

i|FEATURES

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ScreenSkills

BBC FILMS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2019

We hope these are useful and may issue updates during the submissions period. Please also read our Guidelines, available for download at ifeatures.co.uk/apply-now

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TEAM ELIGIBILITY

I live in London / Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland. Can I apply?

Yes. Individual team members can live anywhere in the UK and we encourage pan-national and regional collaborations.

I'm a first-time filmmaker. Can I apply?

iFeatures is not for the very new or inexperienced. It is aimed at talent that has some professional experience and whose work has already garnered positive industry and/or public attention. You should be able to evidence a successful track record in shorts, television, video gaming, online storytelling, theatre, commercials, graphic novels, music promos, documentary, art film and videos, and/or other related media. You need to demonstrate clear readiness to tackle a debut feature-length film of a scope and quality that has the potential to break out nationally and internationally.

iFeatures is not only about having a great idea; it's first and foremost about having the right talent in place to realise it. The overall team needs to be well balanced in terms of skills and experience, and we welcome teams that bring together different perspectives and ways of working (e.g.: a film producer working with a TV director and a playwright).

If you are at an earlier stage in your creative career, then the BFI Network Film Hubs may offer the right opportunities for you: network.bfi.org.uk/funding-finder.

I'm an experienced filmmaker. Can I apply?

iFeatures is targeted at emerging writers, directors and writer/directors who have yet to make a funded feature film. However we will consider applications from filmmakers who have already made a no/micro budget feature that has had limited exposure and not been theatrically released. Applications from more experienced directors - e.g. documentary directors or directors with TV experience - who are looking to make a low-budget fiction debut feature may also be considered at our discretion.

If producers have considerably more experience than one full feature as lead producer, then please discuss with us before applying. We welcome meaningful collaborations between experienced and emerging producers. Established producers may mentor applications from emerging producers and/or have an Executive Producer relationship with projects.

Can I apply as an individual?

Yes, writer/directors may apply as an individual. However we do not accept applications from lone writers, lone directors or lone producers. In other words, the writer and director roles must be filled at the time of application.

We always encourage a producer being attached, however we appreciate that filmmakers coming from outside the usual routes, e.g. shorts/film school, may not have a relationship with a potential feature film producer. We do not advise forming hasty relationships for the sake of it as these can prove problematic later. For those filmmakers that feel unable to secure the right producer at the point of application, if selected the iFeatures team will facilitate attaching a producer to the project as soon as possible in order for the project to benefit fully from the support available.

I'm a looking for some collaborators to apply with. Can you help?

We're happy to encourage, like and link to any social media groups set up to generate collaborations, but with a small core team it is sadly not possible for us to provide one-on-one matchmaking support to prospective applicants.

Can I apply with more than one project?

Any individual can be attached to only one submission per round, and we ask lead applicants to ensure that their team members are not attached to more than one submission before applying.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Are you looking for a particular genre or type of story?

We're looking for stories that capture a clear sense of time and place, and that express and reflect the many regional and national identities and that might resonate with audiences at a national and international level. We want to see original genre films as much as dramas, and firmly believe that 'meaningful' and 'entertaining' are not mutually exclusive ideas in the audience's mind.

Our story is not set in the UK. Can we submit?

Unfortunately not. Projects must be set in the UK and should have a clear, specific sense of time and place.

Our script will not be written in English. Can we apply?

Yes we can consider projects to be written and produced in languages other than English but only so long as the story is meaningfully set in the UK. Please note that all project development and Labs will be conducted in English and all projects and teams must be able to engage with the scheduled programme and timeline as advertised. If you are unsure if this applies to you or might prove problematic for your project, please contact us to discuss.

We already have an idea that has been developed to script. Can we submit?

iFeatures is primarily concerned with fresh ideas that can be developed with the demands of lower budgets in mind from the outset. We also want projects that can maintain forward momentum and fully benefit from the Labs. A project that has already received some development and is at script stage is not precluded from submission but we would expect a commitment to a re-examination of the story. We would need to see that you are committed to a fresh overhaul of the material, and advise you discuss it with the iFeatures team in advance.

If you are looking only or primarily for development funding then there are other avenues available, such as the BFI Film Fund: bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/production-development-funding/development-funding

I am a director. Should I send you a DVD of my showreel as part of our submission?

Our application process is online and, rather than a DVD, you should include a weblink (which may be password protected) to a Vimeo, YouTube or other online platform where we can view examples of your work. We'd like to see complete examples of your work - short films, TV programmes or features – rather than montage reels in order to have a clearer sense of your creative voice, style, abilities with actors, approach to narrative etc.

We can only accept DVDs in extremely exceptional circumstances and you will need to discuss this with the iFeatures team in advance.

Our project is a feature-length documentary. Can we submit?

Regretfully, we are unable to accept documentary proposals in iFeatures; all projects must be primarily and substantively fiction.

If your project is a documentary feature, support is available through BFI Doc Society docsociety.org/bfi-doc/

We do not have the rights to the project we wish to apply with. Can we submit?

You should only apply to iFeatures if you can demonstrate that you either own or can acquire the necessary rights to the project in question. If the project is based on any underlying work you will need to have obtained rights or prove that you can obtain rights in (or an option over) that underlying work sufficient to be able to make one feature film, and at an ultimate cost that is commensurate with a low-budget production.

I have previously submitted the project to iFeatures, Creative England and/or the British Film Institute. Can I apply?

We regret that projects that have previously been declined by iFeatures are not eligible to apply except with our prior agreement (please contact the iFeatures team to discuss). In such cases, you would need to demonstrate that there are significant and substantive changes to a project or that major new elements have been attached or secured. Projects previously selected for iFeatures but which did not continue to production are not eligible to reapply - however previous teams/talent may apply with a different project.

Projects can be considered for iFeatures if they have previously been declined through other Creative England and/or BFI offers. However, it's not advised that you simply resubmit the project as it was - it's worth reflecting on why the project might have been declined before.

THE PROGRAMME

When will there be a decision on our submission?

We will endeavour to let all applicants know whether they have been successful or not by 31 May 2019 at the very latest. If there is any delay to this date due to an unexpectedly high number of submissions, we will contact all applicants by email with a revised timescale.

How much time commitment will iFeatures demand from filmmaking teams?

iFeatures is a commitment. We want to work with passionate, ambitious and committed filmmakers who will seize the opportunity provided by the initiative, which has been designed to see engagement throughout from the filmmaking teams. We also realise that people also have jobs and families, and will do our best to make it work for everyone, no matter what their personal circumstances.

iFeatures is a 10-month programme including dedicated and bespoke support, access to industry and networks, as well as mentoring and high-level training with established industry professionals. There will be three group residential Labs (approx. 3 days each) as well as an initial overnight Bootcamp which participants will be expected to attend. There will also be individual script development and mentoring sessions. Otherwise, how you manage your time to complete required development deliverables (treatments/beat sheets, script drafts, revisions, etc.) is down to you agreeing a credible plan with the iFeatures team.

The development onus will inevitably fall on the lead writer but both the director and producer will be expected to be intimately involved with script development and in other elements of the process towards market readiness.

How will the development award be spent?

Each filmmaking team will agree a development budget with the iFeatures team. This may vary according to the specific needs of each project and the stage of development that it is at, but will be driven by, and expected to complement, the wider Lab journey and structure of iFeatures, as well as by guideline overall rates suitable for low-budget projects. We would expect the writer to receive a significant proportion of the monies with appropriate retainers for director and producer. Applicants and agents should note that there will only be minimal flexibility around the spend and structure of the development award, and if a different approach is required or expected to development then they should consider alternative routes of development support.

Apart from the award, how will story/script development be supported?

The short answer is in a way that is most appropriate to the project and team. The development teams within Creative England, BFI Film Fund and BBC Films will provide input/feedback at key stages in the process. Teams will also work with a story, script or development editor who is suited to the material.

What happens if one or several of our filmmaking team leave the project along the way?

We'll do all we can to help you resolve any issues but at the end of the day it's your project and you'll have to find a way of driving it through the development process. In the unfortunate

event that a member of the team does drop out or is asked to stand aside, we'll assist you in finding a replacement but will reserve the right to approve who they are. In the event that a suitable resolution can't be reached, we'll have the right to put the project into turnaround as a last resort.

What are the recoupment expectations for development awards?

Projects will be subject to industry-standard turnaround provisions set out in the development contract with Creative England. If your project subsequently goes into production (with or without support from BBC Films or BFI) then the development award amount will be repayable no later than first day of principal photography of that film; we will require a development end credit, to include reference to our partners and the National Lottery; and we will expect a 5% share of producer's net profits (payable to BFI and BBC Films).

How flexible is the low-budget bracket for projects?

We believe there is an achievable sweet-spot for high-quality low-budget films budgeted between £500,000 and £750,000. We are looking for projects which at the point of application expressly intend to finance within this bracket, and we will develop films with a view to tailoring proposed budgets to what we believe the project needs and what can be reasonably financed in the current landscape. We will not select projects which have the express or obvious aim of shooting significantly outside that bracket; if you feel your project falls clearly outside of it, please discuss this with us before applying.

What will happen at the conclusion of iFeatures?

On completion of the programme and the final development phase, Creative England, BFI and BBC Films will consider the best route to market for projects. Following the Lab, the BFI and BBC Films have both committed to supporting at least three films to progress to production. iFeatures aims to drive a high proportion of the projects developed through the Lab to a position where they can successfully finance, and access the full range of financing options available in the current landscape.

The intention of iFeatures is to equip and empower producers and filmmakers to drive their projects forward. In the past, iFeatures iterations each saw three films progress directly through its own production funding scheme, but we have also seen further films convert outside the scheme through a variety of routes, and at various budgets. iFeatures has since evolved into a development Lab programme, with the aim of flexibly engaging with the opportunities of the current funding landscape, and better serving the filmmaking teams as the agent of their own success.

If you can't find an answer here or in our iFeatures Guidelines, or if you need to discuss with the iFeatures team prior to applying, please contact ifeatures@creativeengland.co.uk

While the information and advice in these FAQs is believed to be accurate at the time of going to press, Creative England reserves the right to make changes at any time to iFeatures and/or to these FAQs at any time at its discretion. Neither Creative England or its Partners shall be responsible for any loss attributable to errors, omissions or other inaccuracies in the information contained in these FAQs.