

Department of Film & Screen Media

University College Cork

MA FILM AND SCREEN MEDIA

NFQ Level 9, Major Award

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES



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MARKS AND STANDARDS

The Marks and Standards for the **MA in Film and Screen Media** are published in the Marks and Standard tab of the programme's entry in the [Academic Programme Catalogue](#).

The Marks and Standards for the **Postgraduate Certificate in Film and Screen Media** are published in the marks and standard tab of the programme's entry in the [Academic Programme Catalogue](#).

Full details and regulations governing Examinations for each programme will be contained in the [Marks and Standards Book](#) and for each module in the [Book of Modules](#).

PASS STANDARD

The pass standard for each module is 40%. Special Requirements for individual modules, if any, are detailed in the Book of Modules (www.ucc.ie/modules/).

The University uses the following mark bands:

- First Class Honours: 70–100
- Second Class Honours – Grade I: 60–69
- Second Class Honours – Grade II: 50–59
- Third Class Honours: 45–49
- Pass: 40–45

LEARNING OUTCOMES

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

MA IN FILM AND SCREEN MEDIA (NFQ LEVEL 9, MAJOR AWARD)

On successful completion of this programme, students should be able to:

- Develop their knowledge to an advanced level in the study of 20th and 21st century film;
- Understand connections between theoretical, aesthetic, social and cultural contexts in the study of films;
- Develop independent critical and research methods and scholarly research, writing and debate;
- Introduce key concepts in film studies.

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN FILM AND SCREEN MEDIA (NFQ LEVEL 9, MINOR AWARD)

On successful completion of this programme, students should be able to:

- Develop their knowledge to an advanced level in the study of 20th and 21st century film;
- Understand connections between theoretical, aesthetic, social and cultural contexts in the study of films;
- Develop independent critical and research methods and scholarly research, writing and debate;
- Introduce key concepts in film studies.

MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Individual module learning outcomes are available from the UCC [Book of Modules](#).

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

Assessment on the MA in Film and Screen Media is planned to encourage as well as test students' **acquisition of key skills**, in conjunction with subject-specific knowledge; its main purposes are:

- To offer students an opportunity to verify and demonstrate the level to which they have achieved the learning outcomes of the course/module;
- To enhance students' learning further—the process of undertaking assessment is a learning process; including reading, researching, acquiring skills, developing projects and, thus, acquiring knowledge.

The Department of Film and Screen Media aims to **encourage learning** through diverse and innovative forms of assessment. We also aim to **provide critical and constructive feedback** according to established criteria.

The assessment processes are subject to regular review through the Department's internal boards, feedback from Student/Staff committees, External Examiners' reports, and Quality Assurance audits.

The types of assessment used include essays, written exams, oral presentations and examinations, video essays, creative films (production and postproduction), creative writing (screenplays), web-based projects, blogs, and portfolios. Film modules incorporating practice also apply aspects of group work and group assessment.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Important note: The criteria below must always be integrated with any module-specific criteria, as directed by the Lecturer.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN WORK

We consider three main elements when marking your written work (essays, tests, written examinations); your assignments must address all three areas to be successful:

Argument and analysis: Work should contain a coherent and accurate main thesis/argument. It should perform thorough and considered analysis and/or close reading of texts, and produce a reflective, clear and in-depth discussion of the topic.

Knowledge and research: Work should be based, where appropriate, on wide and critical reading of relevant secondary sources; it should demonstrate excellent and thorough comprehension of any texts discussed, and of their relevant historical, intellectual, and/or artistic contexts.

Writing and presentation: Work should be well structured and organised and should be written in a clear and persuasive manner. Referencing should accurately and consistently follow scholarly conventions, as should formatting and presentation. Essays should also avoid mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

When assessing written work staff consider the following points:

- Depth of understanding of basic concepts and issues
- Relevance to the assignment title or question
- Logical organisation and coherent linking of ideas
- Personal evaluation of issues under discussion
- Analysis, including originality of examples used
- Knowledge of the relevant contexts
- Evidence of adequate and appropriate background reading and critical use of relevant secondary material
- Evidence of systematic thought and argument
- Clarity of expression
- Accuracy of grammar and punctuation
- Systematic and standardised in-text and bibliographical references (n/a to exams)
- Final copy presentation and layout (n/a to exams)
- Observation of length requirements
- Evidence of having fulfilled requirements and expectations as detailed by the module leader in relation to assessment prerequisites

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

We consider three main elements when marking oral work; oral assignments must address all three areas to be successful:

Argument and analysis: Presentations should contain a coherent and accurate main thesis/argument. Work should perform thorough and considered analysis and/or close reading of texts, and produce a reflective, clear and in-depth discussion of the topic.

Knowledge and research: Presentations should be based, where appropriate, on wide and critical reading of relevant secondary sources; they should demonstrate excellent and thorough comprehension of any texts discussed, and of their relevant historical, intellectual, and/or artistic contexts.

Presentation and organisation: Work should be well structured and organised and should be presented in a clear and persuasive manner, engaging the audience and using any technical supports (PowerPoint, video, etc.) in an effective and professional way.

When assessing oral presentations staff consider the following points:

- Depth of understanding of basic concepts and issues
- Relevance to the assignment title or question
- Logical organisation and coherent linking of ideas
- Personal evaluation of issues under discussion
- Analysis, including originality of examples used
- Knowledge of the relevant contexts
- Evidence of adequate and appropriate background reading
- Evidence of systematic thought and argument
- Clarity of expression
- Engagement of audience
- Use of appropriate supporting materials/technology (Slides, PowerPoint, handouts, audio, video etc.)
- References for use of secondary material (e.g. on PowerPoint or handouts)
- Timekeeping
- In case of group presentations, group cohesion and appropriate distribution of roles

- Evidence of having fulfilled requirements and expectations as detailed by the module leader in relation to assessment prerequisites

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PRACTICAL WORK (CREATIVE)

We consider three main elements when marking creative practical work (creative films and projects); assignments must address all three areas to be successful:

Research and planning abilities: Work should demonstrate ability to identify a range of technical skills, equipment expertise, and practices for filmmaking. It should also demonstrate an ability to work independently and collaboratively in a small crew, using a range of strategies and technical skills to contribute to the planning, execution, and production of a sequence/film.

Production skills: Work should demonstrate evidence of applied technical ability, grasp of fundamental film grammar, appreciation of narrative structural dynamics, and effective use of cinematic devices and techniques.

Originality and creativity: Work should demonstrate screen storytelling ability, inventiveness, creativity, and innovation.

When assessing creative practical work staff consider the following points:

- Quality of practical and creative ideas behind the work and your research, particularly as they respond to (and achieve) the brief, the quality of imagination at work, innovation and taking artistic risks.
- Quality of the technical production (such as image quality, exposure, focus, smoothness of camera movement, clarity of sound, etc.)
- Understanding and implementation of screen aesthetics / grasp of fundamental film grammar
- Practical considerations in the project (such as correct use of space, location, lighting etc.)
- Practical skills, as appropriate to the project, including skills in management and time management
- Coherence, clarity of communication, organisation and structuring of the work
- In the case of group projects, an understanding and demonstration of a designated role and the independent initiative to research and implement the associated responsibilities
- Understanding and critical awareness as shown in the work. Depending on the particular project, this may include: an intellectual understanding of the work; an understanding of social, historical, cultural, aesthetic context; awareness of relevant practitioners and their work and/or theorists and theories
- Observation of rules regarding copyright and original work by other collaborators (actors, musicians, artists, locations, etc.)
- Observation of length requirements
- Evidence of having fulfilled requirements and expectations as detailed by the module leader in relation to assessment prerequisites

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PRACTICAL WORK (CRITICAL/CREATIVE)

We consider three main elements when marking critical practical work that includes a creative component (video essays and projects, including web-based exercises, blogs, portfolios); assignments must address all three areas to be successful:

Argument and analysis: Work should contain a coherent and accurate main thesis/argument. It should perform thorough and considered analysis and/or close reading of texts, and/or produce a reflective, clear and in-depth discussion of the topic and its contexts.

Knowledge and research: Work should be based, where appropriate, on wide and critical reading of relevant secondary sources; it should demonstrate excellent and thorough comprehension of any texts discussed, and of their relevant historical, intellectual, and/or artistic contexts. Work should also demonstrate technical and formal knowledge of the medium used to convey the results of research.

Presentation, organisation, and creativity: Work should be well structured and presented, and it should demonstrate evidence of the ability to make the best use and, when relevant, creative use, of the medium to convey ideas.

When assessing critical/creative practical work staff consider the following points:

- Evidence of adequate and appropriate background reading
- Relevance of the discussion
- Soundness of planning and organisation
- Evidence of systematic thought and argument
- Observation of conventions of academic discourse when citing sources
- Observation of length requirements and technical instructions
- Careful presentation (e.g. accurate presentation of information and ideas; accurate editing and transitions, when relevant; accurate proofreading of written elements, when relevant)
- Clarity and effectiveness of communication through audiovisual and/or web-based means
- Quality of the technical production (such as image quality, clarity of sound, etc.)
- Understanding and critical awareness as shown in the work—depending on the particular project, this may include: an intellectual understanding of the work; an understanding of social, historical, cultural, aesthetic context; awareness of relevant practitioners and their work and/or theorists and theories
- Evidence of having fulfilled requirements and expectations as detailed by the module leader in relation to assessment prerequisites
- In the case of web-based projects, students' technical grasp of website construction, management and maintenance will be evaluated, including:
 - General website construction and adherence to course instructions
 - Web design and aesthetics
 - Navigation and accessibility (linearity of the site, ease of usage)
 - Presentation of information and ideas (web menus, web pages, posts/findings—where applicable)
 - Technical functionality (hyperlinks, embedded files, downloads, interactive elements [surveys, widgets, etc.]—where applicable)
 - Integration of media (image files, videos, sound files, social media activity, etc.)

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN CREATIVE WORK (SCREENPLAYS)

We consider four main elements when marking creative written work (screenplays); assignments must address all four areas to be successful:

Originality and creativity: Acknowledge that there is a story to tell. Show an understanding of how to tell it for the screen. It should be clear that this is not a story better told in a novel, on radio, or in the theatre. Inventiveness, creativity, and innovation are most welcome.

Character work: It is important the script shows serious consideration of character and the interaction of character with story/plot. Quality of dialogue, relevant action, physical detail, relationships between characters, the presentation of the world of the character will all be important.

Structure: Evidence of clear thinking about structure, including having thought about the different ways to tell the story and make intelligent creative choices, especially in relation to Point of View, Timeframe, Tone, the visual world of the film. Remember the story is unique, but must be executed in a dramatically satisfying way.

Presentation and organisation: Screenplays must adhere to the required format, and be free from misspellings and grammatical errors.

When assessing creative written work staff consider the following points:

- Evidence of planning and organisation and consciousness of task
- Consistency and strength of story structure, characterisation and character development
- Effectiveness of narrative elements
- Use of form and language appropriate to context
- Correct formatting of script
- Ability to incorporate critical feedback, revise and edit
- Ability to communicate visually
- Ability to create atmosphere / story world
- Evidence of having fulfilled requirements and expectations as detailed by the module leader in relation to assessment prerequisites

SPECIAL CRITERIA

The points detailed above will apply to most of the assignments set. In some cases, however, a particular module or task will require its own set of criteria, and these will be communicated when the assignment is circulated.

Students may ask the lecturer of any given module for more clarification on assessments.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

FIRST CLASS

80–100

In **written/oral/practical critical assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded for outstanding work that generates novel approaches, and has impressive scope and theoretical sophistication. Work is highly ambitious and original and is presented in an exemplary fashion.

In **practice-based creative assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded for outstanding work that surpasses what can normally be expected of an undergraduate student, generates novel approaches, and demonstrates professional-standard ability and achievement. Work is highly ambitious and creative and is presented in an exemplary fashion.

70–79

In **written/oral/practical critical assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded when candidates show evidence of extensive relevant reading and a confident ability to tackle complex issues, using a range of

different skills and knowledge. Work is focused and cogent, showing clarity of thought, sophisticated reasoning, and excellent analytical ability; it is logically structured, using correct grammar and spelling and/or audiovisual formats, and excellent referencing and bibliography.

In **practice-based creative assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded to work of outstanding overall quality. It will consist of an original and ambitious project that has achieved its goals with high level of technical/formal competence. It will be informed by the strength of its original ideas and by an appropriate and distinctive structure, and will be presented in an excellent way.

UPPER SECOND CLASS (2.1)

60–69

In **written/oral/practical critical assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded to very good work that displays a confident use of a range of skills, evidence of learning from a range of relevant sources, a solid grasp of and, when relevant, an individual perspective on the material and themes explored. The work will present the results of those explorations with clarity and cogency; it will be well structured, using correct grammar and spelling and comprehensive and accurate referencing and bibliography.

In **practice-based creative assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded for very good work that has achieved the majority of its goals and demonstrates a significant degree of originality and ambition. It will be based on an original idea and will be well structured. It will show significant evidence of research and planning, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the medium/and a good level of technical competence.

LOWER SECOND CLASS (2.2)

50–59

In **written/oral/practical critical assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded when there is evidence of knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts. Work will be of an overall satisfactory standard but there may be limited depth of reasoning and/or an inability to remain consistently focused in use of arguments or evidence. The work may not be precise in execution and may be generally lacking in originality; may present mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation; and have clearly identifiable areas for improvement.

In **practice-based creative assessment**, a mark in this category is awarded to work of an overall satisfactory standard showing degrees of originality and ambition and the achievement of its primary goal(s). Technically it will be competent in quality with a recognisable and successful overall structure. It will be based on a degree of research/planning and exhibit some critical awareness of the medium but with marked variations in the effectiveness of the use of formal elements and have clearly identifiable areas for improvement.

CANVAS

Film and Screen Media uses **Canvas** (canvas.ucc.ie), a virtual learning environment. On Canvas you will find copies of module syllabuses, assessment briefs, module materials, and links to Turnitin (for submission of your work, see below). Your lecturers will also post announcements and send class emails through the Canvas “Announcements” system. The Student Guide to UCC Canvas/IT is available [here](#).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT

All FX assignments must be submitted as directed by your Lecturer – specific details of assignment submission will be available on each module Canvas page.

Instructions on how to submit media projects are available from the Student Area of the Film and Screen Media website.

Instructions on how to submit assignments for modules not administered by Film and Screen Media will be made available by individual module coordinators.

TURNITIN

Turnitin is software device that scans a typed document, then finds and highlights material in it that has been taken from another source. This material includes quotations (whether or not they have been placed in quotation marks) and all work previously submitted to the Turnitin database. It provides an “originality report” showing the percentage of such material in an essay. If, for example, one quarter of the essay is quotation from another source, the report for that essay will be 25%.

Both students and teaching staff are given a password that allows them to access Canvas, and Turnitin through Canvas. Assignment submission links will be available on each module’s Canvas page, and submission guidelines will be set by individual lecturers.

STYLE AND REFERENCING

It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that appropriate assignment guidelines and requirements (including the length of submissions) have been fulfilled. Furthermore:

- The following information must be provided on a title page/cover sheet: the student’s name, the course, the lecturer’s (or lecturers’) name(s), the title of the assignment, and the due date of the work on a title page.
- Use a simple, easily read typeface such as Times New Roman font size 12, use generous margins, and double-space your work. Pages should be numbered.
- Written assignments must conform to the writing and referencing conventions of the MLA style, which are set out in the ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 9th ed. New York: Mod. Lang. Assn., 2021.**

Strongly consider buying a copy of this book. Copies are also available in the library on Q+3. The website of the www.mla.org provides some free instructions under the “MLA Style” option. An excellent free online guide to MLA style is the Purdue OWL (Purdue University Writing Lab), which is available [here](#).

POLICY ON EXTENSIONS

A student seeking an extension must submit a completed extension form. and email it as an email attachment directly to the lecturer of the module they are requesting an extension for and to the departmental administrator, Ms Linda Murphy. The extension form can be found on the UCC Film and Screen Media website under “[Student Area](#)”, login required (username: student / password: student). Please note the following points:

- Applications should be made before the submission date.
- Extensions that do not incur loss of marks will normally only be allowed where there is a relevant medical certificate or written evidence of other significant difficulties that have interrupted work (computer problems, such as failure of printer and inability to access shared facilities, will not

constitute a reason for the granting of an extension, the departmental labs are available to all MA students).

An initial request, if agreed, will generally amount to a one-week extension. On a discretionary basis, a further extension may be sanctioned. In such cases, students will be required to present further evidence of a compelling reason for late submission. Again, the extension must be agreed to in writing.

If an extension is sanctioned, the late work, on submission, must be accompanied by the supporting documentation (medical certificate, etc.).

Where an extension has not been agreed to in advance, or where a student submits an essay after agreed extensions have expired, the appropriate penalties for late submission will be imposed. Penalties for late submission of work to be assessed are as follows:

- **Where work is submitted up to and including 7 days late**, 10% of the total marks available will be deducted from the mark achieved.
- **Where work is submitted up to and including 14 days late**, 20% of the total marks available will be deducted from the mark achieved.
- **Work submitted 15 days late or more** will be assigned a mark of zero.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

There is a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism/cheating/presenting AI as your own work in the Department of Film and Screen Media. If there are credible grounds to believe that submitted work does not represent the student's own work, the student may be required to orally defend their work to assess its originality, as well as their understanding of the topic(s) being assessed. Fail marks have been awarded in cases of plagiarism.

Familiarise yourself with UCC's [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and read UCC's page on [Understanding Academic Misconduct](#).

Please also see Film and Screen Media's MA Handbook before undertaking your assignments (available on the [Student Area of the FSM website](#) – login student/student); also available on Canvas.

When plagiarism is detected, the Department will apply the University Policy.

WRITING SKILLS

The UCC [Skills Centre](#) contain detailed resources on reading and note making, on critical thinking, on writing skills and on exams and assessment. You are advised to familiarise yourself with these resources. In particular, the section on writing skills includes tutorials on how to use quotations, how to avoid plagiarism, and on the writing process.

WHEN IN DOUBT

Queries should be directed to the following staff:

- About the assessment of specific courses to the **Module Coordinators and Lecturers**
- About issues that have a bearing on your overall performance in your modules to the **MA Director**