

# MMA

Master of Arts Screen  
(Nine Disciplines)

Course Guide 2025

AFTRS

Lead the Next Generation  
of Content Creators

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# Section 1: Key Information

## Overview of this Course Guide

This Course Guide is structured in three sections and is intended to cover all aspects of the Master of Arts Screen (MAARTSSD). 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.

Section 3 covers the AFTRS approach to Teaching and Assessment. Here, you'll find a detailed explanation of AFTRS' assessment strategy, policy and process.

## Other Key Documents

This Course Guide is designed to complement several other documents that are also important to familiarise yourself with. In addition to [Student Policies and Forms](#), all students should familiarise themselves with:

**Student Handbook:** This document sets out the course study rules for all students. It is your responsibility to read and be familiar with the information outlined in the Student Handbook. Topics include: Student Code of Conduct; Progress Rules; Managing your Course; Academic Support; Referencing; Complaints; and Academic Policies.

**Schedule of Fees:** This document provides a summary of all higher education fees and associated information (study periods, census dates, credit points and EFTSL values) for subjects undertaken in courses of study at AFTRS.

**Subject Outlines:** These outlines are produced for each semester of the course and include details of your subjects, including session titles, assessment tasks, deadlines and reading lists.

# Key Course Information

Award	Master of Arts Screen
Course Code	MAARTSSD
AQF Level	Level 9 - Masters Degree
Total Credit Points	96
Standard Full-time Duration	4 semesters (2 years)
Maximum Duration (Candidature Period)	4 years
Study Load Conditions	Full-time only
Minimum Credit Points per semester	24 credit points
Maximum Credit Points per semester	24 credit points
Delivery Mode	Internal (face to face)

## Graduate Capabilities

Graduates of AFTRS are:

1. Storytellers who possess the courage and integrity to embrace and reflect Australian perspectives
2. Practitioners skilled for the screen and audio industries
3. Creators who can effectively communicate ideas, problem-solve and collaborate inclusively
4. Cultural-leaders able to apply positionality and ethics in their practice

## Course Learning Outcomes

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

## Course Completion Requirements

Students are expected to actively engage in their learning in a positive and respectful manner by attending all scheduled sessions, completing coursework, assessments, and projects in good time.

Students must attempt all submission tasks in each subject, noting here that some assessments are split into multiple tasks. For avoidance of all doubt, students cannot skip or ignore a task; each task for each assessment must be attempted. Students must achieve a passing grade (50% and above) in all subjects in one academic semester to be eligible for completion.

Refer to the Student Handbook for progression rules and assessment regulations.

# Credit Point Structure

Subject Code	Subject Name	Mode of Delivery 1	Mode of Delivery 2	Type	Credit Points	Total hours	Directed hours	Self-directed hours
SCRN1034	Screen Studies A	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
SCRN1035	Research and Development A	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
SCRN1038	Collaborative Practice A	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
*See Below	Discipline Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
Semester 1					24	576	240	336

SCRN1036	Screen Studies B	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
SCRN1037	Research and Development B	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
SCRN1039	Collaborative Practice B	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
*See Below	Studio Discipline B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
Semester 2					24	576	240	336

SCRN2040	Capstone 1	Internal	n/a	Core	20	480	200	280
SCRN2038	Professional Practice 1	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
Semester 3					24	576	240	336

SCRN2041	Capstone 2	Internal	n/a	Core	20	480	200	280
SCRN2039	Professional Practice 2	Internal	n/a	Core	4	96	40	56
Semester 4					24	576	240	336

Discipline Studio A								
Subject Code	Subject Name	Mode of Delivery 1	Mode of Delivery 2	Type	Credit Points	Total hours	Directed hours	Self-directed hours
CINE1016	Cinematography Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DESN1014	Production Design Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DIRC1016	Directing Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DOCO1013	Documentary Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
EDIT1023	Editing Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
MUSC1017	Music Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
PROD1023	Producing Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
SCRW1027	Screenwriting Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
SOUN1014	Sound Design Studio A	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168

Discipline Studio B								
Subject Code	Subject Name	Mode of Delivery 1	Mode of Delivery 2	Type	Credit Points	Total hours	Directed hours	Self-directed hours
CINE1017	Cinematography Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DESN1015	Production Design Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DIRC1017	Directing Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
DOCO1014	Documentary Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
EDIT1024	Editing Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
MUSC1018	Music Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
PROD1024	Producing Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
SCRW1028	Screenwriting Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168
SOUN1015	Sound Design Studio B	Internal	n/a	Core	12	288	120	168

# Alternate Exit Qualifications

Advice on alternative exit qualifications can be found in the Student Handbook.

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 Arts Screen.
- Upon successful completion of four subjects (24 credit points), you may exit with a Graduate Certificate Arts Screen.

# Section 2:

## Structure & Content

### Course Rationale

The Master of Arts Screen (MAARTSSD) aspires to graduate visionary and adaptive screen storytellers capable of producing compelling, impactful work and building sustainable careers in a dynamic media landscape. Students will gain high-level creative, technical and critical skills that allow graduates to enter industry as advanced screen practitioners, innovative creators and on track to be leaders in their chosen field.

The MAARTSSD is offered in nine specialisations, immersing students in an intensive, practical program of thinking, testing and making within a disciplinary field. Small group workshops, seminars, mentorships and collaborative exercises will be guided by leading industry practitioners. This practice-based curriculum supports students' development of a deep embodied understanding of key concepts, technical skills, and current best practice within their craft area.

Informed by the philosophy that excellence in screen arts depends on mastering a complex creative skill set, this specialised craft-based learning is integrated into a program of shared subjects focused on developing a broader analytic, reflective and collaborative skillset. Here cross-disciplinary lectures, seminars, production exercises and screen studies enable students to cultivate a broad understanding of screen forms and practices; skills in ethical and respectful collaboration; and a deeper understanding of their own screen practice and creative voice.

The program is delivered over four semesters (two years).

In Semester 1 and 2, students develop a deep understanding of their craft area and the vital role it plays in creating engaging screen narratives in their *Discipline Studio*. Teaching will focus on individual roles and responsibilities within the discipline, and developing craft-based technical knowledge and skills, which students will continue to advance and refine across the two-year program.

Parallel to this core discipline-specific learning, students will participate in three shared subjects: *Screen Studies*, *Research & Development* and *Collaborative Practice*. In *Screen*

*Studies*, students will hone their mastery of screen language, critically analysing screen forms and practices through the lens of a range of different theoretical frameworks. This subject provides students with an opportunity to develop their screen knowledge and build a critical language around film, television and other screen media that they can draw on in applied creative contexts. In *Research & Development* students will interrogate their creative practice and its relation to wider artistic, industrial and cultural contexts. They'll also have the opportunity to explore a practice-based area of creative enquiry: a unique craft specialisation that will drive and focus their learning and creative work over the two-year course. In *Collaborative Practice*, students will apply their disciplinary skillset to a complex collaborative production. This subject will allow students to develop skillsets in adaptability, creative leadership and complex problem-solving in production settings that adhere to industry protocols.

In Semester 3, students bring the various strands of course learning in a single subject *Capstone A*. Here students work to realise a major screen work or portfolio of works—their Capstone Project—developed in conjunction with a team of peers across Semesters 1 & 2. The Capstone Project provides students with an opportunity to synthesise and apply their specialist craft skills, collaborative skills, and knowledge of screen storytelling. It also enables them to practically explore their area of creative enquiry: applying learnings to date; testing ideas, and beginning to evaluate creative outcomes.

In Semester 4, students continue to finalise their Capstone Projects, and formalise their reflections in *Capstone B*. As part of this subject students will produce an exegesis: a reflective work that asks students to think critically about the development and realisation of their Capstone Project. The exegesis gives students a unique opportunity to analyse their creative process and outcomes, articulate their creative practice and its relation to broader screen contexts, and consider the implications of key learnings about their craft area and their area of creative enquiry.

In Semester 4 Students also take part in *Professional Practice*, a subject that readies students for employment by helping them develop creative business skills and establish infrastructure to support a thriving and sustainable career beyond AFTRS.

## Links with Industry

The MAARTSSD 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. During the course of the program, students may also 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 MAARTSSD, a limited slate of Capstone projects will be approved by the Capstone Project Executive Committee.

## 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
- The ability to synthesise leadership strategies and individual core values and vision to inspire and empower collaborators

## Statement of Commitment: AFTRS First Nations Strategy

1. We recognise First Nations people's sovereignty and self-determination as dynamic, diverse and place-based.
2. We recognise the ethics, values, and knowledges of First Nations communities.
3. We honour and uphold the commitment to First Nations education and media training.
4. We respect, value, and apply First Nations knowledges, knowledge systems, technologies, and the development of culturally responsive pedagogies and practices.
5. We are committed to efforts and initiatives that build intercultural relationships, ethical relationality, and the collective approach to prioritise First Nations community governance.
6. We are committed to ongoing mutual learning and growth and understanding that this living process will have no 'finish' or 'end' date.
7. We acknowledge that First Nations knowledge systems are dynamic, living, and undergo constant processes of renewal.
8. We will use project-based approaches to explore engagements between Eurocentric and First Nations Knowledges to create, inspire and generate awareness and appreciation across knowledge systems.
9. We recognise the centrality of relationships of First Nations kinship systems, extending into the biosphere, known as 'kincentric ecologies'.



# MAARTSD Productions

The MAARTSSD 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 semester is designed to lead students through a complete cycle of the creative process, providing a focus to the productions that reinforces the overall aim as described above.

**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 production.

**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.

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

**Semester Four:** Reflecting through an exegesis. The 8000-word (or equivalent) 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 MAARTSSD 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 oftentimes 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.

## Mentoring

Each semester, you will receive mentorship from your discipline supervisor and creative practice research tutor. 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 the development and design of your research project.

You are expected to manage your mentoring hours and initiate mentoring sessions. Each session should address clear discussion points. 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 to successfully complete their course. Inherent Requirements refer to the abilities, knowledge and skills required 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
- Respectfully communicate 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
- Undertake long shoot days (up to 10 hours/day during shoot blocks)
- Comply with all WH&S requirements for production activities
- Complete mandatory inductions
- Take responsibility for the hire and return of gear

## Intellectual tasks

- Organise and collect information
- Synthesise theory and practice
- Accurately recall information
- Demonstrate appropriate time management in the delivery of tasks

## 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

## Technological tasks

- Engage with school technological platforms as required
- Check student email account regularly
- Complete all required online orientation modules

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 Centre.

# 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.

- An Introduction to Indigenous Media Ethics and Aesthetics (IIMEA)
- WHS Regulatory Framework
- Site Induction
- Studio Safety Induction: Video and Quiz
- Lighting Safety: Video & Quiz
- Academic Integrity module

# Section 3: Teaching & Assessment

## Overview

Section 3 of this Course Guide details the importance of students developing a deep conceptual understanding of screen content creation to become the type of adaptable generalist that the screen industries are demanding.

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 theory and craft skills are equally valued, 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.

Kolb Cycle of Experiential Learning

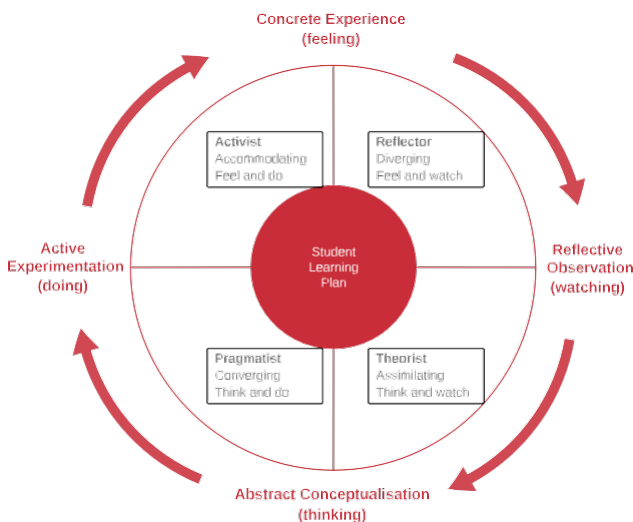


Illustration modified from Kolb's learning cycle (Dennison and Kirk, 1990)

# Learning Formats

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

**Jointly-taught Activities (JTAs):** Two or more subjects or programs work together to a brief to address a targeted piece of learning with a mutually beneficial outcome. The JTA is a planned and embedded component of their coursework. Assessment of JTA can vary between participating subjects, dependent on each subject's intended learning outcomes.

# 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 a student 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.

## 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, 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 lecturer, 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 Program Convenor, 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.

# Learn more

Get in touch for personalised course and admission advice. You can also attend our Open Day, events and campus tours.

[aftrs.edu.au](https://aftrs.edu.au)  
[info@aftrs.edu.au](mailto:info@aftrs.edu.au)  
1300 223 877

Facebook	@aftrs
Instagram	@aftrs
X	@aftrs
YouTube	/AFTRSShowcase
TikTok	@aftrsgoodcontent
Snapchat	aftrsedu

## Australian Film Television and Radio School

The Entertainment Quarter  
Moore Park  
Sydney NSW 2021

TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12011  
CRICOS Provider Code: 03662D

All information in this course guide is provided for domestic students (Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents, and New Zealand Citizens). International applicants should visit [aftrs.edu.au/international](https://aftrs.edu.au/international) for information. The information in this course guide is correct at February 2024 and is subject to change at any time without notice. For the most up to date information, please visit [aftrs.edu.au](https://aftrs.edu.au).



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