ScreenSkills

The ScreenSkills Tick: Application Guidelines and Accreditation Criteria

Guidelines for courses 2018-19

This document is designed to provide guidance for courses who will be applying for accreditation or re-accreditation during the academic year 2018/19. It gives information on the criteria, application and assessment process, the timelines and the people involved.

For help at any point please contact tick@screenskills.com where you will be put in touch with a member of the Tick team.

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Please use these guidelines in conjunction with the **Tick Application Form**.

1. Background

ScreenSkills

ScreenSkills leads the UK Creative industries' skills and talent drive, improving productivity, innovation and competitiveness to achieve a world-leading UK screen sector.

As part of our remit we work with further and higher education courses that supply talent to the screen industries. ScreenSkills' course accreditation scheme, managed by ScreenSkills on behalf of employers, is devised in consultation with industry and education and recognises courses within the UK that provide exceptional standards of industry relevant training. Each accredited course undergoes a rigorous assessment by industry professionals in order to be awarded the ScreenSkills Tick - a quality mark indicating the courses best suited to prepare new entrants for a career in the Creative industries.

History and aims of the Tick

The Tick was set up in higher education for animation, games and screenwriting in 2005. Between 2012 and 2015 ScreenSkills expanded the Tick across a wider range of sectors. There are currently over 200 ticked courses across the UK. Subject areas cover film, television, media production and technology, animation, games, VFX and digital design. Since 2005 we have assessed over 400 HE, FE and Apprenticeships for the Tick and engaged over 500 employers in the process.

The aims of the Tick are to:

- Signpost prospective students to the courses that will provide them with industry-relevant skills, and good links with those working in the industry and potential employers.

- Assure employers that students graduating from accredited courses have the levels of knowledge and skills they are seeking from new employees, and can perform to the standard they expect.

- Enable employers to prioritise recruitment and engagement activities on courses that have been identified as having an industry-facing ethos.

The headlines of the Tick criteria are courses that demonstrate a particular focus on:

- Graduate employment rates
- High standards of student work
- A focus on professional preparation of students including team work, soft skills and business skills
- Relationships with employers
- An industry focus of the curriculum and its delivery

Reviewing the Tick

The creative industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy (8.9% growth per year) and with the continued disruption of digital technologies, convergence and globalisation, it has never been more important for training providers and higher education to provide the talent and skills the industry needs to continue to grow and thrive. Given all of these changes, we knew that we needed to review the Tick to make it sustainable for the future and to ensure the brand remains synonymous with job readiness.

In 2016 the industrial, political and economic context in which ScreenSkills and the Tick operated underwent significant changes:

- Government subsidy for skills development was at an end and the main focus of support focussed on apprenticeship development and provision

- In addition, tuition fees, the Teaching Excellence Framework and an increasing student focus on value for money, meant student employability became a greater priority.

As a result ScreenSkills consulted with industry and higher education providers on the purposes and value of the Tick. Building on the feedback from this review, we devised a new Tick process which we hope retains its value and streamlines its processes. The headlines of the process are that:

- In the application and assessment there is less of a focus on inputs (curriculum, course content) and an increased focus on the outcomes of courses – particularly those related to employability i.e. graduate employment rates, student work and evidence of students' professional preparedness.

- We have streamlined the application to have less reliance on supporting documents. The main evidence required is requested in the body of the application form.

- The establishement of new Tick Industry Panels in each of the sector areas, directly involved in assessing courses for the Tick – increasing high level industry engagement and ownership of the Tick course network.

- Both a written application and a course leader presentation to the Tick Industry Panel will be required and will form the complete process – without the requirement for an accreditation visit.

2. The Accreditation Process

Eligibility
The headline eligibility criteria are:

- Already in operation and have produced one cohort of graduates, with evidence available to demonstrate that a good proportion of them have either progressed to Masters level and/ or gained employment in the creative industries.

- Industry practice-centred with strong input and relevance to the creative industries.

Accreditation Process
Timelines to be agreed following Expression of Interest.

Application Form Submitted Course submits application form and accompanying materials – initial non-refundable fee of £605.
Assessment Stage 1 – Desk Based Industry and quality evaluators assess the application, supporting evidence and graduate employment/student work, and feedback via a Stage 1 report. Unsuccessful courses are offered feedback and advice on course development. Successful courses are provided with feedback regarding what they need to present at the next stage - the Tick Industry Panel presentation – fee is due of £2,394.

Student Questionnaires
Industry and Quality Evaluators will devise and send a confidential questionnaire to go to all students from the applicant course. A 60% response rate will be required before progressing to a Tick Industry Panel presentation.

Assessment Stage 2 - Tick Industry Panel presentation
An industry panel made up of senior representatives from the relevant sector meet to hear presentations from course leaders and 3 or 4 student representatives from each course. Before hearing the course leader presentation the panel will receive summary feedback from the Industry evaluator on the written application and the results from the student survey. Presentations from course leaders will cover areas arising from Stage 1 as well as information on facilities and industry input in to the course. Presentations from students will include information on project work and how they follow the creative process criteria. Further examples of student work should also be provided. The industry Panel will prepare an accreditation report with an accreditation decision which will then be communicated to the course.

4 year Accreditation cycle and annual monitoring
Courses enter a 4 year accreditation cycle with annual monitoring requested mid academic year. Annual monitoring requires courses to report any major staffing, resource or curriculum changes as well as providing graduate employment information, updates on course development plans and industry input and engagement. At the end of the 4 year cycle the process is repeated and courses apply for re-accreditation.

Application Form and Supporting evidence

As outlined above, at the application stage, courses are asked to submit an application form along with some supporting evidence. The Tick application process requires less supporting evidence and places more emphasis on information contained within the application form.

The application form should be self-explanatory but please contact ScreenSkills at any point for advice and guidance if unsure. It requires narrative answers against the employer engagement criteria below and tabled information on graduate employment rates, work experience, staff experience, staff/student ratios, lists of industry input as well as cohort profiles (application/ enrolment/retention numbers and diversity information).

The list of supporting evidence below consists of all of the additional mandatory information that we need in addition to the application form. In exceptional circumstances additional pieces of information can be submitted by the applicant course but these should be discussed with ScreenSkills in advance.

Supporting Evidence
Course Content and Structure:

- Course structure diagram clearly defining progression routes from year to year.

Course Monitoring and Development:

- External examiners' reports from the past two years

- Examples of feedback from students

Industry Engagement:

- Information relating to live briefs

Facilities and Equipment:

- An outline of relevant facilities

- A list of relevant equipment, with quantities

- Details of technical and/or IT support and student access to facilities and equipment

Student Work:

- Eight or more recent pieces of individual student work from their final major projects, along with feedback and assessment information for each (for undergraduate courses this should be work from the final year, and for postgraduate courses from the final term/semester). The range should include work assessed as top, average and borderline fail.

- Eight or more recent pieces of individual student work from their interim projects, along with feedback and assessment information for each. For undergraduate courses, this should be work from the second year (third year for four year courses). For postgraduate courses, this should be from the middle term/semester. The range should include work assessed as top, average and borderline fail.

- Eight or more recent samples of industry-facing work showcasing the best student talent from the course, such as show reels, exhibitions/showcase, etc.

For those courses that produce actual artefacts (e.g. fashion courses, set design, graphic design etc.) – only digital images/videos should be provided to support the application at the first stage. A sample of actual artefacts should then presented to the Industry panel. For courses submitting games or digital student work, the application form requires you to detail any specialist software evaluators will need in order to view the material (e.g. engines, 3D models, specialist video).

Submission format

We require an electronic copy of your application and supporting materials:

- Preferred submission format – file sharing via Dropbox (other file sharing/transfer sites will be accepted)

- USB Stick/External hard drive (please note we are not able to return these)

- Email (under 10Mb). Please follow up with email with no attachments in case it is mistakenly in Quarantine/Junk folder

- Maximum 10Gb for all files

The application must clearly reference the provided evidence. ScreenSkills may reject any applications which do not comply with the submission recommendations, in which case it will need to be returned to the applicant un-assessed for re-formatting and referencing.

General Privacy Policy

ScreenSkills (*or any successor in title)* ('we', 'us', 'our') is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. For the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and any subsequent UK legislation covering data protection the Data Controller is ScreenSkills (our Information Commissioner's Office registration number is **Z8941934**)

This Policy covers ScreenSkills in relation to the collection and use of the information you give us. It sets out why we collect personal information and how we use that information. It explains the legal basis for this and the rights you have over the way your information is used.

We may change this Policy from time to time. If we make any significant changes we will advertise this on the website. Please check this Policy occasionally to make sure you are happy with any changes: https://www.screenskills.com/about-us/privacy-policy/

If you have any questions about this Policy or concerning your personal information please contact ScreenSkills, Data Protection Officer(s) at: data.protection@screenskills.com, or by post to Data Protection Officer, ScreenSkills, 94 Euston Street, London, NW1 2HA.

3. Accreditation Criteria

The ScreenSkills criteria outline the standards of excellence required by employers to produce confident, highly skilled and creative students with the appropriate knowledge and skills, who are reflective practitioners, with entrepreneurial flair and leadership skills, aware of ethical, legal and compliance issues, and a sense of responsibility to those who use and consume their products. The criteria define the outcomes of course design, curriculum and delivery that will meet these challenges and needs. The criteria are divided in to two sections:

- The industry focus and employer engagement criteria. These are assessed at each stage of the process.

- The Creative Process criteria. These are assessed, normally through a student presentation of work, at the Stage 2 Industry panel.

Industry Focus and Employer Engagement Criteria

The following criteria are designed to enable courses to demonstrate how they have a specific focus towards:

- Current industry practice

- Professional preparation for students

- Significant involvement of industry in course design, curriculum and delivery

The application form will guide you through each section of the criteria, and provide you with guidance on how to provide evidence that your course meets them.

A. **Graduate Achievement – Initial criteria check**

Criterion: Provide evidence of successful progression of students into the creative industries.

Information should be provided on where at least 60% of graduates from the past 1 year, preferably 3, are employed

Of these, a good proportion of graduates should be employed in roles relevant to their degree or in creative/transferable roles in other industries, with evidence of progression towards senior roles after a few years

A proportion of current students and/or graduates should be achieving festival awards, industry and professional accolades, reviews, promotions or newsworthy achievements

Postgraduate courses should enable students to specialise in the field above the level expected from undergraduate students and gain in-depth knowledge and experience of their field at a professional level. Graduates from postgraduate courses should progress to senior levels in their career more quickly than their undergraduate counterparts.

B. **Student Work**

Criterion: Demonstrate that student work produced on the course is appropriate for the level of the course and the discipline.

- Student work should reflect current industry practices where appropriate, but creativity, innovation and challenges to current practice should also be encouraged

- Assessment standards should take into account degrees of industry readiness appropriate to the stage of the course, the requirements for access to appropriate further training and career development

- Graduate level work should be judged according to entry requirements for the chosen industry/sector

C. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Criterion: Demonstrate effective and fair recruitment and selection procedures for students from diverse backgrounds who wish to embark upon or further develop careers in the creative industries.

- Effective procedures should be in place to identify those applicants who are innovative, creative and who have the potential to establish careers in the creative industries

- Proactive recruitment practices should be in place to encourage wider access and diversity

- Pre-course information should clearly outline what students can expect during the course and should emphasise its vocational purposes

- Teaching staff should be able to filter and refuse places to applicants that they judge unable to complete the course successfully. All shortlisted students should be interviewed, either face-to-face or by telephone and/or provide portfolios or equivalent where appropriate

D. Close links and interaction with the creative industries

Criterion: Demonstrate close links and interaction with the creative industries

- Curriculum design should have regular input from the industry including where appropriate:
  - industry advisory board
  - consultation with industry professionals on course design
  - industry assessment of student work and providing feedback to students
  - external examiners with professional backgrounds

- Appropriate visiting and guest industry lecturers should be regularly scheduled

- Students should have access to relevant industry experience via work experience/work placements/internships

- Students should have the opportunity to take part in live briefs, work simulation and project work. However live briefs and project work should not undermine commercial business opportunities.

E. Staff Industry Backgrounds and Professional Development

Criterion: Ensure that all practice staff have credibility as practitioners and are up to date with contemporary industry practices.

- All practice staff should demonstrate a suitable background in professional practice in the relevant industry sector/s

- Clear procedures should be in place to ensure that all production staff are required to regularly refresh their industry practice. This may include
  - dispensation to deliver commissions or work
  - placements with appropriate companies, etc
  - development should not be restricted to attending courses or conferences

- Senior management should have systems in place to keep track of staff professional development and ensure all staff have sufficient time and are enabled to put the above in to practice

F. Professionally Relevant Education and Business Skills

Criterion: Provide a track record in high quality education relevant to the creative industries.

- Students should be provided with an overview of the structure of the Creative industries and the sector(s) relevant to the programme, including job roles, key current issues, further training, employment or career development, including freelance work.

- Professional preparation should be an embedded part of the course and should provide students with the financial, legal and business skills to further their career upon graduation, with an emphasis on freelance employment if appropriate for the discipline.

- Methods should be in place to develop students in the soft skills required of a successful industry professional, such as

  - team working

  - personal development planning

  - competitive pitching and presenting

- Courses should show how students and graduates develop their entrepreneurial skills within their chosen field(s), for example through specialist mentors and incubator units.

- Students should develop appropriate skills to promote and showcase their work and to market their skills after graduation. Students should be aware of current industry issues and developments relevant to their sector, including

  - sector priorities

  - business environment for sector

  - IP

  - technological divergence and convergence and impact of digital networks

G. Professional Resources

Criterion: Have resources which will enable students to practise their skills in environments which reflect creative industry practice.

- Sufficient dedicated access to professional facilities and resources that replicate current industry practice

- Students should have sufficient out of course workshop hours access to facilities and equipment

- Sufficient dedicated access to supervision and technical support should be available to all students

Creative Process Criteria

These criteria are assessed at the second stage industry panel presentation. Generally a student presentation of a project or piece of work will be the most suitable means of demonstrating how the course meets these criteria.

The criteria looks to assess how far your course is industry practice-based, if it is concerned with the production of a tangible or intangible artefact, and if the outputs at each stage of the creative

process (from the original idea or brief, through preparation, making and finally to dissemination, and, increasingly, on to selling the product) are of a high quality.

Different industries have different terminologies to describe these stages, but their absence should not read as privileging certain sectors over others.

NB: Not all creative projects will result in actual dissemination/adoption/exhibition, but students should be aware of Stages 6 and 7 and what would be required.

Stage One – The Quality of the Brief
In a learning environment this can be a given, sometimes self-generated, brief, commission, order, exercise or specification. It should be part of any assessment of a course.

- Is it designed to incite quality from the learner?

- Does it reflect industry standards and expectations, or move a student towards such engagement?

- Is it presented in a timely way to allow exploration?

- Are resources in place? Is it practical?

- Are limitations and specifications clear? Will it lead to practical experience?

- Is it crafted to maximise student learning and investigation?

An industry-quality brief should always be limited in terms of time, resources, or skills level to be successful for the learner. An ill-defined brief can limit growth and mean the student is diverted away from quality learning.

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of briefs across your course, a narrative from tutors, evidence that format/structure simulates industry, and incremental complexity/challenge as course progresses.

Stage Two: The Quality of the Idea in Response
This concerns the quality of ideas and how restrictions and circumstances have been accommodated. There should be an emphasis on abundance, and the ability to generate many ideas and dispassionately cull.

- How do learners filter samples and select the best ideas that will lead to quality ideas going forward?

- How is the idea captured (sketchbook/blog/presentation)?

- Is it coherent?

- How well does it fulfil the brief?

- Does it address, if required, innovation and novelty?

- Does it survive peer inspection/interrogation? Often, it is vital to persuade others to engage with an idea; this stage therefore includes the quality of internal pitches, wording of adverts or requests, and resulting negotiation.

- What qualities does the student display?

- How are students trained or enabled to behave according to norms of the industry?

- How is the student's foresight in evidence?

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of logbooks, records or pitches, schedule of workshops, a tutor's narrative, etc.

Stage Three: The Quality of Pre-Production
This stage sees the filtered yet intangible idea being visualised or rehearsed.

- How effectively are resources gathered by the learner?

- How prepared has the course made the learner in the formalities and procedures of their subject with regard to pre-production?

- How are current practices and formula used?

- How effectively is the idea communicated?

- How is the idea visualised, concretised or rehearsed, so all can share and there is a minimum of ambiguity?

- How robust is the line of sight to the brief and demands of sponsors/commissioners?

- How high is confidence in the ability to carry out the project?

- Of what quality are the artefacts and outputs such as script, storyboard, spec sheet, pattern, diagram, list, maquette, initial workshops, etc.?

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of storyboards, drawings, plans, maquettes, etc.

Stage 4: The Quality of the Production
This represents the move from preparation to the making. It is here that the artefact is created – the game, magazine, film, graphic sequence, fashion accessory.

- How well are the processes of production communicated to the learner?

- How well is the unexpected negotiated by the learner?

- How well are schedules maintained, within reason?

- Attention to detail?

- Management of team and project?

- How robust is the line of sight to the brief, idea and demands of sponsors/commissioners?

- How well does the product fit the expectations of the brief?

- Is it complete and on schedule? If not, has the learner displayed tactical modifications?

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of artefacts produced.

Stage Five: The Quality of Reflection and Analysis
This is not usually part of an industry process, but in the learning environment is essential. It happens through the creative process, but is of prime importance at this point, once the learner has seen their idea manifest as product.

- How good is the quality of the learner's self-assessment and consideration of their journey thus far?

- How does the course enable space and incentive for this to happen?

- How is such activity stored for wider use within teaching, if allowed?

- How near is the product created to an industry-made artefact?

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of viva voces, essays, crit recording, etc.

Stage Six: The Quality of Dissemination (where appropriate to course)

One of the repercussions of the changes we referred to earlier, is that today's creator may be the same person who publishes, transmits, broadcasts or advertises the artefact. In previous decades, their relationship to the product would have ended with its materialisation. Here, when relevant, we want to award courses that embrace the creator's extended role in ensuring the product 'leaves the lab'. The creator (or on some courses someone else) sends the artefact into the world. It might be a poem being sent to a magazine, a logo given to the client, a documentary entered into a competition, an iPhone game uploaded, a skirt hung in a shop. It is connecting the product with an audience, giving it the potential to find a buyer, an opinion former, or a commercial entity. This stage can be evidenced by astute research into industry and markets. It could also be typified by the learner identifying the market, even if there is no intention to release the product.

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of research into issues around dissemination: market research, identification of buyers, awareness of audience. We realise that, traditionally, the creator is not the distributor, but with digital disintermediation from publishers, gatekeepers, etc. we want to encourage creators to factor the end-user into their creative process and articulate how they might reach them. This does not mean getting skirts into the NEXT shop window, or games onto XBOX, but the course should demonstrate students have factored and articulated how their product might successfully be distributed.

Final Stage Seven: Evidence of Adoption/Exhibition

Proof of the success of an industry-facing course is that artefacts created are of sufficient quality to fit on a retail shelf/TV schedule/smartphone. This is the stage where the product meets an audience/user/player/client, is used and accepted. It might be a poem that gets published, a logo design used on a shop front, an iPhone app played online, a skirt being worn, or the exhibiting of the artefact. In an accreditation system, we should ensure that the learner's knowledge and attributes are tested by this practice. User adoption is the proof that the leaner has gained significant industry skills.

Of course, it is not practical for every learner to get their product into market places, which are often a challenge for those already working in the industries themselves, so this stage might be replaced by simulation, exhibition, sampling audience response, or advocacy from industry spokespeople themselves. Someone other than the learner and the tutor needs to sample and approve the quality of the artefact.

Examples of what you may want to present: Samples of industry approval of artefact created on the course, or other evidence of quality such as awards, festivals, commendations etc.

4. Next Steps

Once you've read these guidelines, in conjunction with the application form, please contact ScreenSkills with any questions and to talk through your own individual application.

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