TUNING DOCUMENT FOR FILM/SCREEN ARTS EDUCATION

1 Introduction to the Area

"The purpose of professional training is not to create genius or talent, but to teach a method and to instil a methodical frame of mind into those who must later assume responsibilities toward society and the individual; for a film director has an audience of millions and he has a mission to perform. Professional training can provide him with the means for constructing a system to suit himself, for making a good start, for developing and strengthening his personality".
JEAN LODS: The Professional Training of Film Technicians
(UNESCO report, 1951)

A film school is a generic term for an educational institution, almost always at third-level, dedicated to teaching the practical skills of film-making and many, if not all, usages of the term "film school" now refer to television and video as well as film and frequently include animation and/or digital media. However, as these areas of study have expanded, some of the titles for the programmes themselves have changed in order to cover the broader curriculum.   Undergraduate course titles (in the English languages) range from: "Film Production", "Film and Television Production", "Film and Broadcast Production", "Film and Video Production", "Film and Moving Image Production", "Video Production", "Film and Television", and "Film and Video", to "Screen Arts", "Media Arts", "Cinematic Arts", and "Moving Image Production". Notwithstanding these new wider definitions, programme titles such as "Audiovisual Production", "Multimedia" and "Communications" almost always tend to be too general and either also include radio and journalism or derive from technology-based and/or computer-related origins. It must be emphasised that the subject area addressed in this tuning document is the practical teaching of film and television production, where the hands-on (?) element is at least 50% of the curriculum; theoretical media studies and analysis, even with an element of practice, is excluded.

However, despite the increasing popularity of film education around the world, there has always been a debate within film industry circles as to the importance of film school training, as opposed to the traditional hierarchical apprenticeship system of learning "on-the-job" from experienced professionals in the relevant department, despite the fact that there are no departments as such in a film crew for directors and screenwriters. Andries Deinium, a teacher at the University of Southern California in the 1940s, summed it up when he said, "Running a film school in Hollywood is like running a medical school in a community of faith healers". Nevertheless, as film schools have increased exponentially and mushroomed around the world – particularly in the past 20 years - there is now a higher percentage of industry professionals than ever who have studied at a film school. For example, in the Irish Film Board's recent report, Irish Audiovisual Content Production Section Review (PWC, 2008), there is a much higher ratio of graduates from formal courses in film/media production amongst the under 40s than in the industry as a whole. Although 53% of respondents reported having formal industry education or training prior to entering the industry, 80% of those who undertook training were between 20 and 40 years of age. Film schools are clearly here to stay and are more directly important to the industry than previously. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the traditional apprenticeship model of training within the industry continues to exist in parallel with film school education. Indeed, in most countries, graduates and former students of film schools still have to deal

with this traditional system when they enter the industry, particularly in technical grades, although they are often able to climb the ladder from a higher rung, or receive automatic trade union membership which confers automatic status, for instance at the (UK) National Film and Television School. Of course, the hierarchical model does not apply in the same way for the roles of director, producer, and screenwriter. Nevertheless, film schools firmly believe that their curricula, which are wider than the technological equipment training in one specialisation (e.g. cinematography or editing) and also, virtually without exception, include an element of film history and cultural contextualisation, give a more rounded, beneficial introduction to a career in film-making.

The first film school in the world was VGIK, which was founded just over 90 years ago in 1919. A number of major international film schools are state-funded but generally self-standing, that is, independent from other third-level universities, institutes and colleges. Film schools in this category include those in countries formerly part of the Soviet bloc, such as FAMU (Prague), an integral part of the Academy of Performing Arts (founded 1946), which also trains musicians and theatre artists; PWSFT, the (Polish) National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Lódz, founded in 1948; and Szinház – es Filmüvészeti Egyetem, the (Hungarian) University of Drama, Film and Television in Budapest, founded in 1947. These film schools were designed for state-funded film industries, where graduates who completed their courses were guaranteed employment for life. Elsewhere, other national (and usually independent) film schools, which tend to have a relatively small number of students, include: the Nederlandse Film en Televisie Academie (the Netherlands Film and Television Academy) in Amsterdam, which was founded in 1958, and has about 285 students; Den Danske Filmskole (the National Film School of Denmark), which was founded in 1966, and has approximately 100 students; the (UK) National Film and Television School (NFTS), which opened in 1971, and has 160 full-time students; and Den Norske Filmskolen (the Norwegian Film School), which opened in 1998, and has about 84 students. National film schools are not only situated in Europe: the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), founded in 1973, is a world-class film school, as is the Beijing Film Academy, established in 1950, with reportedly 100,000 annual applicants for 400-500 places – although this does include actors!

However, many film schools can be found within art colleges, universities, and institutes of technology. These would include the leading examples in the USA, such as UCLA, NYU, and the University of Southern California. In Europe, Aalto University in Helsinki (Finland); the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia); the University of Westminster (UK); and the Institute of Art, Design & Technology (Ireland) have film schools which are faculties, schools, or departments within the overall institution in which they are based. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that film programmes do not always reside in film schools: a number of highly respected courses are situated within university faculties of arts, humanities or theatre; schools of media or design in art colleges; or are offered by conservatoires of music and drama.

The representative body for film schools is CILECT (Centre International de Liaison des Écoles de Cinéma et de Télévision), the International Association of Film and Television Schools, and there is no world-class film school that is not a full member. CILECT was founded in Cannes in 1955 with the intention of stimulating a dialogue among film schools in the deeply divided world of those times with a membership drawn from eight countries. By the year 2010 CILECT has grown to include 148 institutions from 58 countries on five continents. Its goals are to provide a means for the exchange of ideas among member schools, and to help them understand the future of education for creative personnel in film, television, and

related media. It is dedicated to the creation, development and maintenance of regional and international co-operation among its member schools, and to the encouragement of film and television training in the developing world.

The core values inherent in the discipline are creative storytelling and the development of the visual imagination, whatever technology is used. The use and meaning of images and sound are taught whether the style or genre of the content is highly commercial in intent or experimental in form, or any shade of grey in between. Some graduates become highly specialised technicians, whilst others become more creative artists.

Broadly, the field of study covers practical work in the three areas of pre-production, production and post-production; these include: screenwriting, directing, producing, script editing, scheduling, budgeting, cinematography, sound recording, art direction/production design, costume design, make-up design, production management, editing, special effects, and sound mixing. Theoretical studies, such as historical, analytical, critical, contextual and others complementary to the discipline, as well as preparation for vocational destinations, including entrepreneurial skills in the area of media, finance, distribution and exhibition across the increasing available platforms.

Over the last twenty years or so there has been a move away from primarily educating *auteurs*, that is, writer/directors. The "Triangle" system, which was promoted by CILECT from the 1990s, has been influential in broadening the scope of film education by dividing the sphere of influence between the three sides of the triangle: the Director, the Writer, and the Producer. Up until the introduction of the Triangle, there was very little training for the film producer but this has now appreciably changed. Similarly, the curriculum on many undergraduate film courses also gives more space to technical specialisms such as cinematography, editing, design, and sound.

These recent trends in the sector have meant that, apart from those that work in traditionally-crewed large-scale feature films made for the cinema, there is an increasing demand for graduates with a wider skill set and a reasonable competency in the basic specialisms, as above. This has happened at the same time that there has been a so-called "democratisation" of the media, with the advent of reasonably-priced video cameras, mobile phones with the capacity to record moving images, computer editing programmes, and platforms such as YouTube. However, this "democratisation" has been shown to be largely illusory, frequently promoted by manufacturers of digital technology or promoters of websites, who have deliberately fostered the impression that anyone can be a film-maker overnight as long as they are in possession of the equipment. Nevertheless, the advantage of developing more overall technical skills, at the expenses of training only writer/directors, has been beneficial as far as broadening employment opportunities on graduation. It has also meant that film schools have introduced portfolios of related/overlapping postgraduate programmes, which allow deeper/more advanced study in specific subjects/areas. Examples include: MAs in Fiction Directing, Documentary Directing, Screenwriting, Producing, Production Design, and Editing.

In the larger field of film education, however, it is regrettable that schools at secondary level do not involve themselves sufficiently in the study of media, although there has been some progress in recent years. When this situation is improved, it will be of considerable benefit to providers of practical film education, to industry – and ultimately society. Media literacy is a means of understanding the influence of the mass media, and the impact of rapidly evolving technology on our daily lives. It is also concerned with helping young people

develop an informed and critical understanding and enjoyment of how the media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organised and how they construct reality. Whether the study of film, television and other media encourages students to further get involved with these subjects and art forms or not, media literacy is a valuable and necessary life skill.

The European film tradition is a rich and diverse one, which is reflected in its film courses, certainly when compared to the USA, which overall is more attuned to the homogeneous commercial cinema of Hollywood. Although, as discussed above, European film schools and film courses are now more likely than previously to take into account the imperatives of the "industry", the education that is provided across our continent happily is very far from being monolithic and continues to reflect the cultural mosaic that numbers the Lumières, Méliès, Eisenstein, Dreyer, Vertov, Bresson, Buñuel, Fellini, Bergman, Tarkovsky, Wajda, Godard, Fassbinder, Angelopolous, Marker, Wenders, Kieslowski, Loach, Almodóvar, and Haneke amongst its great artists.

2. Degree profiles

1st Cycle

BA in Film and TV Production. This is sometimes called Media Production but can also be called BA in Communication Design. Typical elements include: practical film production, history and theory of the discipline, professional practice, production management/producing, research and participation in student and public film festival. There is some level of specialisation in certain degrees but in post communist countries specialisation starts immediately in the 1st cycle.

2nd Cycle

In the 2nd cycle students specialise in particular areas of production, screenwriting, cinematography, sound recording, post production and documentary, fiction, animation and production design. Often in this cycle students come from other disciplines like anthropology, music, journalism, business and the degree has many features of a conversion programme. 2nd cycle graduates can come from another background but are eligible to enter into professional practice Students often take the 2nd cycle to acquire another specialisation/orientation (e.g. go from editing to directing).

Typical elements of the 2nd cycle include extended self initiated projects and productions, theory of storytelling and narrative and in some cases, a dissertation and a public screening in public film festivals. Advanced self analysis and critical thinking and a more theoretical focus are features of 2nd cycle degrees.
However, the International Masters degree offered in Central and Eastern Europe is a production degree. Typically 2nd cycle degrees have greater industry involvement.

3rd Cycle

There are no PhD programmes in Film Production in Europe.

Typical Occupations

1st Cycle: Graduates are equipped to enter some level of professional practice, usually entry level in production and post production companies and television companies. Graduates are also eligible for union membership.

2nd Cycle: Graduates are equipped to enter professional practice. 2nd Cycle programmes are more focused on self development and 2nd cycle graduates can come from another academic background but can also enter into professional practice. Students often take the 2nd cycle to acquire another specialisation/orientation - go from editing to directing.

3rd Cycle: 3rd Cycle studies are usually in the area of Film Studies and usually for an academic career.

Role of Subject Area in other Degree Programmes

Film production can be a major in a design degree and can also be a minor subject in a Film or Media Studies degree

3. Learning Outcomes and Competences

There are philosophical differences between film or production education. Some programmes are highly oriented towards professional education, with an emphasis on the industry, whereas other programmes are oriented towards the individual student and promotion of the artistic or experimental approaches. Tensions exist between those trained under the traditional apprenticeship system of training and those educated formally in production; however, the traditional apprenticeship system has declined as second-level education has increased the expectation of formal qualification at third and fourth level.

Practices in production education vary – there is no single standard approach. In some academies, particularly in Eastern Europe, the emphasis is on specialization in a particular department (e.g. cinematography) at undergraduate level. Other institutions adopt the policy of integrating film, television, and animation, although the balance varies. There may be some degree of specialization, but the acceptance is that the students will develop a broader skills base and will also study film history and media theory. Within the academy, a strong theoretical component is widely considered valuable in generating stories to tell and reflecting on ways of telling those stories.

Aims
- The primary aim of the educational programme is to provide a rigorous disciplined approach to theory and practice at an undergraduate level
- Develop a theoretical, critical and reflective understanding of a wide range of media forms
- Originate and develop media content, in particular documentary, drama and animation projects
- To work across diverse media formats: the still and moving image, broadcasting and the web
- To prepare learners for work in the rapidly developing media and cultural industries, in their national industry and internationally
- To enable learners to gain a working knowledge of professional standards and operational procedures
- Foster creativity and conceptual thinking

Learning Outcomes

Specific Competences

On completion of the first cycle programme, learners will be able to:
- Critically evaluate the theory, concepts and practice of contemporary media form and content
- Understand the history of media and the relationship between media and the culture of which it is a part
- Demonstrate understanding of the culture and histories of cinema and broadcasting and their relationship to society
- Utilise all the elements of text, image, sound and story telling and originate and develop creative content
- Work across diverse media formats: the still and moving image, broadcasting and the web
- Demonstrate proficiency in their chosen specialism

- Have a working knowledge of professional standards and operational procedures and equipment in a range of related media industries
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical obligations and health & safety standards relating to production
- Must be skilled in camera, sound, editing and directing
- Develop awareness and adopt a critical, creative and innovative approach to technological advances in production - equipment/software, adaptability, flexibility, transferrable knowledge

Generic Competences

- Communicate effectively and responsibly and participate effectively as part of a team
- Critically analyse, reflect on and critique media communication
- Make effective utilisation of information resources and information technology and software
- Engage in problem formulation and creative resolution through analysis, synthesis and critical thinking on an individual and team basis
- Initiate projects and independent productions to a professional standard
- Initiate independent projects, identifying sources of funding and distribution
- Refer to and continue to develop a range of conceptual and transferable skills (eg. research skills)
- To have a working knowledge of the historical development of technology, aesthetics and content
- Develop awareness and adopt a critical, creative and innovative approach to technological advances in production - equipment/software, adaptability, flexibility, transferrable knowledge

In the same way that there are various approaches to production education at undergraduate level (eg. specialist versus integrated), there are three main types of second cycle programme, each with its own set of aims and learning outcomes; conversion; deep specialization; theoretical.

Second cycle conversion programmes are designed for students whose primary degree is in an unrelated discipline. Most candidates will not have production experience and will be expected to meet similar objectives to the first cycle production graduates as described above. In terms of their written dissertation, they are expected to undertake more original research, engage with critical theory at a deeper level and demonstrate a higher standard of analysis than a first cycle dissertation. They will also be expected to develop the requisite production skills in a much shorter time-frame.

Additional Learning Outcomes at conversion second cycle
On completion of the second cycle conversion programme, learners will be able to:

- Demonstrate all of the skills and competencies attained by a first cycle student
- Undertake original research and offer deep, critical analysis of research findings
- Quickly assimilate information and deliver media projects to a professional standard
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the business, professional, ethical, and legal issues of creating media content
- Work independently to practice and hone production skills

- Develop keen awareness of funding opportunities and appropriate distribution channels
- Initiate and actively seek networking opportunities (eg. know which competitions to enter and festivals to attend, join appropriate professional organizations)
- Take responsibility for his/her own learning and continuing professional development
- Engage in problem-solving activities
- Develop improved transferrable skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and rapid decision-making

Second cycle deep specialization programmes are designed for learners who have a primary degree in production, with general and all-around production skills. They may have majored in a particular aspect of production or a particular genre. However, at this specialized second cycle level, they are expected to build on their experience and attain extremely high levels of expert knowledge. The specific competencies are dependent on the area of specialization (i.e. a cinematographer will acquire different skills to someone working in post-production sound).

Additional Learning Outcomes at deep specialization second cycle

- Take responsibility for his/her own learning
- Consistently produce an expert performance of their specialized role on multiple productions
- Have a thorough understanding of the media context in which he/she will operate
- Reflect critically on his/her own practice and integrate the learning arising into their approach to production
- Take significant responsibility for their role in initiating productions or in innovating techniques within their department
- Engage in problem-solving activities
- Develop improved transferrable skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and rapid decision-making

Second cycle theoretical programmes are usually aimed at those who specialized in production at first cycle, or who have pursued other non-production disciplines. This type of programme does not include a production element: it is focussed on contextual and historical literature.

Additional Learning Outcomes at theoretical second cycle
On completion of a theoretically-based second cycle programme, learners will be able to:

- Research and manage information sources effectively, using relevant literature, databases, and electronic resources
- Critically analyze individual research findings and those of others
- Write accurately and fluently in the academic context
- Confidently present and defend research findings
- Take responsibility for his/her own learning
- Have deep knowledge and demonstrate thorough understanding of cinematic/media history and culture
- Have deep knowledge and demonstrate thorough understanding of the context in which film/media is produced
- Analyze and evaluate current debates within contemporary media theory

4. Workload and ECTS

1 - 3 to 4 years 180 to 240 credits
2 - 1 and 2 years 60, 90 and 120 credits
3 - 3.5 years

5. Assessment strategies

The key common features of assessment in the film production education are that assessment is both continuous and summative. There is much variation based on the approach of the individual school.

Individual work

Animation is largely an individual activity in the college environment, with the animator taking complete responsibility for all aspects of film-making. In industry, animators are frequently required to work as part of a team. The animator can be assessed on both the films produced and their records of how they made their decisions.

Some institutions require students to produce a short film individually, being responsible for all roles. This may be a one-off requirement or continuously over several semesters.
At foundational level (usually year one), module assessment may include the execution of basic exercises (e.g. to shoot and edit a short sequence) and some practical tests (eg. camera operation).

Some institutions require students to work as part of a crew for the majority of their college career. Resources available will sometimes determine the approach of the educational institution.
Whether students produce solo films or work in groups, there is assessment of the individual learner.

Students are not examined on finished films alone. It is the student's role and performance in that role, in the production that is assessed. The student is assessed by a team of examiners (lecturers) rather than an individual.

The film text is accompanied by a body of written work (which may include drawings and plans, photographs, spreadsheets, word-processing documents). Various institutions have different requirements, but the common theme is that the student maintains a production file, production diary/production log, and possibly, a critical reflection. This would include whatever paperwork is involved in the crew role, preparatory, shoot records (eg camera report sheet), and post-production. There may also be a requirement for a written report of the student's perception of the project, reflecting on their performance and the learning experience.

The students' accounts collectively inform the assessment team and function as some element of peer assessment, even if informally. There is variation in the levels of staff supervision of student shoots; observations made by staff on a shoot will also inform assessment of individual students.

In some institutions, students defend their work on a production at a group screening, which is similar to a crit that takes place in art-based programmes.

In others, students attend an individual exit interview with the assessment team. In this situation, the student has the opportunity to comment on their role in the project and their reflections on their performance. They may also be questioned about their production file/diary/log/critical reflection.

In both instances, the assessors are seeking to establish who is responsible for what element of the production, and how individual students contributed to it.

Example: Final year assessment Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften, Fachhochschule Würzburg-Schweinfurt

In the final semester, each student participates as crew in two film projects: once in an A role, once in a B role. The *A-role* could be director, cinematographer, editor, possibly art director. The *B-role* would be all other crew roles. During the shoot, each crew member is required to write a daily log.
The finished film is screened to the faculty and assessed individually on a scale from 1 – 100 with 'failed' below 50 and 'high distinction' above 84. The film is then given the average mark.
In a second step, the logs are assessed in view of how crew members fulfilled their position/ function and the reporting is compared. The results may vary between +10 and -10 points against the mark for the film.
This procedure assesses both the quality of the film as well as the individual contribution. It allows the recognition of the level of effort and achievement.

Other schools may adopt a similar 'major role/minor role' combination over several productions, with each student making an individual submission of production file and other specified documentation. The levels of grading for pass rate and classification vary from institution to institution.

Professional internships

Also referred to as placements or work experience, some institutions include an internship as part of the programme. If a placement is considered for ECTS purposes, it must be assessed. Internships must offer a genuine learning experience for the student. The placement co-ordinator would arrange briefing/training for the host (employer), as their input is required in evaluating the student's performance. A supervisor would be assigned for the student, often the person co-ordinating the placement, who would meet the student, usually on-site, at regular intervals during their internship period. Internships may also include a component of self-assessment.