

GUIDING LIGHTS 10/11

FAQs

Do I have to pay a fee to take part on the Guiding Lights scheme?

No.

I'm an American national who lives and works in the States. Can I apply?

No.

I am a non-UK national who has residency in the UK. Can I apply?

Yes - proof of residency must be provided. You must also demonstrate that you are committed to continuing to work in the UK film industry.

I don't live in London, will this count against me?

Definitely not! We are actively seeking applications from all parts of the UK. Financial assistance is available for travel to events that are part of the scheme.

Is there an age limit for applicants?

No.

I work full-time. Does this mean I won't be able to participate on the scheme?

No, the time commitments required from participants over the 12 months should be easily manageable alongside full-time employment. Please be aware however that there are certain dates for which you must be available and to which you must commit. More information about these is contained in the Guidelines.

Why do the eligibility criteria and submission materials vary from role to role?

Each discipline has a different career-path and one size doesn't fit all. The eligibility criteria have been developed in consultation with industry and take into consideration the differences between the individual disciplines.

I have worked on and off in the film industry for several years. Does this count as at least two years?

You must add up each period of employment so that it totals two years. For film production work, this is only valid if you received a credit for the work. If some of your work is in television production, that can also count, but you must be able to demonstrate that you are committed to working in the film industry.

Can my work in commercials and music videos count towards my two years of professional experience?

No. *Except* in the case of cinematographers who may use work on commercials to account for up to a quarter of their two years of professional experience.

I have worked in the film industry but it has mostly been unpaid. Can I apply?

Yes, as long as it is professional (i.e. not as a student), unpaid work experience does count. As above, film production work is only valid if you received a credit for your work.

I've been to film school and have made 3 short films, but have never had a job in the film industry. Do I qualify?

No, you must have worked professionally in the film industry.

I have worked as a 1st AD for at least two years and have directed two short films of at least 3 minutes in length. Can I apply as a director?

Yes, as long as you have directed at least two short films and one of them has been selected by and screened at one of the festivals on our approved festival list, your professional experience can be in any grade in the film industry.

Can I send a music video or a commercial instead of a short film?

No, we are specifically looking for film industry professionals so you must send 2 films for assessment.

I'm a writer/director, can I apply for both categories?

No, the application process requires that you select only one field under which your submission will be considered. We are aware however that the two disciplines often cross over. Should your application be successful, this will be taken into account when matching you with a mentor.

I have the necessary amount of experience and credits but don't have a copy of any of my films. Will you consider my application without this?

No, your supporting material is a compulsory element of your application. We have to be able to see an example of your work.

I have directed two short films, but neither of them has screened at one of your approved film festivals. Can I apply?

No, at least one of your films must have been selected by, and screened at, one of the festivals on our approved list.

How do I prove that one of my short films was screened at a festival?

Evidence may include an acceptance email or letter from the festival, a copy or photocopy of the festival programme, a screengrab of an online festival programme or written confirmation from the festival. If you have another form of evidence but are unsure as to whether or not it will be accepted, please email the Guiding Lights Co-ordinator (guiding@lighthouse.org.uk).

What constitutes a letter of recommendation?

If you are a writer, a cinematographer, or a business professional, you must include a hardcopy of a letter from a professional referee who has known you for at least 12 months and is familiar with your work in the capacity in which you are applying. This letter should detail who they are, how they know you, and why they think you are suitable for the Guiding Lights scheme.

One of my films was directed with a co-director – can I submit it?

No. In order to assess your abilities and potential as a director we need to see work that we know you were wholly responsible for.

As a writer, how do I indicate my 'professional experience' in the film industry if my work has never been produced?

Whilst you don't necessarily need to have been professionally employed to write, we are looking for evidence that you are committed to a writing career within feature films and have sufficient industry experience and knowledge. Credited film work in

another role does count towards your 2 years of professional experience, but higher education studies **do not**. Relevant screenwriting activity may include, but is not limited to: script development work, short film screenplays, securing an agent, having a project optioned, collaborations with/commissions from production companies/producers, and participation in continuing professional development training.

I have worked in the film industry for at least two years and have written a feature-length screenplay which is so far uncommissioned. Can I apply?

Yes, as long as you can demonstrate you have the required level of experience and have written one feature-length script (and have at least one other feature-length project in development), it does not need to have been produced.

I have written scripts for short films, television and radio but I have not yet written a feature-length screenplay although I intend to. Can I apply as a writer?

No, sorry, submission of a completed feature-length script is a compulsory part of your writer application.

I work in a law firm, non specific to the film industry. However, I have worked on numerous film deals within the firm which add up to at least two years of experience. Can I apply?

Yes.

Is there a limit to the length of films I can submit as my supporting materials?

Each film must be over 3 minutes long but there is no maximum length. However, due to the high volume of applications expected, we may not be able to watch more than 30 minutes of material per applicant.

I am a foreign national and I am not working in the UK. Am I eligible to apply?

If you are a national of a European Union country you are eligible to apply. However, you should bear in mind that the priority for Guiding Lights is to support UK filmmakers and that the programme is designed to benefit the UK film industry. These priorities will be taken into account in the selection process so you must show how your participation will help to achieve this.

Do you provide mentoring for editors, composers or sound designers?

No. The scheme is currently only open to the disciplines specified. Please contact Skillset for information on other training and development initiatives.