



TALENT

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR EMERGING FILMMAKING TALENT

These guidelines relate to our support for **emerging filmmaking talent** - writers, directors and writer/directors who have some professional experience and whose work has already garnered positive industry and/or public attention but who have yet to make a feature film.¹

Please read them carefully before submitting your application. For information on other Creative England film opportunities, please visit <http://creativeengland.co.uk/film-and-tv>.

About BFI NET.WORK and the Talent Centres

[BFI NETWORK](#) is a key initiative to discover and support promising writers, directors and producers from the nations and regions of the UK, detailed in the BFI's *Film Forever* plan. As part of its contribution to BFI NETWORK, Creative England set up the Talent Centres in 2013 to work with new and emerging filmmakers from across England, including London. The BFI announced its [2022 Strategy](#) in November 2016, which involved a major review of all Lottery film funding activities taking effect from the new financial year in April 2017. Creative England will continue to deliver the Emerging Talent Fund during a transitional year in 2017. We will continue supporting feature film development for first-time filmmakers across England, and to fund pilot shorts as part of feature film development.

What can I apply for ?

Eligible emerging writers, directors, writer/directors and producers are able to apply to the Talent Development team for funding and other support towards Feature Film Development and the production of pilot/proof-of-concept shorts and teasers.

The majority of our support is for the development of live action, fiction feature film projects of all genres. We may, with our prior agreement, also accept proposals for the development of documentary features that demonstrate clear cinematic ambition. Prospective applicants should contact us to discuss their proposal in advance of making an application

¹ In certain cases, we may elect to support filmmakers who have made a no/micro/very-low budget or previously unreleased feature film.

We are currently unable to support 100% animated features; however, we can support the development of features with animated elements where they represent a limited/minority proportion of the action.

Our development awards will tend primarily support the writing process and/or pilot/proof-of-concept teasers. However, awards may also include a contribution towards option costs (over works already published or produced in another medium), research, script editors, producer fees/overhead, director services, legal fees, budget/schedule, casting, recce, , and other costs as may be agreed.

We can accept proposals for the adaptation of existing material (such as a play, novel, etc.) but only if you can provide us with evidence to show that you have already acquired an option over the underlying work, or that such an option is available to you, or that the work is out of copyright.

We cannot provide support for costs already incurred by you prior to any award being made.

All features developed with our support must be:

- capable of being a feature-length film for theatrical release;
- capable of obtaining theatrical and video release certificates no more restrictive than BBFC '18; and
- capable of qualifying for certification as a British Film
<http://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/british-certification-tax-relief/cultural-test-film>.

Projects seeking support must have been developed to full treatment stage (minimum 8 sides of A4) or beyond at the point of application. If you apply without a full treatment, you may be asked to withdraw your application and reapply when ready.

Single project development awards will not generally exceed £30,000; however, if you are applying for both development and pilot production simultaneously, we will consider awards that support combined activity. The level of an award will be agreed by Creative England in consultation with the BFI, following detailed discussion with the successful applicant. Awards will be appropriate to the proposed development activity, the scale of the intended project, the talent involved and industry norms.

Although partnership funding is not required and is not a consideration in our funding decision, we welcome additional support from other industry sources and/or our NETWORK partners (Film Cymru Wales, Scottish Film Talent Network/Creative Scotland, NI Screen and Film London).

As part of the feature film development process, we support the production of short film pilots, proofs-of-concept and teasers from writer/directors and directors whose work is already garnering attention and have written or have a formal attachment to a feature film that is in active development at script stage or beyond. Your project

cannot act simply as a stand-alone short film and you will be asked in the application to clearly demonstrate that it acts as a purposeful pilot by sharing the same or similar concept, world, genre, style, character/s, narrative and tone as your feature film.

Proposed pilot projects should:

- have been developed to an advanced draft
- have a duration of no more than 15 minutes
- be achievable within a budget limit of up to £30,000²
- be a creatively and professionally purposeful pilot for your first feature
- have a producer attached
- have a feature film development to first draft or beyond
- demonstrate the applicant's ability in a way which they have not been able to in their previous work

Match funding is not required, although welcome and encouraged. Production budgets will need to be proportionate to the scale and ambition of the specific project as well as to the talent involved. Only a very few projects may be awarded the maximum amount.

We regret that projects that have previously been declined development funding by Creative England and/or BFI are not eligible to apply except with our prior agreement. In such instances, the prospective applicant would need to demonstrate that there are significant and substantive changes to a project or that major new elements have been attached or secured.

Who can apply ?

This strand of support is for emerging filmmakers. 'Emerging' in this context means writers, directors and writer/directors who:

- have already acquired some professional experience in that role;
- whose work has already garnered positive industry and/or public attention;
- who have not yet written or directed a produced feature film, but are on the cusp of their first feature film

In certain cases, we may elect to support filmmakers who have made a no/micro/very-low budget or previously unreleased feature film.

Applicants will have a strong track record in the discipline in which they are applying and be able to demonstrate how their project proposal is integral to their transition into feature length filmmaking.

Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we require applicants to demonstrate the following:

² In exceptional circumstances, we may consider short films of a higher budget level but will require you to provide confirmation at the application stage that the balance of funding is in place.

Writers

A minimum of two writing credits across any of the following:

- a feature film script that has either been commissioned or optioned by a third party producer or production company.
- a drama/comedy that has been commissioned or publically broadcast on TV, online or radio.
- a professionally produced theatre play/piece.
- a published novel or collection of short stories/poems.
- a short film that has been screened at a recognised film festival; or has won an award; or has been picked up for theatrical distribution or broadcast television.

Directors

A minimum of two directing credits across any of the following:

- screen-based work that has been commissioned/funded by a third party and publically screened including TV and online drama, commercials, music videos, documentaries and Artist's Film & Video.
- a professionally produced theatre play/piece that has garnered positive reviews.
- a short film that has been screened at a recognised film festival, or has won an award, or has been picked up for theatrical distribution or broadcast television.

Producers

A minimum of two producing credits (Producer, Co-Producer, Line Producer, Executive Producer, Associate Producer, Development Producer) across the following:

- screen-based work that has been commissioned/funded by a third party and publically screened including feature film, TV and online drama, commercials, music videos, documentaries and Artist's Film & Video.
- a short film that has been screened at a recognised film festival, or has won an award, or has been picked up for theatrical distribution or broadcast television.

Here is a list of BAFTA recognised short film festivals:

http://film.britishcouncil.org/docs/BAFTAShortFilmRecogn_1425301288.pdf.

Writer/Directors need to satisfy the requirements of the above Director and Writer credit requirements.

We retain the right to vary the above requirements where a particular writer, director, writer/director or producer demonstrates exceptional ability. If you do not strictly meet the criteria but feel your body of work demonstrates exceptional ability or potential, please get in touch with the Talent Development team before applying to discuss your eligibility. We expect applications and your body of work to demonstrate a high standard of ability, originality and potential in order to progress towards an award.

Applications for Feature Film Development support must have a writer or writer/director attached. However, we strongly encourage submissions from writer-director-producer teams and would normally expect the producer to lead an application. Any development award made without a producer may be subject to the attachment of one following discussions with the relevant Talent Executive.

Applications for pilots must have a writer, director and producer or writer/director and producer attached. Applications made without a producer attached will be declined on eligibility.

It is not necessary to apply as or through a company but the lead applicant must own or be in the process of obtaining the rights to any project submitted.

Writers, writer/directors and directors must be based in England (including London). Producers must be based in the UK.

In exceptional circumstances, we will consider submissions from teams in which the writer is based in England and the director based in another part of the UK or vice versa. However, this would only be following prior discussion between ourselves, the team and the relevant NET.WORK partner (Film Cymru Wales, Scottish Film Talent Network/Creative Scotland, NI Screen).

Deadlines

The fund will remain open on a rolling basis until further notice.

How to apply ?

The Talent Development team operate an online application process. We cannot accept applications by disc, fax, email or by post except by prior arrangement with the Talent Centres' Coordinator.

Stage 1: Applicants are asked to complete and submit an application form online via the Creative England website at <http://creativeengland.co.uk/film/talent-development>. As part of this application, you will need to indicate whether you are seeking support towards either Feature Film Development or Pilot Production (each will require a separate application) and submit two written proposals in respect of you and your project. These should be

- **An outline (maximum 1500 words).** This lays out the dramatic action of the proposed film from beginning to end. This should clearly convey theme, tone, genre and a sense of character development.

An innovative or non-linear structure can be reflected in the submitted outline or described in a short paragraph following an account of dramatic action. Outlines based on existing source material, such as plays or novels, are required to go beyond plot summaries and will need to provide a clear indication of your strategy for adaptation.

- **Supporting Statement (maximum 1000 words).** This is your opportunity to tell us why you (writer/director/producer) want to make this film. What will make it and you stand out from the crowd? Why will your idea feel fresh and exciting to an audience? What are the specific elements that will contribute to its creative success? What qualities as a writer/director/ producer have you already demonstrated and how will this project further develop you towards your goal of a successful feature film career?

In writing your statement, you may want to touch upon the following areas, depending upon whether you are seeking feature film or short film pilot support:

- Your overall creative vision for the project and how you might achieve that on film. What will make it compelling and distinctive in the current marketplace, and what audience are you aiming to appeal to?
- The intended scale and budget for project.
- The track record and previous work of the writer/director/ producer. How are these appropriate to the creative vision and scale of the project?
- The stage the project is at and what specific activity you are seeking support for. If you already have a sense of the timeline and outline costs of this activity please include details.
- Any other notable collaborators or partners currently involved in the project. Do you have any initial thoughts on casting?
- The strategy for packaging and financing the project once it has been developed. How will you ensure it finds its audience?
- Your longer-term career goals and where this project sits within them. For example, if you are applying for a pilot, you will need to tell us about the feature project(s) you have in development and why the proposed pilot would enhance the chances of getting the feature made.
Beyond project-based support, is there any other support that you as an individual would like to access through the Talent Development team?

Stage 2: Once you have submitted, you will be sent an email confirming that we have received your application, together with a tracking number to be used in all correspondence.

If you have not received such email confirmation within ten working days of your submission, then please contact us by emailing talent.centres@creativeengland.co.uk.

All applications are checked for eligibility against the guidelines. You will be notified by email if your application is ineligible. We are unable to progress ineligible applications but may at this stage allow you to correct an error if it is the sole reason why it is ineligible.

Stage 3: Eligible applications will be reviewed by the Talent Development team with reference to the selection criteria outlined below. We may also use external advisors to assess applications from time to time.

Following initial eligibility checking we will revert to you within seven weeks of submission, you will receive an email to tell you either:

- that we have reviewed your application, are unable to consider it further and that it has been declined; or
- that we would like to see additional materials for consideration and/or would like to meet with you to discuss your application in more detail.

Additional materials should be provided within one week of a formal request and may include, amongst others:

- a full detailed treatment for your project
- a complete draft screenplay
- a writing sample
- visual materials (storyboards, mood boards, location stills etc)
- further examples of previous work
- a development or production budget
- a development or production schedule
- documentary evidence of rights ownership and/or chain of title
- documentary evidence of any proposed partner involvement in your project
- evidence of a feature project as part of a Pilot application

Please do not apply until you have all the additional materials you will need to progress the application.

If we ask for a meeting, all relevant members of the creative team should attend. This meeting will typically be held at one of Creative England's offices and is an opportunity for you to explain in person why you want to make the film and to outline your ideas in more detail. We may also have questions about your application and may ask you to address or refine certain aspects.

It is important to understand that requesting additional materials or a meeting does not constitute an endorsement of your project or guarantee funding.

Stage 4: On receipt of the additional materials and/or following a meeting, we will give you an indicative timescale as to when a final funding decision on your project will be taken. In most instances, this will be within a further six to eight weeks but may vary depending upon the amount of information requested, whether there are any significant action points arising from the meeting, and the volume of applications we are processing at any given time.

Selection Criteria

All applications submitted will be considered according to the following criteria:

- the creative merits of the proposed project;

- the abilities and track record of the filmmaking team, and the quality of their previous work;
- the viability of the project in terms of budget, financing and potential market/audience;
- the strategic benefit of the project to the filmmaking team's career;
- the range and number of projects already being supported by the Talent Development team.

In our decision making, we endeavour to realise Creative England and the BFI's strategic aims in terms of supporting England-wide talent and diversity in all its forms, and ensure that Lottery funds benefit as wide a base of talent as possible.

We receive a high volume of applications to this fund and are only able to make a limited number of awards each year. Even if your application meets all the above criteria, we may not necessarily be able to support you.

Funding Decisions

All funding decisions will be made by Creative England, in close consultation with BFI, on the basis of a detailed assessment and a recommendation by the Talent Team.

Whilst all projects are reviewed against the published criteria, the selection process is inevitably subjective and our decision on whether we wish to support your project is final.

All successful and unsuccessful applications will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible after a funding decision has been made.

Awards and Conditions

Please refer to Appendix 1 of these guidelines for details of our standard terms and conditions for awards under this strand.

All successful awards are published on the Creative England website and it is a condition of any award that successful applicants co-operate with Creative England in any PR and press activity relating to their funded activity and the Talent Development funding in general.

Feedback

All unsuccessful applications will receive a standard declination email.

Where time and resources allow, we will endeavour to offer some feedback and constructive advice to unsuccessful applicants at stage 2, if requested. However, due to the high volume of applications that we receive, this may not always be possible.

We also welcome constructive feedback on our application and assessment processes.

Return of Materials

We will retain the application form for declined projects for a period of two years, after which time it will be destroyed. Other supporting materials will only be returned to you if a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed with them. Otherwise the materials will be destroyed after the project has been declined.

Resubmission

We can only accept resubmissions for projects if there have been significant and substantial changes to a script or major new elements have been attached and/or secured since the last application. All resubmissions must be discussed with and agreed by us in advance.

Speculative Submissions

We regret that we are unable to read scripts or consider project that have not be formally submitted through the application process.

Solicitation

In exceptional circumstances, we may solicit applications to the Talent Development team directly. We will only solicit in accordance with the relevant terms of the National Lottery Act 1998. A solicitation does not guarantee funding and all solicited applications will be treated the same as any other application to the Talent Development team in respect of assessment and decision making process.

Appeals and Complaints

Creative England's decision in all matters concerning the assessment and selection of projects is final. Inevitably, applicants may be turned down and may be disappointed as a result.

Applicants who wish to make an appeal against a funding decision can only do so if they have good cause to believe that the correct procedures, as published in these guidelines, have not been adhered to or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome of an application.

A copy of the Lottery complaints procedure can be obtained from Creative England on request.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request information held by Creative England. This includes information held in relation to applications to any of Creative England's Lottery funding programmes including Talent Development funding. If you choose to apply for Talent Development funding, you should be aware that the information you supply, either in whole or in part, may be disclosed under the Act.

Contacting Us

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries on the above process, eligibility or application process.

In the first instance, please send an email to talentcentres@creativeengland.co.uk stating “Emerging Application Query” in your subject header.

Whilst the information and advice in these guidelines is believed to be accurate at the time of going to press, Creative England reserves the right to make changes at any time at its discretion. Neither Creative England nor any of its partners shall be responsible for any loss attributable to errors, omissions or other inaccuracies in the information contained in these guidelines.

Appendix:

If you are successful in your application for Talent Development funding, you will be required to enter into an agreement with Creative England that sets out the terms and conditions of our funding. These will include amongst other:

Feature film development

1. You will need to establish the rights ownership of your project and we will require certain approvals over the project including all chain of title or clearance documents, and other third party funding arrangements. If you cannot provide documentary evidence that you already have or can secure the necessary rights, then we may not be able to fund your project.
2. You will normally be required to repay development funding to Creative England no later than the first day of principal photography of the film along with further payment of one per cent (1%) of Net Profits. Provided you repay the development monies on time and are an independent UK film producer, we will ringfence these monies for you to spend on the development or production of your next project or on staff skills training. Certain conditions may apply to this recycling of development monies from time to time.
3. You will be required to assign a share of all rights in your project, including copyright, to Creative England as security for our funding. These rights will be reassigned to you (or your assigns) on repayment of the development funding.
4. You will need to complete your development work within an agreed timeframe or you may have to repay our funding.
5. Our funding may be subject to cut-off after the delivery of each stage of the development work.

6. You will be required to provide a credit to Creative England and BFI NET.WORK on all materials (screenplays, pilots, etc) created with our funding and on the end credits of the film. You will also be expected to co-operate with Creative England and the BFI in any PR and press activity relating to your project and to the Talent Development funding in general.

Pilot/proof-of-concept production

1. Creative England will require approval of all key elements (including writer, director, individual producer, principal cast & principal crew), of all clearance agreements, the production budget, cashflow schedule and production schedule and insurance policies. We will have consultation rights over all cuts of the film and approval over the final cut/picture lock.

2. You will be required to acquire and/or clear rights to all works required for the making and exploitation of the short film worldwide in all media in perpetuity.

3. You will be required to assign a 50% share of copyright and all other rights in the short film to Creative England save for certain reserved rights in respect of the adaptation of the script, characters, situation etc for the purposes of producing or procuring the production of a future film or TV series.

4. You will be required to ensure that your short film is produced in accordance with the requirements of all unions and guilds having appropriate jurisdiction and all legislative requirements, both National and EU, including those concerning National Minimum Wage.

5. You will be required to provide Creative England and BFI NET.WORK with a presentation credit and a closing credit in a form advised by us. Where a Talent Development executive has engaged with your project in a substantive manner, you may choose to provide an Executive Producer credit to them at the discretion of Creative England's Head of Film. You will also be expected to co-operate with Creative England and the BFI in any PR and press activity relating to your project and to the Talent Development funding in general.

6. You will be required to provide us with certain delivery materials including a master copy of the final short film, 5 DVD's, publicity stills and materials, and copies of all clearance agreements. The cost of these delivery materials must be included in your budget.

7. You will be entitled to retain control of the distribution and exploitation rights in your short film save that Creative England will require the non-exclusive right to copy, reproduce and exhibit the film in perpetuity:

- theatrically in the UK (commercially and non-commercially); and
- non-theatrically throughout the world including through online means

including the right to authorise others including the BFI to do so. We will not exercise such rights until after an appropriate festival window. Creative England will also require a right of first refusal to release the short film commercially on DVD in the UK.

8. We will not seek to recoup its funding or to participate in net profits. However, the production company will be expected to ensure that any revenues realised from the film are properly accounted for and shared equitably with the director, writer, individual producer, principal cast and crew. Creative England shall have a right of approval over any such arrangements.