

Course Outline: Editing

The MFA in Editing is a specialisation within the broader **MFA in Film, Television and Games**.

You will work to Industry standards using high-end facilities. You are encouraged to consider your craft as part of the whole process of film and television production and not merely as the final stage, developing your skills as a narrative and technical editor.

You will collaborate with fellow students in other specialisms on a wide range of projects, putting into practice the skills you will learn throughout the course.

During their time at the National Film and Television School and amongst other projects, students will complete four graduation films to be shown to industry at graduation showcase.

Course facilities

Throughout the course, you will have your own dedicated editing suite. We have a large number of specially equipped cutting rooms running AVID Media Composer.

Year One

The first year contains six assessed project based modules, and a wealth of other exercises and workshops:

- Module 1 – Moment of Truth
- Module 2 – Without Words
- Module 3 – Science & Natural History Graduation
- Module 4 – Animation
- Module 5 – First Year Film Fiction
- Module 6 – Question

Module 1: Moment of Truth

This module is a collaborative exercise alongside Directing Documentary, Sound & Composing in which you will create a short film narrative about an individual experiencing a moment of change – assessed by tutors and HoD's in individual and group reviews. The edit runs for approximately 3 weeks.

Module 2: Without Words

In this workshop we want you to experiment with cinematic time to create a coherent story where staging image and sound are used to their fullest potential (dialogue should be kept to a very minimum, a total of approx. 100 words). This is a collaboration with Directing Fiction students and other departments on a short film with intentional limitations on actors, time, budget, location and film stock. The Directing Fiction students will write scripts that work smartly within these limitations, with the aim of getting the most from the resources available.

There will be a three-week edit period in which these parameters will be explored further.

Module 3: Science & Natural History Graduation Project

After your summer break you will edit the first of your four graduation projects. Across 6 weeks of editing you will work closely with SNH Directing, Composing and Sound second year students to create films of approximately 20 minutes in length that tackle science and natural history subjects from around the globe. These films will be shown at the end of year graduation showcase to industry which you will attend.

Module 4: Animation

This workshop gives the students a conceptual and practical introduction to techniques in animation, and the different story forms and ways of developing animation ideas. Further seminars and workshops are anticipated throughout the year, typically in collaboration with the Directing Animation students, in order to build students' knowledge of animation techniques and development prior to starting to develop their Animation Graduation Film.

Module 5: First Year Film

Throughout the first-year ideas and scripts will be developed for a 5-10-minute film which is shot and edited during the autumn term. Sometimes these films are based around a shared theme or genre. Scripts will be developed by the producers and directors in conjunction with cinematographers, production design and sound. The composers provide the music and the films are edited and mixed by the end of the year.

Module 6: Question

This module is a joint exercise between Directing Documentary, Editing, Sound Design, Composing, Production Management and Location Sound Recording, introducing you to the basic principles of enquiry through film-making. Directing students will be asked to identify a question about the world and to make a documentary film that attempts to answer that question. The heart of the task is not so much finding the answers but in identifying a subject that's ripe for interrogation, and to be inventive and tenacious in the film-making process. You will be assessed on the extent to which you deliver a coherent, watchable and revealing piece of work – on schedule. The expected duration of the finished short film is 15 minutes.

Other Seminars & Workshops

Alongside and in between the Modules there are a number of exercises, workshops and seminars including:

Springboard Cross Specialisation Introductory Weeklong Workshop

A cross-school and interdisciplinary introduction to film and television, looking at cinematic language and televisual language through the prism of storytelling. It investigates how the main crafts of cinema and television, screenwriting, cinematography, visualisation, editing, sound and music relate to the way filmmaking puts across narrative ideas.

Screen Arts

To complement the practical aspects of the curriculum, the course offers ongoing teaching of the creative and theoretical side of editing and post-production. Each Monday is dedicated to Screen Arts, with lectures at the School by filmmakers and theorists, and screenings of historically and artistically relevant films.

Screen Arts is also incorporated into workshops through seminars and lectures exploring particular ideas relevant to the exercise. Topics include documentary techniques, how to read a script and understand scene structure, the relationship between sound and image and the use of genre in narrative filmmaking. Screen Arts is a compulsory element of the course up to the Easter break.

Avid Training

Editing students will be given an overview of non-linear editing: preparation and planning, breaking-down, basic editing operations, logging, syncing, and audio editing will be covered, together with recording, generating EDL's, using effects, problem solving and project management.

Beyond The Frame

Create a 3-5 minute short film pushing the boundaries of film language. This module is a joint exercise between Directing Documentary, Editing, Sound Design and Composing, designed to let you explore the creative potential of sound in documentary and how it can help develop character, story, ideas and emotions. Directors will work closely with sound designers, editors and composers to experiment with the juxtaposition of sound and image. You will explore the value of collaboration and how to communicate subtle and abstract ideas with clarity. In the process you'll create a short film that expresses an idea, a character or an emotion with great economy of means. It is also a playful exercise where you are encouraged to push the boundaries of documentary film language.

Year Two

In Year Two, the emphasis is on longer productions and advanced workshops.

- Module 7 – Digi Fiction
- Module 8 – Grad Animation
- Module 9 – Grad Fiction
- Module 10 – Grad Documentary

Module 7: Digi Fiction

In this module, students deliver a short film of approximately fifteen-minute-long film using digital technology and operating within tight production and financial parameters. Directors are encouraged to take risks, to draw on what they have learned in the first year, to challenge themselves to develop their confidence in expressive use of film language. Directors will again be encouraged to build their skills in collaborative leadership. In this module directing students will work with: Cinematographers, Sound Recordists, Production Managers, Assistant Directors, Editors, Composers, Sound Design, Production Design.

Modules 8, 9 & 10: Grad Animation, Grad Fiction & Grad Documentary

The majority of Year Two is dedicated to extended productions that are shot on film, or digital format, edited on Avid and fully post-produced through on-line or master print with a final sound mix. These are cross- specialist productions where editors collaborate with fiction/documentary/animation directors, cinematographers, sound designers, composers, set designers and scriptwriters. Editors will work on several productions in the three Directing departments and follow their own schedule created by the post-production supervisor.

By bringing together and testing their acquired skills on a larger production, the editors will have the chance to pursue the language and voice which has been developing through smaller workshops and exercises. The Graduation Documentary project is from 20-40 minutes, Animation Graduation films 5-10 minutes, and the Graduation Fiction Film is approximately 17 minutes in duration.

1. Commercials

Over the course of your two years you'll be asked to edit 3-4 commercials a year as part of the Directing Commercials course run by the NFTS. This gives you as an editor the opportunity to work with the Directing Commercials students as well as build your showreel and hone the skill of telling a story within 30 seconds.

2. Advanced Editing

Workshops covering advanced techniques in editing and editing room protocols will be designed according to the students' individual talents. In past years, these have included a Music Editing Workshop and editing scenes using rushes from the feature film, and tuition in assistant editing skills required in features' cutting rooms.

3. Industry Familiarisation

Industry professionals hold open discussions, instructing the students in business skills, free-lancing and beginning a career after graduation.

Preparing students for graduation, this module will explain the freelance sector, looking for work, CV writing, accounting and making contacts in the industry. Talks from professionals and visits will form part of the module.

Other workshops and seminars are also included during the year, providing valuable further opportunities to learn.

Other Seminars

Additionally, during the second-year students continue to develop their own projects and take part in a series of seminars, tutorials, and meetings with industry specialists both in film and television.

Dissertation

You are required to complete a dissertation as part of your MFA. There are two dissertation options: (1) a written dissertation of between 7,000 and 10,000 words; or (2) a video essay of between 15 and 20 minutes in duration.

The purpose of the dissertation is to give you the opportunity to undertake independent research, explore the nature of your discipline through working on a subject of your choice and increase your knowledge of the creative aspects of film, television or games. It gives you the time and opportunity to think about and develop your ideas on the aesthetic and conceptual aspects of your work at the NFTS, and to reflect critically on your own and others' practice.

You will start work on your dissertation in your first year, identifying and agreeing a suitable subject with the Screen Arts and Departmental dissertation tutors in spring. You will submit a 500-word dissertation proposal by mid-June. You will follow this by delivering by early November by a 2,000-word chapter and detailed progress report/plan (if you are preparing a written dissertation) or a minimum five minutes of edited material and detailed

outline/timeline (if you are preparing a video essay). You may not progress into the second year unless this is completed and considered satisfactory.

Once in your second year, you will continue working on your dissertation, submitting a full first draft, receiving tutor feedback on this and lastly submitting the final draft. Specific deadlines for each stage in the second year vary from course to course in light of each department's work commitments.