Cynthia Erivo Short Film Fund: Call for Filmmakers

We are delighted to launch the Cynthia Erivo Short Film Fund, a new opportunity for University of Oxford student filmmakers from the Cultural Programme at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre, in partnership with the Oxford University Film Foundation (OUFF).

Across popular movies, women - and women of color in particular - remain underrepresented in lead and all speaking roles, according to research from the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. Creating change means bringing new voices to the industry, and the Cynthia Erivo Short Film Fund is designed to support storytelling that spotlights characters from a variety of backgrounds. Filmmakers are invited to submit work that focuses on the voices we rarely see represented in stories that reflect commercial, exciting, and compelling short films.

What the Fund offers

Two teams will each receive:

- £4,000 towards making their short film
- Access to filmmaking equipment through OUFF
- An industry-led filmmaking masterclass
- Support from the Cultural Programme team and OUFF throughout production
- A screening of the finished films at the Schwarzman Centre in Trinity term 2027

Who can apply

The Fund is open to current University of Oxford students, undergraduate or postgraduate, in any subject. All genres are welcome. Films should run no longer than 15 minutes, and shorter is absolutely fine.

Don't have a full team behind you yet? Please don't let that hold you back. If you already have a producer or director of photography on board, that's great, but it isn't essential. OUFF's network can help you find collaborators once you've been selected.

What we're looking for

Applications will be reviewed by a panel from academia and the film industry, including representatives from the Schwarzman Centre, OUFF and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. The panel will be looking for:

- A strong, authentic voice and story, in the spirit of the brief above
- A film that can realistically be made within the time and budget available

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How to apply

Please apply through the online form: CESFF Application Form. You'll be asked for:

- A logline and a synopsis of your film (one page maximum)
- A script sample of at least two scenes (around 3–5 pages), or your full script if it's ready
- A short statement (up to 300 words) on why you want to tell this story
- An outline budget showing how you would use the £4,000
- Details of anyone already attached to your team and their roles
- Optional: a link to previous work (amateur projects are welcome)

Key dates

Application deadline	Sunday 15 November, 6pm (GMT)
Shortlisted pitches	Week 6 (16-20 November)
Successful teams announced	By Friday 27 November (Week 7)
First edit	Mid-Hilary (by Week 5, w/c 14 February 2027)
Final film delivered	End of Hilary (Friday 11 April 2027)
Screening	Trinity term 2027 (Week 5, date TBC)

By applying, you're committing to these dates and to attending the masterclass and screening if successful.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, and particularly encourage applicants whose voices are under-represented in film. If you have any access needs or would like support with your application, please let us know.

Filmmakers retain full rights of their films. Selected films will be screened at the Schwarzman Centre and may be used to promote the Fund.

The Cynthia Erivo Short Film Fund is generously supported by the Adobe Foundation and Jason and Yvonne Lee, in collaboration with the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

Deadline: Sunday 15 November, 6pm

Scan the QR code to apply

Any queries, please contact culturalprogramme@humanities.ox.ac.uk