

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION: Discipline Head, Screenwriting
DEPARTMENT: AFI Conservatory
LOCATION: Los Angeles Campus

ABOUT THE AFI CONSERVATORY

The AFI Conservatory is the graduate-level training program of the American Film Institute (AFI), dedicated to developing the next generation of narrative filmmakers. Established in 1969, the Conservatory is located on an 8-acre campus in the Hollywood Hills, overlooking the city of Los Angeles.

The program follows an immersive, hands-on, production-focused model and offers specialized training in six disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design, and Screenwriting.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate is an accomplished screenwriter with significant industry experience, exceptional teaching and mentorship abilities, and a forward-thinking understanding of how technology, craft, and collaboration shape the screenwriting discipline in 21st-century filmmaking.

This is a full time, 12-month appointment based in Los Angeles and plays a pivotal role in advancing the mission of the AFI Conservatory: to train visionary filmmakers, uphold artistic excellence, and prepare AFI students (“Fellows”) to lead the future of storytelling across film, television, and emerging media.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Discipline Head, Screenwriting is a senior academic and creative leader responsible for shaping the vision, curriculum, and strategic direction of the Screenwriting discipline at the AFI Conservatory. Reporting directly to the Dean, the Discipline Head guides a department (or “discipline”) of working industry professionals responsible for training Screenwriting Fellows.

The role ensures the discipline remains aligned with current industry practices by integrating emerging technologies, artistic trends, and innovative methodologies – from traditional screenwriting to virtual production and AI-assisted visualization tools – while upholding AFI’s longstanding commitment to storytelling excellence. The Discipline Head plays a critical role in mentoring Fellows toward successful careers, aligning curriculum with contemporary professional standards, and fostering a culture of inclusion, innovation, and cross-disciplinary collaboration across the Conservatory.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES:

Creative & Educational Leadership

- Provide visionary leadership for the Screenwriting discipline, guiding Fellows through the full creative cycle of writing for the screen - from identifying I.P. and semester pitching to advanced stages of development, production, and distribution.
- Oversee thesis production processes as they relate to screenwriters and writers' portfolios, offering mentorship that supports Fellows' artistic, technical, and professional growth.
- Lead the review and evaluation of Screenwriting Fellows as they advance through the program, ensuring rigorous assessment aligned with Conservatory standards.
- Recruit, develop, and evaluate Screenwriting faculty, ensuring curriculum delivery reflects AFI's high artistic and professional benchmarks.
- Manage resource allocation, strategic planning, and budgetary decisions in collaboration with the Dean and Conservatory administration.
- Advance the development of the Screenwriting curriculum to reflect emerging market demands, technological innovations, and industry best practices.
- Foster a wide range of voices and perspectives in storytelling, writing, and production methodologies, cultivating an inclusive and globally aware creative environment.
- Teach at least one class per semester and provide meaningful mentorship, assessment, and guidance throughout each Fellow's academic progression.
- Oversee Screenwriting participation in all Conservatory productions, ensuring effective collaboration with picture and sound teams throughout production and post-production.
- Actively support new Fellow recruitment efforts and lead the discipline's admissions process.

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration (START HERE)

- Partner with the Heads of Directing, Producing, Editing, Cinematography, and Production Design to ensure cohesive, industry-aligned training across the Conservatory.
- Collaborate across all disciplines to enhance integrated creative workflows and strengthen the collaborative production process.
- Contribute to Conservatory-wide initiatives that support curriculum alignment, thesis evaluation, and integrated Fellow learning experiences.

Innovation and Emerging Technologies

- Lead the integration and adoption of cutting-edge tools and methodologies that support and enhance script development.
- Serve as a strategic thought partner to AFI in the ethical, artistic, and pedagogical application of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies - reinforcing AFI's philosophy that the artist's vision must always guide the tool.
- Provide guidance and training for Fellows and faculty on responsible technology use, creative exploration, and essential intellectual property considerations.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of evolving technologies to ensure AFI remains at leader in innovation, creative practice, and technological literacy.

Industry Engagement and Professional Development

- Leverage professional experience and industry relationships to support recruitment efforts and connect Fellows with internships, shadowing opportunities, and aligned career pathways.
- Build and sustain partnerships with guilds, studios, agencies, and streaming platforms to expand Fellow access, visibility, and career readiness.
- Collaborate with the Dean, Institutional Advancement, and external partners to strengthen AFI's industry presence and steward relationships that advance the Conservatory's mission.
- Develop and deliver external outreach and networking events – including showcases, recruitment workshops, and other industry engagement opportunities – that strengthen professional visibility and connections for Fellows.
- Engage established alumni screenwriters as mentors, guest speakers, and networking resources to enrich the Fellows experience and foster a thriving professional community.

Inclusive Storytelling

- Champion a learning environment that celebrates diverse voices, cultural perspectives, and inclusive representation across the screenwriting discipline.
- Expose Fellows to a broad spectrum of storytelling traditions, creative approaches, and narrative workflows that reflect the richness and diversity of the global entertainment landscape.

Additional duties as may be assigned.

EXPERIENCE/SKILLS REQUIRED:

- Bachelor's degree in Screenwriting or a related field; M.F.A. preferred.
- Extensive professional screenwriting experience with substantial, credited work.
- Graduate level teaching experience or experience in a professional training environment preferred.
- Demonstrated history of contributing to innovative storytelling across multiple formats and platforms.
- Demonstrated leadership experience supervising creative teams or managing academic programs.
- Active engagement in film and television production, supported by a robust network of industry peers and partners.
- Strong analytical, strategic, and creative problem-solving abilities, with the capacity to navigate complex and evolving challenges.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with staff, faculty, Fellows, and external stakeholders.
- Experience managing resources, personnel, and operational functions in academic or professional environments.
- Recognition for excellence in writing from industry peers, guilds, festivals, or professional organizations.
- Established record of mentoring emerging filmmakers, fostering creative development, and supporting professional readiness.

- Demonstrated commitment to collaboration, supporting developing filmmakers, and creative excellence in both academic and professional environments.
- Friendly, cooperative, and service-oriented demeanor with a strong commitment to supporting faculty, Fellows, and visiting artists.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain confidential information and properly handle employment and / or education records.
- High degree of personal integrity with the proven ability to inspire trust, confidence, and professionalism across all stakeholders.

SALARY RANGE - \$120,000 - \$140,000 annually

Review of applications will commence on February 9, 2026. The position will remain open until filled.