

PLATFORM presents, The Slate 2026–27

Application Guidance and Programme Information

Please read this guidance carefully before applying.

The Slate is a practical filmmaking and talent development initiative from PLATFORM, delivered by Phoenix, Badshoes Film and Liminal Screens.

The programme will support the collaborative development and production of three new short films created by people based in Leicester and Leicestershire with the films premiering at Phoenix in March 2027.

Applying to The Slate confirms that you understand and accept the collaborative nature of the programme.

What is The Slate?

The Slate is a practical learning opportunity for people interested in filmmaking. It is designed to help participants develop skills, gain experience and build professional relationships through the collective creation of short films.

The programme is open to people at different stages of their creative journey. You do not need professional credits or previous industry experience to apply.

The Slate is not a grant programme, a production fund, commissioning scheme, investment programme or paid employment opportunity.

Participants will not receive fees for their involvement.

Instead, participants receive:

- Development support and mentoring
- Guidance from experienced industry professionals
- Access to production equipment
- Production insurance
- Editing facilities and software
- Support with accessibility and delivery requirements
- Advice on festival strategy and exhibition
- A public premiere screening at Phoenix

Collaborative work

The Slate is based on voluntary collaboration.

No participant should apply expecting paid work.

Everyone involved, including writers, directors, producers, cast, crew and performers, will contribute their time voluntarily.

We believe collaborative projects can be ethical when expectations are transparent and participation is voluntary.

For that reason:

- The collaborative nature of the programme is clearly stated from the outset.
- Nobody is expected to participate if collaborative free work does not align with their circumstances or values.
- Participants are free to withdraw before production begins if they decide the programme is not right for them.
- No participant should pressure another participant into undertaking additional unpaid work.
- Contributions should remain proportionate and reasonable for a voluntary development programme.

Who can apply to this first part of the process?

You must:

- Be a writer or writer-director
- Be aged 18 or over.
- Be based full time in Leicester or Leicestershire.
- Be available to pitch your project on 30 July 2027 at 18:30.
- Be available to participate in key programme activity between July 2026 and March 2027.
- Be willing to work collaboratively with other participants.

What can I submit?

There is a short application form where you will answer a few questions about yourself and the story and then upload a completed treatment with the option to upload a first draft.

Only one submission per applicant is permitted.

The applicant must either:

- Be the sole creator of the work.
- Have secured permission from all co-creators before submitting.

Story requirements

Your proposal must:

- Reflect an aspect of Leicester or Leicestershire life, identity, place, community or culture.
- Be achievable within the resources of the programme.
- Result in a finished film between **four and eight minutes** in length.
- Feature no more than three speaking characters.
- Require no more than two extras to sell the story.
- Use no more than two locations.
- Not include children under 18 or animals.
- Not require specialist stunts, fight choreography, pyrotechnics, weapons, intimacy coordination or hazardous activities.
- Not rely on significant visual effects or animation.
- Not require complex licensing agreements.

- Not infringe the intellectual property, copyright or trademark rights of others.
- Not be substantially generated using artificial intelligence. Applicants may use AI tools for research, application writing, proofreading or administrative support, but the creative work submitted must be their own.

Projects that fall outside these parameters may be deemed ineligible.

Selection process

This is the first time we've run The Slate, so we don't know what the take-up is going to be like. If uptake is very high, we may have to select which projects can be pitched in-person.

Pitching will take place in-person on **30 July 2026 at 18:30 at Phoenix** in their Terrace Room. You will have up to five-minutes to give your elevator pitch.

A diverse panel of industry professionals will review all eligible submissions.

The panel will consider:

- Strength of idea.
- Suitability for collaborative development.
- Feasibility within programme resources.
- Originality and creative potential.
- Connection to Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Potential learning opportunities for participants.

Three projects will be selected and the panel's decision is final.

The organisers of The Slate are working on this project in a voluntary capacity and for this reason we do not have the capacity to offer feedback.

What happens if my project is selected?

Selected writers and writer-directors will enter a supported development process.

This process may include:

- Script development sessions.
- Script notes.
- One-to-one mentoring.
- Production planning meetings.

The selected project that enters production may differ from the version originally submitted due to the refinement and changes which can occur through the development process.

Applicants should be prepared to revise and adapt their work throughout the process.

Creative control

The Slate is a collaborative programme rather than an auteur-led model.

Writers and writer-directors will play a significant role in shaping their projects, but they will be expected to work collaboratively with producers, cast, crew and mentors.

Participants should not expect complete creative control.

Creative decisions will often balance artistic ambition, practical limitations, accessibility, safety, participant learning and available resources.

Production model

Crews will be assembled from programme participants and volunteers.

The PLATFORM team will support recruitment where possible but cannot guarantee specific cast or crew members.

Productions will be expected to work within agreed schedules, resources and equipment availability.

The PLATFORM team reserves the right to refuse elements that are not achievable within the programme.

This includes proposed locations, equipment requests, scheduling demands or creative approaches that create unreasonable costs, risks or logistical challenges.

Participation in other roles

Participants interested in directing, producing, camera, sound, editing, acting, production design, assistant directing, script supervision or other roles are encouraged to express their interest by registering their details here:

An expression of interest does not guarantee:

- A role on a project produced through the programme.
- A particular role.
- Placement on a particular film.
- A leadership position.

Opportunities will depend on the needs of the productions and the overall balance of the programme.

Time commitment

Applicants should expect an ongoing commitment between July 2026 and March 2027.

Depending on your role, this may include:

- Development meetings.
- Workshops.
- Pre-production planning.
- Casting activity.
- Rehearsals.
- Shoot days.
- Editing sessions.
- Feedback screenings.

- Premiere events.

Participants are expected to communicate clearly if they cannot attend agreed activity.

Repeated non-attendance may result in removal from the programme.

Accessibility and inclusion

The Slate aims to create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone taking part.

Access requirements do not form part of the assessment or selection process. Applicants are welcome to share any access requirements at application stage if they wish, or at any point during the programme.

Participants can tell us about any adjustments they need during development, casting, crewing, production or exhibition. We recognise that access needs can change over time, and information can be shared whenever it feels appropriate to do so.

Reasonable adjustments will be made within the resources available to the programme.

All completed films will include descriptive subtitles to support Deaf audiences, audiences with hearing loss, and neurodivergent audiences who benefit from subtitles.

Environmental responsibility

Participants will be encouraged to make work in ways that minimise environmental impact.

This may include:

- Reducing unnecessary travel.
- Using existing locations.
- Minimising waste.
- Sourcing costume, set dressing and props within the team.
- Sharing resources and equipment efficiently.

What support is provided?

Selected productions will receive:

- Development support.
- Production guidance.
- Support assembling cast and crew.
- Production insurance cover from Badshoes Film.
- Catering support during production.
- Transport support during production.
- Access to industry-standard camera equipment.
- Access to industry-standard sound equipment.
- Access to editing software.
- Descriptive captions.
- DCP creation.
- Advice on festival strategy and exhibition.

- A premiere screening at Phoenix.

Ownership, copyright and future use

The Slate is a collaborative programme involving multiple contributors.

Before production begins, selected participants will be required to sign agreements covering:

- Chain of title.
- Credits.
- Use of recordings and photographs.
- Exhibition rights.
- Promotional use of completed films.

The programme partners retain the right to use completed films, stills and behind-the-scenes material for educational, reporting, funding and promotional purposes.

Detailed agreements covering ownership, copyright, exhibition rights and future use of the films will be shared with selected participants before production begins. Participants will have the opportunity to review these agreements before deciding whether to proceed.

Behaviour and conduct

All participants are expected to contribute to a respectful, inclusive and professional working environment.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Participants may be required to comply with safeguarding, health and safety and accessibility requirements established by the programme partners.

The PLATFORM team reserves the right to remove participants whose conduct negatively affects the wellbeing, safety or experience of others.

Key dates

- Drop-in sessions to speak with a member of The Slate team: Thursday 18 June 2026 Phoenix Café Bar
- Informal advice on pitching session: Thursday 9 July 2026 Phoenix Terrace Room
- Pitch submission deadline: Thursday 16 July 2026
- Pitch event: Thursday 30 July 2026 Phoenix Terrace Room
- Development, production and post-production: August 2026 – February 2027
- Premiere screening: March 2027 Phoenix Screen 1

Before you apply

Please only apply if:

- You understand this is an unpaid collaborative development programme.
- You are willing to share ideas and work collaboratively.
- You are open to feedback and adaptation.

- You can commit time across the duration of the programme.
- You understand that participation does not guarantee creative control, employment or future funding.

The strongest applications will not necessarily come from the most experienced writers. We are looking for people who are curious, committed, generous collaborators and excited by the possibility of making something together.

Application link

<https://forms.gle/JowYTvQ8XsuHhsHw6>