



A Film School for Scotland

A Film School for Scotland: Mapping Existing Provision

Research commissioned by Screen Scotland and produced by
Professor Nick Higgins (lead author), Dr. Aleksandra Webb and
Niclas Hell, University of the West of Scotland, June 2023



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Executive Summary

The proposal to create a Film School for Scotland, raises a number of challenges and potential opportunities.

The first of which is to understand the impact any such school might have on the existing filmmaking education and training landscape in Scotland. To understand this impact, we must first have a working assumption of the model of film school being proposed.

Based on the needs of both the current boom in HETV and inward productions in Scotland, and the ambition to produce a cultural cinema of international standing, this report proceeds with the working assumption that the model of film school required is **one that delivers an Advanced Specialist Filmmaker Education at a postgraduate Masters level.**¹ This is to suggest that a portfolio of specialist 'above the line' and 'below the line' Masters' degree programmes is required to respond to Scotland's specific industry needs and cultural ambitions.

Mapping Existing Practice-based Filmmaking Education in Scotland

Our analysis of existing filmmaking education pathways sets out to understand both the pedagogical approach and percentage of practice-based instruction involved at each level of education, including the extent of specialisation possible within existing programmes.

Following CICLET and Screenskills criteria, we have identified university programmes with pedagogical approaches that offer a minimum of 50% practice-based core teaching that can be considered to "deliver film and television audio-visual training to a level that would be considered a professional preparation for industry".²

Given the international student focus of current HE business models, we also analyse the number of

Scottish domiciled students being instructed on each HE programme. The results of our analysis reveal smaller numbers of Scottish domiciled students than might have been expected especially at the most advanced level of Masters study. This issue of Scottish domiciled students is especially pronounced given the effects of Brexit, as students whom until recently paid domestic level fees must now pay international fees and no longer have the right to remain and work within the Scottish film industry after graduation. This reduction in trained practitioners post-graduation leads us to conclude that if a talent pipeline is to be supported in Scotland then student bursaries will be necessary at the postgraduate level.

¹ This is outlined in section 4 of the report.

² <https://www.cilect.org/> accessed on 27/02/23

Put simply, we ask the questions; how are students being taught filmmaking in Scotland, who is teaching them, and what is the profile of the current student cohort?

Key

Further Education

- 1 Glasgow Clyde College
- 2 City of Glasgow College
- 3 West College Scotland
- 4 New College Lanarkshire
- 5 Ayrshire College
- 6 Edinburgh College
- 7 West Lothian College
- 8 Fife College

- 9 Forth Valley College
- 10 Dundee & Angus College
- 11 North East Scotland College
- 12 Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Skye
- 13 Royal Conservatoire
- 14 UWS
- 15 Edinburgh Napier

- 16 University of Edinburgh/ECA
- 17 Uni of Highlands & Islands

Postgraduate

- 18 UWS
- 19 Edinburgh Napier
- 20 University of Edinburgh/ECA
- 21 Glasgow Caledonian



Our analysis reveals that currently in Scotland there are:

- **1112 students on 35 film and tv production relevant programmes at 12 FE colleges**

1112 (100%)

Scottish domiciled students enrolled on film production degrees (2022)

- **814 students on 8 undergraduate degree programmes at 5 universities**

538 (66%)

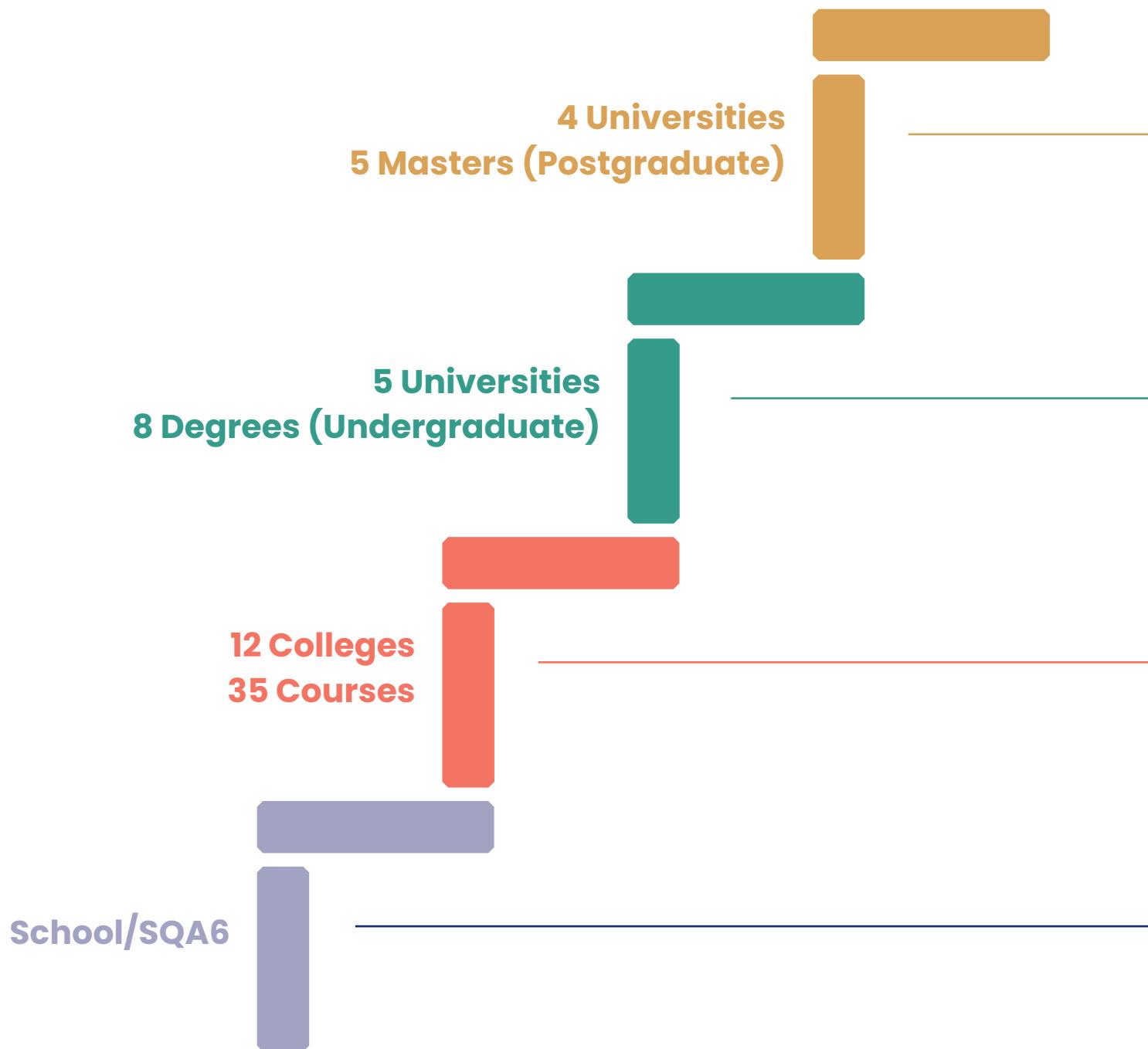
Scottish domiciled students enrolled on film production degrees (2022)

- **101 students on 5 postgraduate degree programmes at 4 universities**

52 (51%)

Scottish domiciled students enrolled on film production degrees (2022)

Educational Pathway: Film and TV Production Scotland



University of the West of Scotland
Edinburgh Napier University
University of Edinburgh/ECA
Glasgow Caledonian University

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
University of the West of Scotland
Edinburgh Napier University
University of Edinburgh/ECA
University of the Highlands & Islands

Glasgow Clyde College
City of Glasgow College
West College Scotland
New College Lanarkshire
Ayrshire College
Edinburgh College

West Lothian College
Fife College
Forth Valley College
Dundee and Angus College
North East Scotland College
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

School
Apprenticeship

Educational Pathway: College

Further Education institution	Higher National Certificate (HNC)/Level 7	Higher National Diploma (HND)/Level 8
Ayrshire College	HNC Film and Broadcasting HNC Media Analysis and Production	
Dundee and Angus College	HNC in Creative and Digital Media	HND Computer Arts and Design (Animation)
Edinburgh College	HNC Creative Industries: Television and Film	HND Creative Industries: Television and Film
Fife College	HNC Creative industries Television (Screen Production)	HND Creative industries Television (Screen Production) HND Sound Production
Forth Valley College	HNC Creative Industries	HND Creative Industries: Media & Communication HND Sound Production
Glasgow Clyde College		HND Digital Film and Television (ScreenSkills recognised) HND Media and Communication
City of Glasgow College	NQ Modelmaking for Film & TV HNC Television Production HNC Creative Industries: Television HNC Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills	HND Creative Industries: Television (ScreenSkills recognised) HND Make Up Artistry TV, Film & Theatre
Glasgow Kelvin College		HND Sound Production
New College Lanarkshire	HNC Television Production	HND Television Production HND Make-up Artistry: TV, Film and Theatre
North East Scotland College, Aberdeen	HNC Creative Industries: Television	HND Creative Industries: Television HND Media and Communication: Production
West College Scotland	HNC Television Production & Photography HNC Sound Production HNC in Media and Communication	HND Television Production HND Sound Production HND Makeup Artistry: TV, Film and Theatre HND in Media and Communication
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Skye		DIPHE Gaelic Media (Diploma) Level 7 & 8/ 2 years

Numbers of students enrolled at FE Colleges on identified film and television production courses

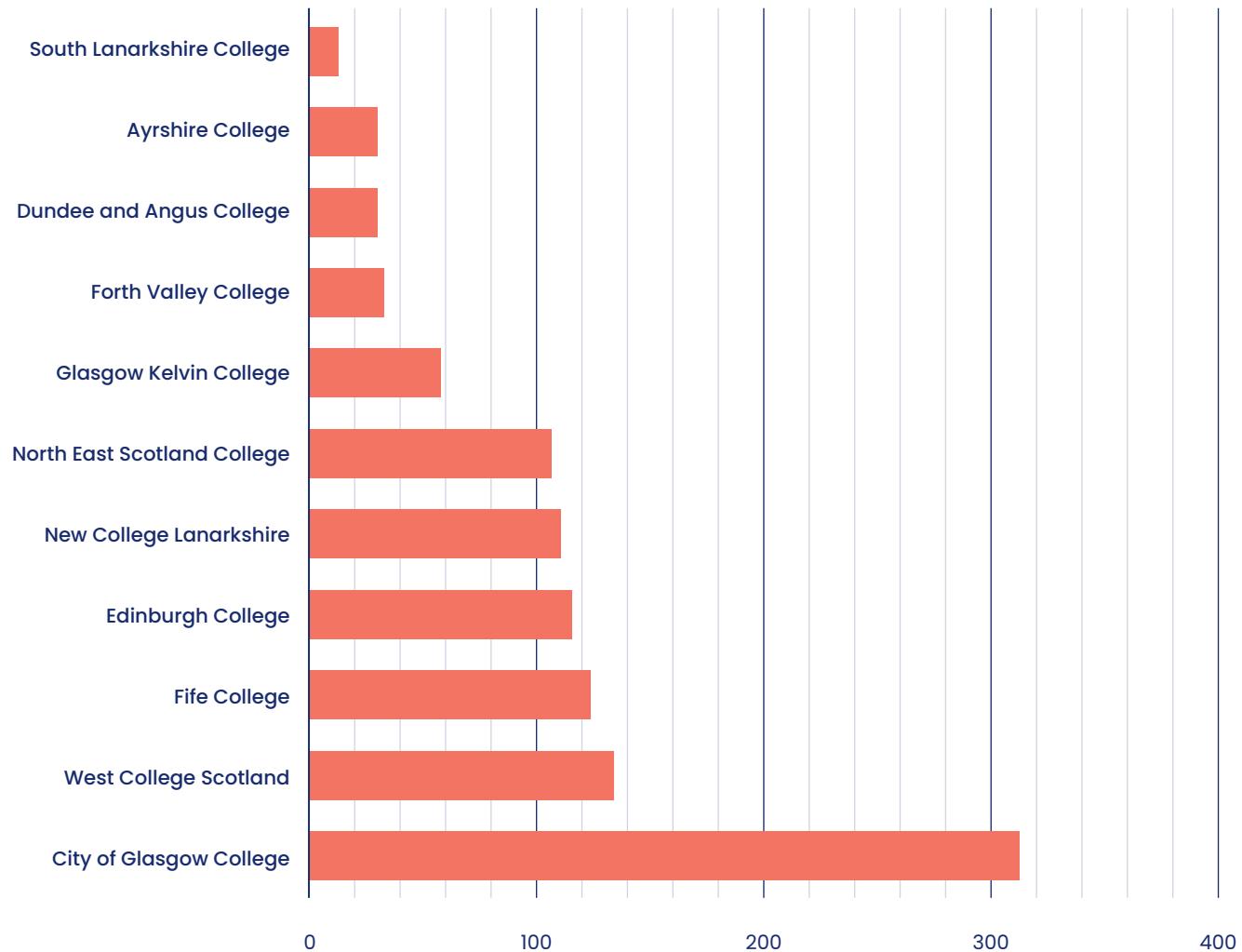


Diagram represent available SFC data on college enrolments per FE institution on Film & TV Production courses in academic year 2021/22⁵

⁵ Figures supplied to research team by Scottish Funding Council on 28th April 2023. Figures for Glasgow Clyde College and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig were unavailable.

Educational Pathway: Undergraduate

Dedicated Filmmaking Degree Programmes

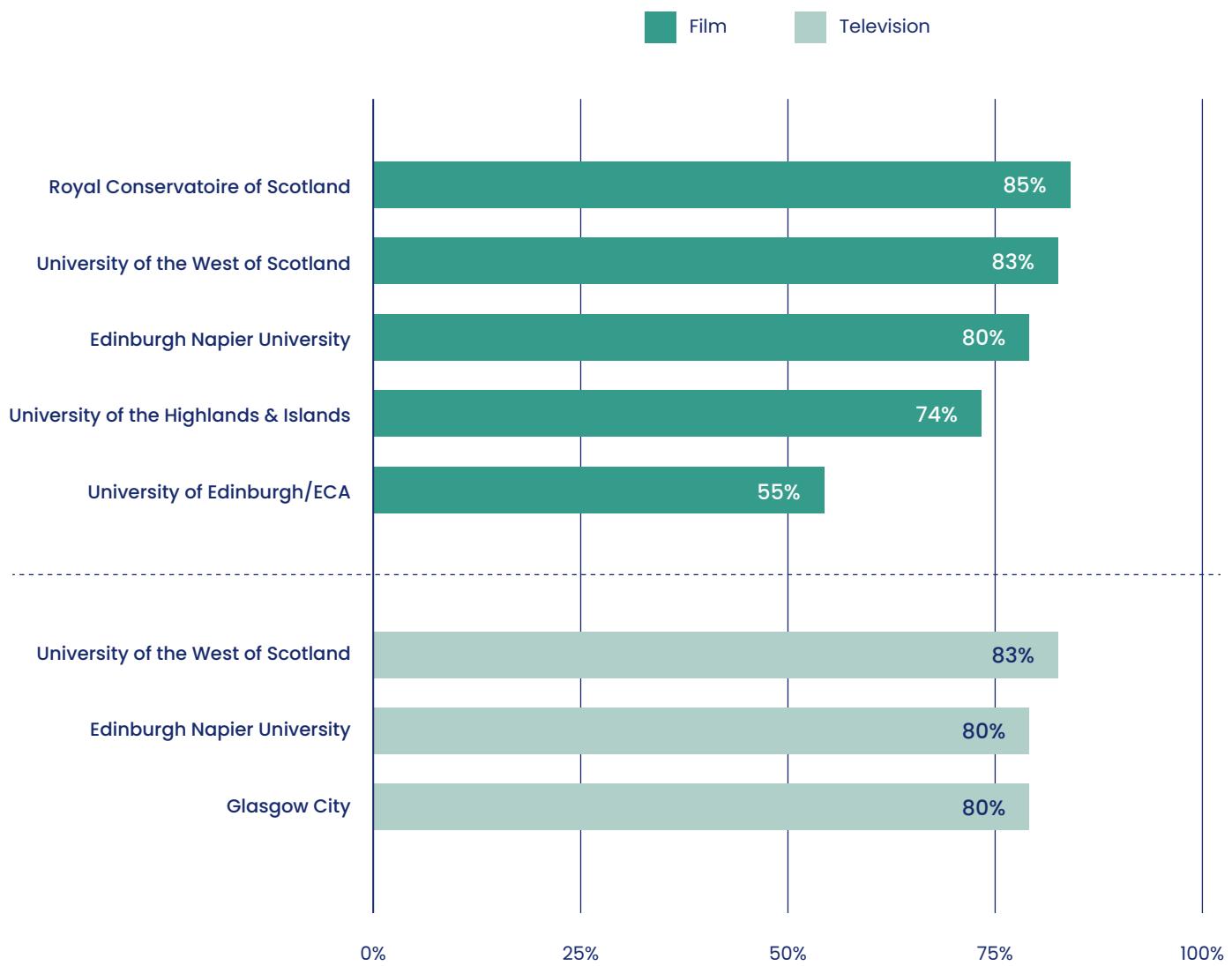
University/Institution	Degree Programme	Duration	Focus	Accreditation	% of practice
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland ⁶	BA Filmmaking	3 years	Drama	None	85%
University of the West of Scotland	BA (Hons) Filmmaking & Screenwriting	4 years	Drama & Documentary	Screenskills Select	83%
Edinburgh Napier University	BA (Hons) Film	4 years	Drama & Documentary	None	80%
University of the Highlands & Islands	BA (Hons) Contemporary Film Making in the Highlands and Islands	4 years	Drama, Documentary & Corporate	None	74%
University of Edinburgh/ECA	BA Film and Television	4 years	Documentary, Drama & Experimental	None	55%

Dedicated Television Degree Programmes

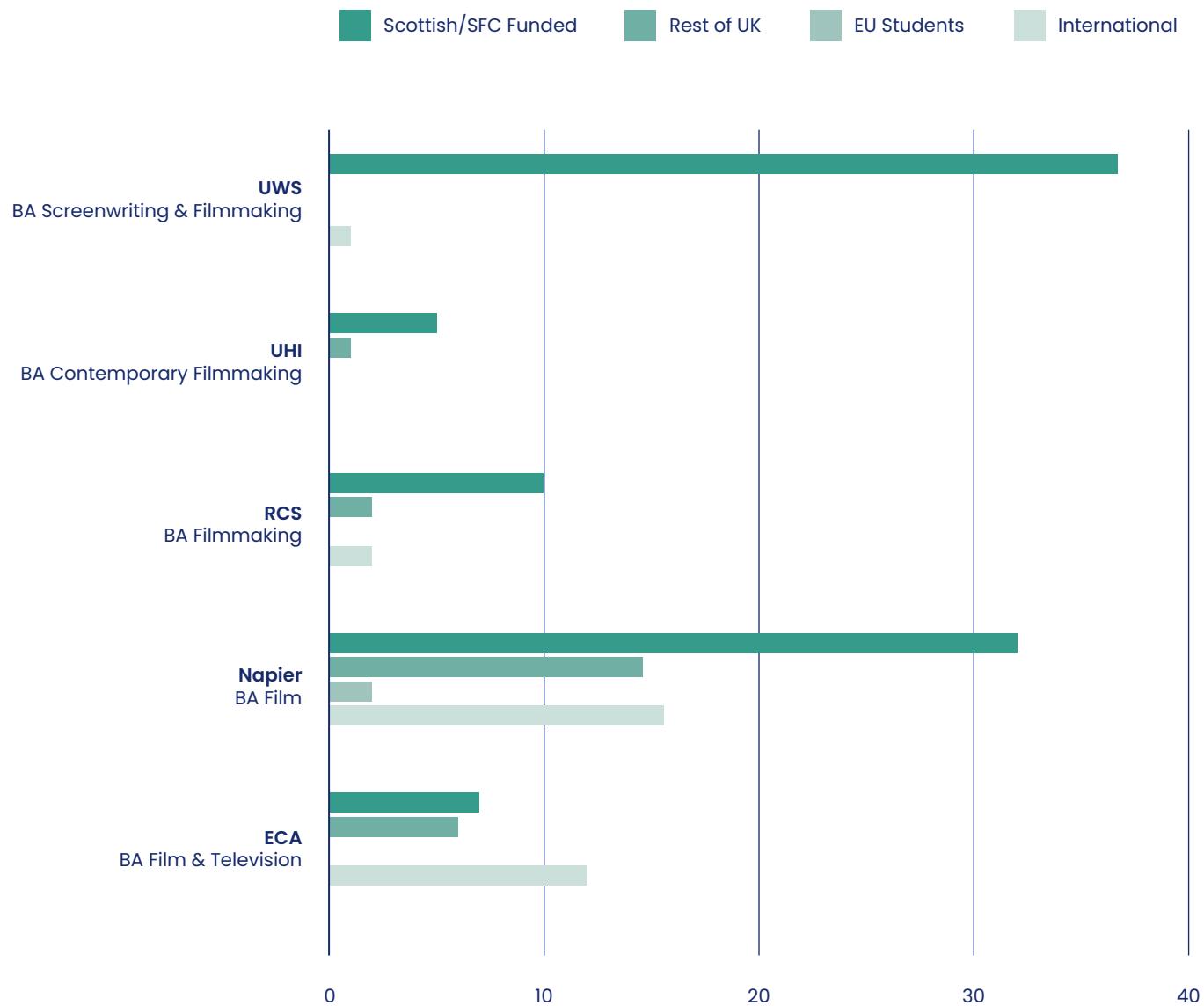
University	Degree Programme	Duration	Focus	Accreditation	% of practice
University of the West of Scotland	BA (Hons) Broadcast Production: TV & Radio	4 years	Television & Radio	Screenskills Select	83%
Edinburgh Napier University	BA (Hons) Television	4 years	Television	Screenskills Select	80%
Glasgow City (awarded by Edinburgh Napier)	BA (Hons) Television	2 years (entry in year 3)	Television	None	80%

⁶ Please note the RCS does not have University status and has its degree programmes accredited by the University of St. Andrews.

Percentage of undergraduate practice-based teaching



Undergraduate student by programme and domicile



Practitioner Experienced Staff

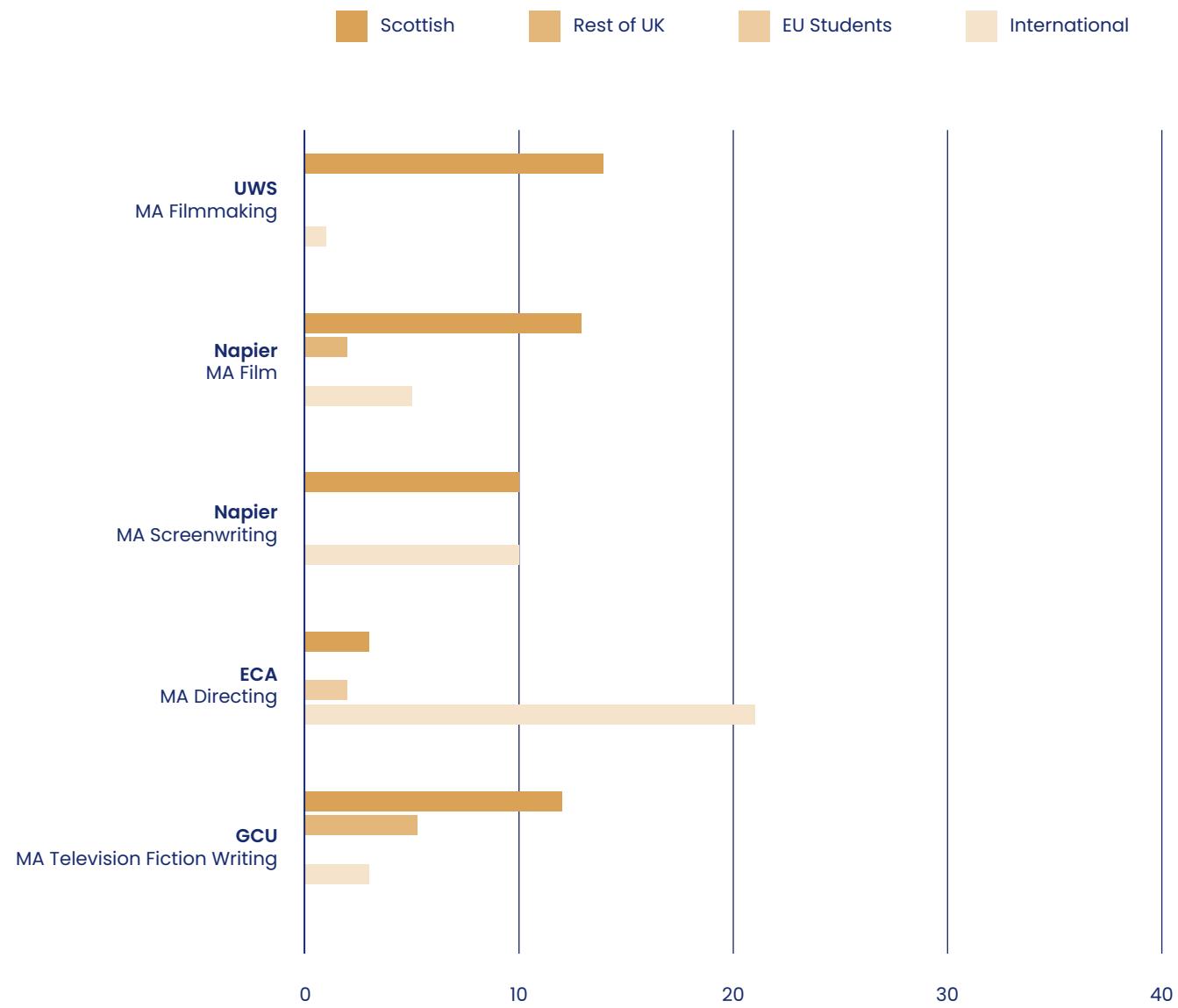
Institution & Degree	Member of Staff	Practitioner Experience
RCS BA Film	Ray Tallen	Short Film and Commercial Camera (historic)
	Vincent Hunter	Short Film Writer & Director (historic)
UHI BA Contemporary Film	Anna MacPherson	Director & Producer (short form & commercial)
ECA BA Television & Film	Tracey Fearnehough	Producer & Director (shorts, broadcast & community – current)
	Lili Sandelin	Producer short form (current)
	Itandehui Jansen	Director (fiction & documentary short & long form – current)
Napier BA Film	Paul Gray	Director (short fiction, documentary short, fiction feature & community – current)
	Zoe Irvine	Sound designer & sound artist (current)
	Sana Bilgrami	Documentary director (short form & art practice – current)
	Louise Milne	Experimental film (historic)
UWS BA Screenwriting & Filmmaking	Paul Wright	Fiction & documentary writer & director / BAFTA winner (short & long form – current)
	Douglas King	Fiction writer & director (short & long form – current)
	Shaun Hughes	Fiction writer and director (short & long form – current)
	Callum Rice	Documentary director / BAFTA winner (short form – current)
	Sam Firth	Documentary writer & director, fiction writer & director / BFI & Chanel Filmmaker Awards 2022 (short & long form- current)

Educational Pathway: Postgraduate

Dedicated Post-graduate Filmmaking & Television Programmes

University	Degree Programme	Duration	Focus	Accreditation	% of practice
University of the West of Scotland	MA Filmmaking	1 year	Drama & Documentary	Screenskills Select	90%
Edinburgh Napier University	MA Film	1 year	Drama	Screenskills Select	90%
Edinburgh Napier University	MA Screenwriting	1 year	Drama	Screenskills Select	90%
Edinburgh College of Art (University of Edinburgh)	MA Film Directing	1 year	Documentary	None	90%
Glasgow Caledonian University	MA Television Fiction Writing	1 year	TV Fiction	None	90%

Number and domicile of postgraduate students, academic year 2022-23



With the exception of the two existing screenwriting degrees at the postgraduate degree level, the majority of teaching in Scotland is delivered in the form of a generalist filmmaker education.

Whilst pathways for specialisation exist within the current educational structure, especially for above the line talent, educational institutions are both insufficiently resourced and lack confidence in the student market to require a commitment to specialisation from their students. The introduction of both a better filmmaking educated school leaver and the establishment of a film school would significantly change this landscape and provide considerable stimulus – at both the start and the end of the film production skills escalator – for such programmes to modify their structures and teaching provision.

Resource Needs for Education Pathways

Given the evidence of excellence within the existing postgraduate provision – graduates from all 5 of the degree programmes win awards, screen productions at festivals and gain industry employment post-graduation – the main obstacle to delivering a specialist filmmaking education and to ensuring that the beneficiaries of that education are Scottish domiciled, is one of resource.

Resource not only in terms of the ability to hire specialist staff but also resource to provide bursaries and scholarships to support Scottish domiciled students to pursue the highest level of filmmaking education.

Our report therefore proposes that a federated model of film school would work best in Scotland.

This model would not only provide significant specialist programme enhancements to the three existing postgraduate film production degree programmes (UWS, Napier & ECA) but would also offer a number of new complimentary MA and postgraduate diploma level programmes covering postproduction and virtual production specialisms. Under the umbrella of a federated model, students from across the film school MA programmes and diplomas would collaborate on graduate productions with access to a studio facility.



Training Pathways

The question of resource for a specialist filmmaking educational model also led us to review the existing training pathways provided for both below the line and above the line crew and talent.

The first point to note is that whilst the educational pathway has a clear (if lacking in specialisation) pathway, the parallel training pipeline for aspiring below the line crew suffers from having no clear attainment framework that would guide potential applicants and offer a transparent filmmaking skills career trajectory.

Even with the positive initiative of the Screen Training Alliance, the majority of the independent training sector currently offers no clear route through the myriad of short course offerings that might clearly result in skills progression and a below the line specialist filmmaking career. The exceptions to this are the Screen NETS and Outlander training programmes, both of which, in large part due to the longevity of the schemes, have created successful models that lead to both skills attainment and employment.

The significant investment of the Production Growth Fund, £7.9M since 2018, that has required inward productions to deliver production training as a condition of receiving funds, has resulted in an estimated 157 production trainees on 21 productions benefiting from this initiative. The challenge for Screen Scotland and analysts is the lack of information available that might evidence the impact such production-based training has had on both individual film crew levels of skills attainment and the impact on the wider skilled crew levels and depth in Scotland. Recent proposals from Screen Scotland to create a pool of production trainers would go some way to ensuring a consistent level of quality for on-set training and a modified online reporting system would also be welcome, however, it is important to highlight that the fund does not exist for the sole purpose of training crew and readers should be mindful of the primary role such investment plays in securing inward productions for Scotland that have wider economic impact beyond training.

Schemes delivered as the result of more directly targeted funds, such as those delivered by the TRC, BECTU Vision and the NFTS Scotland Hub are also reviewed. Paid apprenticeship schemes offered by the TRC such as RAD and RESET are clear examples of successful pathways into industry that can align with the educational pipeline. Such convergence is however rare, and the sector suffers from a lack of engagement with the educational pipeline, especially in relation to further education course leavers.

The training offer of the NFTS Scotland hub in particular is of concern, offering a number of expensive short introductory training courses that appear to be marketed at new entrants, but demonstrate scant evidence of delivering any significant impact on the below the line crew levels or above the line talent outputs. The 'lift and shift' approach of offering existing short courses from NFTS Beaconsfield (England) and delivering them from Glasgow lacks both cultural nuance and a responsiveness to the needs of the Scottish film and TV industry. Recent developments that suggest a more targeted approach such as the multi-camera TV and virtual production courses are to be welcomed, however, the historically low level of Screen Scotland bursary take up contrasted with the high level of core funding (over £1M since 2018) suggests the fee paying NFTS Scotland model sits uneasily within a Scottish filmmaking skills attainment pipeline where FE and HE undergraduate education is free and the NFTS Scotland short course offer does not offer a mechanism for changing the structural inequity already present within the film production ecosystem.

In contrast, the NFTS Beaconsfield (England) in-person specialised filmmaker Masters and diploma level education offer continues to set a benchmark for the delivery of a simultaneous educational experience where in students from complimentary degree programmes collaborate, working in their specialisms, on graduation productions. Screen Scotland has been investing annually for well over a decade in bursaries for Scottish domiciled students to study at Beaconsfield and a number of below the line and above the line students have gone on to have successful careers in industry.³

The challenge of investing in bursaries for Scottish domiciled students to study in England is of course the risk that they may not return to contribute their skills and talents to the Scottish film and television industry, a Scottish film school of comparable quality that also delivered a specialist filmmaker educational model, would overcome this challenge. Examples of notable Scottish above the line NFTS graduates who left and remained based in

³ In addition to the Screen Scotland bursaries, many Scottish students have received significant support from the Dewar Arts Awards. See also Scott, A. J. (2008). What's the Point of Film School, or, What did Beaconsfield Film Studios ever do for the Scottish film industry?. In J. Murray, F. Farley, & R. Stoneman (Eds.), *Scottish Cinema Now*, (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008) for reference to an earlier generation of Scottish NFTS graduates.

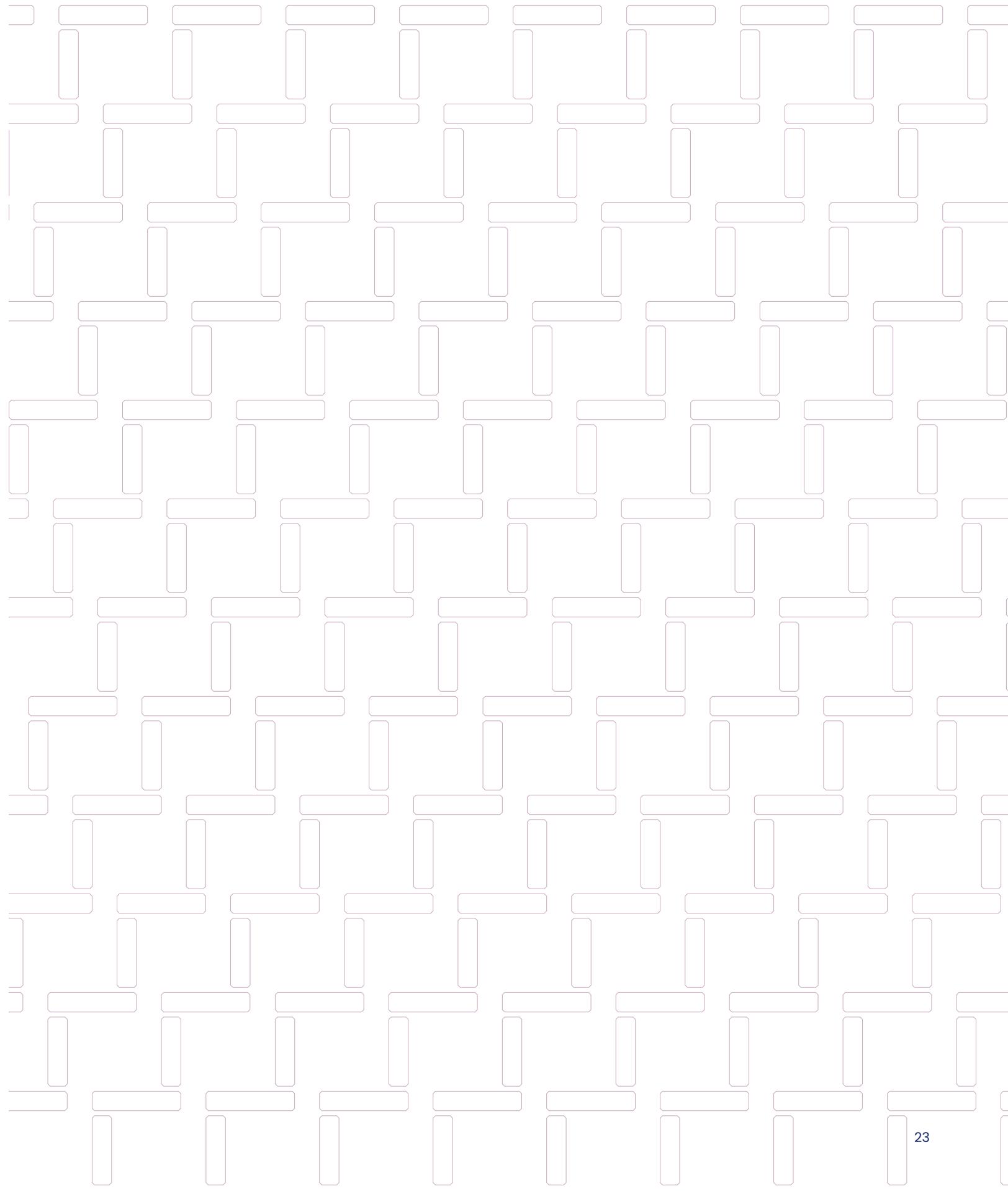
England include Lynne Ramsey (1996), Kirsty Wilson (2009), Jamie Stone (2012) Johnny Kenton (2016), Ben Hunter and Rory Stewart (2017). Currently it is estimated that the NFTS Beaconsfield accepts between 5-10 Scottish students per year onto their MA programmes, with approximately half that number returning to work in Scotland following graduation.⁴

Finally, the above the line training schemes delivered in Scotland can be viewed as offering a compliment to the existing educational pathways as can the informal training organisations that deliver the BFI Film Academy scheme. Whilst the BFI film academy appears to be a reliable feeder into HE filmmaking programmes, the Bridging the Gap, Sharp Shorts and Little Pictures schemes offer a next step for emerging talent from Scotland's existing filmmaking postgraduate programmes.

The bottleneck in above the line talent development is presented by the lack of any feature film production development scheme, a situation that may well become more pronounced with the introduction of a film school producing a cohort of talented graduates every 18 months to 2 years. A pathway to feature film production would also be viewed as an important element for the establishment of a sustainable cultural cinema for Scotland.

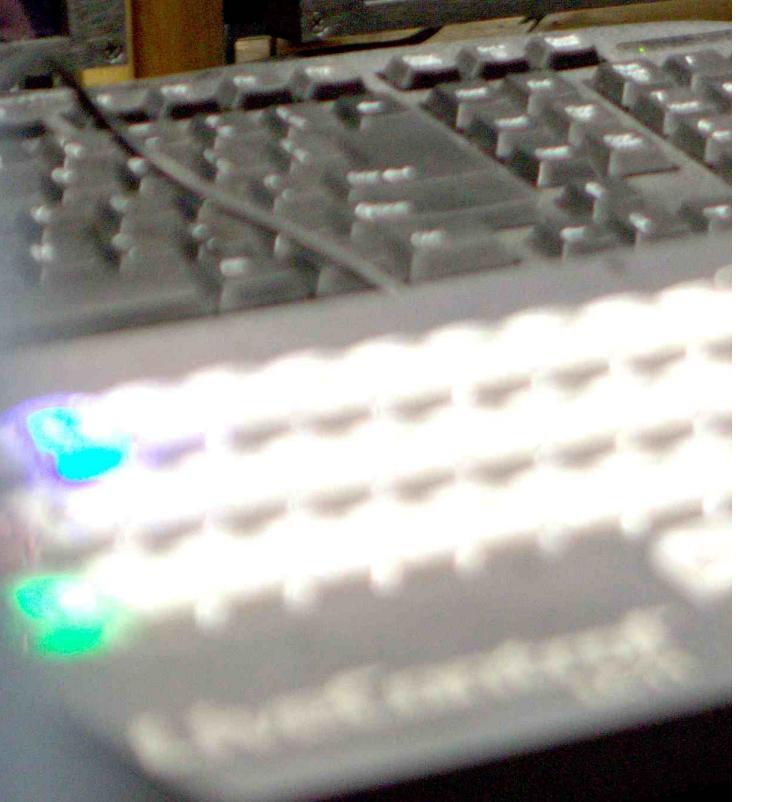
Ultimately, the establishment of a federated Scottish Film and Television School (SFTS), would be an investment in Scotland's own talent and ability to reflect a diverse culture through internationally recognised film and television productions.

⁴ Personal email communication with Jon Wardle, director of the NFTS, 1st Dec 2022. Such numbers are never exact as graduates may well move and live between several locations as their career progresses and increased industry opportunities in Scotland also have the potential to encourage more graduates to base themselves in Scotland.



CAMERA 2

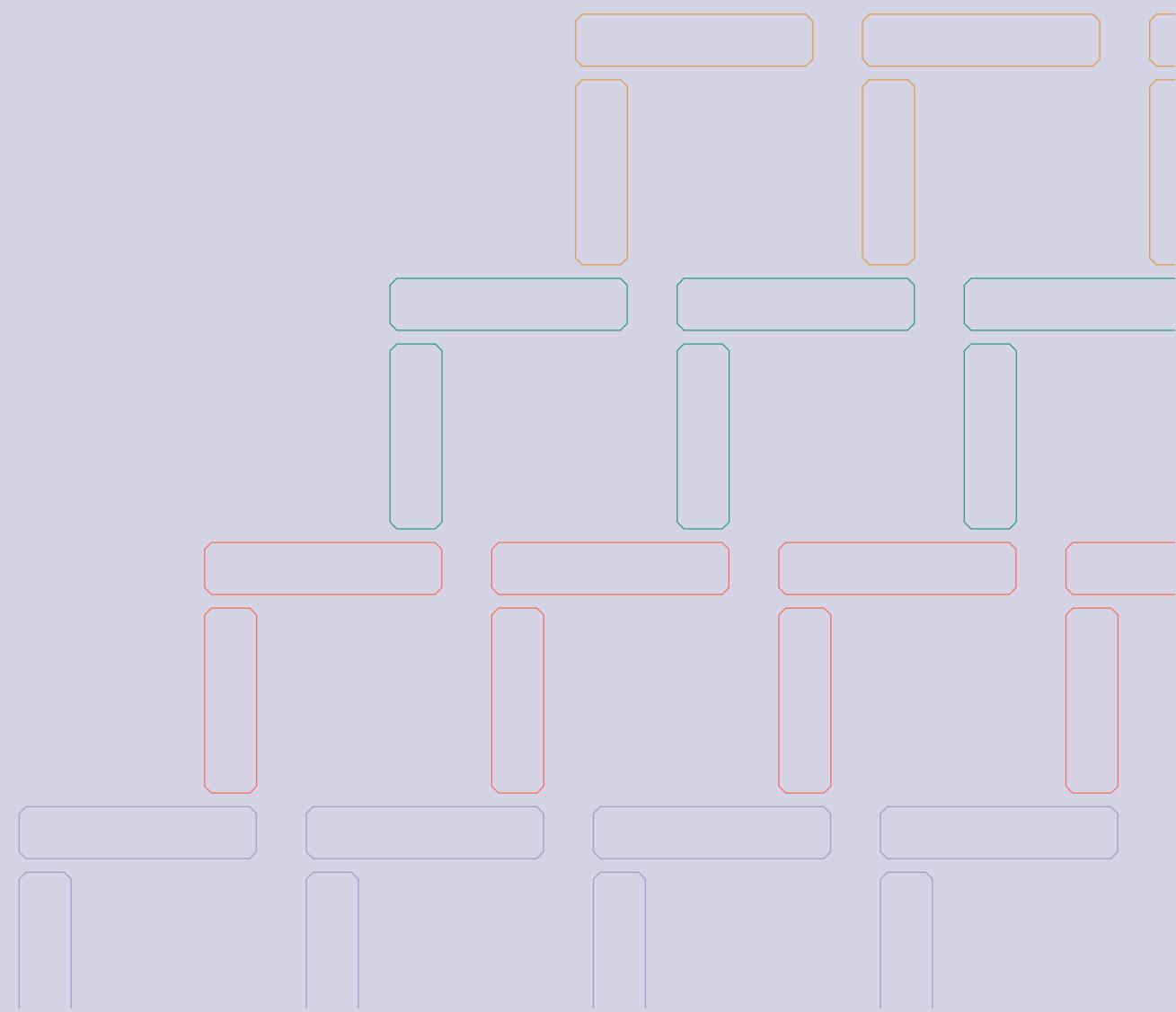
CAMERA





Recommendations and Impact

After conducting a review of the existing filmmaking education and training available in Scotland, with a view to the potential impact of the establishment of a Film School for Scotland, we make the following recommendations:



1. **A Film School for Scotland should be established.**
2. To meet the dual needs of inward productions and the independent film sector, the Film School should adopt an Advanced Specialist Filmmaking Educational model building on both the existing 5 Masters programmes currently on offer in Scotland and new degree or diploma programmes under a proposed **federated 'Scottish Film and Television School' model**.
3. To deliver specialist filmmaking education at this level has several resource implications (as outlined in the previous section) including **access to a small studio and virtual production facility**.
4. To ensure both student diversity and investment in Scottish domiciled students, a set number of places in the new film school should be fully supported with a **bursary that covers fees and a stipend**.
5. To ensure the growth of a distinctive Scottish cultural cinema, the federated film school and its ethos should be underwritten by a **shared cultural cinema programme** with masterclasses and screenings that would unite the cohort on a regular basis.
6. Given the concentration of the film and television industry in Glasgow and the number of filmmaking programmes offered by colleges and universities in the wider Glasgow area, it would be recommended that the **film school studio and virtual production facility is based in Glasgow**.

Existing Filmmaking Education Pipelines

1. The introduction of a new Scottish school curriculum is to be welcomed. A new curriculum could change the base knowledge level of school leavers and have a very positive effect on the next stages of the formal educational pipeline, allowing colleges and universities to modify their curriculum to take advantage of higher skilled school leaver.

It is as yet unclear whether the new school curriculum includes an introduction to the film value chain that could help educate pupils on both the specialist roles within film production and the broader employment opportunities within the Scottish film ecosystem. Our recommendation would be that if not already planned, that **the new Filmmaking curriculum in Scottish secondary schools**, especially prior to the choice of college or university courses, **should include an introduction to specialist filmmaking craft roles and the diverse employment opportunities within the film value chain.**

2. Colleges and Universities should be encouraged to highlight specialist filmmaking skills pathways within their course and degree programmes and to **offer specialist filmmaking skills portfolio exit awards.**
3. **College courses and University degrees with industry accreditation (Screenskills) should be recognised by Screen Scotland** for their commitment to an industry relevant approach to education and offered additional support. This additionality should also be seen as an incentive for other course and degrees to pursue accreditation.
4. **Filmmaking degree programmes at Scottish universities should be recognised for their level of practice-based teaching and**

those that adopt a predominantly practice-based approach as core delivery, should be highlighted within the educational and film ecosystem.

5. A mechanism for communicating between Screen Scotland and the dedicated filmmaking university programmes should be created that facilitates curriculum development and shares opportunities. This should be a **recurring knowledge sharing forum with the 5 universities that offer dedicated filmmaking programmes.**
6. **The introduction of a graduation fair, festival or industry event for graduates from the formal filmmaking education pipeline** should be actioned and would offer opportunities for industry employers and training providers to engage with skilled graduates.
7. For future reports and mapping exercises, it is recommended that a **new HESA code is created with the Scottish Funding Council for dedicated Filmmaking programmes** based on the level of practice-based delivery.

Impact of a Film School: The establishment of a federated model of film school that adopts a specialist pedagogical model, would positively impact upon the existing formal education pipeline at the school, college, and undergraduate university levels.

It would provide not only an aspirational end point on the skills escalator but also a clear rationale for students to choose existing specialist routes within the current pedagogical offer and a reason for both colleges and universities to review their pedagogical models to feed more directly into the film school offer.

The positive impact for the existing masters' level postgraduate degree programmes would come from additional programme enhancement funds and the ability to support Scottish domiciled above and below the line talent through a bursary or scholarship scheme. Given the extremely low Scottish domiciled student numbers on degree programmes such as the ECA's MA Directing (documentary), there is reason to believe that future graduates from these degree programmes would have significantly more impact on the Scottish film industry than they do at this time. The impact of Brexit should also not be underestimated, as the loss of European students, whom in the past have often remained and positively contributed to the Scottish film industry, will also reduce the number of skilled graduates available for employment.

Existing Independent Training Pipeline

1. The creation of the Screen Training Alliance is to be welcomed, however, **coordination and agreement on an attainment framework for below the line skills progression is currently lacking.**
2. The lack of a clear training and recruitment structure within the training programmes offered by inward productions should be addressed with the **introduction of a standardised approach and accredited training coordinators** based on existing best practice from the Outlander and Screen Nets programmes.
3. The lack of integration of below the line training with existing educational providers should be addressed with initiatives such as a graduate fair or a **careers event for students on dedicated film production programmes.**
4. The significant investment in the **NFTS Scotland hub needs rigorous review.** The return on this level of investment is difficult to evidence and for a private provider of film production skills offering training at a fee level well above the existing educational providers runs the risk of further embedding an inequity of opportunity within Scottish society and the wider film ecosystem. The low level of Screen Scotland bursary uptake and the profile of those that have received bursaries, suggests that the NFTS Scotland hub does not currently play an integral role in either the below or above the line Scottish talent pipeline. Recent more targeted initiatives such as studio camera and virtual production training are to be welcomed.
5. The expanded offer of the Little Pictures scheme should be welcomed as a stepping stone between graduation and the fully funded talent schemes of Bridging the Gap (documentary) and Sharp Shorts (drama and animation), however, the **lack of a feature film production scheme is a significant absence** in terms of a skills escalator and should be addressed.
6. **Data should be gathered by both below and above the line training providers on the previous educational attainment of participants to allow for future assessments and mapping of educational and training pathways.**

Impact of a Film School: The establishment of a film school that adopts a specialist pedagogical model, would positively impact upon the existing below the line skills training pipeline.

It would do this mainly by offering a very clear point of below the line specialist film skills attainment, that currently does not exist in Scotland. Much as with the formal educational sector, training providers would be able to amend their training offer with a view to providing freelancers and emerging film crew the experience and skills necessary to build a portfolio required to apply to film school.

The potential negative impact might be that the training providers fail to adapt to this structural change, however, recent proposals from Screen Scotland to create a National Production Skills Centre suggest a recognition of the need for a new structure that more clearly supports school and college leavers as they seek entry into the screen industry. Such a national centre could help overcome the confusing array of multiple schemes currently on offer and hopefully act as a more accessible and targeted one stop shop or portal for new and emerging below the line film professionals.

The establishment of a film school that adopts a specialist pedagogical model, would positively impact upon the existing above the line skills training pipeline in so far as it would extend both the opportunities for emerging talent to produce short form films and increase the talent pool of industry ready writers, directors and producers.

The potential negative impact might be that without the creation of a feature film production talent scheme, Scotland would suffer from an even larger bottleneck of emerging talent that would not have a route of progression beyond short film production. This impact could of course be easily overcome with the creation of such a scheme and links into HETV would also significantly ameliorate any such blockage.

For the informal skills sector, represented mainly by the Film Access Network (FAN), much as with the formal educational and independent training provider pipelines, would also benefit from the establishment of a film school that adopts a specialist pedagogical model. It would provide both an aspirational end point on the skills escalator and a clear rationale for young people to choose specialist routes within the existing pedagogical offer based on an improved understanding of how such skills lead to employment within the Scottish film industry.

