



NZWG SEED & SEED ADVANCED GRANTS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

NZWG SEED & SEED ADVANCED GRANTS

To give this industry its best chance of success we need strong new ideas. We need stories that resonate. New Zealand Writers Guild (NZWG) believe in facilitating diverse pathways for developing these stories. We need to allow writers space to find their voices. New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) funded Seed grants are for writers only and provide unencumbered development funding for feature film scripts.

The Seed Advanced grant pathway is aimed at reducing competition between upcoming writers and more experienced writers, as well as providing new opportunities for the latter, in the Seed pathway. The advanced grants provide accomplished writers with a higher grant level and flexibility around development costs to reflect their greater experience.

Seed & Seed Advanced grants represent an opportunity for writers to be innovative, to be brilliant, and to be excited about the chance to create something they own.

With thanks to [New Zealand Film Commission](#) for continuing to support the screenwriters of Aotearoa, through funding the NZWG Seed and Seed Advanced grants

SEED

For 2026 NZWG Seed Grants offers up to four grants of \$12,500 (+ GST if applicable) each for the development of feature film scripts. Included in the total is \$3,000 (+ GST if applicable) to put toward script consultation per feature film script.

SEED ADVANCED

For 2026 NZWG Seed Advanced Grants offer a total of two grants of \$15,500 (+ GST if applicable) each for the development of feature film scripts. Included in the total is \$3,000 (+ GST if applicable) for a broad development process – possible development tools / processes can be (but are not limited to) workshops, table reads, research and multiple script consultants.

GRANTS AIMS AND PARAMETERS

AIMS

- Create an opportunity for writers to experiment with new ideas and to develop a strong draft of a feature film screenplay before parting with any rights or presenting the work to producers or production companies.
- Seed Advanced aims to reduce competition in the Seed pathway, between upcoming and more experienced writers.

- Seed Advanced aims to provide more experienced writers with a higher grant level and more flexibility in development.
- Provide development funding specifically for writers-only to create a feature film script.
- Find new, exciting feature film projects.
- Create a unique facet of independent script development.
- Facilitate the creation of industry-ready feature film scripts.

PARAMETERS

- These grants do not reflect in any way a purchase price for a draft. They are a contribution to the writer's own investment of time and skill in a project they retain the rights to.
- These grants are for feature film projects only.
- The writer must still own the rights within their work to apply i.e.; no producer or production company is attached to the script.
- The script sample must be from the same feature film which is being applied to the Seed grant with.
- This grant is a subsidy, not a debt against the production. This means successful applicants receive \$12,500 (Seed Advanced) or \$9,500 (Seed) of unencumbered development funding.
- These grants are for New Zealand citizens or permanent residents only.
- An additional feedback service is available for \$150 at the time of applying online. These assessments commence after announcement of the recipients.
- All assessment is via a double-blind read: the assessors will be anonymous; assessors will not know whose work they are reading – decisions will be made on the strength of ideas and writing only.
- Assessors are independent. Each assessor will be an experienced industry practitioner with strong knowledge of script development.
- NZWG staff provide administration and the NZWG Board provide oversight to ensure clear, fair, and transparent processes.
- NZWG staff do not select recipients. The Board of the NZWG do not select recipients unless they are appointed as assessors in their independent professional capacity.
- NZWG Board members are eligible to apply for any round of Seed funding and will in such cases remove themselves from any discussion of that round of the grant.

APPLYING TO SEED OR SEED ADVANCED

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Call for applications 6 weeks in advance of the round deadline.
- Two rounds of Seed and Seed Advanced per year.
- All eligible applications received by the deadline will be read blind (writers names removed) by a minimum of two independent and experienced industry practitioners.
- Seed – Up to four applications may be selected in each Round, up to a maximum of eight per year.
- Seed Advanced – Up to two applications may be selected per round, up to a maximum of four per year.
- Writers of unsuccessful applications will be notified by email.
- Successful recipients will be contacted to engage in a discussion process before signing a tailored Seed or Seed Advanced Grant Agreement.

APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

SEED

Applicants must have written one or more the following to be eligible to apply:

- Unproduced – Film, Short Film, Television, New Media, Literary Works, and Theatre where the applicant is the primary creator.
- Produced – Under 90 cumulative minutes of; Film, Short Film, Television, New Media, and Theatre where the applicant has a Written By credit.

SEED ADVANCED

Applicants must have the following Written by Credit to be eligible to apply:

Produced – Over 90 cumulative minutes of; Film, Television, and Theatre where the applicant has a Written By credit produced by a recognised production company, platform, or authority or has been theatrically performed.

TWO OR MORE WRITER APPLICANTS

Where there is more than one writer per application through either Seed or Seed Advanced, eligibility will be determined as follows:

- The application to either Seed or Seed Advanced will be based on the writer with the MOST amount of experience.
- This is determined by any one of the writers of the application meeting the above Seed Advanced eligibility criteria OR at the discretion of the NZWG Executive Director, where writers of the application combined written by credits exceed the Seed eligibility criteria.

ALL APPLICANTS – ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Applicants must be New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
- ✓ Applicants must hold the rights to the application project.
- ✓ One or more applications may be submitted per round, by the same applicant(s).
- ✓ Applicants can only apply to one fund per round – either Seed or Seed Advanced.
- ✓ Applicants can apply with the same project up to three times.
- ✓ Applicants who have received a grant cannot apply again with that successful project.
- ✓ Applicants who have received a grant cannot apply to the grant again within six calendar months of completing the grant requirements.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications can only be made online only – www.nzwg.org.nz/seed-grants
- Application Materials include Eligibility Materials and Assessment Materials.

APPLICATION FEES

\$30.00 – Members of NZWG, Women in Film and Television (WIFT), Pan-Asian Screen Collective (PASC), Pacific Islands Screen Artists (PISA) and / or Nga Aho Whakaari (NAW). Please note which group you are a member of (with membership number) if it is not NZWG.

\$60.00 – Non-members of any of the above organisations.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL FEEDBACK FEE

\$150.00 –Additional Feedback (optional) service is available at the time of applying to either Seed or Seed Advanced. This is one page of feedback written by an assessor covering notes on the application.

- Additional feedback assessments commence after the grant recipients are announced.
- Additional feedback completed by a different assessor than the judges of that round.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Only correctly completed and entry fee paid, applications are eligible to be accepted into the grant assessment process.

Once the application payment and application materials have been approved, the applicant will receive an email to confirm. If you have not received this email, your application will not be submitted to the judges, please ensure you have received this email to be sure of your inclusion.

Incomplete applications, and applicants that have not paid the entry fee will not be accepted or refunded.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

On application, the following Seed and Seed Advanced Eligibility Materials, Assessment Materials, and Terms and Conditions are agreed to by the applicant(s), please see the last page of this guide.

ELIGIBILITY MATERIALS

APPLICANTS BIOGRAPHY / RESUME

This should demonstrate eligibility according to the above Application Eligibility and should include identifying details which will not be supplied to the Assessors.

SEED – BUDGET AND PLAN

A simple outline, a sentence or paragraph, about how the Seed grant of \$9,500 (+ GST if applicable) will enable the applicant(s) to write and deliver the next draft of the script. Also describing the \$3,000 (+ GST if applicable) for the script consultant(s).

Applicants cannot apply for funding to cover costs already incurred.

SEED ADVANCED – BUDGET AND PLAN

A simple outline of how the Seed Advanced grant of \$12,500 (+ GST if applicable) will enable the applicant(s) to write and deliver the next draft of the script. Also describing the \$3,000 (+ GST if applicable) for the development fee, which can include (but is not limited to): script consultant(s) fees, script assessments, script related research costs, table reads and script workshops.

Applicants cannot apply for funding to cover costs already incurred.

RIGHTS

Applicants must be the rights holder of the works in the application. Whether the work is original, an adaptation, or based on other source material the writer must hold and maintain the rights in the work when entering and while they are a current recipient of a grant.

These grants are for writers working on their own projects only. They are not available for producers looking for alternative sources of funding to pay writers to work on projects where the producer is a rights holder.

Applicants applying with an adaptation idea need to state the original source material and provide written evidence that they are the rights holder of the works to be adapted.

On entry the applicant(s) confirm these rights. If an applicant does not hold these rights, NZWG reserves the right to withdraw funding, and the recipient will be required to return any funding already received.

Human authorship of creative elements: These grants support the development of work created by the writer. Applicants must be the sole human author of the creative elements of their application — including the treatment, the screenwriting sample and the resulting script — and generative artificial intelligence (AI) must not be used to create any of these creative elements. Because AI-generated material cannot be owned as copyright, using AI in this way would mean the applicant does not hold the rights in the work, which is a condition of eligibility, and NZWG reserves the right to withdraw the application or funding. AI tools may be used only for the non-creative elements of the application — for example, drafting the Potential Audience paragraph, or describing in the Budget and Plan how the grant will be spent.

ASSESSMENT MATERIALS

WRITERS IDENTIFYING DETAILS & PDF REQUIREMENTS

The below Assessment Materials must have all identifying details removed. Identifying details are writer(s) names, contact details and other types of personal identifiers e.g. file name, previous works, additional writers etc. Script and Treatment PDFs cannot contain pictures, links to websites, casting references or director's vision.

If any of the Assessment Materials are found to have identifying details in them, NZWG reserves the right to withdraw the application from judging.

Treatment and script must:

- Have all writer(s) identifying details removed.
- Be provided in PDF format only, Final Draft or other scriptwriting software files are not accepted.
- Be presented in industry-standard formatting – 12 pt courier, single line spacing, normal margins.

LOGLINE

To be entered in an open field in the online application portal.

The logline is a statement, in 35 words or fewer, that reflects the narrative 'hook', premise or essential dramatic dilemma inherent in the proposed film. This is not a tagline for a movie poster, but rather a one or two-line summary of the film's essential storyline.

SYNOPSIS

To be entered in an open field in the online application portal.

The synopsis is a highly condensed story outline of no more than 250 words that clearly reflects the dramatic spine of the film. It must touch on the film's tone, genre, emotional journey, and key characters, and must include the film's ending.

POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

To be entered in an open field in the online application portal.

This paragraph will answer the following questions. Who is the primary target audience? What makes this movie different from competing movies? Why should your audience spend their time and money watching this movie? This must not include reference to prior material that may identify the applicant.

TREATMENT

Attached as a PDF file.

This is the first of the two key documents on which the application will be assessed.

This should deliver an outline of the core narrative story, including a beginning, middle and an end. The treatment should also convey the emotional journey, structure, and genre, as well as something of the tone and characters.

The treatment length must be, and is strictly enforced as:

- Seed – five (5) pages – up to a maximum of 2,300 words.
- Seed Advanced – five (5) to ten (10) pages.
- All writer(s) identifying details removed.
- PDF format only – Final Draft or other scriptwriting software files are not accepted.
- No imagery or links to further information may be included.
- Presented in industry-standard formatting – 12 pt courier, single line spacing, normal margins.

SCREENWRITING SAMPLE – 10 PAGES

Attached as a PDF file.

This document is the second of the two key documents to be assessed.

Whilst the synopsis and the treatment state the promise and potential of the idea, this screenwriting sample delivers on that promise. It must show that the writer can execute this screenplay in a skilful and professional manner. This includes tone, dialogue, cinematic imagery, transitions between scenes, and all the other elements that create a filmic experience in the reader's mind.

- The screenwriting sample must be from the same feature film as in the application.
- The sample pages must include some dialogue.
- The sample pages may include non-consecutive scenes.
- 10 pages of standard script formatted sample.
- All writer(s) identifying details removed.
- PDF format only – Final Draft or other scriptwriting software files are not accepted.

ASSESSMENT

Up to four assessors judge the applicant's assessment criteria through a blind-read process. This means the assessors cannot see who the applicants are, and the applicants do not know who the assessors are prior to the completion of judging. Each eligible application is read by a minimum of two assessors at the scoring stage; shortlisted applications may then be read by up to four assessors ahead of the two adjudication sessions at which recipients are determined.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessments are completed using only the following Assessment Materials:

- Logline
- Short synopsis
- Potential audience
- Treatment
- Screenplay sample

Eligibility Materials are not provided to, nor sighted by, the assessors. Assessors will be assessing each application on the following criteria:

1. Idea – is it compelling/engaging? Does it have an audience?
2. Craft – is the writer able to execute the screenplay on a high enough level to deliver on the promise of the idea?
3. Voice – is the writer’s voice original and clear?

SELECTION OF ASSESSORS

Each assessor engaged by the NZWG will be an experienced industry professional with a proven track record for assessing scripts. Potential assessors will be selected by the Executive Director of the NZWG, with some further suggestions from NZFC and the Board of NZWG.

The Executive Director of NZWG will select up to four different assessors to be engaged each round, all applications will be read by a minimum of two assessors at the scoring stage, with shortlisted applications read by up to four assessors before the two adjudication sessions. An additional, non-judging, script assessor will provide the optional Additional Feedback if purchased by applicants.

All assessors will immediately disclose any potential conflict(s) of interest and – where actively involved with the development of an application / project at the time of assessment – will subsequently remove themselves from any discussion, decision or selection relating to the application(s) in question.

The assessor's details will be made public at the time of the announcement of the grant recipients.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND FEEDBACK

- To be considered for a grant, an application score must make it into the Top 20 or Top 10 or are a judge’s “wildcard”.
- Score is marked in three criteria – Idea, Craft and Voice – from each of the assessors.
- The score is calculated from the total assessors’ marks for each of the three criteria. 1-3 – 3 being the highest in Seed and between 1-5 – 5 being the highest in Seed Advanced in each criterion.
- An adjudication session will be held to select the successful grant application(s).
- The assessors are under no obligation to award grants.
- Writers of unsuccessful applications will receive an email to state this. No further correspondence with the assessors will be entered into.
- Additional Feedback (optional) service is available at time of applying - \$150 + GST. A different assessor reviews the application and gives 1 page of detailed notes. These assessments commence after the grant recipients are announced.

SUCCESSFUL GRANT RECIPIENTS

The goal of this grant is to assist in the creation of industry-ready feature film scripts. In addition to the financial assistance of the grant funding, the NZWG will provide on-going, tailored support to give the best chance of the recipients achieving this goal.

The grant payment is usually structured as follows:

SEED

- Successful recipient(s) paid \$4,750 (+ any applicable GST) on signing of the Seed Grant Agreement with NZWG.
- The final payment of \$4,750 (+ any applicable GST) will be paid to the recipient(s) on completion and delivery of a polished draft based on the outcomes of the development process.
- The recipient(s) must provide accurate invoices for NZWG to make any payment.
- The script consultant(s) fee of \$3,000 (+ GST if applicable) will be paid directly to the consultant(s).
- Funding is subject to attaching a NZWG approved script consultant. This can be arranged with NZWG assistance if required.
- The working relationship between the writer and the script consultant will be established on a case-by-case basis to provide the writer with feedback and support in a way that works best for them.
- Barring circumstances beyond the writer's control, applicants will have 6 months from when they engage their consultant, to complete the process or the remainder of the money may not be released.

SEED ADVANCED

- Successful recipient(s) paid \$6,250 (+ any applicable GST) on signing of the Seed Advanced Grant Agreement with NZWG.
- The final payment of \$6,250 (+ any applicable GST) will be paid to the recipient(s) on completion and delivery of a polished draft based on the outcomes of the development process.
- The recipient(s) must provide accurate invoices for NZWG to make any payment.
- The development fee of \$3,000 (+ any applicable GST) will be paid directly to service provider(s) as agreed in the Seed Advanced Grant Agreement by the NZWG.
- Funding is subject to suitable development processes and tools being approved by NZWG.
- Assistance and guidance will be provided by NZWG to ensure the development processes and tools are fit for purpose for that project / recipient(s).
- Barring circumstances beyond the writer's control, applicants will have 6 months to complete the process, or the remainder of the money may not be released.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Successful recipients will participate in meetings with the Executive Director of the NZWG to discuss their plans, their progress, and the expectations for deliverables.

Recipients will also receive guidance on pathways for the project once the draft has been completed. This will include participation in any appropriate NZWG networking and pitching events.

NZWG Seed Dates 2026 -2027

2026 ROUND 1

Date	Detail	Processing
Friday, 31 July 2026	Open Round - Call for entries	6 weeks
Friday, 4 September 2026	Close Round - Eligibility Checks	1 week
Friday, 11 September 2026	Entries to Assessors	5 weeks
Friday, 16 October 2026	Assessors Selection back to NZWG, Shortlist Created, Additional Assessing	1 week
Thursday, 22 October 2026	Adjudication Sessions x 2 with Judges (normal Thursday & Friday)	1 week
Friday, 30 October 2026	Notifications to Applicants and Recipient Announcement	1 week

2026 ROUND 2

Date	Detail	Processing
Friday, 18 December 2026	Open Round - Call for entries	8 weeks - allow for Christmas and New Year
Friday, 12 February 2027	Close Round - Eligibility Checks	1 week
Friday, 19 February 2027	Entries to Assessors	5 weeks
Friday, 26 March 2027	Assessors Selection back to NZWG, Shortlist Created, Additional Assessing	1 week
Thursday, 1 April 2027	Adjudication Sessions x 2 with Judges (normal Thursday & Friday)	1 week
Friday, 9 April 2027	Notifications to Applicants and Recipient Announcement	1 week

CONTACT DETAILS

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