

COURSE SUMMARY DOCUMENT

2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR

COURSE TITLE: Master of Arts (MA) Drama Writing

DURATION OF COURSE: One Year (Full Time)

Entry Requirements:

Applicants will normally be expected to have an honours degree in a related subject area, and it is expected that all candidates will demonstrate some experience of dramatic writing.

Candidates will also be required to have either substantial writing experience in a non-drama medium or have been working in the drama industry and now wish to develop their writing skills. An example of drama writing will be required as part of the selection process.

Applicants should also have a clear understanding of theatre and their individual creative ambitions. The selection process will seek candidates whose writing has the best chance of finding a place in the professional industry, after training.

For speakers of English as a second language an IELTS 7.0 (International English Language Testing System) is the minimum requirement with a minimum of 7.0 in each component of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Applicants will be interviewed by two members of staff, including the Head of Course or Artistic Director. There may be two rounds of interviews.

Course Outline:

This pioneering course aims to nurture students to find their distinctive voices as writers for stage, screen, and radio. The course is delivered through masterclasses, workshops and seminars delivered by top industry professionals and experienced practitioners.

The course takes the students through four modules to unpack a Writers' Toolkit, and thus, to support the playwright in writing a signature script and additional portfolio pieces.

Students will gain an understanding of how directors and actors unpack text. They will also have their scripts examined in practice as actors bring their scripts to life at various points through the course. Students will have access to industry standard facilities including a dedicated writers' room, a radio drama studio and film department.

This course is delivered from a practitioners' perspective and the hands-on experience will ensure an excellent start to graduates' careers and prepare them for employment by providing a practical and critical understanding of commissioning and other industry processes.

The integration of the course into the BOVTS production schedule will allow for the development of several specific features that will enhance the students' experience and learning:

- 1) Students will benefit from working within the context of an already meshed resource of expert tutors, visiting industry professionals, and students-in-training on different courses. These are in the related fields of acting, directing, design, stage management, costume, lighting and sound design, audio drama and film making.
- 2) The School benefits from a very close relationship with the drama industry and this extends to MA Drama Writing students. On graduation, students will have a sophisticated practical understanding of the industry and have had the opportunity to make contacts within it.
- 3) Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of the process of conceiving, drafting, redrafting a play and be given a toolkit of skills, enabling them to work confidently and appropriately in different styles and genres.
- 4) Students will graduate as a creative, practical and confident writer who is capable of knowing which stories best fit each medium and be an excellent collaborator, able to articulate ideas and be sensitive to the values and creative contributions of others.

Core Modules and any Optional Modules:

All modules are compulsory.

Module Name: The Dramatic Medium Part One (45 Credits)

Module Name: The Dramatic Medium Part Two (45 Credits)

Module Name: The Drama Writing Industry (30 Credits)

Module Name: Writing a Signature Script (60 Credits)

Optional Modules: There are no optional modules.

Interim Award: There are no interim awards under this award scheme.

Credit requirements: MA Drama Writing – 180 credits

Method of study (for example, lectures, seminars, work placements) expected:

In the first term students will be learning in a group, exploring the Writers' Toolkit. They will also learn alongside students of other disciplines: directors, designers, actors and production arts. Students will learn through seminars, workshops, masterclasses, and theoretical projects in a structured teaching environment.

As they progress through the course, under the guidance of teaching staff and visiting playwrights' students will learn by reading, writing, and working on scenes that they create. In the first term students will develop their practice and create short scenes in response to the lectures associated with the Dramatic Medium Part One. These scenes will be workshopped with the directors and actors at the end of the first term.

During that first term, students will also have tutorials to discuss their signature script, which they are encouraged to begin working on as soon as the course commences. At the end of the first term, they will be

asked to do a presentation of their signature script, outlining the key themes, plot, characters, and world of the play.

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By studying in a vocational drama school, students will be working in an environment in which the School's many courses share a common purpose, that of teaching professional practice for drama production. They will therefore be learning alongside different groups of students with a shared focus, learning their place in the creative team and learning how to interact purposefully within the group.

Students are expected to be able to work independently and develop leadership skills through the course as well as being taught through structured classes and workshops.

Much of the information and some of the content of the course is available via the School's Virtual Learning Environment. Students will benefit from having their own personal computer and access to the internet to make the most of the course.

Workload including number of contact hours with School staff and expected self-study: This is a full-time course. Structured time averages 14 hours per week. Students should expect to undertake at least 15 hours per week of independent study. There will be some weeks where students will need to be in School all week – for example to workshop their Dramatic Medium Part One scenes, to record their radio plays, to attend rehearsals of their signature scripts etc.

Students will need to be flexible as some rescheduling may be necessary.

The overall methods of assessment for the Modules (for example exams, course work or practical assignments):

There is continuous feedback and assessment of students' playwriting skills, knowledge and understanding. All modules are assessed by coursework (meaning there are no exams). Students will receive extensive feedback – written and oral – from teaching staff and visiting industry professionals.

Students will be assessed on their signature script presentation, their complete signature script, their development plan, their audio play, their film pitch and their critical reflection on their dramatic writing.

Students are assessed on a pass or fail basis (meaning that degrees are undifferentiated / not classified).

The award students will receive on successful completion of their Course:

MA Screen Acting validated by the University of the West of England, Bristol.

Where the course is taught:

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School – Downside Road

Length of the Modules:

11 weeks each.

Who will be teaching on the course:

Head of Course, BOVTS teaching staff and visiting industry professionals.

The fees which students can expect to pay:

Tuition fees for UK and Republic of Ireland students on the MA Drama Writing course will be £16,000

Tuition fees for overseas students (non-UK) on the MA Drama Writing course will be £26,510

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An Associate School of the University of the West of England

Please see the Fees Policy at <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/courses/fees/tuition-fees-policy> for further information.

Any extra costs (in addition to fees) which students may have to pay to complete the course and estimated cost:

Increasingly, much of the information and some of the content of the course is available via the School's virtual learning environment and so you will benefit from having access to your own personal computer and the internet to make the most of your course. It is estimated that a suitable personal computer will cost £300.00. Please check with the Course leader for recommended functionality. You will need to research the most cost-effective way of accessing the internet. The School has a number of means tested scholarship funds available to assist students with purchases of computer hardware and other essential costs which would otherwise cause financial hardship.

Course materials are provided, but students may have to allow funds to provide their own work clothes and contribute to some costs towards their self-promotion materials. It is estimated that additional costs will be around £150.00. Students can apply for hardship funds if required.