

FILM LAB: NEW VOICES

Frequently Asked Questions



[Film Lab: New Voices](#) is a low-budget, feature film skills development initiative designed to provide a platform for the next generation of diverse, South Australian filmmaking talent.

Film Lab: New Voices is co-funded by the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), Adelaide Film Festival (AFF) and Screen Australia.

For full information about the program including application instructions and guidelines, please go to safilm.com.au/industry-and-skills#filmlab.

Do short films made at university still qualify a team for entry?

Yes. The SAFC is seeking applications from early career writer, producer and director teams who do not already have feature film credits but demonstrate readiness for participation in the Film Lab: New Voices program. Film Lab: New Voices is a unique program and is therefore highly competitive. Applicants will be expected to have significant short film, web series or short documentary credits and demonstrate a track record with the content they have made. These shorts could have been made at university or made independently, and examples of past work must be able to show high levels of commitment and professionalism and convince the committee that the team can deliver a high quality feature film within the allocated budget and by the deadline of the Adelaide Film Festival 2026.

Is there a size limit for the teams applying for the initiative?

Yes. There is a maximum number of three to a team being writer, director and producer. Teams can also apply as a team of two, with one producer and one writer/director. Please note: You must talk to the SAFC before applying if this is your situation.

Do all my team members have to come from SA?

Yes. Each member of your team must be a South Australian resident as defined in the [SAFC Terms of Trade](#).

Can we have an established producer attached to the project going in, or is this exclusively for teams with all emerging creatives?

No. This is a unique talent escalator program to give first-time feature film credits to a new South Australian writer, director and producer. It is not a program aimed at established producers. If the producer has not financed a feature film through the traditional financing pathway of the Producer Offset, Screen Australia, state agency and market attachment then yes, they can be part of the team. Please note: You must talk to the SAFC before applying if this is your situation.

If I'm making a feature documentary, does it have to be shot only in SA? Can it be shot in other states in Australia or internationally?

Maybe. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The primary objective of the lab is to create new "greenlighter" talent. The secondary objective is to foster new creative collaborations between SA key creatives, SA Heads of Department and SA service companies to support the "next wave" of SA filmmaking talent. The SAFC therefore expects that projects will be wholly produced and post-produced in South Australia. Where the subject matter of a documentary takes place outside of South Australia, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis with respect to all other assessment criteria. Please note: You must talk to the SAFC before applying if this is your situation.

Can I submit a full draft script that I already have?

No. You should only submit 1/3 page concept in the two page pitch document. Please note that Film Lab: New Voices is a skills development program to uncover new talent and the scripts must be written for the allocated budget. This is an opportunity for bold new voices to create projects that will launch careers and get noticed in the marketplace.

Applicants should be aware that the development process will interrogate the concept/idea to a high level – it is unlikely that the concept you may be approved for as part of your application will be the same script you finally develop.

If I work part time or full time, can I do Film Lab?

The Film Lab: New Voices program will be a rigorous development program over a 12-month period with guest speakers and activities during the week, script mentor feedback sessions on weekends and a schedule of deadlines to meet.

How applicants manage their participation in the program around other work and personal commitments is up to the applicant, but it is an intensive program.

The Film Lab: New Voices development component will include a two-week workshop in March 2024.

Writers will have approximately three months to write the first draft and just over two months to re-write the second draft. Writers will then have approximately one month to re-write and deliver the third draft, and two months to deliver the polished script, due February 2025.

If you are selected to go into production, it will be a full-time commitment.

Final schedule dates will be shared in February with shortlisted teams.

If I'm a student, can I do Film Lab?

No. As per the [SAFC Terms of Trade](#) section 1.2 on Applicant Eligibility:

An individual applicant must not be:

- (b) enrolled full-time in a film, television or interactive digital media course at a film school or other educational institution. Applications from part-time students will be assessed on a case-by-case basis only where the film does not form part of the assessable material for the course and where the applicant holds all copyright for the project

Can I apply with a concept for a documentary?

Yes. This program is for feature-length projects of any genre (scripted or documentary) that demonstrate a strong authorial voice, authentic storytelling, and an independent spirit.

Do I have to have already made a feature film to apply?

No. The SAFC is seeking applications from early career writer, producer and director teams who are expected to have short film, web series or narrative documentary credits and the team must be able to clearly demonstrate their ability to deliver the project to professional standards on schedule and within the allocated budget.

What if I have only written/directed/produced short films before, can I still apply?

Yes you can apply. The SAFC is seeking applications from early career writer, producer and director teams who are expected to have short film, web series or narrative documentary credits. The past work must be able to show a commitment and professionalism from the teams and convince the committee that the team can deliver to the budget and deadline of AFF 2026.

What if I have a television broadcast credit but not a feature film credit – can I still apply?

Yes, because you don't have a feature film credit. The past work must be able to show a commitment and professionalism from the teams and convince the committee that the team can deliver to the budget and deadline of Adelaide Film Festival 2026. Remember that Film Lab: New Voices is for narrative films or documentary, so the applicants must be able to demonstrate prior experience in narrative screen storytelling.

What if I have a feature film credit for a feature that I self-funded – can I still apply

Yes, if you have only self-funded a feature film and not financed it through the traditional finance model of Producer Offset, Screen Australia, state agency and the market. Please note: Key creatives with prior feature film credits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and you must talk to the SAFC before applying if this is your situation.

I've made music videos – can I still apply?

Yes. The SAFC is seeking applications from early career writer, producer and director teams who are expected to have short film, web series or narrative documentary credits and have a track record with the content they have made. If the past work is in music videos, the applicant in the team must be able to show a commitment and professionalism and convince the committee that the team can deliver to the genre, budget and deadline of Adelaide Film Festival 2026. Remember that Film Lab: New Voices is for narrative films or documentary, so the applicants must also be able to demonstrate prior experience in narrative screen storytelling.

Do I have to have an underrepresented person on the team?

Yes. The SAFC is committed to supporting increased participation by people from groups currently underrepresented in the South Australian screen industry including: First Nations practitioners, female identifying writers and directors, practitioners from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, Deaf or disabled practitioners, practitioners from LGBTQIA+ communities and practitioners from regional and remote areas of South Australia.

Can a female producer be the underrepresented person on the team?

No. This is not an area of underrepresentation in the South Australian screen industry. A team may include a female producer, but that person will not be considered as the underrepresented team member. Female writers and directors are eligible as the underrepresented team members.

Can we have a writer who is also the director in the team – making a team of two?

Yes you can, but please carefully consider the commitment of the applicants to engage in the Film Lab: New Voices development process and to work professionally and to a high technical standard within the budget.

What if my film is a \$1M budget or higher – can I still apply and find the additional finance later?

No. We strongly invite teams to come in with ideas that can be made for \$600K. Teams are encouraged to be entrepreneurial, however the intention of Film Lab: New Voices is to use the parameters of the low-budget methodology creatively and to best effect. Any plans for additional finance and in-kind investment will require prior approval from all funding partners. Teams must be able to demonstrate that their films can be completed to a professional standard for the approved budget and timeframe.

I will be bringing some additional private finance into the project – is this OK?

Sourcing additional finance is not a requirement of this program. We encourage teams to come in with ideas that can be made for \$600K. Teams are encouraged to be entrepreneurial, however they must obtain prior approval for any additional finance and in-kind support and be able to demonstrate that their films can be completed to a professional standard for the approved budget and timeframe. Private finance will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Can I crowdfund to help finance the film?

Sourcing additional finance is not a requirement of this program. We encourage teams to come in with ideas that can be made for \$600K. Teams are encouraged to be entrepreneurial however, they must obtain prior approval for any additional finance and in-kind support and be able to demonstrate that their films can be completed to a professional standard for the approved budget and timeframe.

Can I base my idea on a book or other work?

Yes, if you own or have the option to acquire the rights to develop and produce the work. Teams will need to provide evidence of optioning or acquiring the rights when applying.

Is there any flexibility on the Adelaide Film Festival delivery date?

The successful Film Lab: New Voices film will have its World Premiere at Adelaide Film Festival in 2026. AFF will require the film to meet this timeframe, so there is no flexibility for delivery.

Is there any chance of submitting to other festivals other than the Adelaide Film Festival?

Not prior to Adelaide Film Festival 2026.

I'm developing my career as a writer/director/producer. How should I choose what single role I could perform?

The SAFC is seeking applications from early career writer, producer and director teams who are expected to have short film, web series or narrative documentary credits and have a track record as either a writer, producer and director with past work they have made in that role. Therefore, the past work must be able to show a commitment to that role and convince the committee that the individual and team can deliver in that role to the budget and deadline of AFF 2026.

I've had a passion project for five years that I've been trying to get developed and financed. I think I can make it work for Film Lab: New Voice – should I apply with that?

We encourage teams to come in with ideas that can be made for 600K. You are not expected to submit a full script and should only submit 1/3 page concept in the two page pitch document, but you could rework the themes in your idea to fit the low budget methodology. Please note that Film Lab: New Voices is a skills development program to uncover new talent and the scripts must have bold new voices that will set the film apart in the marketplace. Applicants should be aware that the development process will interrogate the concept/idea to a high level – it is unlikely that the concept you may be approved for as part of your application will be the same script you finally develop.

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How will the projects be assessed?

Film Lab: New Voices will be assessed by a panel comprising of SAFC, AFF, Screen Australia and independent industry representatives with experience in low-budget feature films. All partners are committed to increasing representation of underrepresented voices in decision-making and will ensure that all panels include diverse voices and perspectives.