

GCSE LEVEL

FACT FILE

Moving Image Arts

Subject content link:

Industry Practices and Contexts:
Film Funding

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Industry Practices and Contexts: Film Funding



Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- identify the main types of film funding body in the UK and Ireland and be able to provide one example of each (for example regional/national film commissions and regional/national broadcasters).



Course Content

In the United Kingdom and Ireland there are a number of ways in which a film or TV project might be funded. More often than not a combination of sources are used to finance a project. These may include:

Funds from a Broadcaster or Studio:

If a studio wishes to distribute a film or if a broadcaster wishes to eventually broadcast it on TV they may fund some or all of its production costs in return for those rights.

Most Hollywood films tend to be produced and distributed by a cluster of powerful well-known studios such as Warner Brothers, Disney, Paramount, Fox and Universal.

In the UK, BBC Films and Chanel Four's Film Four division have both fully or partly funded dozens of feature films.

Most recently, online streaming services, such as Amazon Prime and Netflix, now also directly fund and commission the production of films and television series, which they then also distribute through their own platforms.

Private Equity Investment:

A producer may approach private investors in order to fund a project. These investors will then share in the profits of the film if it is financially successful.

Public Funding:

In the UK the main public body responsible for this is the British Film Institute. There are also a number of regional and national film funding bodies which use public money to support and encourage film production.

In Northern Ireland this role is fulfilled by Northern Ireland Screen who fund indigenous film production as well as offering logistical and financial support to foreign productions filming in Northern Ireland (e.g. the TV series Game of Thrones). In the Republic of Ireland The Irish Film Board (also known as Bord Scannán na hÉireann) fulfills a similar role.

Case Study: If we look at the films of director Tom Hooper, we can see a variety of funding models.

His first feature film *The Damned United* (2009) was funded by BBC Films, the English regional film agency Screen Yorkshire and by Columbia Pictures, a film studio owned by the Japanese electronics company Sony. Sony, in return for their investment, retained distribution rights and the BBC retained the right to broadcast the film in the UK.

His second feature film *The King's Speech* (2010) was funded by a mixture of private equity funding and money from the now defunct funding body the UK Film Council.

His third feature film *Les Misérables* (2012) was funded by the British production company Working Title Films, the French production and distribution company Studio Canal, the American production company Relativity Media and the Hollywood studio Universal Pictures.

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