



INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

Bridging the Gap is one of the leading documentary new talent initiatives in the UK, offering intensive training, a cash budget, and international distribution to emerging filmmakers based in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Bridging the Gap is run by Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI).

For our 17th edition of Bridging the Gap we are asking filmmakers to respond to the theme of **TURBULENCE**. The call is open to all filmmakers based in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

This year's theme is a challenge for applicants to define and redefine turbulence through ideas, characters and stories. We want you to surprise us with submissions that embrace the scope of the theme and subvert expectations in terms of form and content.

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." ~ Maya Angelou

Up to 12 ideas will be short-listed on the basis of the proposal and supporting visual materials. The projects will be developed and honed further through **weekend workshops** run by international filmmakers and leading industry professionals. The 12 filmmakers will then pitch to a panel of experts, who will **commission up to 5 films**. Creative Scotland will commission up to 4 Scottish projects, and Northern Ireland Screen will commission 1.

As well as a **cash budget of up to 8K** (plus in-kind production and distribution support) the selected filmmakers will receive further training and mentoring over six months to create vibrant contemporary stories.

The films will be delivered by May 2020, and are intended for **distribution in cinemas and at festivals**.

Eligibility

The initiative aims to bridge the gap between training/graduation and a first commission by offering filmmakers the opportunity to work closely with SDI. **We are particularly interested in filmmakers from diverse and under-represented backgrounds.**

Scotland and Northern Ireland-based filmmakers are welcome to apply for the chance to be short-listed and develop their projects through our workshops.

We cannot accept applications from students in full time education.



Submitting your proposal

Proposals* should be **2 pages** in length. They should start with a short description (premise) of the film, then follow with a slightly lengthier description of the idea with notes on research, access, character, visual style, etc. and, if you know this already, some brief information on the collaborators you would like to work with.

**See 'Writing a documentary proposal' included at the end of this document.*

We are looking for **strong visual ideas** with cinematic scope. Can you imagine watching them on the big screen? If you are short-listed, there will be time to hone the proposal for the final pitch, but initially well written, clear proposals with a creative approach, real vision and a feel for story will stand out.

While we like distinctive and ambitious ideas, make sure your project is realistic in respect of length (ca 10 min), production limitations (shooting in January, February, March 2020) and financial considerations.

You can add a key image or two to the proposal to give a more visual idea of the story - but make sure it enhances your idea, rather than mislead the reader.

Visual material

We would like you to submit **a taster** with your application. This can be a **clip** showing your main character or your main location (if relevant to your story). It doesn't need to be edited but should help us visualise your project!

Selection criteria

Up to 12 ideas will be pre-selected by industry professionals on the basis of the proposal and supporting materials, and on how beneficial the programme will be to them.

Successful candidates will be informed on Monday 7th October 2019

Please note that Bridging the Gap financiers and partner organisations will have access to the applications.



Checklist

Your online application (www.scottishdocinstitute.com/opportunities/bridging-the-gap) should include:

- **Proposal** (2 pages) to be uploaded when filling in the online application form
- **Visual Material** (one short clip to show the style of your film and the access to your contributors if you already have them) to be uploaded when filling in the online application form
- **Short note** from the heart on why you are passionate about making your film through Bridging the Gap (50-150 words)
- **CV / Filmography** (1 page maximum) to be uploaded when filling in the online application form
- **Example** of your latest work, or one of your short films that you feel is most relevant to your application and shows your directorial and storytelling skills. **Maximum 30 min in length and no show reel please!** An online version (on Vimeo or YouTube) is much preferred. Alternatively send us a DVD* labelled clearly with your name. The DVD should reach us before Sunday 22nd September 2019
- **Equal Opportunities Form** (anonymous) to be filled in online once your submission is completed

**If sending a DVD, please post it to: Scottish Documentary Institute | Bridging the Gap – 74 Lauriston Place - Edinburgh EH3 9DF*

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MIDNIGHT SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2019

FEE: APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATION ON BRIDGING THE GAP ARE FREE



Training overview & schedule

If you are selected, you **must make a commitment** to attend the training sessions.

All workshops will take place at the Edinburgh Art College (University of Edinburgh). Travel and accommodation bursaries are available to those who have to travel further than 75 miles to attend.

- **Project Development & Research Workshop:** Fri 18th & Saturday 19th October 2019
Tutor: Elhum Shakerifar – Producer (UK)

- **Pitching & Trailer Workshop:** Sat 16th, Sun 17th November 2019
Tutor: Grant Kier – Producer (UK)

- **Directing Workshop:** Sat 14th & Sun 15th December 2019
Tutor: Mila Turajlić – Filmmaker (Serbia)

- **Commissioning Pitch:** Friday 10th January 2020

- **Project Delivery:** Wednesday 20th May 2020

Wider Benefit - open to non-participants

We also host **masterclasses** and **screenings** in Edinburgh by internationally recognised speakers and filmmakers from the industry, which are **open to all**. Details of those events will be available on www.scottishdocinstitute.com

Masterclass highlights well as our documentary podcast can be found online: (www.scottishdocinstitute.com/masterclasses).

For any further question please contact us: bridgingthegap@scotdoc.com / 0131 651 5760

BRIDGING THE GAP IS SUPPORTED BY:

SCREEN SCOTLAND
SGRÌN ALBA



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art



WRITING A DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL (2/3 pages)

The **proposal** is a shorter version of the treatment - often written at earlier stage. Although you should save the specific, detailed descriptions for the treatment at a later stage of development, your proposal should give the reader a clear idea of the film you want to make.

Passion

When writing a proposal, don't be afraid to infuse your words with passion. Your excitement and sense of urgency should be contagious. Documentary is about emotion not information. And don't forget that humour also has a place in documentary! Look out for those quirky moments making life precious.

Theme

Theme is what your story is really about - the underlying point your story is making. While your documentary tells a specific story rooted in a particular time and place, it no doubt addresses an overarching societal issue or universal human concern. Like a cell's DNA, this theme should be embedded in every scene of your show, keeping it focused and on track.

Background

Brief background information will help the reader understand the context of your project and of the story you want to tell.

Story, structure & characters

The **story** is you following the evolution of a specific moment in someone's life, some event, some transformation, etc. and this becoming the vehicle for you to explore the theme of the film.

Like the frame of a house, or a human skeleton, **structure** holds up all the parts of a story, supporting and organizing the elements into a coherent and interrelated dramatic whole. Structure determines how the story will unfold dramatically, how it will build - moving through moments of tension and conflict - from beginning to middle to end. Explore what the overall



story is, what could happen in the course of the duration of the film. Try to give the reader a sense of the film's emotional trajectory.

Give a brief description of your **characters** and try to bring them to life for the reader. Mention the kind of access you have to them and to the story you want to tell. Do you know the characters or do you still need to approach them? Have you researched your story already? Etc.

Style

Style refers to a variety of tools one can mobilize to give the story a distinctive quality, feel, look or tone. Style can be articulated through camera work, editing, sound design, score, lighting, production design, interviewing technique, etc. Every stylistic choice becomes a signifier, telling the viewer something important about the story. Be concise and try to avoid generic statements ('the film will be cinematic').

Voice-over and Point of View

"Voice" can be a many-layered thing. When considering voice, you have to ask, *Who* is the storyteller and whose story is being told? The answers to these questions determine not only the viewer's sense of intimacy with the characters, but the director's point-of-view. In a truly personal story, the teller and subject are one and the same.

When a director represents another character or community, it is useful to be conscious of the ways storytelling can mediate the voice of the subject or main character.

Length & shooting format

Length may be prescribed by the slot you going for but always make sure that the story told fits the length.

Remember the shooting format SHOULD facilitate the stylistic and structural demands of the film not the other way round.