



MA DIGITAL NARRATIVES

International Master's Programme
Application Details 2026



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Academic Requirements

To be eligible for the Master's degree, applicants must have an undergraduate degree (Bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree) with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits or a higher degree (e.g. a German »Magister« or »Diplom«) from an accredited university.

The ifs Internationale Filmschule Köln welcomes talented applicants who have received degrees in unrelated fields or have worked in media but have not received official degrees. In justified cases, applicants with exceptional artistic skills whose CVs lack one or more of these formal requirements may request to enroll in the programme as advanced training participants. Special admission requirements apply.

Work Experience

Applicants must have worked in the field of art, journalism, media production, software development or others mentioned in the call for at least one year.

Language Skills

Applicants need to provide proof of sufficient English language skills (B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), e.g. by a TOEFL score of 72 points (internet-based) or equivalent test results. Native English speakers are exempted from this requirement.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants must upload all material listed below by **16 March 2026**.

The application portal will be open starting at the beginning of January. Once it's available, you will find the link to the application portal here: <https://www.filmschule.de/de/studium/ma-digital-narratives/bewerbung>

APPLICATION

In order to apply, you are required to upload all material listed below as separate PDF files. **Each file must be marked with your surname** (Format: PDF file; File size: 5 MB max.; file name example: Last_name_CV.pdf)

Documents

1. CV showing at least one year of subject-related professional practice or comparable experience
2. A translated (German or English) copy of your degree certificates (scan)
3. A translated (German or English) copy of your examination certificates – alternatively a translated (German or English) copy of your transcript of records and your diploma supplement (scan)
4. Proof of very good English language skills (level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Native English speakers are exempted from this.

ASSIGNMENTS (in English language)

Please include your name and identify the respective task on each page of each document! All documents must be submitted as individual PDF files, labeled with your surname (e.g., Lastname_LetterOfMotivation.pdf). Maximum file size per document: 5 MB.

Task 1 – Letter of motivation

A letter of motivation answering the following questions:

- Why do you want to take part in this programme?
- What is your professional/educational background? Which of your previous experiences and interests are relevant for the programme?
- What skills/competencies would you bring to a collaborative working environment?
- What are your future professional/artistic/scholarly goals and how would participating in this programme help you achieve them?
Be as clear and comprehensive as possible in presenting your expectations and interests.
Length: max. 750 words

Task 2 – Links to three work samples

Provide links to three of your own works.

These can range from project work to writing samples, such as immersive or interactive works, installations, games, films, photo slideshows, reportages, creative writing, research investigations, podcasts, creative/innovative social media posts, data visualizations, etc.

Individual and/or team work (in which you had a particular role or task such as narrative designer, creative or artistic director, UX designer, creative technologist, among others) can be accepted as a creative digital work or writing sample. In case you were part of a team, please specify your role and tasks in the project.
(If possible, one link will lead to a portfolio page that showcases a selection of the candidate's work.)

Task 3 – Research topics

Suggest up to three topics you would be interested in researching or experimenting with during the programme – creatively and/or academically.
Length: max. 200 words per topic

Task 4 – Case studies

Select up to three projects (not your own) that are in your opinion exceptional for their innovative use of storytelling in digital media.
Case studies are analyses of projects from other creatives or companies, that are outstanding examples in their respective fields.

Describe:

- The project's concept
- Why it is relevant or groundbreaking
- How it contributes to the field of digital storytelling

Length: max. 200 words per project

Task 5 – Essay

Write a short research essay (also called a scholarly essay) on the topic of production and reception of interactive digital narratives.

Length: min. 1000 to max. 1250 words

Task 6 – Optional: previous academic writing

Additional to task 5, feel free to submit a previously written article, blogpost, or scholarly paper from your BA studies programme, with the appropriate references to where these were published, if at all.

Please note: Plagiarism – i.e., the use of external content without attribution – is not a trivial offense, but a serious violation of the principles of academic integrity. The use of AI tools is also only permitted if their use is permissible in the respective context and is made transparent. TH Köln publishes guidelines for students in which the correct use is explained in more detail – these rules of conduct also apply to us. Current link: https://www.th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/organisation/zle/thki_gpt-lab_handreichung_studierende_final.pdf

Incomplete applications will not be considered!

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

INTERVIEWS

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview via Zoom.

DATES (subject to change)

Application deadline 2nd Call: 16 March 2026

Interviews: 13 & 14 April 2026

Start of programme: September 2026

Duration: 2 years (4 semesters)

Residency: 12 weeks in semesters 1–3, 4 weeks in sem. 4

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

- To ensure that the education certificates and diploma acquired abroad comply with the admission requirements of the ifs (higher education qualifications), applicants can consult the following database: <http://anabin.kmk.org/>
- Please also check at the German Embassy of your home country whether you need to provide an APS certificate by the Academic Evaluation Center for your visa application.
- Enrollment at the TH Köln, the cooperation partner of the ifs, is mandatory for ifs students (the current semester fee of the TH Köln amounts to ca. € 340 per semester).
- To obtain a residence permit, international students have to demonstrate sufficient funds to secure their livelihood. As of the summer semester 2024, they need to cover an amount of € 992 per month or € 11,904.00 per year in a blocked bank account. The required amount for a student visa application is based on the current BAföG rate – the national standard that defines the absolute minimum of a student's necessary expenses for an adequate standard of living. Note that this amount may change from year to year due to the ongoing increase in costs for housing, electricity, food, etc.
- You can find more information here: https://www.th-koeln.de/en/international_office/degree-seeking-students_86456.php

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