721	Research Techniques and Dissertation	60	Core	No
TV717	Scriptwriting: strategies, techniques and analysis	30	Core	Yes
TV718	Feature film treatment and script	30	Core	Yes
TV719	TV Bible and TV Pilot	30	Core	Yes
TV720	Freelancing and pitching	30	Core	Yes

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

The MA Screenwriting degree incorporates a wide variety of teaching and learning methods:

- Traditional **lectures and seminars** - we aim to create an environment where students can express themselves and understand the nature of working in the industry. Students will be challenged to defend their script ideas in front of the group, as well as assessing other writers' scripts, making them aware of the importance of cultivating their own artistic voice
- Students will work **individually and collaboratively** to develop their screenplay productions
- **Workshop-based** classes, where students will work on tight deadlines to present written work of their chosen scripts.

- Professional **master-classes**, and related sessions that may not fit into regular timetabled hours but require independent learning and studio practice, in the form of:
 - Wider reading and preparation for lectures.
 - Reading colleagues' work.
 - Visualisation of proposed material.
- Students will also be encouraged and supported to attend **visits to outside institutions** such as *pitching markets*, *networking events*, *screenings*, talks from industry professionals, among others, to enhance their networking skills and engage in the research activities proposed in the programme.
- **Individual and small group tutorials** led by industry professionals and business mentors, not only to support students throughout the degree but more importantly to prepare them for professional life afterwards.

During the degree, learning will include (but will not be limited to):

- Presentation and pitching skills
- Developing and improving scriptwriting skills
- Value proposition
- Entrepreneurial skills

These experiences are voluntary and self-determined by the student (though will be strongly encouraged and supported by BNU) and not formally assessed. Accordingly, relationships with hosts are informal (they are not involved in assessment) though compliant with legal requirements for health and safety.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

- Books on the module reading lists will be made available via the LRC at the High Wycombe campus. Students will be expected to cover the costs for any suggested reading and visual material such as books, films, essays, etc that are not on the prescribed module reading lists.
- Free buses are available from Pinewood to Uxbridge, and the University also runs a free bus service between its Uxbridge and High Wycombe campuses.
- Networking events will predominantly take place at the Pinewood campus location, but may occasionally also take place at the High Wycombe campus and/or in London. The typical additional cost that a student may incur for travel would amount to approximately £100 per annum.
- Each student will need a laptop or similar (tablet with keyboard etc.) in order to take notes and develop scripts.
- BNU students to be able to access relevant trade titles such as *Variety*, *Broadcast*, *the BFI Statistical Yearbook* and *Screen International*.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad (Hours)
Year One	640	1160	0

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment activities are used on this programme:

- **Essays** – Students will be required to present research material in specific subjects and edit it to fit the desired outcomes. Students will be asked to write in depth about particular topics and questions and will be expected to draw upon and reference a wide range of evidence or sources to support the answer/s. Essays will be informed by critical and theoretical discourse and evaluated under academic standards.
- **Reports** – Students will be expected to present reports on the progress of their scripts on a weekly basis.
- **Presentation Assessment** – Throughout the degree, students will be expected to produce coursework and present it to a specialized panel, which will assess and mark it. Pitching skills are essential when dealing with producers and seeking finance. One of the panelists will be a University academic, who will assess from the perspective of contextual learning.
- **Practical Skills** – Students will be challenged to produce industry-standard results with the time constraints imposed by industry. Students will be formatively assessed by industry professionals on the quality of their finished pieces throughout the degree.
- **Formative** feedback on drafts of scripts will be provided by screenplay professionals, while **summative** assessment will be supported and undertaken by suitably qualified University-appointed academic tutors

Classification

Calculation of final award:	Level 7 – 100%
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For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Applications are welcomed from students from all around the world with an interest in the film and/or TV industry and writing for the screen. Students will be required to go through an interview process with a University member of staff to assess the level of capability pertaining to the discipline. Assessment will be based upon an existing portfolio of work. If English is not the students first language, and IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent is essential.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?

No

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

Typical work opportunities for graduates would include:

- Screenwriter
- Researcher
- Script reader
- Script editor
- Script consultant

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Student Learning and Achievement Unit for skills and study support, the Library and Learning Resources, the Student Opportunities and Career Success Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Buckinghamshire New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (2015)
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	No
Date Published / Updated:	November 2018/September 2021

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	PGCert Screenwriting
Credits requirements:	60 credits
Module requirements:	Any 60 credits excluding DA705
Learning Outcome	
Systematically critique key aspects of how the film industry operates, with specific focus on screenwriting processes.	
Critique existing examples to inform development new and revised creative outputs	
Systematically critique professional issues, debates and conventions	
Transform existing narratives with ethical awareness of how these may be interpreted by contemporary audiences	
Appraise effectiveness of planning, organizational, project management and leadership skills deployed to manage time, personnel and resources	
Critically interpret feedback and other creative evaluation both to inform revision of existing works and to create new works	
Defend decision making as an individual artist, such as via illustrative review of creative works	
Demonstrate social and ethical awareness when interpreting multiple research sources to inform construction of new works	
Deconstruct commissioning and funding structures of the creative industries, critically evaluating related constraints and opportunities	
Formulate information, ideas and solutions to be organized for both specialist and non-specialist audiences	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	PGDip Screenwriting
Credits requirements:	120 credits
Module requirements:	120 credits excluding DA705
Learning Outcome	
Execute effective manipulation of the written word, interpreting relevant industry standards with critical insight into how they are defined and achieved	
Systematically critique possibilities of a script assembled in conjunction with a score and other textual and documentary sources	
Critically examine social, cultural and political interpretations of new and existing works	
Critique your own creative processes and practice	
Critique the development of creative ideas and concepts derived from documented research	
Create innovative screenwriting works, challenging conventions such as through the application of alternative hypotheses	
Devise new works with that demonstrate critical insight into social, cultural and political interpretations	
Critically interpret feedback and other creative evaluation both to inform revision of existing works and to create new works	
Transform existing narratives with ethical awareness of how these may be interpreted by contemporary audiences	
Produce work that adheres to industry standards of specified length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources	