

The Puttnam Scholars Programme 2025

Northern Ireland Screen and **Screen Ireland** have teamed up with **Atticus Education** to offer **four** Northern Ireland residents the opportunity to attend 6 two-hour online masterclasses with **Lord David Puttnam** (producer of *Midnight Express*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Local Hero*, *The Killing Fields*, *The Mission*). A follow-up 'in-person' event for the scholars and industry leaders will take place in Belfast in October 2025.

The masterclasses will be fully interactive and full engagement by each participant is an essential feature of the programme. Having attended the entire programme each individual will receive a scholarship to the value of €1,000, and a bursary to attend the 2026 Berlinale Festival. Travel expenses to the in-person event will also be included where needed.

Those participating in the master classes will enhance their understanding of the creative process, and the cultural context within which the screen industries operate.

Platform & Resources:

The master classes will take place online using Webex and the selected participants will need to provide their own computer or tablet, and broadband connection to take part.

Participants must watch a set-film/TV episode, selected by David Puttnam, ahead of each session. A handbook with learning resources and other required materials will be provided by Atticus Education prior to the commencement of the programme.

Participants must be available for a 'tech check' call with the Atticus Education team some time during the week 16th – 20th June 2025.

Dates: The master classes will run between **1000 hrs** and **1200 hrs** on **23rd June, 26th June, 30th June, 2nd July, 7th July & 9th July 2025.**

Selected participants **MUST** be available for **ALL** the masterclasses

Content: Across the six master classes Lord Puttnam will explore the following themes:

1. **The Power of Identity:** How can film make the personal universal? Using his own experience of growing up with the cinema of the 1950s, Lord Puttnam will encourage participants to consider their own voice; what it is they are trying to say, and how can their experiences and ambitions be best manifested on screen. This session will remind participants of the importance of memory, community, collaboration, and risk-taking, and how all these and more are essential to successful filmmaking.
2. **The Evolution of Creativity:** What is creativity? Is it something we are born with, or can it be developed? Participants will learn how vital it is to be 'creatively resilient' as an artist and as a filmmaker, and how best to cultivate ideas and innovation on the page and on set. The session will also consider the need for creative agility, invention and open-mindedness when career paths diverge, and opportunities open up in unexpected directions.
3. **Fact or Fiction:** What relationship does a filmmaker have with truth? This seminar will consider the fine line that exists between facts and their interpretation – can a film ever be truly objective? How can a real-life event be converted into an 'entertainment property'? What responsibilities does a filmmaker have to the communities and stories they are telling? This session will also look at the increasing global demand for 'fact-based' stories and documentaries; and consider the questions this trend has raised about authenticity, reality and motive in filmmaking. As it becomes increasingly difficult to tell the difference between what is real and what is fake, this seminar will also consider the impact of AI and other emerging technologies on audience trust.
4. **Builders and brokers:** How do filmmakers become dealmakers? This seminar will examine how a filmmaker builds a project from the ground up by brokering deals, negotiating contracts, and working with various partners across the industry. It will also focus on the value of IP – how can a filmmaker develop and protect their IP over the lifetime of a project? Participants will be encouraged to better understand what is involved in the business of getting a film made and distributed, particularly in a world of new media, and consider the broad skillset and networks needed for a creative idea to become a reality.
5. **Music and Meaning:** How do you know what you want your film to sound like? Participants will learn how a filmmaker interacts with music; how music can support the

narrative, and how to go about creating the right score for each individual film, TV series or even video game.

6. **Interpreting the Future & the Global Marketplace:** How is technology changing film making? Participants will enhance their understanding of how ongoing changes across the screen industries in both production and distribution, with a particular emphasis on developments in generative AI (especially text to video) and virtual production. This seminar will explore why it is critical for the creators of content to keep abreast of the evolving global market, and the many opportunities that come with it.

To be eligible to apply candidates **MUST** fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a writer, director, or producer resident in Northern Ireland that has either:
made their first feature (fiction or documentary) or television drama with funding from a broadcaster, distributor, financier, or screen agency in the past three years.

Or

is about to make their first feature (fiction or documentary) or television drama and has that feature (fiction or documentary) or television drama project in active funded development with a broadcaster, distributor, financier, or screen agency.

Priority will be given to candidates who have delivered their first feature or television drama **and** who currently have a second feature or TV drama in active development.

Applications from people from backgrounds that are currently under-represented in the screen sectors, who fulfil the above criteria, are particularly welcome.

Candidates that fit the above criteria should send an email to **chris@northernirelandscreen.co.uk** containing:

- Evidence of how they fulfil the eligibility criteria.
- Confirmation of their availability to attend the masterclasses at the above dates and times.
- Details of how attending the above listed masterclasses will advance their project and their career.
- Biography: One paragraph - 250 words max. (Please note, if selected, this Biography will be included in the participant Welcome Pack.)

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria please do not apply.

Past participants of the Puttnam Scholarship Programme are **not** eligible to apply again.

Applications should be returned to Chris Vaughan at [**chris@northernirelandscreen.co.uk**](mailto:chris@northernirelandscreen.co.uk) by **12 noon on Wednesday 14th May 2025.**