There is no one path to becoming a successful director. Film school serves as a place where you can be surrounded by other filmmakers and be supported in the learning process of filmmaking. The Brooklyn College Film Department has put together some resources to help guide new directors toward success as a working director.

**EDUCATION**

Consider continuing film school and applying to MFA programs. There are advantages and the only real disadvantage is cost.

- What’s the cost per year?
  - Can you get loans?
  - A Scholarship?
  - Grants?
- How many years?
  - 4? 2?
- In which year will you be able to take film focused courses?
- Do you have a lot of general education courses?
- Do you need to take the GRE/SATs?
- What else does the application involve?
- Are the professors accomplished?
- What are their credits?
- Do they keep office hours?
- Do they have Hollywood connections?

**DIRECTING**

- Are their alumni flourishing?
- Are they working inside the industry
- What’s the class size?
- Do you have one-on-one time with the professors?
- What courses are offered?
- Directing?
- Shorts?
- Features?
- Specific Genres?
- Writing?
- Features?
- Shorts?
- TV?
- Editing?
- Avid / Final Cut?
- Path to professional certification?
- Animation?
- Production?
- What do you make and when?
- What kind of equipment is available to students?

**Do they continue to update their filmmaking equipment?**

- What are their plans for the years you attend?
- Do they have an internship program?
- Are they in Los Angeles or New York? Or an International equivalent where production happens?
- How do they place alumni in jobs?
- Do you make a Graduate Film / Senior film?
- What’s the average budget?
- Do they give grants?
- Do you have to raise your own money?
- Will you need a job while you’re a student?
- Do they offer grants for that?
- Teacher Assistant Positions?
- How will this school get you where you want to be?
- Will this degree get you connections?
- Will you be able to get a job?
DIRECTOR PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS
There are many workshops and programs for directors, producers, and screenwriters. Some are international big names and some are smaller locally run. As with film festivals, the larger workshops offer more prestige and more competition.

Many of the programs also offer sources or connections to funding.

The Brooklyn College Film Department is compiling a list of Director Programs here, but you can also do your own research.

FUNDING
The screenwriting resource is also a place to check festivals and competitions for filmmaking funds.

Filmmakers often use grants to fund their films. Studio Binder has compiled The Ultimate Film Grants List for Every Filmmaker in 2020.

Research your other options for funding. Revisit your notes from business of film, producing, or other courses where independent film funding was covered.

CONSIDER OTHER WORK IN THE FILM INDUSTRY
There are many positions in the film industry that can provide valuable experience, connections, and pay. Be open to other opportunities.

Use your connections made in film school, social media, and other avenues to find work.

OTHER BROOKLYN COLLEGE RESOURCES
- BC Infohub
- Subscribe to the BC Film Department Newsletter
- Magner Career Center
- Screenwriting Database
- TV & Film Resources
- Brooklyn College Film Department Internship Page
- NYC Camera Assistants
- Production Junction
- NYC Film Crew Calls
- Local Zero Heroes New York
- NYC Filmmakers Group
- NYC TV & Film Production FB Community
- EntertainmentCareers.net
- mandy.com
- Contact Us: Film@brooklyn.cuny.edu
SUBMITTING TO FILM FESTIVALS

No one can know how great of a director you are if you don’t show them. Film festivals are where many directors get their first break and recognition.

There are many festivals and they are not all equal. You must research the festival circuit to find the ones that best fit your film or project. Below are some questions to ask when building your own festival plan.

‣ Map out submission and festival dates to avoid conflicting submissions. Some festivals do not allow previously screened work, some do.

‣ Film Festival Database is a great tool for building a festival submission plan.

‣ What type of film are you submitting? What films have done well or won awards at the festival? There are many festivals for short films, documentaries, niche interests, identities, genres, and more. Your film may fit better in certain festivals.

‣ Do you have any connections to the festival staff? If you’ve met someone through a class you’ve taken or at a networking event, contact them when you submit. It doesn’t hurt to get your film to someone who is familiar with you or other works you have made.

‣ Does the festival have other filmmaking programs?

‣ What are the awards or prizes? A festival with more prominent awards offers more validity, but there is also more competition.

‣ What are the festival fees and how much do you have budgeted for them? Tip: Always ask the festival if they waive fees for student projects. Many will say yes.

‣ Consider smaller festivals where you may have a better chance of success.

ATTENDING FILM FESTIVALS

There is much more to a successful premier at a festival than watching films. If you are accepted into a film festival you have to prepare several things for your project and make a festival business plan and schedule.

‣ Research what the festival is like to attend. Do you know anyone who has been to festivals? Talk to them.

‣ Make a schedule of events and screenings you should attend to benefit your career.

‣ There are many different aspects to a festival aside from watching films. Familiarize yourself with the festival from a business perspective and identify events that would be beneficial to your career.

‣ There are many networking opportunities at festivals, many in the form of cocktail parties, make sure you take a professional approach to these events and maximize your networking opportunities. Consider making business cards and make sure to engage with other industry people.

‣ Learn the markets and sidebars. These are places where films are screened and/or sold, often outside of the main festival. Research the festival you are attending and understand all of the possible ways to promote yourself and your film.

‣ Make a great press kit for your film. Press kit examples from Tribeca Film Festival.

‣ Make a pitch deck for your film. Here is an explanation on what a pitch deck is and why you need one.

‣ Look into getting a sales agent if you get into a larger festival. They will help you navigate offers.
DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA (DGA)

The Directors Guild of America is a labor organization that represents the creative and economic rights of directors and members of the directorial team working in film, television, commercials, documentaries, news, sports and new media.

What Does it Take to Join a Motion Picture Guild?

All About Joining the DGA

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE DGA

- Guaranteed minimum compensation and benefits through negotiated collective bargaining agreements
- Health insurance after “requisite minimum earnings” and a pension plan for retirement.
- The guild also negotiates residuals (payments) from television reruns, basic cable exhibition, home video, and digital exploitation.
- Creative rights ensure that directors retain active participation in all aspects of the filmmaking process.
- The right to choose the first AD, to engage with casting decisions, to direct all reshoots, giving directors a specific period of time to develop a first cut without interference
- Legal representation
- Access to educational resources
- Free screenings and events
- Screener films for awards

REQUIREMENTS

- Deal Memo or Commercial Project Listing Form
- Council Application Approval
- Endorsement from Three DGA Members
- DGA Initiation Fees and Quarterly Dues on a sliding scale