

Course Guide

Master of
Arts Screen
(10 Disciplines)

2022

AFTRS

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Section 1: Key Information

Overview of the Course Guide

This Course Guide is structured in four sections and is intended to cover all aspects of the Master of Arts Screen (MAS). The guide provides transparency on the structure of the course, expectations of students and staff and support through to graduation and employability in the industry.

Section 1 provides key information on the structure and expectations of the course, such as time commitment and learning responsibilities.

Section 2 focuses on the structure and content of the postgraduate degree program. Here you will be able to gain a clear understanding of the two-year postgraduate degree and how and why we teach the way we do.

The AFTRS approach to Teaching and Assessment is covered in Section 3. Here, there is a detailed explanation of AFTRS' assessment strategy, policy and process.

Key Course Information

Course Name

Master of Arts Screen

Course Level

Post-Graduate (AQF9)

Credit Points

96

Course Duration

Two years, full-time

Weeks per Year

32

Mode of Delivery

On campus, blended and online delivery modes

Graduate Capabilities

- Culturally engaged, creative leaders capable of steering independent and collaborative projects with vision and integrity, who can harness trends and developments in technology to progress and empower storytelling in the Screen Arts
- Highly skilled, reflective professional practitioners fluent in the language of cinematic storytelling who can draw from a depth of knowledge in their craft and a breadth of diverse sources to tell engaging, meaningful stories across platforms and technologies and have the capacity and passion for independent life-long learning
- Adaptable creators who are responsive to change, who can problem-solve and innovate
- Entrepreneurs possessing the business skills and knowledge of industry to sustain long term careers and generate opportunities for themselves and the wider community
- Ethical collaborators able to inspire, contribute to and progress a shared vision with an understanding of their own values and a respect for the values of others

Course Learning Outcomes

- Critically evaluate and apply a deep understanding of cinematic storytelling to create audience engaged work for the screen
- Justify and implement a reflective creative practice
- Apply an adaptable skill set to problem-solve and innovate on professional projects
- Demonstrate and apply advanced knowledge of theory and practice as a professional and creative leader in their discipline
- Demonstrate an ability to collaborate effectively and ethically across diverse creative projects

Course Rules

This guide should be read in conjunction with other key AFTRS documents:

- Semester Outlines
- Student Handbook
- MAS Capstone Parameters document
- MAS Innovation Fund Parameters document
- Fees Schedule

Student policies, procedures and forms can also be found on the AFTRS website.

Credit Point Structure

Subject Name	Subject Code	Credit Point	Face to Face Hours	Directed Hours	Self-Directed Hours
MAS Year 1					
Screen Studies A	SCRN1034	4	40	28	28
Research & Development A	SCRN1035	4	40	28	28
Collaborative Practice A	SCRN1038	4	40	28	28
Discipline Studio A	See DISCIPLINE LIST*	12	120	84	84
Semester 1 Total		24	240	168	168
MAS Year 2					
Screen Studies B	SCRN1036	4	40	28	28
Research & Development B	SCRN1037	4	40	28	28
Collaborative Practice B	TBC	4	40	28	28
Discipline Studio B	See DISCIPLINE LIST*	12	120	84	84
Semester 2 Total		24	240	168	168
MAS Year 3					
Capstone A	SCRN2014	24	240	168	168
Semester 3 Total		24	240	168	168
MAS Year 4					
Professional Practice	SCRN2015	12	120	84	84
Capstone B	SCRN2031	12	120	84	84
Semester 4 Total		24	240	168	168

* Students will enrol in one of the following Discipline Studio Subjects listed below in Semesters 1 & 2

Discipline Studio Subjects

Subject Name	Subject Code	Credit Point	Face to Face Hours	Directed Hours	Self-Directed Hours
Discipline List					
Semester 1					
Animation Studio A	ANIM1009	12	120	84	84
Cinematography Studio A	CINE1016	12	120	84	84
Directing Studio A	DIRC1016	12	120	84	84
Documentary Studio A	DOCO1013	12	120	84	84
Editing Studio A	EDIT1023	12	120	84	84
Music Studio A	MUSC1017	12	120	84	84
Producing Studio A	PROD1023	12	120	84	84
Production Design Studio A	DESN1014	12	120	84	84
Screenwriting Studio A	SCRW1027	12	120	84	84
Sound Design Studio A	SOUN1014	12	120	84	84
Semester 2					
Animation Studio B	ANIM1010	12	120	84	84
Cinematography Studio B	CINE1017	12	120	84	84
Directing Studio B	DIRC1017	12	120	84	84
Documentary Studio B	DOCO1014	12	120	84	84
Editing Studio B	EDIT1024	12	120	84	84
Music Studio B	MUSC1018	12	120	84	84
Producing Studio B	PROD1024	12	120	84	84
Production Design Studio B	DESN1015	12	120	84	84
Screenwriting Studio B	SCRW1028	12	120	84	84
Sound Design Studio B	SOUN1015	12	120	84	84

*The Master of Arts Screen is a full-time course calculated at an average of 36 hours per week commitment

Alternate Exit Qualifications

Enrolled students have the option of exiting the course early with a lower level qualification. This is known as an 'Alternate Exit'. The following are the alternate exit qualifications in this course:

- Upon successful completion of all 1st and 2nd semester subjects (48 credit points), you may exit with a Graduate Diploma. Example study pattern as follows:

Subject Name	Subject Code	Name	Credit Points
Semester 1	SCRN1034	Screen Studies A	4
	SCRN1035	Research and Development A	4
	SCRN1038	Collaborative Practice A	4
		Discipline Studio A	12
Semester 2	SCRN1036	Screen Studies B	4
	SCRN1037	Research and Development B	4
	SCRN1039	Collaborative Practice B	4
		Discipline Studio B	12
			48

Section 2: Structure & Content

Course Rationale

The Master of Arts Screen (MAS) aspires to develop graduates who are visionary, highly skilled storytellers able to enrich Australian culture, capable of building sustainable careers in a dynamic media landscape. Over a two-year full-time program of small group teaching, mentorships and cross-disciplinary collaborations, graduates will emerge with the high-level creative and technical skills to enter industry as highly skilled practitioners, creators and leaders in their chosen field.

The MAS is offered in ten specialisations. Through small group teaching, mentorships and exercises, students will be guided by leading industry practitioners to advance their knowledge of the concepts and technical skills that underpin their discipline. The MAS will equip screen storytellers with the high-level creative and technical skills to become leaders in their chosen field, whose work can transform lives and affect positive cultural change. To achieve this level of excellence in screen storytelling, students will be immersed in an intensive, practical program of thinking, testing and making within a disciplinary field.

This program is delivered over four semesters. Semesters 1 and 2 have four subjects. In Semester 3 students complete a major project. In Semester 4 students have an opportunity to look beyond their learning at AFTRS and consider future pathways. Each semester is designed to lead students through a complete cycle of the creative process:

Semester 1 – Testing
Semester 2 – Developing
Semester 3 – Realising
Semester 4 – Reflecting

Informed by the philosophy that excellence in screen arts depends on mastering a complex creative skill set, this specialised learning is integrated into a program of shared subjects and collaborative exercises across the MAS.

In Semester 1 and 2, parallel to the discipline specific learning are shared subjects: Screen Studies, Research & Development and Collaborative Practice. Research & Development will challenge students to interrogate who they are as practitioners, the creative choices they make and how these values, choices and processes sit in a wider cultural context. They will develop and articulate a practice-based area of creative enquiry that will drive and focus their produced work over the MAS. In Screen Studies, students will hone their mastery of cinematic language, critically evaluating cinematic story ideas and techniques through seminars, screenings and textual analysis. In Collaborative Practice, students will apply their disciplinary skillset to a complex collaborative production-based project to flex their skillsets in adaptability and complex problem-solving.

In Semester 3, students bring together their course learning in a Capstone Project(s). In making a single or collaborative work, students address and explore their area of creative enquiry and synthesise their knowledge of cinematic storytelling and specialist craft skills. Students will also refine their skillsets in collaboration, creative leadership, problem-solving and entrepreneurialism.

In Semester 4, students participate in Reflection and Professional Practice. The process of reflection enables students to evaluate and present their course experience and new-found knowledge. In Professional Practice, students look outwards to industry, evaluating the adaptability of their skillsets in contemporary and emerging media landscapes.

Links with Industry

The MAS has been developed in collaboration with leaders in tertiary education, Heads of Disciplines and Industry Advisory Groups. Teaching and mentoring is undertaken by screen industry professionals, drawing from the very latest industry practices and placing an emphasis on emerging opportunities. In addition to your Head of Discipline, a variety of specialist guest lectures and speakers will share their expertise with you, run specialist classes and Q&A sessions throughout the two-year program.

As a result, the curriculum aligns with current industry practice and the learning outcomes are aligned with industry best-practice across the screen and broadcast sectors. The course content is also reviewed regularly by AFTRS' Industry Advisory Groups to ensure that it remains at the forefront of innovative industry practice. As such, during the course of the program, students may be given an opportunity to participate in a professional placement in their discipline to gain real-world experience and understanding of their chosen craft.

In second year of the MAS, a limited slate of Capstone projects will be approved by the Capstone Subject Leader as agreed in their Student Learning Plan. The flow of approvals and departmental processes are illustrated below.

Leadership and Collaboration Skills

Building a sustainable career in the creative industries requires more than conceptual grounding and craft skills. A crucial part of professional practice is the development of broad and adaptable skillsets. These are a core set of leadership skills which transcend specific job roles.

We break down these professional leadership skills into the following categories:

- Advanced decision-making skills to resolve complex issues taking into account a range of creative, professional, and ethical considerations
- The ability to act with autonomy, resilience and vision in planning and realising tasks at a professional level
- Synthesise a critical evaluation of leadership strategies and individual core values and vision to inspire and empower collaborators

Cultural Capability

Becoming a student at AFTRS, you are placing yourself among the next generation of creative and cultural leaders. As a storyteller and content creator, you are helping to amplify the nation's story to the world and leave a lasting cultural legacy.

This is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Any national storyteller must first understand the rich diversity of peoples and communities that make up that country – as well as how that country is positioned in relation to the rest of the world. This means that to tell stories that represent Australia and what it is to be Australian, means developing an awareness of the cultural diversity and multiple perspectives that make up Australia.

This is why Cultural Capability is one of the key course learning outcomes.

Cultural capability refers to the necessary attitudes and skills required to work in culturally diverse situations and with people from diverse backgrounds. The 'cultural' aspect of cultural competency is used to include many aspects of life in Australia that we may sometimes take for granted, including but not limited to: race, gender, age, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and disability.

More broadly, cultural competency refers to the ability to contribute to an inclusive and respectful work environment, whether that be in an office, classroom or on-set and often manifests itself as the capacity to empathise and communicate with those whose attitudes, beliefs and values differ from our own.

Cultural capability, then, is vital when working for clients, with colleagues and in creating content for audiences both nationally and internationally. This is because of the way we find and tell stories and represent people is important – and never more so than in the 21st century media industries.

Indigenous Content

Because of the place that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders hold as the First Peoples of Australia, special attention is paid to weaving Indigenous content throughout the Master of Arts Screen course. Our aim is not to place one or two sessions into the course that tick boxes, but to blend this content into everything we do.

The Indigenous content we deliver on the course has been consulted on with the First Nations and Outreach team, as is best practice to do. Students are also required to contact and consult with the First Nations unit when dealing with Indigenous content, for example, in their productions.

MAS Productions

The MAS is a practice-based coursework program with numerous opportunities for students to collaborate on high-level productions throughout the program.

The aim of the production activities is to engage in the creative cycle of testing, developing and realising creative projects through a process of making and synthesising concepts, theory and skills into coherent screen storytelling works.

Each year of the course provides a focus to the productions that reinforces the overall aim as described above.

Year One Semester One: Testing through experimentation and risk taking. Creative freedoms, carefully targeted parameters and focus on process are designed to encourage experimentation and risk taking in the production of unique screen stories while at the same time understanding how to work within a cross-disciplinary screen work.

Year One Semester Two: Developing through iterative methodologies. Briefs are supplied by industry partners to allow students the experience of balancing individual creative aspirations with iterative processes of agile development and project execution.

Year Two Semester One: Realising through Capstone Work. The Capstone work synthesises theory and practice through the execution of a major project(s). Based on industry best-practice, this process replicated real-world experience within a safe learning environment where students receive tailored mentoring at key moments

Year Two Semester Two: Reflecting through an exegesis. The 5000 to 8000-word exegesis is a reflective piece of work that justifies, explains and makes transparent the relationship between a student's creative practice and their area of research that has been tested, developed and realised over the course of the program.

The importance of professional practice and adherence to policy, process and guidelines are prioritised throughout AFTRS MAS productions. While the end goal of any screen practitioner is to work together to create great screen stories, it is important to note that the productions themselves are primarily learning experiences. Students are encouraged to see themselves – rather than their productions – as the ultimate artefact that they are crafting. Students can often times put themselves under pressure to produce perfect content, which in turn, stifles creativity. AFTRS provides the perfect opportunity to take risks and make mistakes as, ultimately, it is the student who learns the most rather than creates the best content, who will succeed.

Approved Capstone Projects gives students in each discipline to collaborate on at least one major project in their second year. Capstone Projects are approved the Capstone A&B Subject Leader and Course Convenor. The flow of approvals and departmental processes are illustrated on the following page.

Mentoring

Each semester, you will receive mentorship from your discipline supervisor and creative practice research lecturer. Your discipline supervisor will work with you to develop your Learning Plan, a critical tool that is used to tailor the program to your learning and career goals. Discipline mentorship comprises 10 hour per semester. Creative Practice Research mentoring (2 hours per semester) is available to support you with your R&D assessments.

You are expected to manage your mentoring hours and we recommend that your first mentoring meeting consists of a schedule and agreed plan for mentoring for the relevant semester.

Inherent Requirements

An Inherent Requirement is an academic or non-academic requirement that is essential for students to demonstrate for the successful completion of a course. Inherent Requirements demonstrate the abilities, knowledge and skills to achieve the core learning outcomes of the course while preserving the academic integrity of the school's learning, assessment and accreditation processes.

For this course you are required to be able to undertake:

Communication tasks

- Presentations to peers, academics and industry representatives
- Understand and respond to verbal and written communication at a high level
- Respectful communication with diverse cohorts on diverse topics

Reflective/creative tasks

- Create and reflect upon a range of practical creative projects
- Originate ideas and actualise artefacts within disciplinary contexts

Physical tasks

- Attend 80% of classes
- production studio inductions and associated activities including shoots of 10-hour continuous blocks (up to 50 hours in a week)
- Follow WH&S requirements for indoor and outdoor filming activities including appropriate clothing and footwear
- Complete mandatory inductions
- Tidy and clean up before and after each activity

Intellectual tasks

- Organise and collect information
- Synthesise theory and practice
- Accurately recall information
- Complete tasks in a safe and timely manner

Interpersonal tasks

- Comply with the AFTRS Charter of Conduct
- Demonstrate respectful and safe behaviour at all times
- Manage conflict and moderate emotions
- Contribute to a positive learning culture

Students with disability or a chronic health condition may be able to have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to meet these requirements. These adjustments should be formalised through a Learning Access Plan (LAP), which is facilitated by Student Services.

Mandatory Online Training

All students are required to undertake specific learning modules as part of their course. The online modules are to be completed as a condition of your enrolment.

- Indigenous Cultural Competency Program (ICAP)
- WHS Regulatory Framework
- Site Induction
- Studio Safety Induction: Video and Quiz
- Lighting Safety: Video & Quiz

Section 3: Teaching & Assessment

Overview

This section details the importance of students developing a deep critical and conceptual understanding of their own creative practice and processes in order to become a leader in their disciplinary field in an ever changing and demanding screen and broadcast sector.

Following the Kolb Cycle of Experiential Learning, we believe that the best way of developing skills, knowledge and understanding is through practice-based learning. At the heart of practice-based learning is the idea that theories (in our context, concepts) are best learnt through testing and experimenting.

The course utilises one particular model of practice-based learning, Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984), as the foundation of its teaching and learning strategy. Experiential learning comprises of a reflective cycle involving a Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation and Active Experimentation. This approach is fostered by both the subject design and industry-based teaching staff and is embedded into the structure of the course.

This process of experience, reflective observation, conceptualisation and experimentation form learning cycles through the course, linking one concept to another, scaffolding learning and developing the ability to adapt key principles and theories in different ways.

This approach also means that there is never a choice between teaching theory or craft skills, because each constantly reinforces the other.

Central to the MAS course is the Student Learning Plan that is a bespoke learning agreement between the student and their discipline supervisor to track student learning and foster the reflective learning process.

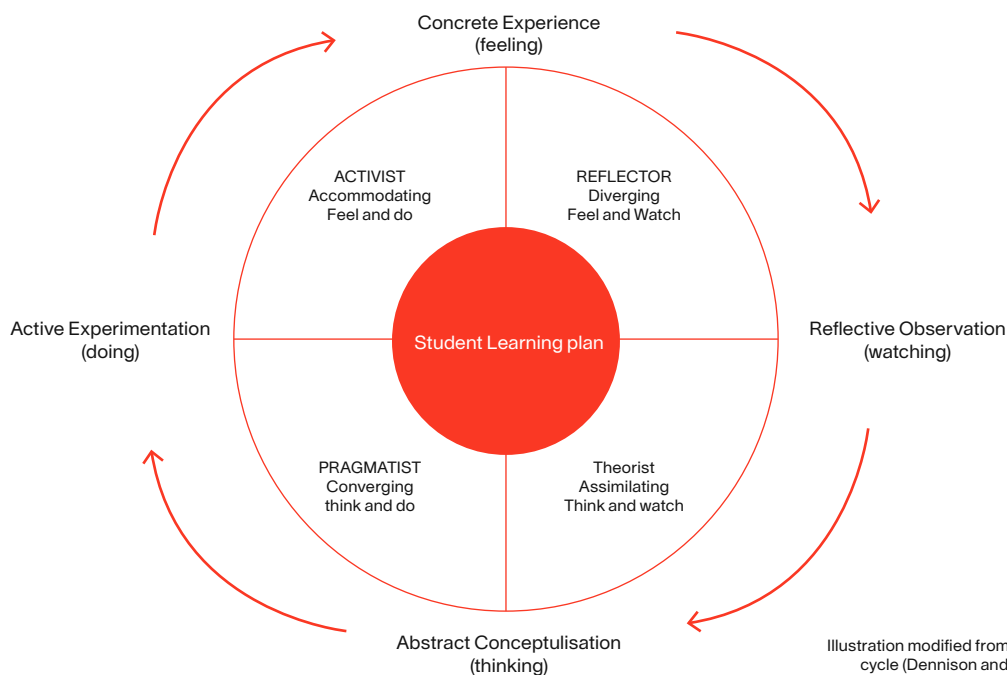


Illustration modified from Kolb's learning cycle (Dennison and Kirk, 1990)

Learning Formats

Lecture: A lecture is a formal presentation by an expert in your subject, given to the whole MAS cohort or MAS discipline cohort.

Seminar: A seminar is a less formal session where lecturers and students contribute to a discussion at a deeper level in small-group classes.

Studio: Studios in the MAS are a combination of discipline theory and practice, delivered in hands-on, practice-based learning modes designed to give you opportunities to test and experiment with concepts from the lecture as well as generate new ideas. Activities may include research, written exercises and discipline exercises. Studios are discipline specific and led by the discipline supervisor on full-day sessions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (MAS Year 1) and Thursdays to Fridays (MAS Year 2). The focus is on student-centred learning, and group and individual exercises will be used alongside regular review and reflection.

Directed Learning (DL): Directed means that you are working to a set task with minimal supervision, testing your technical and intellectual ability. This work is structured and will often build towards your assessments. These days are mandatory. They play a crucial part in enabling you to develop your understanding, skills and mastery of your craft.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL): A crucial component of your MAS course is the work done during SDL days. Self-directed means that you are working independently, testing ideas and techniques and exploring your own practice. This work may be more or less structured and will often build towards your assessments. These days are mandatory. They play a crucial part in enabling you to develop your understanding, skills and mastery of your craft.

Assessment Strategy

Assessments are designed to ensure that students are able to demonstrate that they have met the course learning outcomes. Good assessments, however, also form part of the teaching and learning experience as well as provide feedback that aids your continued development.

While assessment and specific grades are important, the ultimate objective is to further your learning. It is not unusual for students to receive a lower mark than another student, but to have learnt more than them as a result of challenging themselves and taking risks. This should be celebrated and is one of the important reasons we place so much emphasis on the reflective elements of our assessment.

It is also worth noting that while your career objective may be to master your craft, your objective at the school is to learn how to master your craft. This is a subtle and important difference which often demonstrates itself by giving equal consideration to all of your subjects and assessments and not just the final end of semester portfolio and presentation.

Types of Assessment

There are two main forms of assessment that are used in the Course:

Formative: On-going formative assessment is designed to help monitor student learning throughout the subject and provide feedback that enables students to improve their learning. It can occur at any stage of an exercise or project to help identify strengths and weaknesses and address problems. Examples of formative assessment on the Course are: Review Screenings; Seminar presentations and Mentoring.

Summative: Summative assessment is designed to evaluate student learning at the end of a subject by comparing it against a defined benchmark, such as the Learning Outcomes. It is used to measure student progress at each level and it contributes towards the final grade for the Course. Examples of summative assessment on the Course are: Portfolio; Essays; Formal Presentations.

Learning Outcomes & Marking Criteria

Assessments should be viewed as targeted exercises and tutors are primarily looking at how students demonstrate the subject learning outcomes. The way in which students are asked to demonstrate the learning outcomes for that particular assessment are described in the marking criteria and the rubrics that are supplied in the semester outlines.

Because of this, it is important that students familiarise themselves with the marking criteria and rubrics. A piece of work may be excellent, but if it is not demonstrating the learning required, as outlined in the briefs, then it will not receive a good mark.

Learning outcomes and marking criteria are often densely written in order to convey complex concepts and levels of learning. It is important to note that the process of understanding the learning outcomes and marking criteria cannot be separated from the process of learning itself.

If you are unsure about the meaning of learning outcomes and marking criteria, it is your responsibility to discuss with your tutor to help you “unpack” them.

Assessment Structure

Scaffolding: Assessments are scaffolded, with the intention that learning from one assessment will impact the next. To this end, it is important that assessments are undertaken in the order designed.

Weighting: Assessments across each subject are weighted (that is, they are allocated a proportionate percentage value of the overall total). The weightings for assessments are not typically split evenly, rather, weighting is based on the perceived importance of each assessment and how it relates to the associated assessments.

Assessment Moderation & Assessment Panels

Moderation

Moderation meetings take place prior to the marking your work and is attended by the assessing tutors, a representative from the Teaching & Learning team and convened by the Subject Leader. The function of this meeting is to discuss how to grade against the rubric and set expectations of what constitutes a high distinction, distinction, etc.

A further moderation takes place once the marking is complete, where the Subject Leader typically selects three assessments from each assessing tutor and reviews the work, mark and feedback to ensure a level of consistency across the assessors.

Assessment Panel

The assessment panel is a formal part of the academic quality process. Attending are the Course Leader, Subject Leader and typically a representative from Teaching & Learning and Student Centre. The purpose of the panel is to discuss the general effectiveness of the assessment, the quality of the marking and feedback, note students who have failed or not completed the subject and release marks.