

ScreenSkills Select: application guidelines and endorsement criteria

Guidelines for undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses

These guidelines are designed to provide guidance for courses that will be applying for ScreenSkills Select endorsement or renewing their existing endorsement. It gives information on the criteria, application and assessment process, the timelines and the people involved.

Once you've read these guidelines, in conjunction with the application form, please contact ScreenSkills Select with any questions and to talk through your own individual course application.

ScreenSkills Select Team

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Please read these guidelines in conjunction with the **ScreenSkills Select Application Form**

1. Background

ScreenSkills

ScreenSkills is the industry-led skills body for the UK's screen-based creative industries - animation, film, games, television including children's TV and high-end drama, VFX and immersive technology. We work across the whole of the country to ensure that UK screen has access now, and in the future, to the skills and talent needed for continued success. As part of our remit we work with undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses that supply talent to the screen industries. ScreenSkills Select endorses and enhances screen courses that develop industry-ready students and industry-leading professionals. Each course undergoes a rigorous assessment by industry professionals in order to be ScreenSkills Select endorsed.

Aims of ScreenSkills Select

The aims of ScreenSkills Select endorsement are to:

- Signpost prospective students (and their parents) to the courses that will provide industry-relevant skills, and strong links with industry professionals and potential employers.
- Assure employers that students have the levels of knowledge and skills they want in new employees and can perform to a high standard, helping them to prioritise recruitment and engagement activities with courses identified as having a strong industry-facing ethos.
- Help enhance the quality of endorsed courses through the application process and annual review.
- Bring university and college courses closer to industry – setting up new connections, new understanding and new opportunities.
- Give educators additional industry insight and connections, rewarding their courses with a distinct value in a crowded marketplace.

To qualify for ScreenSkills Select endorsement, courses must have:

- high graduate/leaver employment and progression rates
- excellent standards of student work
- evidence that they are addressing sector skills gaps and shortages in curriculum design
- a focus on preparation of students for the workplace, including teamwork, professional and business skills
- strong engagement with employers and an industry focus
- commitment to staff and student diversity and inclusion with regards to both recruitment and training.

2. The endorsement process

Eligibility

All courses must:

- Already be in operation and have produced at least one cohort of graduates or leavers, with the evidence available to demonstrate that a good proportion of them have either gained employment in the screen industries or progressed on to relevant further study
- Be industry-focused, with strong input from employers and relevance to the screen industries

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- Courses must be at Level 3 or above – either undergraduate (Levels 4-6), postgraduate (Level 7) or vocational (Level 3-5)

Endorsement process

Precise timelines for the below stages will be agreed with course leaders:

<p>Expression of interest Course leader receives new application guidance and application form and confirms their intent to apply. ScreenSkills is on hand to offer one to one advice and guidance.</p>
<p>Application form submitted Course submits application form and accompanying supporting evidence. Payment for initial non-refundable Stage 1 fee is then due.</p>
<p>Assessment Stage 1 – Initial review Industry and quality evaluators assess the application, supporting evidence, progression data and student work, and feed back to course leaders via a Stage 1 report.</p> <p>Unsuccessful courses are offered feedback and advice on course development. Successful courses are provided with feedback regarding what they need to present at the next stage – the Stage 2 industry panel presentation.</p> <p>The Stage 2 panel fee will be invoiced prior to presentation date.¹</p>
<p>Student Questionnaire ScreenSkills will send a confidential questionnaire to go to all students from the applicant course. A 60% response rate will be required before progressing to a ScreenSkills Select Stage 2 industry panel presentation.</p>
<p>Assessment Stage 2 - Industry panel presentation Course leaders are asked to give a presentation to a Stage 2 industry panel made up of senior representatives from the relevant part of the screen industry. The industry panel also interview student representatives from each course. Stage 2 panel is currently conducted online via Zoom.</p> <p>Prior to the presentation, the Industry Evaluator will present summary feedback on the written application and the results from the student questionnaire. Presentations from course leaders should cover areas arising from the Stage 1 report, as well as information on facilities and industry input into the course, and a quality improvement plan for the future. Further examples of student work can also be provided at this stage.</p>

¹ For institutions wishing to submit multiple applications/ re- endorsements we offer a discount for courses (applicable for Stage 2 fees only) ranging from 10% for 2 courses to a maximum of 40% for 5 or more courses.

Endorsement decisions

At the end of the presentations at Stage 2, the industry panel may provide informal feedback but will not always provide an indication of the endorsement decision.

They will complete a Stage 2 report which provides detailed feedback against the assessment criteria as well as a formal decision. The purpose of the report is also to highlight any particularly innovative areas of the course as best practice and to provide a course development plan, highlighting areas for development.

If the industry panel judge that a good majority of the endorsement criteria have been met, the report will recommend endorsement. The endorsement can be subject to formal conditions or subject to satisfactory monitoring against any areas for development. If the industry panel team judge that critical areas of the endorsement criteria have not been met, the report will decline ScreenSkills Select Course endorsement and will provide feedback on areas that need to be addressed in order to better align with the criteria in the future.

4-year endorsement cycle and annual review

Courses are endorsed for 4 years and are required to complete an annual review in Years 2, 3 and 4 of endorsement. Annual review requires courses to report any major staffing, resource or curriculum changes, update on diversity and inclusion, course development plans, industry input and engagement and feed back on ScreenSkills Select benefits. At the end of the 4-year cycle the process is repeated and courses apply for renewal.²

Payment for annual monitoring fee is due in Years 2, 3 and 4 of course endorsement, starting from the nearest date to the end of a course's first year of endorsement.

Application form and supporting evidence

As outlined above, at the application stage courses are asked to submit an application form along with some supporting evidence.

The application form should be self-explanatory, but please contact the ScreenSkills Select team at any point for advice and guidance if unsure. It requires narrative answers against the employer engagement criteria below and tabled information on graduate/leaver employment rates, work experience, staff experience, staff/student ratios, lists of industry input as well as cohort profiles (application/enrolment/retention numbers and diversity information).

The list of supporting evidence below consists of all the additional mandatory information that we need in addition to the application form. In exceptional circumstances additional pieces of information can be submitted by the applicant but these should be discussed with the ScreenSkills Select team in advance.

Supporting Evidence

Course Content and Structure:

- Course structure diagram clearly defining progression routes from year to year.

Course Monitoring and Development:

- External examiners' reports from the past two years
- Examples of feedback from students

Industry Engagement:

² **Terms and Conditions:** All endorsed courses will be under contract with ScreenSkills during their endorsement cycle. Requirements of the contract will include the submission of annual review, maintenance of endorsement standards, payment of annual fees and active promotion of ScreenSkills Select through their own channels and the ScreenSkills website and compliance with branding and communication guidelines.

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- Information relating to live briefs i.e. example project brief set by an employer

Facilities and Equipment:

- An outline of relevant facilities
- A list of relevant equipment, with quantities
- Details of technical and/or IT support and student access to facilities and equipment

Student Work:

- Eight recent pieces of individual student work from appropriate major projects, along with feedback and assessment information for each (final year or final term/semester). The range should include work assessed as top, average and borderline fail.
- Eight recent pieces of individual student work from their interim projects, along with feedback and assessment information for each (depending on the length of the course, this should be from the middle term/semester or second/third year). The range should include work assessed as top, average and borderline fail.
- Eight recent samples of industry-facing work showcasing the best student talent from the course, such as show reels, exhibitions/showcase, etc.

For those courses that produce actual artefacts (e.g. set design, production design etc.) – only digital images/videos should be provided to support the application at the first stage. For courses submitting games or digital student work, the application form requires you to detail any specialist software industry evaluators will need in order to view the material (e.g. engines, 3D models, specialist video).

Submission format

We require an electronic copy of your application and supporting materials:

- Preferred submission format – file sharing via Dropbox, or other file sharing/transfer sites
- Email (under 10Mb). Please follow up with a separate email with no attachments to ensure that your application has been received.
- Maximum 10Gb for all files

The application must clearly reference the provided supporting evidence. ScreenSkills Select may reject any applications which do not comply with the submission recommendations, in which case it will need to be returned to the applicant un-assessed for re-formatting and referencing.

General privacy policy

ScreenSkills is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. You can read our privacy policy at this link: <https://www.screenskills.com/about-us/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about this Policy or concerning your personal information please contact ScreenSkills, Data Protection Officer(s) at: data.protection@screenskills.com, or by post to Data Protection Officer, ScreenSkills, 94 Euston Street, London, NW1 2HA.

3. ScreenSkills Select endorsement criteria

The ScreenSkills Select endorsement criteria outline the standards of excellence required by employers to produce graduates who are creative and highly skilled in their specialisation. They also highlight the necessary professional skills to enter the industry, including entrepreneurship, leadership skills, awareness of ethical, legal, and compliance issues. The criteria define the outcomes of course design, curriculum and delivery that will meet these challenges and needs as follows:

The following criteria which is assessed at each stage of the process is designed to enable courses to demonstrate how they have a specific focus towards:

- Current industry practice
- Professional preparation for students
- Significant involvement of industry in course design, curriculum and delivery

The ScreenSkills Select application form will take you through each section of the criteria and provide you with guidance on how to submit evidence that your course meets the criteria.

A. Graduate achievement – Initial Criteria Check

Criterion: Provide evidence of successful progression of students into or towards the screen industries.

- Information should be provided on where at least 60% of graduates or leavers from the past 1 year (preferably 3 years), are employed or have progressed to ongoing education.
- Of these, a good proportion of graduates or leavers should be employed in roles relevant to their course or in creative/transferable roles in other industries, with evidence of progression towards senior roles after a few years. Alternatively, a good proportion of leavers should be engaged in ongoing education relevant to their course.
- Ideally, a proportion of current students and/or graduates should be achieving appropriate festival awards, industry and professional accolades, reviews, promotions or newsworthy achievements.
- Postgraduate courses should enable students to specialise in the field above the level expected from undergraduate students and gain in-depth knowledge and experience of their field at a professional level. Graduates from postgraduate courses should progress to senior levels in their career more quickly than their undergraduate counterparts.

B. Student work

Criterion: Demonstrate that student work produced on the course is appropriate for the level of the course and the discipline.

- Student work should reflect current industry practices where appropriate, but creativity, innovation and challenges to current practice should also be encouraged.
- Assessment standards should take into account students' readiness for industry.
- Graduate or final year work should be judged according to entry requirements for the chosen industry/sector, or alternatively entry requirements for appropriate ongoing education courses.

C. Recruitment and selection procedures

Criterion: Demonstrate effective and fair recruitment, selection and training procedures to increase participation from students from diverse backgrounds who wish to embark upon or further develop careers in the screen industries, and to encourage the development of appropriate behaviours and attitudes for working positively in a diverse setting.

- Effective procedures should be in place to identify those applicants who are innovative, creative and who have the potential to establish careers in the screen industries.
- Proactive recruitment practices for staff and students should be in place to encourage wider access and diversity.
- Pre-course information should clearly outline what students can expect during the course and should emphasise its vocational purposes.
- Teaching staff should be able to filter and refuse places to applicants that they judge unable to complete the course successfully. All shortlisted students should be interviewed, either face-to-face or by telephone and/or provide portfolios or equivalent where appropriate.
- Training opportunities should be available to develop appropriate attitudes and behaviours among students that will enable them to contribute positively to the workplace (for example, tackling bullying and harassment, or unconscious bias).

D. Close links and interaction with the screen industries

Criterion: Demonstrate close links and interaction with the screen industries

- Curriculum design should have regular input from the industry including where appropriate:
 - industry advisory board
 - consultation with industry professionals on course design
 - industry assessment of student work and providing feedback to students
 - external examiners with professional backgrounds
 - appropriate visiting and guest industry lecturers should be regularly scheduled
 - students should have access to relevant industry experience via work experience/work placements/internships
 - students should have the opportunity to take part in live briefs, work simulation and project work. However, live briefs and project work should not undermine commercial business opportunities.

E. Staff industry backgrounds and professional development

Criterion: Ensure that all practice staff have credibility as practitioners and are up to date with contemporary industry practices.

- All practice staff should demonstrate a suitable background in professional practice in the relevant industry sector/s.
- Clear procedures should be in place to ensure that all production staff are required to regularly refresh their industry practice. This may include:
 - dispensation to deliver commissions or work.
 - placements with appropriate companies, etc.
 - development should not be restricted to attending courses or conferences.
 - senior management should have systems in place to keep track of staff professional development and ensure all staff have sufficient time and are enabled to put the above into practice.

F. Professionally relevant education and business skills

Criterion: Provide a track record in high quality education relevant to the screen industries.

- Students should be provided with an overview of the structure of the screen industries and the sector(s) relevant to the course, including job roles, key current issues, skills shortage areas and skills gaps, further training, employment or career development, including freelance work.
- Professional preparation should be an embedded part of the course and should provide students with the financial, legal and business skills to further their career upon course completion, with an emphasis on freelance employment if appropriate for the discipline.
- Methods should be in place to develop students in the professional skills required of a successful industry professional, such as
 - team working
 - personal development planning
 - competitive pitching and presenting
 - appropriate behaviours and attitudes for the workplace (see above).
- Courses should show how students and graduates develop their entrepreneurial skills within their chosen field(s), for example through specialist mentors and incubator units.
- Students should develop appropriate skills to promote and showcase their work and to market their skills after course completion. Students should be aware of current industry issues and developments relevant to their sector, including
 - sector priorities
 - business environment for sector
 - IP
 - technological divergence and convergence and impact of digital networks

G. Professional resources

Criterion: Have resources which will enable students to practise their skills in environments which reflect screen industry practice.

- Sufficient dedicated access to professional facilities and resources that replicate current industry practice
- Students should have sufficient out of course workshop hours access to facilities and equipment
- Sufficient dedicated access to supervision and technical support should be available to all students