

WRITE NOW

Early Stage Documentary Development Fund

Why WRITE NOW?

The journey from an idea to the first treatment or the first successful funding application can be the most challenging one. The idea might not be fully articulated, the story might be missing important pieces, the characters might not be on board yet. Far too often, getting a project off the ground is a labour of love, relying on the adaptability and resilience of the Director to power through and carry on, often spending their own money.

We, at SDI, are a small but passionate and dedicated team with big dreams. We live, breathe and support documentary because we believe in its power to inspire solidarity, bring together communities and advocate for change, in a generous and thought-provoking way. In our role as a charity and an intermediary between funders, industry, artists and audiences, SDI is in a unique position to support directors at this stage, which can be one of the most fragile in the process of making a film.

The WRITE NOW Fund is our response to some of the challenges the documentary industry currently faces, and it's an exciting journey for us too.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be Scotland-based
- The project must be a first or second feature-length documentary
- We accept animation and experimental projects. Hybrid projects combining documentary and fiction will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- We do not accept series or fiction projects

General Advice for Applicants

Our application form asks for some details about you, your filmmaking experience as well as your project.

We are looking for applicants who demonstrate:

- An ambition to question and push the boundaries of the documentary form
- A sense of vision and urgency
- Curiosity and open mindedness to actively embrace an early development process that best fits their project

Be yourself in the application - we are not looking for perfectly formed commercial filmmakers but more those ambitious storytellers with determination to get their project off the ground and a readiness to actively develop their idea.

Be honest about your needs, your doubts and the challenges you are or expect to be facing whilst developing your project.

Application Questions

What do you mean by Early Stage Development?

We have a broad definition of what early stage development can be:

- You may have started developing an idea/story but you haven't secured access yet
- You may have already secured protagonists but the story still needs to be developed
- You may have a proposal written but you need to develop a treatment to apply for funding
- You may have already shot some material but you are in the process of changing the angle of the story
- You may be in the process of developing a feature film based on a short you've completed

But don't hesitate to get in touch if you want to check that you are at the right stage to apply.

What kind of story does the Fund support?

We are not looking for specific stories or themes and your story doesn't need to be set in Scotland. But it should be topical, urgent or timeless and have a contemporary relevance. We also value visual ambition, creative storytelling and uniqueness.

What can I use the WRITE NOW grant for?

The grant can be used for various early development needs including but not limited to living costs / childcare & caring costs / taking time off work to write or undertake

research, legal costs, access to research archives / documents, identifying and gaining access to protagonists (including travel), and any preliminary costs associated with shaping the story and the creative vision.

Grantees cannot use the grant for production, post-production, promotional and marketing purposes, or for applying to marketplaces, training initiatives and workshops.

I am a Producer with a feature idea, can I apply?

No, the WRITE NOW fund is for Directors only.

Who will be part of the selection panel?

Your application will be reviewed and assessed by a panel of three readers, including a member of the SDI team and two international documentary professionals.

When will I hear from you to know if I've been selected or not?

We will be in touch late October/early November 2023.

Will I receive feedback on my application?

Yes, all eligible applicants, whether successful or not, will receive brief feedback on their application.

What happens if I'm successful?

You will be asked to sign a contract with SDI detailing the amount awarded, the timing of payments, credits obligations, etc. You will also be requested to provide us with a budget (how the grant will be used) and a provisional schedule in order to receive the first instalment of the grant. Grants will be paid in two instalments.

What will I need to deliver if I'm awarded a grant?

Deliverables for the grant and the delivery timeline (between 3 to 6 months) will be individually designed based on the grantee's goals and the project's specific needs at the time of selection. Some possible outcomes include: characters identified/access secured, story and topic research, completion of a treatment.

You will be expected to properly credit Scottish Documentary Institute / WRITE NOW Fund and its funders in the credits of your completed film.

Is the WRITE NOW grant repayable?

No.

Can I use the WRITE NOW grant as match-funding?

Yes, the grant can be used as match-funding in your finance plan and funding applications.

Can you tell me more about the tailored support part of the grant?

This support is offered on an individual basis and can take various shapes, from consultancies to mentoring with industry professionals and creatives. You will also have a minimum of two sessions with SDI to provide feedback and assistance during the early development stage and to help planning for the next steps of the project.

About the Application Form

When starting your application online, you will be able to view the whole application form and you will have the option to save it as a draft and complete it in stages.

Note that we are unable to accept incomplete applications or those received after the published deadline.

We are a small team so please do not leave submitting your application, or contacting us with any questions related to your application, until the deadline day (**EOD Monday 25th September 2023**)

Checklist for application submission

- Short synopsis
- Short proposal (2/3 pages)
- Visual material (optional) or moodboard/lookbook/deck (optional)
- Note on the stage you're at with your project, your needs and what will the grant be spent on
- Funding in place (if applicable)
- Short biography
- Detailed filmography
- 1 example of previous work (NO showreel please)
- Completed Equal Opportunities Form

Need help?

Contact us on writenow@scotdoc.com

We will be available to support you with any queries you may have between 9:30 am – 5:30 pm and we will endeavour to respond to messages as quickly as we can. However, we are a small team so please allow 24 hours for a response to your message.

Alternative formats for applications

Please get in touch if you would like to submit your application in a different format (e.g. video presentation, offline or in BSL) or if you have any accessibility requirements so we can support you throughout the application process.

Make sure to contact us in advance so we can provide the right support for you. We may be able to cover the costs associated with this.

You will still be expected to answer all sections of the form and to make your application by the published deadline.

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