

Filmmaking Challenge 2026: rules of engagement

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Key dates

- *Wednesday 3 December*: Info Session (Film Challenge + FEST + Berlinale 2025, at Catalyst)
- *Friday 19 December*: deadline to apply
- *Monday 5 January*: teams announced, Whatsapp Groups launched
- *Wednesday 14 January*: online info session. All team members have confirmed their participation by this date.
- *Tuesday 20–Thursday 22 January*: Filmmaking Challenge
- *Thursday 22 January from 17:30*: wrap party & screening

Official Time Period

- The Catalyst Filmmaking Challenge will occur between *12:00 Tuesday 22 and 16:00 Thursday 22 January*, this is the “Official Time Period”.
- All creativity must take place during the Official Time Period. Creative work includes, but is not limited to: writing the script, casting (of roles), rehearsing, costume/set design, shooting, editing, sound design, rendering, outputting to USB drive or other media.
- Work that can begin *prior* to the Official Time Period is: organising crew, organising cast, securing equipment not available from the school, scouting/securing locations and original music.

Required Elements

- All films will have their own genre, prop and character, which **MUST** be included in the final film (these “Required Elements” will be revealed at the challenge launch on 20 Jan).
 - Teams will draw x2 genres and must use at least one, or a combination of the two.

- The required character does not have to be the leading role, but we must actually see them on screen. The profession/character does NOT have to be spoken out loud, as long as we can infer who they are.
- Props have been previously assigned and will be found in your film kits. Props must be actively used in the film, otherwise they're a set piece and not a prop!
- All films must contain a line of dialogue, which will be revealed at the challenge launch on 20 Jan.
 - All films will have the same line (in addition to any other dialogue).

Footage

- Every frame of your film MUST contain footage shot or created in the Official Time Period. This is "core footage".
 - "Supporting footage", or footage shot or created BEFORE the Official Time Period (including stock footage that is part of a special effect) may be placed over or under the core footage, as long as every frame of your film contains some amount of core footage and the assembling of the core footage with the supporting footage occurs during the Official Time Period.
 - Animation, titles and special effects can be considered core footage if it is created during the Official Time Period (see rule relating to footage created using AI).
 - Still photos are permitted as core footage. Still photos do not need to be created during the Official Time Period.
 - You must have rights to any footage or photos used in your film!

Equipment & locations

- Teams will be assigned basic kits with camera, lighting and audio recording, however teams are free to use their own equipment, and any type of video or film camera. There is no limit to the number of cameras.
- Additional gear may be booked from the film and music tech shops, subject to availability and Catalyst student level (year of study). Items cannot be booked in advance of the Official Time Period. Students booking equipment must be trained and in a relevant role on their team.
- **Filming is permitted on the Funkhaus grounds, however never inside Funkhaus spaces that aren't a part of the Catalyst campus.**
- Teams are not restricted to filming at the Funkhaus, and are encouraged to film around the city wherever it is legally allowable, or permits have been obtained.

Music & AI

- Teams are encouraged to work with a composer and/or musicians (and ideally have a Catalyst music student in your team!) to write and record music for the films. It is allowed

to use pre-recorded music; however, teams must have the rights to any music used in their film and must provide releases for all music used. As with music, pre-recorded sound effects are allowed, but you must have rights to use them. Original music does *not* need to be created within the Official Time Period.

- You may use AI in the creation of your film, subject to the following guidelines: you may only use AI in ways that are legal in Europe and the UK. You may not use AI to create any part of your entry prior to the Official Time Period. You must have the rights to all work including work created with AI. In other words, any AI generated material that uses copyrighted material for which the filmmaker does not have a release is not permitted. (As an example, using a screenshot from the movie Pulp Fiction to create a new image is prohibited).

Submitting your film

- The finished film must be a minimum of 3 minutes in duration, and a maximum of 5 minutes in duration, including end credits.
- Films must be submitted by 16:00 on Thursday 22 Jan. Films must be submitted to the Vimeo folder here:
 - [Filmmaking Challenge 2026](#) (Catalyst Film Production students have access to this account).
 - Please upload your videos to a *maximum* resolution of HD - *not* 4K.
- At the launch teams will be provided with the [Catalyst logo](#), which must be included in each film.