Writers in Motion Application Guidelines

How to apply for the 2027 professional development programme

Writers in Motion supports writers to develop an original animated short film concept from its narrative foundations through to a pre-production-ready short film scriptpolished script. This guide explains who can apply, what to submit, how applications will be assessed, and what selected participants will be expected to commit to.

Programme overview

Programme	Writers in Motion
Programme period	April to September 2027
Delivery: A two-part programme delivered through alternating weekly sessions	Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 April 2027: In-person Auckland component.
	Fortnightly “Office Hours” availability of Shari for between session support.
	Fortnightly: Two-hour sessions focused on writing development through and story instruction with Programme Education Lead Shari Goodhartz.
	Alternating Fortnightly: One and a half hour sessions delivered by animation industry professionals.
	September: and a final Auckland table read.
Programme Education Lead	Shari Goodhartz, animation-writing educator
Cost	There is no programme fee. Participants are not paid a fee or stipend.
Travel support	Limited travel support may be available to selected participants who live outside Auckland to assist with the cost of attending the in-person Auckland component. The amount available will depend on the number of selected participants requiring support and is not intended to cover all travel expenses. Approved contributions will be reimbursed following submission of an expense claim and valid receipts. (Participants should contact the WIM team if paying approved travel costs upfront would create a barrier. Where practical, VFXG may arrange approved travel directly).
Key application dates	Application Q&A: 6.30pm Wednesday 11 November Applications open: Monday 7 December Applications close: 11pm Friday 18 December

	Shortlist notified: Friday 12 February Shortlist Interviews: Monday 15 - Wednesday 24 February Applicants notified: Monday 1 March
Apply and learn more	https://lagomorph-studios.com
Be notified when applications open / Register for Webinar/	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHhkgnZt4kK7JcxGnv3KnLA6YIEwN19TOzI7kiaFPoTb8ssA/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=106299818354760344594

Who should apply

Writers in Motion is designed for writers who want to strengthen their craft for animation and can commit to developing one short-film concept across the full programme. Writers in Motion welcomes applications from writers of all backgrounds and is committed to supporting a cohort that reflects the diversity of Aotearoa. We particularly encourage applications from Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled and neurodivergent writers, LGBTQIA+ communities, culturally diverse communities, people from regional areas, and voices that have historically been underrepresented in the screen and animation industries.

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- be aged 18 or over, and be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident;
- have written a (funded or self-funded) narrative piece that has been produced and released;
- be the sole writer of an original animated short-film concept and all materials submitted;
- own or control the rights needed to develop the concept, or have written authority from the relevant rights holder;
- be available for the programme from April to September 2027 and able to attend the online and in-person sessions, including the in-person Auckland component, with reasonable adjustments where required;
- be prepared to share work in progress, receive feedback, and revise their concept; and
- meet the conduct, confidentiality, health, safety and participation requirements of the programme.

Demographic Information: Providing demographic information is optional, and applicants may select “prefer not to say.” This information will be handled privately and used only to support equitable selection, programme planning, and reporting.

Eligible short film concepts

The programme is for an original animated short film concept. Concepts may use any animation technique.

A concept is not eligible if:

- the applicant does not hold the rights;
- the concept has already been written as a script;
- the scope of the concept is primarily a feature film, series, game or non-narrative work rather than an animated short film;
- the submitted material infringes another person's copyright, privacy or other rights;

Authorship and use of AI

The core creative material must represent the applicant's own writing and storytelling. Generative AI must not be used to write or substantially generate the logline, synopsis, concept statement, treatment, concept art, or script sample. Standard spelling, grammar, formatting, transcription and accessibility tools may be used.

Applicants must disclose any material use of an AI system or of another person's creative contribution. VFXG may ask for clarification where authorship or rights are uncertain.

What the programme involves

Selected participants will work through:

- Structure, loglines, treatments, beat sheets and outlining
- Tone, character, thematics via visual storytelling
- Script revision: First, second drafts and polishing
- Writing with animation pipelines, design, storyboards and budgets in mind
- Developing an art asset to supplement each short film concept
- Preparing the completed script for an Auckland table read

Industry contributors are expected to include Mukpuddy, storyboard artist Del Hahn and art director Matt Haworth. Speakers and session details may change if required.

Programme commitment and accessibility

Before applying, applicants should consider the following programme commitments:

- **Online sessions:** Sessions are expected to take place weekly, alternating between writing-development sessions with Shari Goodhartz (2hrs) and sessions with animation industry professionals (1.5hrs). Sessions will generally be held on weekday evenings New Zealand time.
- **Work between sessions:** Participants should allow ample time between sessions for writing, revision, preparation and other programme assignments.
- **Auckland component:** Participants must be available to attend the in-person Auckland component from Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 April, requiring approximately 1-2 nights in Auckland.
- **Final table read:** Participants must be available in-person or online for the Auckland table read in July and August 2027 Thursday Evenings from 7pm..
- **Technology:** Participants will need reliable internet access, a computer capable of joining online video sessions, a working microphone and access to Microsoft Word, Apple Pages or Google Docs (having screenwriting software will not be an asset in this course).
- **Recordings and captions:** Sessions will not be recorded by WIM and must not be recorded by participants.
- **Access support:** Reasonable adjustments will be available. Writers who require another form of communication or accessibility support should contact the WIM team as early as possible so available options can be discussed. Requests will be handled privately.

Safety and conduct

- WIM is committed to providing a physically, culturally and psychologically safe programme environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and other unsafe conduct. Selected participants must follow the WIM Code of Conduct and will receive clear information about how to raise a concern or request support.

What to submit

Applications must be completed through the official online portal by the closing deadline. In addition to the online portal requirements, submission materials must be uploaded as:

- A combined PDF with specs (6-7 Pages), 10mb.
  - Bio
  - CV
  - (optional) Visual Portfolio
  - First page script sample
  - One page narrative treatment
- Formatted as: A4-sized, written in 12-point courier, combined into one .pdf.
- With document headers (or at the top of your document): Name, Section, Date
  - Eg. Daisy Lawless Bio 10Dec26
- Document Submission Naming Convention: FIRST NAME_LAST NAME_WIM_DATE SUBMITTED
  - Eg. Daisy_Lawless_WIM_16Dec2026

Prepare the following:

Application Deliverables	What is required
Biography (One page, 500 words maximum)	A one-page biography: who are you, what is your connection to animation, where are you in your career, how dedicated are you?
CV (One - two pages maximum)	A CV / or visual animation portfolio of previous work if applicable.
(Optional) **Visual animation portfolio**	A .pdf of still images from your animation work, if you are an animation professional (10 MB max)
A one-page writing sample **Screenplay format ONLY** (One page maximum)	The FIRST page of a screenplay you have written yourself (not the one you are applying with).
One Page Narrative Treatment (Formatting: 1.5 spacing, 500-word max)	A one-page narrative treatment of the short film you plan to develop during this course. This should consist of three paragraphs, one each for the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
Application Portal	**What is required**
Headshot	Colour preferred; image should allow space on either side of the head for cropping purposes; image to be submitted as .jpg
Link to previous work	Include the password, if required
Applicant details	For example: contact details, location, residency status, conflict of interest. Applicants may also provide optional demographic information and identify any access or dietary requirements. Access, disability, health and dietary information will not be used to assess creative merit. Accessibility: If you require help with the application portal, please contact WIM.

How applications will be assessed

WIM Team & VFXG will first check that each application is complete and eligible. Eligible applications will be reviewed by WIM assessors using the same criteria:

Criterion	What assessors will consider
Story and idea	Is the central idea engaging, coherent and suited to an animated short film?
Voice and craft	Does the material show a distinctive point of view and a workable level of writing craft?
Visual storytelling	Does the concept show potential to use animation, design and visual storytelling meaningfully?
Development potential	Would the short film concept benefit from the programme's structure, feedback and industry input?
Programme readiness and commitment	Does the applicant understand the programme requirements, show a willingness to develop their work and appear ready to participate constructively, with reasonable feedback being addressed, as required?

Assessors and applicants must disclose conflicts of interest. Assessors will not review an application where WIM Team & VFXG considers the conflict material. Selection is competitive. Meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee a place.

Selection and notification

- Selection will consider the strength and development potential of each application alongside the overall balance and diversity of the cohort. Where demographic information is provided, it may inform final cohort selection but will not replace assessment against the published criteria.
- Access, disability, health and dietary information will not be used to assess creative merit and will be handled privately.
- The WIM team or VFXG may contact an applicant to clarify eligibility, rights, availability or application information.
- Following the initial assessment, the shortlisted applicants will each be invited to an online interview. Being shortlisted does not guarantee selection.
- Final selection decisions will be based on the submitted application and interview, together with the published assessment criteria and the overall composition of the cohort.
- Applicants who are not shortlisted and all applicants who are interviewed for the programme will be notified by email once the selection process is complete.
- The WIM team and VFXG are not required to fill every available place if the applications do not meet the programme’s standards.
- Assessor notes or individual feedback will not be provided.
- WIM nor VFXG will not share any personal details or creative application content without permission.
- Selected applicants must sign and return the Writers in Motion Participant Agreement before their place is confirmed.

Before you apply

- Read these guidelines, and review the Application Declaration and Privacy Notice on the application portal itself.
- Check that you can attend and complete the full programme, including the in-person sessions.
- Keep a copy of everything submitted and submit early enough to address technical problems.
- Contact WIM Team VFXG before the deadline if you need a reasonable adjustment or an accessible application method.

Questions and accessibility

For programme questions, access support or an alternative application format, contact Monique Gilmour at writersinmotionnz@gmail.com. Requests for adjustments will be handled privately and will not disadvantage an applicant in assessment.