

Course outline: Diploma in Assistant Camera (Focus Pulling and Loading)

There are three modules in the year, of six to eight weeks each. Each one starts three weeks before one of the three major films that are made by the MA students at the School. Students enrolling in the course are allowed to complete the three modules over a two-year period, although we encourage you to complete in one year if possible.

By the end of the course you will have evidence of work and skills in:

- Being a Trainee - part of a camera team
- 2nd A/C work - film and digital
- 1st A/C work - depending on progress

Course Elements

The course consists of a logical progression of classes, practical workshops and modules, taught and overseen by industry professionals run over three terms starting in January each year. Teaching sessions usually takes place during Monday to Friday from 9.30am until 5.30pm.

Knowledge is imparted and experience gained through workshops and production experience.

Please see the sections on Assessment Criteria and Assessment and Final Classification below for more information on how you will be assessed throughout the course.

Core workshops taught to all students

- 16mm Camera
- 35mm Camera
- Alexa Digital Camera Familiarisation
- H&S Training
- First Aid Course
- Assisting and Focus Pulling

Induction & Introduction to Assistant Camera (Focus Pulling & Loading) - Term 1

Modules

Module 1

This provides a complete “back to basics” approach to both film and digital equipment. The course leader will take you through all you need to know from unpacking equipment to maintaining and returning it in the same condition you found it.

During the three-week introduction period, you will be both classroom and location based, and there will opportunities to work with actors and block scenes, as well as shoot them. The Course Leader will continually assess your skills, and by Week Four will have chosen teams for the “Digi Fiction” shoots which are directed and shot by 2nd Year students on the Alexa Mini cameras. During the remaining five shoots in this series, you will be led by a professional 1st A/C as a way of providing continuous training.

Module 2

After a 10-week break, you will return to the School for a three-week prep period for Summer Fiction Film (SFF). These are longer shoots, again with the 2nd Year MA students, and may shoot on digital or 16mm or 35mm film. Prior to the shoots, you will be continuing with your training in both handling a further range of equipment and lenses, as well as further opportunity to practice your focus skills - for students who are deemed fit to take on this important role.

Those not acting as 1st A/C's on the shoots will be 2nd A/Cs - again under continual assessment from the Course Leader. Some shoots may be led by professional 1st A/Cs.

Module 3

After a further four-week break, you then prepare for the “FYF” (First Year Film) shoots, which are directed and shot by 1st Year students. These shoots are all on 16mm, which is a fitting finale to the course as 16mm is the most exacting format to work with, both from a focus point of view, and also the care and accuracy needed in the testing and preparation of the equipment.

By this point we would hope that some of the students on the course are now in a position to successfully carry out the role of 1st A/C.

However, it is likely the most students graduating from this course will be accepted in either trainee or 2nd A/C roles in larger productions, but will be more than qualified to fulfil any camera department role on small shoots.