



Film
Forever

DIVERSITY STANDARDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Where can I find the Diversity Standards form?

The Standards form is built into the online application process you will complete for the fund you are applying to.

Q: Where can I find more information on the Equality Act and the areas it covers?

Please visit the [Equality Act 2010](#) page of the Equality and Human Rights Commission website. The site includes definitions of each [protected characteristic](#) covered by the Act, including those that the BFI Diversity Standards focus on: disability, gender (sex), race, age and sexual orientation. The Standards also seek to ensure that people from lower socio-economic groups are better represented.

Q: Applicants are expected to meet the criteria of at least two of the four sections of the Diversity Standards. I am unsure if my project can do this – should I still apply?

We encourage you to think creatively about diversity in your project from the outset and explore alternative approaches to increase your contribution to industry diversity. You should then fill in the Diversity Standards form as completely as possible. On receiving your application, we may suggest that you develop the content of your Diversity Standards form further and if required we will issue you with a new copy of the form to complete.

Q: I haven't yet confirmed my staff / crew or the specific training opportunities we will offer to address Standards B and C. Am I still able to meet the Standards?

Where it is too early in the process to confirm how you will fill certain roles, we would expect to see clarity in your intention to engage diverse cast or crew. Where possible, you should name the people you are considering for specific roles. Provided you demonstrate commitment of intent, you could meet elements of **Standards B and C**. Once you have submitted your application, please liaise with your BFI Film Fund contact on your progress with this and describe how you followed through on your intentions in your post-project Diversity Report.

Q. I am applying for early stage Development funding. Do I have to fill in the Diversity Standards form?

Yes – we would like to see that plans for diversity in the project are evident from the start and we will take into account the content and ambition of your proposals when we consider your application. You should address **Standard B, Project Leadership and Creative Practitioners**, with reference to your current staff and where possible describe the approach you plan to take to employ diverse cast and crew across the projected life of your project.

Q. What do you mean when you say applicants for Development funding should demonstrate engagement with the Standards ‘at each stage of development’?

We usually provide **development** funding in stages as projects progress. If you seek further (‘supplementary’) development funding for your project from the BFI, we will ask you to update us on your engagement with the Diversity Standards at each stage. This will show us how the Diversity Standards influence the decisions you and your staff make as your development progresses.

Q: If my ideas for diversity in my project change while you are considering my application, will I be able to update my Standards form before you take a decision?

If your application is eligible for assessment, you will have the opportunity to revise your Diversity Standards form following submission. Please contact the BFI Film Fund if you need to update your form. Once your documentation has been finalised and we are in the process of completing our funding decision, further changes will not be possible.

Q: What happens if I plan to meet certain criteria but then cannot – for example, my crew or staff changes before or during production?

We understand that circumstances can change during the delivery of a project, sometimes for reasons beyond your control. If you experience challenges in meeting the criteria you originally proposed, we would expect you to contact us to discuss this during your project. On completion, you should provide a detailed explanation of the steps you took towards meeting your targets, and describe why it was not possible. As with any agreed element of a project, if you were to fail to deliver on the plans you made and could not provide good reason for this, it could affect your ability to receive further funding from the BFI.

Q: I am applying for completion funding: my film is already shot and I won’t be taking any new decisions on who to employ. How can I address the Standards?

You should address **Standards A and B** in relation to the attributes of your completed film. If you have a distributor for your film, or are planning to self-distribute, you can also address **Standard D** in relation to your future plans. Although **Standard C** is optional for **completion** funding applicants, you should consider whether there are remaining options for offering industry access and opportunities through your project. Please also detail here any industry access and opportunities you have already provided.

Q: Age is one of the areas of under-representation. Does this refer to young or older people?

The key consideration here is whether, in the context of your specific project, you are addressing under-representation in relation to age. For example: an applicant is developing a story in a genre where younger characters typically predominate, such as an action film, and proposes an older person as a lead character; or, where the narrative structure of the project focuses specifically around a particular age group, whether young or old. This could address elements of **Standard A**. Equally, age would be relevant if you are applying for funding for a youth film **festival** or **programme** seeking to engage younger audiences.

Q: Is there funding available from the BFI to help people meet the Standards?

We do not provide additional funding to enable people to meet the Diversity Standards. Many of the areas within the Standards can be addressed without additional cost. Applicants that are not already offering the industry access and opportunities detailed in **Standard C** should look at whether they can provide these as part of their wider business practice. This could include seeking partnership funding for training from a body other than the BFI.

If you are seeking to make a wider commitment to diversity and offering industry access within your organisation, you may be eligible to make an application to the [BFI Diversity Fund](#) for this activity.

Q: What do you mean by ‘people from lower socio-economic groups’?

Broadly speaking, people from lower socio-economic groups are those who experience disadvantage in the form of reduced opportunities due to their levels of income, education and work experience. This disadvantage may be evident in access to educational and employment opportunities, health, and quality of life.

We do not apply a specific measure of what constitutes low socio-economic status for the Diversity Standards. If your project aims to address this area of under-representation, you should explain why you consider the individuals involved to be of lower socio-economic status – whether you are representing people on screen, offering employment, providing industry access or developing audiences.

Q: I have an idea for increasing diversity in my project but it doesn't fit with the categories of the Standards. Can I still tell you about it?

Yes: when you complete your Diversity Standards form, please include all detail that you feel is relevant and, if required, attach any documents you feel might further support your submission.

QUESTIONS ON STANDARD A: ON SCREEN REPRESENTATION, THEMES & NARRATIVES

Q: How much detail do I need to give under Standard A?

We will be looking for clarity and a persuasive level of detail in your response. For example, if you are applying for a **development** or **production** award you will need to give a fuller response than stating only that your main protagonist/antagonist 'is female' or 'is BAME'. Please provide a fully-rounded argument as to why a particular character, theme or narrative structure gives a meaningful representation of diversity. Where the project has a clear thematic focus around a specific under-represented group, we will also be looking to see commitment to genuinely involving this group across the overall project. For development applications, this could be in areas from casting to story and character development. For **festivals** or **programmes**, community collaboration could be worked into your programming, event and marketing decisions.

Please also describe any research that you have carried out or are planning.

Q: How will you assess A3, 'diversity in secondary themes & narratives'?

We will look at how you describe subplots and the story arcs of secondary characters. A Standard would be awarded in A3 if a subplot was unfamiliar in terms of (for example) characterisation, location or gaze / narrative perspective.

Q: What does element A6 of the Standards, 'non-specific representation', refer to?

This refers to the inclusion of character(s) possessing one of the protected characteristics (for example, sexuality or disability) where the possession of this characteristic is evident but remains incidental to the wider narrative. This means that the character as written will not engage with specificities of being of a particular race, gender etc., but that the film still provides a level of on screen representation. The choice may also have a secondary effect of shedding a different light on the narrative concerned.

Q: How should festivals and programmes address Standard A?

Please provide information on the overall themes and narratives of your **festival** or **programme**. If you have detailed information available on your screening programme at application stage, please provide examples of titles and where possible any summary information about how the areas of under-representation are apparent across your programme. Please note that programming films that are non-English language or of international origin does not in itself meet the criteria; we are interested in what is on screen and how this relates to the focus areas of the Diversity Standards.

Q: My film has a historical setting and / or is based on a traditional narrative. What will you be looking for in terms of on screen representation?

If your film is based on a familiar literary / historical narrative, when we consider your request we will ask: what is the purpose of re-telling this story? We are looking for unfamiliar and perhaps unexpected approaches. Work meeting the criteria of Standard A might:

- provide complex representations of characters normally relegated to two-dimensional roles;
- tell the story from a different perspective that aligns with, or sheds light on, the focus areas of the Standards;
- revise traditional elements to increase representation and alter frames of reference

Q. My film has a contemporary setting. What are you looking for in contemporary stories?

In contemporary stories we are looking for things such as:

- new voices: stories about characters or themes that have not previously been portrayed on screen;
- contemporary lens/gaze: the perspective of the narrative. How are characters portrayed?;
- unfamiliar narratives: if a story has never been told on screen before or is being told in a new or innovative way

QUESTIONS ON STANDARD B: PROJECT LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS

Q: Standard B mentions artistic leadership having a ‘positive outcome’. What does this mean?

We will be looking for you to describe how the artistic leadership of someone from an under-represented group will impact upon your project. Will it bring knowledge or a perspective that would otherwise be absent? Will it lead to developing more progressive cultures of employment? Will it shape the content of your project in a particular way? Are there any long-term or wider impacts that this example of leadership could generate?

Q: Why do you ask for details of the specific individuals we aim to employ, and how much information should I provide here?

In order to inform our future strategy and track the impact of the Diversity Standards on industry practice, we are looking to be able to locate and potentially map personnel as their careers progress. You should detail clearly the relevant employment decisions you have taken, which groups you will seek to bring to the fore and why, and the long-term outcomes you are aiming for.

Q: Guidance for Standard B states that ‘allowances will be made for projects with smaller teams (e.g. documentaries, smaller festivals and programme projects)’. What size of team does this apply to?

We would potentially make allowances for productions where the total number of people involved in project delivery is less than approximately 25. Allowances will also be made in relation to the smaller teams involved in development funding applications. For **festivals** or **programmes**, this will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the size of the project. Roles being filled on a volunteer basis can be included here.

Q: In B1, what do you mean by principle producer; do other producers count?

The principle producer is the producer who will lead on the project. If you have more than one lead producer, please provide details. Executive producers, co-producers, associate producers and production executives would not usually count in B1 but can be reflected under areas B2 and B3. Please state if you are providing the opportunity for a less experienced producer to learn from someone more experienced.

Q: I'd like to hire crew from the identified under-represented groups but need some help – who should I talk to?

There are a number of organisations that may be able to provide advice as you develop your employment plans, or advertise the opportunities you'll provide. These include [Creative Access](#), [Creative Skillset](#), [Creative Diversity Network](#), [The British Blacklist](#), [B3 Media](#), [Women in Film and TV](#) and [Reel Angels](#).

Q: I am a female writer-director and will fulfil both of these roles in the documentary I am seeking funding for. Can I count this as two of the three people required in element B1 of the Standards?

Each person should only be counted once, so a female writer-director would count as one of the three required in B1.

Q: I am applying for a programme or festival: could you clarify what sort of roles constitute artistic leadership?

Curators, programmers, creative directors, project managers, marketing managers or other significant roles that influence your project artistically and creatively.

Q: B2 mentions 'six other key roles' – which roles does this refer to on a production?

A key role will usually be a Head of Department (HoD) but, depending on the size of your crew or the division of duties within your production, it may be appropriate to include second tier roles.

Q: Are we able to include catering staff and other outside companies in B4?

You can include regional facility companies if they will be contracted by your production company.

Q: What is your definition of 'Greater London'?

Greater London is the area governed by the [Greater London Authority](#), comprising 32 boroughs plus the City of London. A map of the Greater London area can be found on the [London Government Directory website](#).

Q: I am shooting my film with a UK crew in America, do I meet element B4 as I will be located outside Greater London?

No, this is only for productions located outside Greater London in the UK nations / regions.

Q: Standard B4 covers 'Productions located in the UK outside Greater London that demonstrate an intention to offer substantial local employment'. I am applying for a film festival or programme – should I complete this section?

As the majority of the **festival** and **programme** awards made by the BFI are specifically for activity outside Greater London, this element of the Standards applies only to productions, as the funding is not geographically specific in the same way and productions can elect where to locate their activity and provide employment.

Q: We are shooting some of our production at locations inside Greater London as well as outside. Will this meet element B4 of the Standards?

Please describe what portion of your film will be shot outside Greater London, and detail the amount of local employment you will offer (e.g. rough estimate of the budget, number of jobs involved etc.). We will evaluate this information to determine whether the local employment you will offer is substantial in relation to your overall employment plans.

Q: My production company is located outside Greater London. Does this meet element B4?

Not in itself: you will also need to demonstrate that you will offer substantial local employment on the project you are applying for.

QUESTIONS ON STANDARD C: INDUSTRY ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Q: What sort of internships and career progression opportunities should I offer?

We expect all of the positions you are offering to have depth and breadth in terms of the experience they will provide to the person involved. Will the individual work with a range of staff across your project? Will they have a range of duties that collectively form a rewarding experience? Are any mentors of a high standard and in possession of significant skills and experience?

We may visit your project or make further enquiries to ensure that the work experience provided is of a high quality.

Q: Where can I find more information about offering employment and training opportunities?

There are many organisations that provide support in relation to industry access. For general guidance on offering employment opportunities, [Creative Skillset](#) provides information for [creative businesses and trainers and educators](#). The UK Government has general guidance on providing internships and work-based training on its [website](#) and has specific information on [providing quality internships](#). [Creative Access](#) seeks to partner with organisations who can provide paid internship places for talented young people from Black, Asian and non-white minority ethnic backgrounds.

Q: How should Development funding applications address section C?

Applicants for development funding should provide information on any opportunities they will offer during the development stage. For example, you may choose to deliver a masterclass on your writing/development process aimed at a specific audience, or demonstrate commitment to diversity at an early stage with casting for read-throughs.

QUESTIONS ON STANDARD D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSITY IN AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Q: I expect that my film or project will have a wide appeal. Does this meet Standard D?

You will need to evidence detailed consideration of specific target audiences for your project; stating in broad terms that it is open to everyone will not meet the criteria. Do you anticipate that your project will be of particular significance to an under-served audience? How do you plan to reach these audiences?

If you are applying for a **programme** or **festival**: which sections of the community where your project will take place are not currently engaged with your activities – and how do you aim to develop these potential audiences? You could discuss your programming choices, marketing plans, community partnerships, etc. A strong response here will demonstrate commitment to long-term audience development beyond the single project.

Q: Platforms for our release include video on demand (VoD). Do we meet D4?

To meet D4 you will need to show a convincing understanding of how your release strategy will reach specific new and / or under-served audiences.

Q: What do you mean in D1 by ‘provision of disability materials & access above and beyond statutory requirements’?

We are looking for evidence of you creating disability access for your project beyond that which you are legally obliged to provide, or (for **production** and **distribution** funding) that you’ll be contractually obliged to provide as a minimum in your agreement with the BFI. If you need further information on what these minimum BFI requirements will be, please contact Filmfundcoordinator@bfi.org.uk. Activity ‘above and beyond’ may include creative approaches to marketing for specific audiences or enhanced programming activity that provides additional experiences for disabled people.

Q: Standard D3 mentions activity ‘outside Central London’ – how do you define this?

We use Transport for London’s zones 1 and 2 as defining Central London.

Q: D3 asks for ‘Added value for audiences in a specific UK region or nation, or outside central London’. My film festival or programme will take place outside of London. Is this enough to achieve the Standard in D3?

This section is awarded for additional benefits to audiences in the nation or region that go beyond the core provision of the **festival**, **programme** or **release**. This might include provision in specific languages addressing local communities; a focus on local or regional cultures; or strategic interventions targeted at developing film audiences in the area.

Q: What sort of partnership opportunities (D5) are the Standards interested in?

We are looking for projects to form new collaborations or alliances that are specifically targeted at increasing the diversity of UK film audiences. The specialist or expert knowledge involved may relate to building community partnerships, outreach methods, disability access, linguistic minorities, specific national or regional film cultures, etc. We will look at the quality and relevance of the expertise that you plan to engage, and for demonstrations that this will provide a deeper level of audience engagement and development.

If you have a question about the Diversity Standards that has not been answered above, please contact Filmfundcoordinator@bfi.org.uk