

Course Outline: MA in Location Sound Recording for Film and Television

The MA in Location Sound Recording for Film and Television is a specialisation within the broader **MA in Film, Television and Games**.

This unique 15-month MA course is a comprehensive program designed to prepare you for a career in location sound recording. It has been designed to meet the industry's growing demand for highly trained sound crew for film and television productions, and aims to give high quality training in theory and practice of recording sound for picture on location and in our sound stages. You will collaborate with students in other specialisms to make several films over the course of your studies.

The course represents a steady progression beginning with the definition of sound both technically and aesthetically. During the first Autumn term basic technology and sound recording skills are covered and for the rest of the course you will learn through practical exercises ending with the responsibility for sound recording on a range of graduation films. At each stage additional skills are added through specific workshops - e.g. mic placement, boom operating, to provide a comprehensive education that is of great value in understanding and communicating with other industry professionals.

Knowledge is imparted and experience gained through workshops and production experience. In addition to this, further training is given in health & safety and you will also be offered training sessions on business studies and career development. Using the latest equipment and technology, you will work on both fiction, documentary and light entertainment projects.

Upon completion of this MA course, students will be able to:

- Understand the fundamentals of sound, acoustics, and audio equipment.
- Operate professional location sound recording equipment effectively.
- Capture high-quality audio in various on-location settings.
- Collaborate with film and television production teams.
- Troubleshoot common sound recording issues.
- Adhere to industry standards and best practices for location sound recording.
- Demonstrate professionalism, communication, and teamwork skills in a production.

Whilst you will participate in modules run jointly with other disciplines, the accent is on a continuous process of learning through practical exercises, workshops and tutorials. The core subjects with the workshops and exercises employed to teach them are listed below.

Course Elements

Introduction to Sound

- Sound propagation and reflection
- Audio physics and terminology
- Practical exercises and demonstrations

Audio Equipment and Technology

- Overview of audio recording equipment
- Microphones, and mixers
- Wireless audio systems
- Recording media and formats
- Maintenance and troubleshooting

Location Sound Recording Techniques

- Pre-production sound planning
- On-set audio setup and monitoring
- Boom operation and microphone placement
- Field Recording
- Noise reduction and sound isolation
- Working with directors, producers, and other crew members
- Effective communication and teamwork
- Understanding the script and project requirements
- On-set etiquette and professionalism

Industry Standards and Best Practices

- Safety protocols on set
- Industry regulations and unions
- Networking and career development
- Practical application of skills on various projects
- Portfolio development

Production Experience may include:

- 1st Year Fiction First Year Film
- 1st Year Documentaries
- 1st Year Fiction Exercises
- 2nd Year Fiction Digital Film
- 2nd Year Documentary Graduation Production
- 2nd Year Fiction Graduation Production – Film/HD
- 2nd Year Television Graduation Production

Modules

Module 1 – First Year Film

This will be your first practical film making module working in full teams. This module will allow you to gain initial experience of working on set in a single camera scripted drama environment as part of a sound team. You will observe the working practices and processes of all departments including those of the Sound Recordist whilst performing the duties of a First Assistant Sound. You will support a second year student acting as Sound Recordist in recording dialogue, atmospheres and sound effects as required by the script.

Module 2 – Digi Fiction Film

You will be involved in the making of a short scripted film on a variety of formats. You will work on two films, once as Sound Recordist and once as First Assistant Sound, and you will be closely involved in the project from the outset. This module will allow you to continue to develop your experience of working on set in a single camera drama environment as preparation for the

Graduation Fiction projects. You will lead the sound recording team for the first time, developing the communication and management skills needed to do this effectively.

Module 3 – Grad Fiction Film

You will make a scripted single camera location film. This is the chance for students to put into practice all the knowledge and skills they have acquired on the course. Professional level working practices and results are expected of the sound recording team. You will work on three films, once as Sound Recordist, once as First Assistant Sound and once as Second Assistant Sound. This module will be used to evaluate the knowledge and skills you have gained throughout the course. You must work autonomously without coaching or instruction and demonstrate comprehensive familiarity with the responsibilities of a head of department.

Module 4 – First Year Film

You will continue to develop your film making experience working in full teams on this module. You will act as Sound Recordist, responsible for recording dialogue, atmospheres and sound effects as required by the script. You will mentor and be supported by a first year student acting as First Assistant Sound. This module will allow you to increase your experience of how to prepare for, lead and deliver sound recording on location, working collaboratively as part of a shooting crew.

Module 5 – Master’s Portfolio

The Master’s Portfolio requires you to demonstrate evidence of, and critical reflection on, your professional and creative practice throughout the course. The final portfolio should not only act as a record of your work on the course but as a dynamic document that critically examines your journey, growth, and the evolving relationship between your creative practice and professional skills and aspirations in film and TV. You will submit your portfolio before your final Progress Review, in which you should be prepared to answer questions on it.

Other Components of the MA

Health and Safety

Risk Assessment and Health & Safety modules are presented as an integral part of technical workshops and productions.

Business studies

Including CV preparation, professional networking, negotiation techniques, and working as a freelancer are delivered by a leading Below the Line agent and financial management, tax reporting, invoicing and accounting are delivered by an accounting company specialising in the media industries as part of the course in preparation for work in film and TV production.

Optional Productions may include:

- Recording 1st or 2nd year Commercials
- Personal projects