

Master of Fine Arts

www.nhia.edu/mfa

WRITING FOR STAGE & SCREEN
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HOW IT WORKS

The two-year program consists of 2 ten-day residencies each year (one summer, one winter) and four semester-long individual mentoring periods between each residency. During these periods, students work on their projects under the supervision of professional writer/mentors drawn from the residency faculty or in certain cases from our pool of outside professional writers (see faculty/mentor listing) as well as with a faculty advisor and other established professionals at the top of their game. The entry level residency can be either in January or July, and the fifth and final residency is designed to highlight/showcase the thesis script by each graduating student. In the course of the two-year program, students engage with both playwriting and either screenwriting or television writing--in consultation with faculty/mentors, students may choose to concentrate primarily on one or more genres.

RESIDENCIES

Each ten-day gathering consists of intensive coursework covering all aspects of the scriptwriting process as well as the study and analysis of master works in both mediums and lectures and workshops by established writers and other working guest artist professionals.

The keystone of all residencies and the centerpiece of the program, however, is the ongoing and extensive collaborative exploration of all students' works-in-progress by a loosely-knit ensemble of professional actors (SAG and AEA) assembled as needed to give initial voice to student scripts. These readings are a critical aspect of the writing process, allowing for the testing and critiquing of student work and are designed to lend each residency a supportive and stimulating workshop/lab environment in which all participants--students, faculty/mentors, and other gathered theatre and film professionals--work together on students' material. This workshop atmosphere is a distinguishing component of the program and what makes it nationally unique--a no-nonsense, hands-on and rigorous testing ground experience where each student and his or her work is embraced and guided by the assembled professionals.

WHERE IT'S HELD

All residencies take place in the historic village of Peterborough, New Hampshire in the heart of New England's culturally rich Mt. Monadnock Region. Located in the foothills of the famous mountain (a favorite haunt of such literary luminaries as Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson), Peterborough was the inspiration for Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* and serves as the secluded hub for the residencies, offering an ideal retreat atmosphere for writers. It is one of the leading small arts communities in America, hosting such revered arts organizations as the MacDowell Colony and the Peterborough Players, the longest-running summer theatre in America. The surrounding countryside is abundant with peaceful and inviting by-ways--hiking trails, rivers, and rolling hills as well as small picturesque villages with boutiques, museums and great dining spots, all a short walk or drive away.



Mt. Monadnock, New Hampshire

MENTORING/ADVISING

The mentoring that takes place between residencies is designed to be one-on-one and personal. A selected professional writer/mentor works with each student, closely guiding the writing process on one or more projects selected during the previous residency. Mentors are drawn from our own resident faculty as well as from a growing list of outside established professionals. Great care is taken in assigning this semester-long pairing with a student, with special emphasis given to selecting a mentor who is a good match. The major project the student has chosen to develop is carefully considered in this process, with the goal being that the student and mentor establish a strong and productive working relationship. The program is designed for students to be assigned a different mentor each of the four semesters, in order to allow for a broad range of perspectives on the creative process, the execution of the craft, and the pros and cons of the professional world of the playwright and screenwriter. In addition, every student is assigned a faculty advisor each semester who stays in touch throughout the term and supplements the student's work with suggested readings, guided research ideas, and academic and professional advice. The Program Director also stays in contact with each enrolled student throughout their two-year program, sharing and supplementing the academic advising component as necessary.



Peterborough, New Hampshire

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