

# Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Issued 1 July 2025

Updated 31 October 2025

### How much can I apply for?

If you are applying for the production of a live-action short film, the maximum amount you can apply for is \$100,000. If you are applying for the production of an animated short film, or a film that combines live-action and animation, the maximum amount you can apply for is \$125,000.

The minimum allowable production budget in this program is \$75,000.

The maximum allowable production budget in this program is \$175,000.

Screen Australia expects that the budget will pay at least award minimum rates and, where applicable, any minimum rate agreed between the relevant guilds, including key creatives, cast and crew.

### What does Screen Australia mean by Short Film? Does this also mean Online/Direct-to-Audience shorts?

For the purposes of this program, Screen Australia defines 'short film' as films of fifteen (15) minutes or less whose first and primary window is a theatrical festival outcome.

For short work for an Online/Direct-to-Audience platform, please go to Screen Australia's Narrative Content Production Funding [Guidelines](#).

### Can I apply by myself?

This program is open to companies and individuals (either alone or as part of a team of co-applicants).

If successful, the applicant/team will need to incorporate a company to make the project before contracting with Screen Australia.

### Can I apply for 100% of my budget?

For the purposes of this program you can apply for up to 100% of your production budget and up to the following amounts:

- A live-action short, \$100,000;
- An animated short, or a short that combines live-action and animation, \$125,000.

The program accepts applications where the production budget is up to \$175,000 and you have sourced other avenues of funding.

The minimum allowable production budget in this program is \$75,000.

The maximum allowable production budget in this program is \$175,000.

#### **What is the minimum amount I can apply for?**

\$75,000 is the minimum amount you can apply for.

#### **When is the best time to apply?**

There are two (2) competitive deadline-based application rounds of funding per financial year. The deadlines for Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding are available on the Screen Australia website.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply when their project is ready, the story is production ready, meets all eligibility criteria and have all submission materials in place.

Projects that intend to be in pre-production or principal photography on either the application deadline date or decision date will not be eligible as Screen Australia does not fund retrospective costs.

#### **What if I have no credits?**

Screen Australia requires a minimum level of experience for directors and producers to be eligible to apply for the Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding program.

The Short Film Production Funding program has eligibility credits and the team must meet them to be eligible to apply. The credits required are about the team's requirements as well as requirements for individual team members. The following additional eligibility criteria apply to this program:

- o creatives **can hold dual roles**, for example writer/director, writer/producer, director/producer, animator/producer but must have eligible credits for any role they are holding;
- o creatives **can be in co-roles**, for example co-directors, co-writers, co-producers, co-animators but must have eligible credits for any role they are co-holding;
- o executive producers can be attached to projects;
- o **director or co-director** requires the following sole or co-directing credit/s:
  - o a minimum of one (1) narrative short film that has been publicly screened in a competitively selected Australian or international industry film festival that is not a student film, category or festival; and/or
  - o a minimum of two (2) professional mainstream theatre or mainstream festival directing credits as sole or co-director, programmed by an artistic director or festival director with a

paying audience, not an amateur or self-produced season; and/or

- o a minimum of six Narrative; (6) episodes (of any length) of directing credits in an Online/Direct-to-Audience platform, publicly released and with a minimum of 5,000 views per episode;
- o For the avoidance of doubt, if you are applying for an animation project or hybrid animation/live action project, your credits must be in animation and/or hybrid animation/live action to be eligible.

A director is **not** eligible if they have directed a scripted feature film, but is eligible if they have directed a documentary feature.

- o **producer or co-producers** require the following sole or co-producing credit/s:
- o a producing credit on a minimum of one (1) short film that has been publicly screened in a competitively selected Australian or international film festival; and/or
- o a minimum of six (6) Narrative episodes (of any length) of producing credits in an Online/Direct-to-Audience platform, publicly released and with a minimum of 5,000 views per episode.
- o For the avoidance of doubt, the attached producer/s may have a feature or other narrative credit(s).

**Writers** do not require any credits.

### **Can I continue to develop my script if funded?**

Screen Australia expects that the script submitted at the time of application is production-ready. If funded, Screen Australia understands that scripts may or will be further developed to incorporate elements such as production requirements and casting.

### **Can I apply for funding for a short film project that a student team member intends on submitting as coursework?**

No. Projects linked to a course of study, such as being part of any assessable material or being used to count towards credits for a course are not eligible.

### **I have already made my short film project, can I apply to Screen Australia for post-production, enhancement or finishing funding?**

No, Screen Australia does not offer funding after a project is made.

### **Do I have to talk to Screen Australia before submitting an application?**

No, you do not have to talk with Screen Australia before submitting an application.

Please read and review the Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding [Guidelines](#), the [Application Form](#) and this FAQ.

### **Can I apply with more than one project at the same application deadline?**

No, if you are a writer, director, producer or animator, you can only be named in one application in any role for the Narrative Content Short Film Production funding deadline in which you are an applicant or a team member.

**Can I apply Screen Australia Narrative Content Development funding and then the Narrative Content Short Film Funding Production Fund?**

No, the Narrative Content Development Funding program does not support writing short films or proof-of-concept (POC) scripts.

**Do I have to repay production funding from Screen Australia if my application is successful?**

No, Narrative Content Short Film Production funding will be provided as a non-repayable and non-recoupable grant.

**What if I have not submitted all required materials when I submit at the deadline?**

Once submitted, the Program Operations team will review each application to determine eligibility and ensure that required materials have been submitted. A member of the team may contact the applicant if there are questions regarding submission materials or eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment which will take approximately twelve (12) weeks.

**How long will I have to wait for a funding decision?**

Due to the volume of applications, you will be notified of the outcome of your application within twelve (12) weeks.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application via email and where required, by telephone call by a Screen Australia staff member.

**What happens if I'm successful?**

Funding will be in the form of a grant and subject to a **non-negotiable** standard contract.

Successful applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application verbally by a Narrative Content Investment Manager. Applicants will also be advised of any special conditions of Screen Australia's funding, after which the decision will be notified in writing.

Approved applicants receive a Letter of Approval detailing the level of Screen Australia's approved funding, as well as information about the contracting process and any applicable conditions.

Following this, successful applicants will enter into a production grant agreement (PGA) with Screen Australia.

Please allow sufficient time for contracting with Screen Australia, and where required, other parties. A member of the Screen Australia Communications team will be in contact to discuss how and when your funding will be announced. All funding decisions are embargoed until an announcement strategy is confirmed and agreed.

**If our application is successful, Screen Australia will provide an industry mentor to support the director. How will the Director Mentor work with us and our project?**

The Director Mentor will work with the team and Director of a successful project across the three key phases of pre-production, production and post-production. The focus for the mentoring will be determined between the Director Mentor and Director.

**Do we get to/ need to select the Mentor?**

No, Screen Australia will engage and assign a Director Mentor to each project.

**What happens if I'm unsuccessful?**

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing.

Projects that are unsuccessful can reapply in a future funding round if significant changes have been made; however, you will need to provide a Statement of Changes, outlining key changes to the project.

If a project is declined twice for this, or any predecessor Screen Australia Short Film funding program (i.e. Hot Shots) it is unable to apply again to Screen Australia's Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding program.

**I'm an emerging practitioner, do I need a more experienced Producer or Executive Producer attached to be eligible?**

No. As long as you and your team members meet the eligibility criteria, your project can be assessed.

**Will my application have a better chance of being approved if I ask for less money?**

You should apply for the amount of funding you need in order to undertake and complete your project within the context of the funding caps for this program.

**Do I need to film part of my project as a proof of concept?**

No, you do not need to film part of your project as a proof of concept. While this can be helpful, you only need to provide proof of prior work of one or more of the key creatives in your application. It is helpful if this prior work is a similar style or tone of the project you're applying to make.

**Can I have volunteers/students/unpaid cast and crew as part of the project?**

Screen Australia expects all recipients of funding to pay at least award minimum rates or, where applicable, any minimum agreed between the relevant guilds, for all work performed by third parties on their project, including key creatives, cast and crew, as per the Terms of Trade (see [Information for Recipients](#)).

If you intend on hosting Vocational Placements for your project, you must obtain Screen Australia's prior written approval and discuss the matter with an Investment Manager.

### **What can't I use the funds for?**

See the [guidelines](#) for a list of projects/activities that are not eligible for funding. Your production budget will need to be approved by Screen Australia before contracting. Screen Australia's funding cannot be retrospective.

### **Do I have to shoot my film in Australia?**

If successful, Screen Australia strongly encourages applicants to shoot their film in Australia. Any successful applicant and project must adhere to Screen Australia's Terms of Trade, and the guidelines of Narrative Content Short Film Production Funding. For example, the production budget must reflect cast and crew wages, which must be paid no less than minimum Australian union rates. For example, the project must be able to demonstrate that the applicant controls the rights and central management and control of the project is in Australia.

Screen Australia recognises that there may be stories that cannot be shot in Australia. Whilst Screen Australia will accept an application for a project that does not shoot in Australia, the applicant must be able to indicate why shooting in Australia is not possible. The applicant will need to present a case in their application materials as to why the project requires a shoot outside of Australia or why elements cannot be achieved in Australia, and meet all other eligibility criteria of the program.

The maximum allowable budget for any successful project under this program is \$AUD 175,000. Any project considering a shoot that is not in Australia must be able to be delivered within the budget cap for this program, whilst meeting all other requirements for eligibility. It is strongly advised that the applicant, if presenting an application for a non-Australian shoot, is able to demonstrate in their application materials the viability of the production budget and production methodology in addition to any specific requirements for shooting in a non-Australian country, inclusive of safety, permits, insurances, and meet all other eligibility criteria of the program.

### **Can my project be a co-production?**

No, for this program Australians citizens or permanent residents (holding a permanent visa) must control the rights and have central management and control in Australia. The origin of the film must be identifiable as 100% Australian. The director, writer, producer, and where applicable, animator must be Australian citizens or permanent residents (holding a permanent visa), whether that is one person or co-people fulfilling those roles. In addition

each above-the-line role must meet all other relevant eligibility criteria, and Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

If successful, the funded film must have its country of origin as Australia.

### **Can I use non-Australian actors?**

A successful short film can launch the career of everyone involved, including above and below the line talent, crew and heads of department, inclusive of cast. If your project requires a non-Australian actor, then you will have to engage with the [Foreign Actor Certification Scheme](#) early if you intend to bring foreign actors into Australia for any production. Separate to any requirement from Screen Australia, a production must meet the requirements of this scheme. It is strongly advised that the applicant, if presenting an application that includes casting of a non-Australian actor, is able to present a case in their application materials as to the budget viability of casting that actor, as well as adherence to the Foreign Actor Certification Scheme.

### **What Rights need to be in place at the time of application?**

Applicants must have clear chain of title before applying for Short Film Production Funding. This means that any and all rights to the project need to be owned and controlled by the Applicant, as obtained through legally-binding documentation. If you have an option over underlying rights (such as if the script is based on existing intellectual property, such as a book, podcast, play, song etc.) such option must be active (i.e. not expired) and must be ongoing until a date that is later than the proposed commencement of principal photography.

A solicitor's opinion letter (with respect to chain of title) will need to be provided prior to contract execution.

### **What do I need to provide in my application?**

Review the application form in Smartygrants for application questions. Through the application form, applicants must provide all the information requested and answer the application questions.

### **Submission Checklist**

- ☐ **Script** draft script for a live action or animated project (no longer than 15 pages)
- ☐ **Production budget** using the Screen Australia Feature Film or Digital Media A-Z template and inclusive of:
  - Production Costs (including any applicable Development Costs)

- Post Production Costs
  - dedicated Marketing Budget to support the early development and creation of high-quality marketing assets as well as audience testing
  - All Delivery costs relevant to National Film and Sound Archive and festival entry costs and requirements
  - Closed Caption and Audio Descriptions
  - Cast and crew wages must be at least award minimum
  - Allowance for carer and accessibility costs (for example, Accessibility Coordinator), if applicable
  - Contingency of 10% of the production budget
  - Costs for a Solicitor's Chain of Title Opinion Letter
  - all post-production and delivery using the Screen Australia budget A-Z template that totals to \$100,000 (live action), or \$125,000 (animation) or up to \$175,000 (total budget either live action or animation with funding other than your request to Screen Australia) with all cast and crew paid no less than minimum guild and union rates
- ☐ Project and **Production Schedule** including Shooting Schedule and Post-Production Schedules, and any other documentation detailing the project's proposed production methodology or pathway
  - ☐ **Director and/or Animation Lookbook** with vision statement (no longer than 10 pages)
  - ☐ **Finance Plan**, listing all sources of financing for the project (which may include, equity, private investment, grant funding from other sources, sponsorship, post production house investments)
  - ☐ **Chain of Title**, a summary of chain of title for the project, and if available at the time of application
  - ☐ **Diversity, equity and inclusion plan**, where there is participation or content from the following communities: including d/Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+ or other under-represented groups, the project applicant should provide:
    - a statement setting out how the applicant is approaching the content or participation;
    - a consultation plan covering the full production process, and demonstrating how they are following it; and,
    - evidence of consultation taken to date.

### **Do I need to supply a Video Pitch?**

No, you do not have to supply a Video Pitch.



### **Do you provide a template for the Budget document?**

Yes, projects applying for Narrative Content Short Film Production funding must use the A-Z Finance Plan template or Movie Magic. The A-Z template is available to download on the Screen Australia [website](#). Production Budgets will also be accepted in either Movie Magic or the A-Z format.

### **What if my project changes after being funded?**

While we expect some project elements to change, some changes require review and approval from the Screen Australia's Narrative Content Department. Your Production Grant Agreement (PGA) will outline your obligations.

### **How important is inclusivity and diversity in my creative team?**

For Australian screen content to deliver cultural and economic benefits it must speak to, and be for, all Australians. A range of ideas and a diverse workforce will enhance the Australian screen industry, making it more relevant to Australian audiences and more competitive internationally.

Screen Australia is committed to building equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility into its programs and into our engagement with the community.

Screen Australia encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences. In particular, the agency welcomes applications from under-represented groups.

Screen Australia strives to make its funding programs accessible by removing barriers for people who are d/Deaf, disabled and/or those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **What is the drawdown schedule for Narrative Content Short Film Production Grant Agreement (PGA)?**

Execution, approval of all relevant documents	60%
On Viewing of Rough Cut, and approval of Rough Cut Cost Report	35%
Complete Delivery to Screen Australia and approval of final Cost Report	5%

### **How is my project announced?**

Successful projects will be contacted by a member of the Screen Australia Communication Team to discuss announcement. All funding decisions are embargoed until an announcement strategy is confirmed and agreed.

### **Further questions**

If applicants have questions about this program or accessibility requirements relating to submitting an application contact Screen Australia's Program Operations team at [shortfilm.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:shortfilm.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au) or on 1800 507 901.