BTL NEXT STEP
Stage One Guidelines
[Production Companies & Screen Businesses]

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Overview

BTL Next Step is a credit springboard and career accelerator program to support established mid-career below-the-line (BTL) practitioners to step up into senior crew and leadership roles that have been identified as experiencing shortages.

The program is broken down into two stages:

Stage One – Applications are open to **production companies and screen businesses** who are able to provide opportunities for mid-career practitioners to gain experience in senior crew and leadership roles identified in the list below.

- 1st Assistant Director
- Art Director
- Editor
- Line Producer
- Location Manager
- Post Production Supervisor
- Production Accountant
- Production Manager
- Special Effects (SFX) Supervisor
- Sound Designer

Approved companies will receive funding of up to $50,000 for each opportunity supported under this program. An exception to the $50,000 funding limit may be considered for extended placements where the applicant is able to demonstrate significant benefits to the industry.

Applicants may offer to provide multiple opportunities under this program for the same role or across multiple roles.

Stage Two – following each Stage One deadline decision, applications will open for **mid-career practitioners** who would like to progress their careers in one of the BTL crew roles that have been identified above as part of Stage One of the program. More information on Stage Two of the program will be published here once available.

Aims & Objectives

The aims of BTL Next Step are to:

- provide opportunities for established mid-career practitioners to step up into senior BTL crew and leadership roles that have been identified as experiencing shortages;

- increase the number of experienced and credited 1st Assistant Directors, Art Directors, Editors, Line Producers, Location Managers, Post Production Supervisors, Production Accountants, Production Managers, Special Effects (SFX) Supervisors and Sound Designers working in film, series television or other significant formats, thereby addressing significant current constraints in workforce capacity in these roles;

- increase diversity, equity and inclusion in the screen sector by supporting the career development of workers from diverse backgrounds that reflect contemporary Australian life.

Who is eligible to apply for Stage One?

- Applicants for Stage One will be production companies and screen businesses who are able to provide opportunities for mid-career practitioners in the ten identified roles.

- Applicants for Stage One must be Australian companies. You will need to read our Terms of Trade to ensure you are eligible for Screen Australia funding.

- Applicants do not need to already be receiving funding from Screen Australia. However, those that are may apply for additional support under this program (which will be provided separately as grant funding).

- Projects must be of scale and well known to Screen Australia AND/OR to be produced by reputable production companies with a strong track record.

- 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 LGBTIQ+; and people located in regional and remote areas.

What will be funded?

- Stage One of this program provides funding to production companies and screen businesses to provide opportunities for mid-career practitioners in the identified roles above to be mentored, undertake a placement and attain a credit that will progress them along their career pathway.

- These opportunities will subsequently be filled by applicants through Stage Two of the program, being **mid-career crew practitioners** for whom this credit making scheme will elevate and accelerate their career trajectory. These applicants will have 2+ years of professional experience, have reportable credits, and will be ready to step up into the relevant opportunity and earn a credit.

- Each opportunity should put Placees in the centre of a production and expose them to relationships, networks, connections and skills enhancing experiences.

- Screen Australia will contribute a maximum of up to $50,000 towards each placement (funding will be directly related to the length of the opportunity). Requests of over $50,000 may be considered in exceptional circumstances for extended placements where applicants are able to demonstrate that there will be significant benefits to the industry.

- Funds are to be used as a contribution to:

    - The costs of employing the practitioner at the applicable recognised industry rate including wage (at least award minimum rates), superannuation, overtime etc excluding host company overheads or capital expenditure;

    - The costs of a supervisor/mentor, if not otherwise covered by the applicant, to mitigate risks involved with engaging a less experienced HOD;

    - An allocation for the host production company/business to cover on-costs of onboarding and hosting the Placee.

- The length and remuneration of each Placement will be determined by the nature of the format and schedule of the given production but will cover pre-production, production and some post and the production and mentor/host production company must commit to the awarding of a credit for the Placee.

- 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.

- Additionally, Screen Australia will contribute up to $3,000 towards relocation costs and/or $3,000 towards carer/support costs, if required, to support Placees from anywhere in Australia to undertake placement opportunities. Screen Australia will review requests for contributions towards relocation and career/support costs through Stage Two of the program and these costs will be paid to the selected Placee via the host company.

- Placement opportunities that are approved in Stage One will be included in a public call-out as part of BTL Next Step Stage Two.

- As part of the assessment and selection process for BTL Next Step Stage Two, successful applicants from Stage One will be required to review the applications received for their opportunity, interview up to 3 short-listed candidates (with a Screen Australia representative present at the interviews) and liaise with Screen Australia as required for the assessment of Stage Two. Screen Australia will have final approval of successful applicants.

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 retrospectively nor can it be used for opportunities 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).

- Funding cannot be used to support Placees (selected in Stage Two) who are currently employed by the production company or screen business.

- Placees are only accepted via a successful Stage Two application and assessment process, and are not able to begin a placement retrospectively, or prior to an approved placement start date.

How to Apply

Applications can be made via the application portal on 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.

- details of the production/s that the BTL crew opportunities could be provided on and which roles /opportunities could be offered.

- details of the individual who will be overseeing or mentoring the Placee as part of the opportunity being provided on the production.

- details of the company – experience; structure; and details of principals and key staff.

- a detailed budget that addresses all components of the opportunities being offered including any co-contribution from the production company or screen service business.

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 **assessment criteria** of BTL Next Step.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Aims of the program:** How well does the BTL crew opportunities and the production/s meet the aims of the program and the roles being targeted?
- **Mentoring/Supervision:** How experienced is the individual that will be overseeing or mentoring the Placee?
- **Company experience:** How experienced is the production company that will be providing the opportunity?
- **BTL Opportunity:** How long are the BTL opportunities being offered by the applicant and what is the future potential of Placees being hired for future television or film projects in a credited role?
- **Budget:** How well does the proposed budget address the placement opportunities being offered by the applicant?
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion:** How well has the applicant considered diversity, equity

and inclusion in the planning of the proposed opportunity?

We aim to make the application and assessment processes as transparent as possible, but given the volume of applications we receive, we do 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 and the successful Placee(s) through Stage Two will need to enter into a grant agreement with Screen Australia which includes specific non-negotiable core conditions.

If the production company or screen business is not able to fill the opportunity with an applicant from Stage Two, then the funding will be revoked.

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

Drawdowns:

- For successfully funded 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 outcomes of the opportunities.
- 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 BTL crew who have benefited from the BTL Next Step program 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, application form, and the FAQs, please contact Program Operations on 1800 507 901 or via email industrydevelopment@screenaustralia.gov.au. Please note that we are unable to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

Update Log

Dec 2023

- Clarification of Stage Two selection process.

Sept 2023

- Roles of crew placee's updated from four to ten positions
- Addition of regional travel and/or Carers Costs for Stage Two placee to be provided by

Screen Australia where appropriate

- Addition that selected placee's from stage two cannot be current employees
- Addition that Stage One funding will be revoked if no suitable placee is found through Stage Two.