
NOTES ON NOTES

Notes on supporting material for development applications

Thorough, specific supporting notes are essential for the assessment of an application for development funding. Your application will benefit significantly if you take the time to consider and articulate the strengths and weaknesses of your project. Remember that quality and relevance of supporting material, rather than sheer volume, should be the guiding factor in formulating an application.

Where different members of a team are submitting notes (writer, producer, director, script editor), the notes should reflect the respective roles and demonstrate a unity of creative vision for the project. While we understand that these documents may change with the various stages of the development process, it is essential that they reflect your current intentions for the script development of your screenplay.

As part of your application you need to submit:

- script development notes from the writer
- a producer's statement, unless a producer is not yet attached
- a director's statement, if a director is attached.

Please note: These documents are not intended as pitch documents. Rather, they provide a critical analysis of the project at this stage and an outline of the challenges to come. Please do not submit more than the page extent indicated in each section below.

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT NOTES FROM THE WRITER

Up to three pages.

Script development notes are the writer's opportunity to tell us about the project via a concise, to-the-point critical analysis of the submitted screenplay or treatment, an outline of the project's creative strengths and potential, and clear identification of the challenges facing the next draft. Script development notes should provide a detailed critical analysis of the submitted screenplay, briefly outlining the vision for the project and how the current draft/treatment is fulfilling it as well as the challenges it faces and identifying specific steps that will be taken in the next draft to improve it.

These notes, with regard to the ways in which these challenges might be overcome, are critical to our understanding of your process and project.

It is vital that script development notes:

- demonstrate a robust understanding of the film's genre, premise and structure, and tell us what the big ideas at the heart of the project are
- reveal a clear understanding of the protagonist's journey *as it relates* to genre, premise and structure. What are the protagonist's wants/needs? What are the stakes, key turning points and underlying themes? In the case of an ensemble story, what theme or element unifies the different characters' journeys?

- identify current challenges in the script. This might involve an investigation of issues related to structure, plot, tone, length, dialogue, characters, character arcs, theme, set-up and resolution. What are the stakes, obstacles, key turning points.. What is the dramatic question underlying the script
- are specific rather than general. Strategies for how current script problems are to be addressed should be described with clarity and purpose. Screen Australia doesn't expect the writer to have all the answers but where possible, the notes should provide straightforward, craft-based solutions regarding script challenges.

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Up to three pages.

The producer's statement should describe in detail his or her vision for the project. It should define:

- the target audience, and the realistic potential of the proposed project to reach that audience in relation to the development plan, estimated budget and financing strategy
- the producer's understanding of the current script, and the project in terms of what it ultimately stands to deliver to an audience
- the way in which the key creative team of writer/director/producer (or some combination thereof) will be working in order to realise the vision of the film, as well as a brief appraisal of the production methodology which will be needed to realise the project.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Up to three pages.

If a director is attached (or in the case of a writer/director), the director's statement should describe the directorial approach to the project. Ideally, it should outline the relationship between the meaning/idea of the work and the form in which it is to be expressed. A director's statement may move beyond the scope of the writer's notes, but both sets of notes should be founded on a unified creative vision.

The director's statement should demonstrate the director's understanding of:

- the current script; its strengths, weaknesses, future challenges and strategies to address them
- the fundamental creative vision. How and why is this a story that will capture the imagination of an audience?
- issues such as tone, performance style, visual style (incorporating approach to design, camera and editing), and choices relating to treatment of sound and score. NB: again, Screen Australia does not expect a director to have all the answers, but do be aware that consideration of these elements is of increasing relevance as a script nears completion.