



# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FUND: Guidelines

Issued 27 April 2023

Updated 20 December 2023

## Overview

The **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FUND** supports production companies, game development studios and screen businesses to provide skills development through structured work-based learning.

This involves:

- the development of a detailed Skills Development Plan that:
  - addresses the key skills needs of “below-the-line crew” (“Crew”) and Gamemakers on a given production/s, games project or more broadly the national screen sector; and
  - supports diversity, equity and inclusion;

AND

- an appointed individual from within the company or an external consultant in the role of Skills Development Officer, to oversee the delivery and implementation of the Plan.

Funding of up to \$80,000 is available to deliver an applicant’s Skills Development Plan. The fund is open to significant productions or projects across all formats and genres. Game development studios are eligible, as are film and TV production companies and screen businesses servicing the Australian screen sector. A co-contribution from the applicant is strongly recommended.

## Aims & Objectives

The aims of the Skills Development Fund are to:

- build Crew and Gamemaker skills throughout our workforce and support the skills development of as many Crew and Gamemaker roles as possible, especially in roles that are currently experiencing capacity constraints in our national workforce;
- support and nurture a culture of work-based learning and training on film/TV productions and games projects, in addition to supporting the development of production-based Skills Development Officers who oversee skills development and structured work-based learning;
- provide opportunities for Crew and Gamemakers to progress their careers through the

support of structured work-based learning and training;

- for games projects, provide opportunities for Gamemakers to progress their careers through timely and relevant work-based learning or improve the capacity of Australian game development studios and Gamemakers by investing in specialised skills that are in undersupply; and
- foster inclusive workplaces for Crew and Gamemakers and support the career development of workers from diverse backgrounds that reflect contemporary Australian life.

## Who is eligible to apply?

- Applicants must apply as an Australian entity. You will need to read our [Terms of Trade](#) to ensure you are eligible for Screen Australia funding.
- Applicants will be production companies, game development studios or screen businesses for a given production/s, games project/s and will have developed a Skills Development Plan that is ready to be funded by Screen Australia and implemented by a nominated Skills Development Officer.
- For Film and Television projects, projects must be of scale and well known to Screen Australia AND/OR are being produced by reputable production companies with a strong track record.
- For Games projects, the applicant game development studio must be able to provide evidence of a minimum of one shipped game.
- Applicants do not need to already be receiving production or games funding from Screen Australia. However, those that are may apply for additional funding under this program to support the implementation of a Skills Development Plan for the funded project (which will be provided separately as grant funding).
- Screen Australia is committed to increasing diversity throughout our sector, both in the content that we see and play on our screens and in the teams who make it. We want to see applications from companies led by and opportunities being provided for First Nations people; people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people who are Deaf/deaf or disabled; women, people who are non-binary or gender diverse; people who identify as LGBTQIA+; and people located in regional and remote areas.

## What will be funded?

- Funding can only be used towards training and development costs. Funding can only be used for training of Australian practitioners only.
- Application budgets may include expenditure for accessibility, support or other costs for the implementation of the proposed activities to ensure opportunities being provided are culturally safe and accessible.
- **All applicants should consider diversity, equity and inclusion, with opportunities that support the career development of workers from diverse backgrounds that reflect contemporary Australian life.**

- Examples of training and skills development that will be funded is listed in the “Skills Development Requirements” section below.

## What will not be funded?

- Funding cannot be used to fund or substitute a paid crew role on any production/project. Funding cannot be used for professional placements or attachments that are a requirement of Screen Australia, state screen agency or covered as part of another industry program.
- Funding cannot be used for retrospective training or development expenditure nor can it be used for training or skills development for individuals who are already working at the grade or in the role they are moving up to unless there is a detailed case that the step up will mean they are working differently (e.g. moving from one genre/format to another).

## Skills Development Requirements

### Skills Development Plan:

Applicants must submit a Skills Development Plan that identifies the Crew or Gamemaker skills needs of a production/s or more broadly the national screen sector. The plan will set out the steps the applicant will take to address the skills needs.

All Skills Development Plans must consider diversity, equity and inclusion and explain how the training and opportunities will support the career development of Crew or Gamemakers who are First Nations; from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; Deaf/deaf or disabled; women, non-binary or gender diverse; LGBTIQ+; and/or located in regional and remote areas. Application budgets may include expenditure for accessibility, support or other related costs for the implementation of an inclusive development plan.

Skills Development Plans may include a range of activities, such as:

- Crew and Gamemakers receiving on-the-job training to gain confidence in their roles;
- training and/or mentoring to support upskilling crew into mid-career and HOD roles;
- training for supervisors to develop learning solutions suited to their departments;
- training for digital artists in a new tool or pipeline for a games project;
- training for technical staff in a new engine, tool or pipeline; or
- structured programs focused on skills transfers/return to set.

**A minimum of three skills development participants must benefit from the proposed Skills Development Plan.** All skills development participants must receive an appropriate credit reflecting the role undertaken on the given production or games project.

### Skills Development Officer:

Each applicant is required to appoint an individual from within the company or an external consultant to the role of Skills Development Officer who will oversee the implementation of the proposed skills development plan and the capture of data/evidence related to the skills activity carried out. The Skills Development Officer will be required to liaise with Screen Australia to facilitate contact with the skills development participants and their supervisors throughout the production, including set visits.

## Mentors:

For any mentoring opportunities, the production will be required to engage an individual solely and specifically to mentor someone on the production or games project. The mentoring must be structured and linked to a personal mentee development plan relevant to the production and included as part of the Skills Development Plan.

## Training:

Where training courses are proposed as part of the plan, the total cost of a course being delivered to the applicant as part of the production or games project can be considered as part of the Skills Development Plan expenditure. This may include trainer costs, venue costs, materials costs, and relevant/justified accommodation/subsistence costs for the trainer. If the course is being delivered externally, then the cost of sending a staff/crew member on the course can be considered as part of the Skills Development expenditure.

## How to Apply

Applications can be made via the application portal via SmartyGrants. As part of your application, you will need to submit the following information and supporting materials:

- fully completed application form including contact details and confirmation of eligibility
- a **Skills Development Plan** [which identifies the specific production/s and skills needs of Crew and Gamemakers, and details the steps that will be taken to address them]
- details of an individual or external consultant who will be the **Skills Development Officer**, including a bio of the individual's experience in the industry and suitability for the role
- intended **outcomes and KPIs** (should be quantifiable)
- **information about the applicant company:** experience; structure; and details of principals and key staff
- a detailed **budget** that addresses all components of the Skills Development Plan including any co-contribution from the company.

## Assessment Process and Criteria

The Program Operations team will review each application to determine eligibility and ensure that required application materials have been provided. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment and an estimated timeframe of the outcome based on the current deadline.

Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists will assess all applications against the **aims and assessment criteria** of the Skills Development Fund and the strengths and capabilities of the applicant entity.

### Assessment Criteria:

- **Addressing the Skills Need.** How well the Skills Development Plan addresses the skills needs of Crew and Gamemakers for the production/s or games project/s and the suitability of the activities to be implemented as part of the plan.
- **Skills Development Officer.** The experience of the individual that has been identified as the Skills Development Officer and their capacity and capability to implement the plan.

- **Company experience:** How experienced is the production company that will be providing the opportunity?
- **Budget.** How well does the proposed budget address the activities set out in the Skills Development Plan and the activities proposed?
- **Impact.** How many Crew and Gamemakers will benefit from the proposed Skills Development Plan and how well does the proposed activities benefit the Australian screen sector and the areas currently experiencing the most significant workforce capacity constraints?
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** How well has the applicant considered diversity, equity and inclusion in the planning of the proposed opportunity?

As part of the assessment process, Screen Australia will review the Skills Development Plan and may contact you to seek changes, especially concerning specific skills deficits and priority roles identified by Screen Australia.

We aim to make the application and assessment processes as transparent as possible, but given the volume of applications we receive, we may not have the resources to provide feedback on each proposal.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome approximately eight weeks after the posted deadline.

## Terms of funding

If you are successful with your application, you will need to enter into a Screen Australia grant agreement with specific non-negotiable core conditions.

Funding will be in the form of a non-recoupable grant.

Drawdowns:

- For successful applicants: 60% on signing, 35% on receipt of mid-term narrative and cost report; 5% on receipt of final narrative report and cost report.

Reporting Obligations:

- It will be a requirement of the funding agreement to maintain and report at regular intervals in relation to the deliverables, KPIs and implementation of the Skills Development Plan.
- Acquittal of funding will include necessary data for the evaluation of the program against program KPIs, in addition to diversity and inclusion reporting.
- Screen Australia will also establish post-plan contact and monitoring of Crew or Gamemakers who have benefited from the Skills Development Plan for both reporting requirements and career trajectory assistance and progression.

Any personal information collected from Reporting Obligations will be handled in accordance with Screen Australia's [Privacy Policy](#).

See the **FAQs** for further information.

If you have any questions after reviewing these guidelines, the application form, and the FAQs, please contact Program Operations on 1800 507 901 or via email at

[industrydevelopment@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:industrydevelopment@screenaustralia.gov.au). Please note that we are unable to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

### **Update Log**

December 2023

- Clarification that funding can only be used for training of Australian practitioners only.

September 2023

- Program name and directive changed from Production Crew Skills Training Fund to Skills Development Fund.
- Game development studios and training/development for Gamemakers now included.