

HONOURS PROJECT HANDBOOK

(2024-2025)

ACADEMY OF FILM

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The honours project is the culmination of your creative and critical training. It must be prepared and executed with the greatest care and effort. While taking FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop, you must choose a track for your honours project:

- 1) Production (fiction or non-fiction film),
- 2) Scriptwriting (a 90 to 120-minute feature-length film screenplay), or
- 3) Thesis (a research paper).

You will need to prepare a proposal and go through a procedure of Honours Project supervisor selection and allocation.

The honours project is not only a product of creativity, technical skills, and critical thinking, but also an exercise of responsibility, discipline, and time/logistical management. Please honor all due dates. You will have plenty of time to complete the projects if you work on them in a serious and well-organized manner.

To guide you through the process of honours project, this handbook includes major information and regulations. Please read them carefully before you begin. Your supervisors will be happy to help in this important endeavour, so don't be shy about seeking advice.

QUALIFICATIONS*

To embark upon your chosen track, you must qualify in different ways.

- Production/Scriptwriting/Thesis:

Completion of FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop.

- Production:

Completion of 4 production courses taken at the home institution.

- Scriptwriting:

Completion of FILM4007 Advanced Scriptwriting at the home institution.

- Thesis:

Completion of FILM4047 Film Theory and Criticism at the home institution.

* All required course(s) need to be taken at home institution. Those who have waived the required course(s) are not qualified to select the related HP track.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

I. Timetable and Deadlines

March	<p>Submission of chosen tracks while taking FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop.</p> <p>Production track students need to indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If they want to do individual or group projects. All projects need to provide working titles, member name(s), and position(s). 2) Types of shooting schedule: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Normal schedule (as this table is based on): Shooting begins in or after December. b) Early schedule Shooting finishes before December. Post-production that uses school facilities should finish four weeks earlier than the normal schedule. Students who failed their HP in the previous year must choose the early schedule. c) Non-fiction schedule Shooting takes a longer period than the above two schedules. Students must give up their time slots in the normal schedule as well as the standard equipment kit for fiction films. A typical non-fiction gear kit for a crew of one to several people will be provided.
April/May	<p>By the end of FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Honours project proposal presentation. 2) Submission of written proposals.
June/July	<p>Lists of available supervisors ready (internal and external).</p> <p>Release of project supervisors.</p> <p>Assignment of supervisors:</p>

	<p>1) Each faculty member will normally supervise no more than 5 projects.</p> <p>2) Students may have no more than 3 supervisor choices.</p>
November	<p>First Week: Last day to apply for switching HP tracks or changing grouping, which is strongly discouraged, and the request might not be considered at all if the change has any negative impact on the arrangements based on students' track selection and grouping, such as the budget, invitation of external supervisors, teaching load of faculty members, scheduling, resources, etc. Strong justification and supervisor's approval are required for the cases that can be considered!</p>
December	<p>First Week: Principal photography of production projects begins (students are not allowed to borrow any equipment from the technical office without approval from their supervisors and any projects without approval won't be graded even if students use their own equipment to finish them)</p>
April/May	<p>Last Week of April and/or First Week of May: Submission due date.</p>
	<p>The Week after Submission: Screening of production projects. Time for grading could vary for different tracks.</p>

The dates are subject to adjustment to meet the University's schedule of grade submission and graduation.

With supervisor approval, students on scriptwriting or thesis track can work on their honours projects while in exchange. However, students in exchange, even just for one semester, are not allowed to choose the production track. Application for special approval will be processed case by case, based on feasibility and fairness.

Notes on equipment approval and postproduction schedule for production track:

- Fiction Projects:

Students must submit a PDF file with the required documents for pre-production and get supervisors' approval 3 working days before the equipment check-out date. Please refer to the Appendix 3 Check List for Getting Equipment Approval for Fiction Films.

Even if you are not using the school equipment, you're required to submit the file, or your project will not be graded.

- Non-fiction Projects:

Written approval from the supervisor is required before students can check out equipment from the Technical Office. Even if you are not using the school equipment, you're required to obtain your supervisor's approval before filming begins, or your project will not be graded.

Students must submit a PDF file of Forms 1 and 2 in Appendix 4, Guideline for FTV Students to Obtain Permission from Subjects of a Non-fiction Project, along with their honours projects before the project submission deadline, or the submission will be regarded as not successful.

- A certain amount of postproduction time will be assigned to each project. Students will have to stop using postproduction facilities when time is up.

II. Proposal

Researching and writing for a project proposal for screen production or studies.

- Production Track :

- 1) Fiction or non-fiction?
- 2) Director's statement: Why do you want to do this project? What is the theme or idea you want to explore?
- 3) Story (for fiction): the main storyline.

Topic (for non-fiction): the subject matter and potential storyline or structure.

- 4) Treatment: tell the complete story in detail as well as in a cinematic way, indicating the method(s) and style(s) you are going to use.

▪ Scriptwriting Track (8 – 10 pages):

1) Synopsis: 200 words

2) Story outline: 1000 words

- ❖ An extended, detailed description of the project, including a rough structure of the actual screenplay

3) Value and significance

- ❖ The significance of the story
- ❖ Expected response from readers or production companies
- ❖ Commercial, educational, artistic value?

4) Sample scene breakdown

- ❖ Provide a sample scenario, i.e., time, place, action, dialogue, and an overall setup

5) Work schedule

- ❖ Number of days involved in researching
- ❖ Number of days involved in constructing the structure
- ❖ Number of days involved in drafting, revising, and finalizing the screenplay

▪ Thesis Track (10 – 12 pages):

Develop a research question related to film and television studies. Conduct research on that question and prepare the research prospectus.

1) Cover Page

2) One page abstract

- ❖ Briefly summarize the nature of your study, what the research is about, its objective(s), and the methodology employed

3) Research problem

- ❖ What is the problem, issue, or critical focus to be researched?
- ❖ Any important terms to be defined?
- ❖ What is the significance of the problem?

4) Literature review

- ❖ What does previous research reveal about the different aspects of the problem?
- ❖ What research questions or hypotheses have emerged from the literature review? You may establish the significance of your topic by arguing that the research fills a gap in the literature or provides the possibility for fruitful exploration.

Tips for writing a good literature review

- Cohesive not choppy (Organized by topical order/chronological order/problem-cause-solution order etc)
- The reader should see how the research helps clarify a specific aspect of the problem.

5) Method

- ❖ What is the theoretical or analytical framework for the investigation?
- ❖ What will be used to conduct the research?
- ❖ What are the limitations of this methodology? What sources of bias will exist? How will they be controlled?

6) Chapter outline

7) Working bibliography and filmography/videography

- ❖ Reference list of secondary sources (15-20 entries of scholarly and critical relevance) and a list of primary sources (e.g. films) useful for the investigation
- ❖ Use either *The MLA Handbook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (consult your supervisor for reference)

8) Work schedule

Possible types of film criticism for your research project (John E. Moscovitz, 2000)

- Cinematic technique/Cinematic element-driven critique
- The idea/topic-driven critique
- The character/actor/auteur-driven critique
- The movie-to-movie comparative analysis

III. Submission

- Due: **Last Week of April and/or First Week of May**
- Late Policy: If you submit your project after the deadline on the submission day, the final grade of your honours project will be marked down by one sub-grade (e.g., from A to A-); projects that are submitted after the submission day will be marked down by one letter grade (e.g., from A to B) per day, non-working days included. Please note that after being marked down by one letter grade, both B- and C+ will become a C-, and a C- will become a D, as D+ and D- don't exist in the GPA system. For the same reason, after being marked down by one sub-grade, a C- will become a D, and a D will become an F. For example, if the submission day is a Friday, a B project submitted on or after the Monday that follows will receive an F grade.
- Your work must comply with the following regulations to be accepted.
- Production Track:
 - 1) Length of the finished project:

❖ Production project (group or individual): 15-30 minutes (+/-10%)

Projects exceeding the maximum length will not be screened or graded.

- 2) English and Traditional Chinese subtitles are compulsory.
- 3) A synopsis with no more than 500 words in both Chinese and English.
- 4) A signed Declaration of Copyright Responsibility. Please refer to Appendix 5.
- 5) Ten selected production stills must be sent to the Technical Office at the time of submission.
- 6) Credits: for official honours project screenings, opening, closing credits and acknowledgements to the supervisor and all the other teaching and technical staff members must be inserted at the end of your project, including the HKBU logo. A standardized version will be sent to students via email. However, for any other screenings, offline or online, without AF's approval, you CANNOT use any of the above in your credits. So you're advised to have two versions of your film, with two different sets of credits. Please refer to AF's copyright policy.
- 7) Submission to the Technical Office.
- 8) The Student Committee of FTV Honours Projects should also collect all final works after the last official HP screening and send the copies to Academy of Film (Technical Office)

9) Selected works will be uploaded to HKBU Heritage

(<https://heritage.lib.hkbu.edu.hk>).

▪ *Scriptwriting and Thesis Track:*

1) Length:

a) Screenplay: 10000 words or above.

b) Thesis: 8000 to 10000 words in English, 12000 to 15000 in Chinese (if accepted)

2) Language of writing:

a) Screenplay: Chinese or English

b) Thesis: English. Chinese is also acceptable if approved by the supervisor.

3) All works must be submitted in both PDF and Word formats.

4) A signed Declaration of Copyright Responsibility, if applicable. Please refer to Appendix 5.

5) Style, cover page, acknowledgements, and binding Style: Use MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual Style for citation and documentation (i.e., bibliography, filmography, endnotes, etc.). Consult your supervisor as to which style to use if

necessary.

- 6) Cover page and acknowledgements (see Appendix 1).
- 7) Library release form (see Appendix 2).
- 8) Submission to AF Office by email to af-ctv@hkbu.edu.hk.

IV. Grading

A grading panel of at least 3 members will be formed for each track. It's preferable to have at least 1 external member on both the production panel and the scriptwriting panel. Production projects should be screened on a high-quality big screen with a decent sound system, such as CVA 104. All panels should meet with students to ask questions and give feedback.

- Production Track:

- In an individual project, the director will receive the grade.
- In a group project, no more than 4 group members are allowed, and they will receive the same grade unless in some special cases, the panel deems it necessary to differentiate the grades. Students can choose from the following 7 positions (positions that receive the grade should not be shared, for example, you cannot co-direct or co-write a project) :

Scriptwriter.

Director.

Cinematographer. The cinematographer must be the camera operator.

Editor. The editor must be a real editor with major creative input in editing, instead of being the director's editing assistant.

Producer. The producer should keep all the producing documents for further assessment if deemed necessary by the panel.

Production designer. The production designer should also be the art director.

Sound designer. The sound designer should also be the production sound mixer, post-production sound editor, and mixer.

- No grade will be given until the student returns all equipment, including equipment borrowed for non-honours projects, to the Technical Office. Should there be any loss of or damage to the equipment, students must settle the replacement/repair before the final grade can be submitted to AR. Those who fail to do so will fail their projects.

- If you return the equipment late, the final grade of your honours project will be marked down by one sub-grade (e.g., from A to A-, from C- to D, and from D to F) every 24 hours. If the equipment is damaged, you should return the equipment by the deadline for TO's inspection first, and then settle the replacement/repair by providing TO purchase/repair order within 7 days, and you must return the equipment to the technical office within office hours, no later than the next working day after the replacement becomes available or the equipment has been repaired and ready for pickup in Hong Kong, or you will face the same consequence of grade deduction. Honours Project Committee may further reduce the grade according to students' behavior and impact on other honours projects.

Rubrics:

- Idea and concept generation - 20%

- Creativity – 30%

- Overall organization of the completed artifact, event, or program - 20%

- Technical competence - 30%

▪ Scriptwriting or Thesis Track:

Rubrics (Scriptwriting):

- Storytelling – 40%
- Originality and Creativity – 40%
- Technical competence (writing and structure) – 20%

Rubrics (Thesis):

- Research quality – 40%
- Argument/Analysis – 40%
- Writing and format – 20%

V. Remarks on Production Track

- 1) The maximum number of production projects per year is 25. If the total number goes beyond 25, individual projects will be cut down and cGPA will be the only criteria of selection. Those who cannot do individual production projects will have to either join a group project or change track.
- 2) Normally, there will not be arrangements for pick-up shoots. Students are expected to have backup plans and use their creativity to manage unexpected challenges and even crises. If it's both possible and necessary, a one-week period for pick-up shoots may be arranged at the end of March. This is not for instances of poor management or common production problems, but solely for absolutely unavoidable circumstances with significant impacts. Students must obtain endorsement from their supervisors and the Honours Project Committee and coordinate among themselves to develop a schedule and plan under the guidance of the Student Committee of FTV Honours Projects. Supervisors are advised not to grant such an endorsement unless it's absolutely necessary.
- 3) Any change of shooting schedule will not be allowed unless the students involved can come to an agreement.
- 4) Two working days' notice is required for a change of shooting schedule, even if no student will be affected.
- 5) As hard disk space is limited in video editing, any video file stored in a hard drive will be subjected to removal by the next group of users of that priority period.

- 6) For safety precautions in the event of computer failure, you are advised to save your project and back up your work frequently. In the event of computer or hard disk failure unrelated to students' misuse, extra time will be rescheduled to make up for the loss of hours of usage.
- 7) Under no circumstances may students of the Academy utilize professional crew on their production projects, except for actors and positions for safety, such as stunt coordinators, special effects supervisors, safety officers, etc, as required by the AF's Safety Guidelines for Student Productions for hazardous shooting.
- 8) Students may not associate their projects with outside production companies, including production and post-production facilities, personnel, or funding.
- 9) Students are responsible for clearing all copyrights used in their films prior to screenings.
- 10) Students can book no more than ONE TV studio for Honours Project production shooting and should be under the condition that no other courses will be affected.

VI. Remarks on Thesis Track

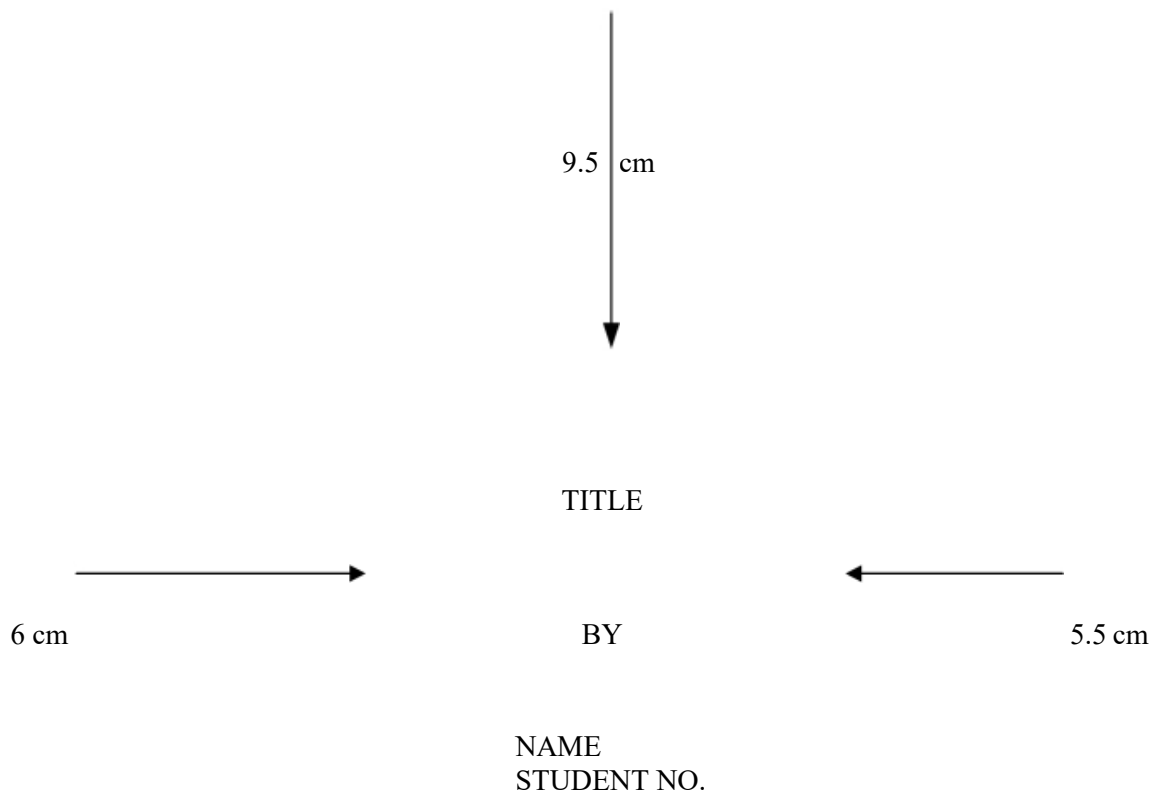
- 1) Posing and developing a problem needing a solution (thesis) or an idea to be expressed in either a dramatic (story in a film, commercial, television episode, or a screenplay), conceptual (image-sound rendition such as an animation or a music video) or non-fiction (documentary or news report) form.

- ❖ Make sure what it is that you want to study and express.
 - ❖ Choose and narrow your topic, concept, and subject matter.
- 2) Literature review: Reviewing past research/writings (scholarly articles, books, and reviews) about that problem and works (films, screenplays, commercials, music videos, TV programs, animations, etc.) about that subject or concept.
- ❖ It helps you to clarify the current state of knowledge about the topic before formulating new research questions or artistic investigation to guide the whole project
- 3) Identifying worthy questions, concepts, and subject matter that previous investigators, filmmakers, and storytellers haven't answered and explored:
- ❖ Suspect the validity of the previous investigations.
 - ❖ Any new diversity of knowledge to the problems and concepts addressed?
 - ❖ New information, method, or style that may alter previous findings, depictions, or storytelling?
- 4) Devising the best method, form, or style to seek answers to these questions:
- ❖ The question itself may suggest the most suitable approach.
 - ❖ Past research in the literature may also suggest a suitable research method.
- 5) Gathering the necessary information to answer the research questions, organize stories, and portray characters and situations.

- 6) Analyzing that information to decide whether they are useful to the project.
- 7) Presenting the results of the inquiry by means of writing or image-sound-making.
- 8) Considering the meaning and implications of the completed project to further knowledge of the field of screen studies and production.

End of Honours Project Handbook

Sample Title Page (English)



AN HONOURS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION (HONOURS)

IN

FILM MAJOR

(FILM AND TELEVISION CONCENTRATION)

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

JAN 2024

Sample Page of Acceptance (English)

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

We hereby recommend that the Honours Project by Mr./Ms. X X X entitled "X X X X X X X " be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Honours) Degree in Film Major (Film and Television concentration).

X X X
Honours Project Supervisor

Sample Acknowledgement Page (English)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my informants for sharing with me valuable information about their life. I would also like to thank the XXX Company Limited for generously responding to my enquiries. Special thanks are extended to XXX, Honours Project Supervisor to the project, for his/her advice and encouragement.

Student signature

Academy of Film

Hong Kong Baptist University

Date: _____

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Honours Project Release Form

Student No.: _____

Author / Student Name: _____

Honours Project Title: _____

Degree Program: _____

Year of the Honours Project : _____

Declaration :

- I agree that the full text of my Honours Project may be consulted by *any/all users* in electronic format online through Internet connection, and in print version for onsite use at the University Library, for purposes of private study, educational use, scholarship or research.

Signature of Author: _____ **Date :** _____

Checklist for Getting Equipment Approval for Fiction Films

Student Name(s): _____

Project Title: _____ (Chinese)

_____ (English)

Supervisor's Name: _____

Shooting Period: from _____ (DD/MM/YY) to _____ (DD/MM/YY)

Script Version No.: _____ Script Completion Date: _____ (DD/MM/YY)

1. Please turn all the following listed items into **ONE PDF file** and send it to the following emails via your BU account:

- a. to@hkbu.edu.hk
- b. af-ctv@hkbu.edu.hk
- c. your supervisor's email

2. Please be reminded that the submission deadline for each project is **3 working days before** the equipment check-out date.

	Item	Supervisor's Signature
1	Equipment Approval from Supervisor (please refer to page 4 of Appendix 3)	
2	Synopsis (≤ 200 words)	
3	Full Script	
4	Budget Plan	
5	Production Schedule	
6	Locations List with Pictures	
7	Key Crew List (please refer to page 2 of Appendix 3)	
8	Cast List (please refer to page 3 of Appendix 3)	
9	Production Design: a. Mood Board b. Character Design (including costume, hair, and makeup) c. Set Design for all scenes	
10	Storyboard or Shot List (both with overhead diagram)	
11	Daily Shooting Rundown	
12	Hazardous Shooting Conditions Request Form, if applicable	

Student's signature: _____ (Name: _____) Date: _____
(The one who will submit the file) (DD/MM/YY)

Key Crew List

Position	Chinese Full Name	English Full Name	Signature
Producer [#]			
Director			
Assistant Director			
Scriptwriter			
Director of Photography			
Production Sound Mixer			
Boom Operator			
Production Designer			
Make-up Artist			

#: Honours Project Producers are expected to cover the job duties of a producer, line producer, and production manager if they choose to be graded as a producer.

You are encouraged to submit a more complete crew list. Please use a separate sheet if needed.

Hazardous Shooting Conditions Request Form

Project Title:

Date of shoot:

Director/Producer:

Student ID #:

Phone:

Email:

Hazardous conditions (describe scene & hazard):

Description of shooting plan (Please attach detailed information if necessary):

Class and/or project:

Instructor/Supervisor:

Signature:

Date:

Student agreement:

I/We have provided accurate and complete information about our project to our instructor named above. Any script, concept, or logistical changes which involve hazardous shooting conditions will receive faculty review and approval prior to production.

Director/Producer signature:

Date:

Approval for shooting and borrowing equipment

Dear Academy of Film:

I would like to confirm that _____ (name(s) of the students(s)) has/have completed all the required items and approve him/her/them to borrow equipment from the Technical Office for shooting the Honours Project (Project Title in English and Chinese: _____) starting from _____ (DD/MM/YY) to _____ (DD/MM/YY).

Best,

_____ (signature)

_____ (supervisor's full name)

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Guideline for FTV Students to Obtain Permission from Subjects of a Non-fiction Project

Professional documentary filmmakers typically use contracts when working with subjects, but our students may not have the legal knowledge to prepare them. Additionally, HKBU shares student project copyrights, making it difficult and time-consuming to obtain written contracts. Therefore, we have established a practical guideline for FTV students to obtain subject permission while ensuring respect and transparency.

1. Inform the subjects: Students should inform the subjects of the nature of their non-fiction projects, including the purpose and target screening platforms.

2. Obtain permission at two stages:

a) Before filming begins: Students should obtain permission from the subjects to use their photographs, voices, and names, and to screen the projects on target platforms.

b) Prior to public screening: Students should invite all subjects to review the final cut as long as feasible and obtain the approval of all present subjects before publicly screening their projects. However, non-public screenings such as in-class screenings are exempt from this requirement.

3. Permission can be obtained in one of the following three formats, from the lowest (a) to the highest (c) official levels, depending on the scale of the exposure:

a) Oral permission without recording: This can be obtained by having a verbal agreement with the subjects and is for projects that will be screened on non-public platforms. For example:

i) In-class screening

b) Oral permission with audio recording: This can be obtained by having a verbal agreement with the subject, which should be recorded for future reference, and is for projects with limited public screening or limited exposure to an audience from the same place as the subjects. For example:

i) Honours project public screenings

ii) Film festivals

c) Written permission: This can be obtained by preparing a written contract, which should be signed by the university, the student(s), and the subject(s). It's for projects with extensive public screening or potential exposure to a large audience from the same place as the subjects. For example:

i) Theatrical release

ii) Online platforms

iii) Local TV

Note: "Local" here means where the subjects are located.

4 Required submissions: Honours project students on the track of non-fiction production should submit Forms 1 and 2 along with their projects by the deadline, or their projects might not be graded. Other students should follow the same practice if they choose to publicly screen their projects.

Subject Permission Format for FTV Non-fiction Projects

Film Title: _____

Student Name & ID: _____

Students should check the appropriate box(es) and specify the screening platform(s) in the form below.

Permission Format	Screening Platform Category	Specific Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Permission Without Recording for Non-public Screening	<input type="checkbox"/> In-class screening <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Permission with Audio Recording for Limited Public Screening	<input type="checkbox"/> Honours project public Screenings <input type="checkbox"/> Film festivals <input type="checkbox"/> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Written Permission for Extensive Public Screening	<input type="checkbox"/> Theatrical release <input type="checkbox"/> Local TV <input type="checkbox"/> Online platforms <input type="checkbox"/> _____	

Self-Declaration of Subject Permission

I have followed the **Guideline for FTV students to Obtain Permission from Subjects of a Non-fiction Project**, and obtained _____
 (permission format) for my non-fiction project titled _____
 _____ (Chinese and English) with
 details as follows:

All Subjects' Names	Permission for filming & screening (put in student signature to declare subject's permission being obtained)	Approval of final cut (put in student signature to declare subject's permission being obtained)

Student Name: _____
 (Chinese and English)

Student ID: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Declaration of Copyright Responsibility

I/We confirm that I/we have obtained all rights for all copyrighted materials in the film/screenplay, titled (English and Chinese)

_____.

I/We take full responsibility for any legal consequences of copyright infringement related to the film's content.

Student Signature(s): _____

Student Name(s): _____

(Chinese and English)

Student ID (s): _____

Date: _____