

Course Outline: MA Film Marketing

The one-year MA Film Marketing programme introduces students to all aspects of B2B and B2C marketing strategies for the film industry - from key art design and promotional trailers to media, publicity and social media plans. Across five modules of study, the MA Film Marketing explores the planning and execution of effective marketing campaigns for film distribution, cinema promotion, and platform release on VoD.

Aspiring film marketers will be immersed in the LFS creative hothouse of student directors, screenwriters, and cinematographers from over 50 nations at Britain's longest established film school. The School is housed in two film studio buildings in Covent Garden, which contain shooting stages, full post-production facilities, and extensive camera and location kit. The course is explicitly industry-facing.

The programme leans firmly into the industry – for expert faculty contribution and mentoring from those based in nearby hubs, and for graduate employment opportunities upon completion; and it leans into the existing LFS creative cohort of writers (MA Screenwriting) and directors (MA Filmmaking) for creative ideas / campaign inspiration and origination / film skills (design, camera, direction) without which no marketing plan ever takes off.

Module 1 Introduction to Marketing in the UK and International Film Industry

The module begins with an introduction to the basic tenets of marketing including segmenting, targeting, positioning, brand, customer value and pricing strategy. It then focuses on the basic architecture of marketing in the film industry and internationally including its evolution. Different marketing models are explored including the differentiation between business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) approaches. Students are introduced to campaign planning and the purpose of marketing, publicity and social media at each stage of the life cycle of a film from development through to distribution. They also look at creative elements and the role of agencies in the promotion of a film.

The importance of a global perspective in marketing is embedded through research and the presentation of a territory analysis project which compares the UK's key marketing strands to those of a key international territory selected by the student. From their own research and growing body of knowledge, students will deliver an analytical essay which compare film marketing in the UK with that of a chosen international territory.

Module 1 – Assessment

An in-depth analysis of marketing strategies and contexts in the UK and in a selected international territory. The analysis will include a description of the industry sector in each territory, its history and current status and the ways in which marketing is used to maximise the value of a film across retail and wholesale environments and across platforms. Who are the key players and companies, how do they work together and/or compete, what is the balance of local to international distribution in enabling a film to find its audiences?

Essay – 100% weighting

Module 2 Research, the Market and the Marketeer

This second module takes a comprehensive look at the main focus of all film marketing to audiences – and how to use data and research to identify and target audiences. Through investigation of data sources and case study examples, students gain an understanding of primary, secondary and tertiary audiences as well as trends in audience behaviour and consumption.

The increasing role of AI in this process will be explored to see how it is bringing value (or otherwise!) to the role of the film marketer. Students explore the skills and attributes of successful marketers. Softer skills – networking and team leadership – are also examined as well as the ways in which diversity and sustainability can be woven into the fabric of marketing campaigns. As part of the development of core pitching skills, students begin training in how to produce and deliver strong presentations, creative story and mood boards, and effective pitch decks for use at boardroom level.

Module 2 – Assessment

A verbal presentation with appropriate supporting materials of a film industry marketing campaign. The presentation to include data and other forms of research and offer analytical insight from the student into the strengths and shortcomings of the campaign and the lessons learnt for future application.

Students will also deliver a case study on an historic or recent film marketing campaign to include a description of the campaign and its strategy, data analysis, materials used in the campaign and descriptions of key players and events. Analysis of the strategies employed including success and failure and lessons to be learned should underpin the re-telling of the campaign itself.

Presentation – 40% weighting

Essay – 60% weighting

Module 3 Distribution and Marketing: the B2B Market for Film

This third module provides insights into past, present and evolving models of film distribution and sales with a particular focus on the consequences for Business to Business (B2B) marketing. Through research and seminars, students examine ‘historic’ industry models and economics of the industry. This looks at: i) global studio distribution; ii) territory-b-territory licensing by independents; iii) and then looks at the transformative impact of platform technologies in the fifteen-year period leading up to ‘peak streamer’ in 2021/22 (and the ensuing crisis of 2023).

Using case studies, we compare the value chain outcomes of the three models (independent, major studio and streamer) and the contrasting functions of marketing within each. Students are also introduced to the costs of marketing campaigns leading up to a film’s release and the profile of costs against revenue generated from each of the three (very different) business models.

This module concludes with a detailed company analysis and its presentation. The analysis covers a company from one of the three types above, students are expected to assess the company and its commercial history; its products and their aesthetic; and its place within the wider trade ecosystem /marketing niche to which it belongs. The associated presentation involves skills and judgements that are applicable not only to the screen industry sector but to the wider marketing industry

Module 3 – Assessment

Students will demonstrate and embed their learnings from this module through a boardroom type presentation of a company analysis of their choosing from a film distribution sector: studio, independent or streamer. The presentation will be to the cohort, tutors and an external industry advisor.

Students will also deliver an analysis of a company working in one of the three sectors under review – studio, independent or streamer. The analysis should cover the company and its commercial history; its products and their aesthetic; and its place within the wider trade ecosystem /marketing niche to which it belongs.

Presentation – 40% weighting

Essay – 60% weighting

Module 4 Marketing to the Consumer: the B2C Market and its Creative Challenge

Following the examination of business-to-business (B2B) marketing models in the previous module, the focus here is on business-to-consumer (B2C) strategies related to film distribution and marketing. These have exploded in the wake of the internet and social media, with opportunities ranging from paid advertising on video channels and conventional ‘media purchase’ display advertising to viral campaigns and paid ad targeting across selected social media platforms. Students are introduced to the key elements: campaign planning; product positioning; messaging and its sequencing / timings / scheduling. They are also introduced to the development with agency personnel of creative assets (artwork, text, trailers and the like) and their execution – all critical in the processes of direct-to-consumer advertising and publicity.

Lastly students will be introduced to the evolving uses, opportunities and challenges, presented by the confluence of social media and AI in marketing. To demonstrate their understanding of the rapid evolution of the film marketing ‘market,’ audience behaviour, and changes to marketing techniques over time, students will produce two pieces of work. The first is a written analysis of the marketing campaign for a film (chosen by the student) released between ten and fifteen years ago; and the second, a pitch deck proposal for the same film as a new release, developing a marketing campaign that would be effective in today’s market. As part of the exercise, students will have an opportunity to collaborate with LFS MA Filmmaking students to produce a sizzle reel or commercial which will be embedded into their pitch deck, to sell their film via a specified publicity channel. In addition, students will include a reflection on the challenges of devising the creative elements within the pitch deck.

Module 4 – Assessment

An analysis of the marketing campaign for a film (chosen by the student) released between ten and fifteen years ago. The analysis should focus on the marketing options available at the time and explore the thinking behind the choices made by the marketers. The essay should include comparable examples and should use correct academic referencing.

Students will also deliver a publicity pitch deck including a sizzle reel or commercial for the same film as the first assignment as if it were a current release, utilising the B2C options explored in this module together with any other appropriate methods and materials. 20 slides including sizzle reel / commercial.

Essay – 60% weighting

Pitch proposal – 40% weighting

Module 5 Film Marketing and the Creative Campaign Proposal

This is the concluding and largest module, drawing together all the strands of the previous modules in one overarching piece of work. This is a dossier that builds an entire campaign life cycle for a film in one coherent and integrated piece of work to be presented verbally and in writing for assessment at the conclusion of the course. Working independently, students will

devise their own film, including definitions of its genre, synopsis, cast, director and audience hooks and targets. From this, they will produce an end-to-end marketing campaign for the film at all stages. The dossier will result from extensive research and will cover options for the distribution of the film across its top five markets (these might vary according to the nationality / language of the film); the costs and revenues associated with that campaign and analysis of audience segments. The presentation and dossier must include key design and creative elements of the campaign including tag lines, concept art, B2B and B2C synopses, and sizzle reels. Students will be provided with a small budget to commission one or two key (and clearly identified) elements within the package from the following list: Concept images or Photography
And either:

B2B and B2C posters or,

B2B and B2C sizzle reels, or

Social Media Assets and Print/Online/Outdoor Adverts.

Students will also be asked to produce a reflective analysis of their learnings from the commissioning process, verbally as part of the live panel presentation and in writing as part of the final dossier. This module is set to coincide with days 1-5 of the Cannes Film Festival (during which the main film market takes place) students will be encouraged to follow trade publications from their London base, during this time to keep abreast of acquisitions, awards and relevant industry news as it happens. Finally, the module also aims to prepare and support students in their employability and steps to enter the industry following graduation, encouraging them to design a career plan including CV writing, and target employer listings.

Module 5 – Assessment

A written dossier that builds an entire campaign life cycle for one film. The dossier must include:

- A description of the distribution of the film across the top five markets (these may vary according to the nationality/language of the film)
- A summary of the costs and revenues associated with that campaign
- An analysis of comparable titles and their positioning in the marketplace
- Key design and creative elements of the campaign including tag lines, concept art, sizzle reel
- B2B and B2C synopses
- A written reflection on the assumptions and creative choices that underpin the material in their dossier

Students also make a verbal presentation of their film marketing campaign to an industry panel to include their thinking behind the concept and their proposed marketing materials. The presentation will also describe the five markets that they are highlighting in their written dossier and the thinking behind their proposed campaign strategy in each market.

Dossier – 80%

Presentation – 20%

Students will benefit from the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate in-depth specialist knowledge of techniques relevant to the discipline or to demonstrate an advanced understanding of concepts, information and techniques informed by knowledge across, or in aspects at, the forefront of the discipline;
- Exhibit competence in the exercise of generic and subject-specific intellectual abilities;
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of techniques applicable to their own research, advanced scholarship or area of specific interest within the broader discipline;

- Take a proactive and self-reflective role in working and to develop professional relationships with others;
- Proactively to formulate ideas and hypotheses and to evaluate these;
- Evaluate current issues and research in the discipline.

After completing the course students will have had the opportunity to acquire the following abilities:

- Professional, including presentation, skills necessary to undertake a higher research degree and/or for employment in a higher capacity in the film industry area of professional practice;
- Critically evaluate their own achievement and that of others;
- Be able to independently and collaboratively solve problems and plan complex production projects independently and collaboratively in unpredictable industry situations;
- Independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development;
- Critically to engage in the development of professional/disciplinary boundaries and norms
- Demonstrate the ability to apply breadth and depth of professional knowledge to a complex creative campaign;
- Draw on a range of perspectives on a film campaign life cycle;
- Evaluate received opinion;
- Make sound judgements whilst understanding the limitations on judgements made in the absence of complete data.