

FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2026

FilmOffaly is pleased to announce the FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2026. This funding initiative aims to foster creative, resourceful filmmaking in the county and to leave a legacy for the local filmmaking community. Since its inception in 2008 this bursary has been responsible for the funding of sixteen short films, each of which are unmissable and many have gone on to be shown at film festivals and on TV – could your idea be number seventeen?

There will be one award to the successful applicant who will receive €12,000 towards the cost of their production and a local premiere for their completed film.

The competition is open for live-action fiction shorts, and we are looking for authentic storytelling and unique, original ideas from talented new filmmakers- professional and novice alike.

While we want you to dazzle us with your ideas and unbridled creativity, there are some rules to follow: filming must take place in the geographical bounds of County Offaly, FilmOffaly also encourage the use of local crew and businesses during production, and at least one of the key production team (Writer,



Figure 1 - 2025 Winner *Bigfoot Lover* shooting in Charleville Forest

Producer, Director) should be based in the Midlands of Ireland.



Figure 2 - Brendan and Brian Gleeson in *Noreen*, the first recipient of the Film Offaly Award

To summarise the competition is held over two stages – **Stage One** sees you submitting your scripts and synopses. These are then sent to our reading panel who will judge the scripts purely on the merits of the writing. Once the readers have finished, they will agree on a shortlist of the top films who will then go forward to **Stage Two**. In Stage Two we ask for more information on the planned production, before interviewing the shortlistees and selecting the overall winner.

TIP: write with a location that is possible within the area, know the general geography of the different areas and what is possible, and not possible. Even limitations can be really rewarding when writing... I would encourage people applying to try and watch some of the films that have been made by film Offaly in the past, it's a long running scheme with and I think people would be pleasantly surprised the breath of stories that have come out

CONOR MCCORMICK, Director 2024, FOR THE CURE



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Tip: "For me, the biggest thing was choosing a story I felt genuinely connected to. That personal link really carried me through the application process and beyond, and I think it comes across when you care deeply about what you're making. Keeping the idea focused and achievable was also key. Having a clear, contained story that suits the scale of the award can be incredibly powerful.

Place and character were hugely important for me too. Leaning into where you're from and the people you know gives the work a real sense of authenticity."

MAURA FOLEY, 2023 Winner, MISSING

Here's the small print...

STAGE ONE

Closing date: 12pm on Monday 23rd February

Please submit the following on <https://submit.link/4Ae> (unlike previous years we no longer accept postal entries):

- A completed FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2026 online application form
- A copy of the script.
- A 500-word synopsis of the film project.

(The script and synopsis will be judged purely on their own merits so please be sure to OMIT author and production company names from the files!)

TIP – Your SYNOPSIS should be a summary that outlines the entire story, including major plot points, character arcs, and the ending. This is to give us a clear sense of the full narrative. Don't confuse this with a LOGLINE, which is a one or two sentence summary designed to hook people into your story without sharing all the major details.

Important:

- Only one script per author.
- OMIT author and production company names from scripts and synopses. Scripts will be rejected if they have these on.
- We are looking for films with an ideal duration of 10-15 mins. If you're not sure how long your script is, then a good rule of thumb is that one page of script equals one minute of screen time.
- We do not require any mood boards or other designs for the initial stage.
- It is advised to have a Creative Team/Producer attached for your project before submission. This will help you get ready in plenty of time for stage two, but is not essential for stage one.
- Ultimately, we want to see a demonstrable link to Offaly and the Midlands by making sure one of the key creative team (Writer, Producer, Director) is based in the Midlands of Ireland – so please bear this in mind when putting together your team.



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- Screenplays of shorts films from any genre, style, topic or perspective will be considered and judged on its merits regarding the quality of the material.
- You are welcome to enter if you have worked on previous FilmOffaly Award-winning productions. However, if you were part of the key creative team (Writer, Producer or Director) on a previous winner then you cannot apply again for 2 years after delivery of the original winning film.
- All entries must be received by the deadline in order to be eligible. We will only accept entries via <https://submit.link/4Ae> and not via our own website or email address.

STAGE TWO

There will be a list of 4-6 shortlisted applicants, who will be required to do the following:

Submit a Full Production Pack to include:

- Notes outlining intended approach;
- Evidence of ownership of rights. (Copies of all option and writer's agreements entered into in respect of story and script if applicable to the project);
- Written confirmation in the form of clearances and permissions of key subject's willingness to participate;
- A budget (to include, production, crew, casting, equip hire, editing, travel, music etc and evidence of further funding if applicable)
- CVs of proposed creative team (director, producer, writer, editor etc)
- Proposed casting – outline details
- Time schedule
- Any additional relevant supporting materials.

Following that, there will be an interview: is in the interest of the applicant that as many members of the key production team attend the interview. Inability to attend will render the applicant ineligible to compete for the award. There will only be one date selected for interviewing. At present we see these interviews taking place in Early April.

TIP: "Trust your instincts. At the interview stage you don't need to have everything figured out yet ,clarity of intention and honesty go a long way."

MAURA FOLEY, 2023 Winner, MISSING

"The Film Offaly award is great opportunity to film in a county that has wonderful undiscovered locations and a great community willingness to support the arts."

GARRET DALY, 2021 Winner, PERSONAL SPACE



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NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Each applicant must adhere to the following conditions regarding their submissions:

- The rights of all Screenplays submitted must be owned by the applicant in their entirety and be free and clear of any third-party interests or encumbrances. The persons and or persons submitting the screenplay must be the author/s of the screenplay and own all its rights in their entirety. (i.e. all screenplays may not have been previously sold, or produced, licensed, optioned or otherwise had any rights transferred to a third party.)
- Screenplays must be the original work of applicant. Any derivative work - if the screenplay is based upon another work in any medium - must be submitted with proper legal documentation proving that those submitting the screenplay also own the underlying rights or the derivative rights in their entirety. If the screenplay is another person's life story, whether loosely or strictly based, applicant/s must provide a signed statement to that effect by applicant/s and supporting legal documentation verifying that applicant/s has the right to make such an adaptation.
- This award is toward the production of a short film – it is essential that the finances submitted for this award cover all costs and are demonstrated to do so – applications that show a deficit or indicate that the team will require or apply for additional funding cannot be considered. This is to ensure that all applicants are considered on the same financial footing and that the films can be delivered on the budgets as submitted.
- Applicants are required to indicate any other funding sources that they are applying to – the name of the funding source and the amount sought. The winning applicant will be issued with a contract and will have a set timeframe to sign and return same.
- Applicant/s hereby understands and agrees that submission does not guarantee that applicant/s will be selected. FILMOFFALY retains sole discretion regarding acceptance issues, terms and regulations, including whether any applicant is chosen and a film made.



Figure 3 - 2016 Winner Kubrick By Candlelight

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed in a competitive context according to the following criteria:

- The creativity and quality of the project proposal
- The rationale of locating the film in Offaly (i.e. how would filming in Offaly benefit the project?), together with a good understanding of the county and what it offers filmmakers.
- Consideration of the utilisation of local crew and businesses.
- The track record of the creative team
- The demonstrable ability of the team to complete and deliver the project with the available funds as submitted in their budget.



Figure 4 - 2022 Winner Missing In Production

For further information please contact: FilmOffaly 0579357400 or filloffaly@offalycoco.ie



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