SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND

Skills Needs Analysis Report for the Screen Sector in Ireland
2019-2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Screen industry is a major contributor to the Irish economy. The audiovisual sectors generated just over €1 billion in Gross Value Add (GVA) for the Irish economy in 2016 and supported 16,930 full-time equivalents of which 10,560 was in direct employment. (Olsberg SPI, 2017). Production activity includes a small number of large budget productions and a large number of small to medium budget productions (Screen Producers Ireland , 2019).

> *In the 2018 Audiovisual Action Plan, the Irish government identified the audiovisual sector as one of the main pillars in Creative Ireland and has stated its ambition to establish Ireland as a global Centre of Excellence by 2020 (Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2018). Responding to recommendations in the Olsberg report (Olsberg SPI, 2017), and the Crowe Horwath report (Crowe Horwath, 2017) the action plan recognised that projected growth in the screen sector would lead to demands for greater crew numbers. There would also be a need to develop a clear plan to close the gaps between the present status of skills in Ireland and the anticipated future shape of the industry (Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2018)*

In April 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht issued new guidelines on Section 481, the Irish tax credit for the film, television and animation industry. Section 481 is a crucial component in the funding mix available to Irish producers. It is critical to the sustainability and growth of the Irish independent production sector and enables producers to compete in international markets (Screen Producers Ireland , 2019) . Under Section 481, a company which produces a film can claim a payable tax credit of 32% of eligible expenditure, subject to certain limits. This is a valuable support to aid film financing in Ireland for qualifying productions.

The new guidelines stipulate that producers are required to develop the skills of those working on the relevant production benefiting from the incentive (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2019). The section 481 Skills Development Requirement requires each producer company's projects with eligible expenditure in excess of €2 million to submit a Skills Development Plan for approval by Screen Ireland (SI) and Screen Skills Ireland.

While training has always occurred during production, this new requirement means that Producers now need to document the estimated number of employees likely to be upskilled and ensure the on - set learning process is more formalised and that skills development outcomes are documented.

New applications also require details on gender equality initiatives, diversity and inclusion initiatives together with a sustainability/green filmmaking plan. The production company is also required to furnish a full compliance report after the completion of the project.

In 2018, Screen Skills Ireland committed to undertake a Skills Needs Analysis across live-action, animation and the television productions sectors. Following on from that process, Screen Skills Ireland carried out another Skills Needs Analysis in 2019 to further evaluate the sector in terms of identifying the skills needs and potential gaps in the sector.

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE RESULTS FROM THREE KEY SOURCES

➡ *The Online Skills Needs Analysis Survey carried out in 2019*

➡ *The qualitative feedback gathered from participants at the 2019 Screen Industry Education Forum*

➡ *The feedback collected from ongoing Screen Skills Ireland stakeholder intelligence gathering*

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

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GROWTH AREAS

While two geographical areas appear to dominate the employment opportunities available: Dublin and Kilkenny, Limerick and Galway also feature as growth areas.

+50%

SKILLS GAPS PROCESS

Over 50% of respondents had a process in place to capture skills gaps on a production.

88%

SHORTAGE OF TALENT

There continues to be a shortage of talent available, with 88% of producers, heads of department (HODs) and employers reporting difficulties in sourcing suitably qualified staff and crew. In line with other parts of the Irish economy it appears to be a tight labour market with only 8% of respondents identifying as not in employment.

92%

SKILLS GAP

The technological and people management changes in the industry are creating a need for a new skillset. 92% of employer producers have identified a skills gap in their production crew. While predictably many identified technical skills gaps such as in animation or sound, over 20% reported gaps in specific key areas such as production accountants.

59%

SENIOR LEVEL GAPS

The challenge in sourcing suitably qualified staff is present at all levels in the production with 59% of respondents reporting difficulties at senior level and 73% reporting difficulties at mid or assistant level.

62%

ACADEMIC TUTORS NEEDED

The contribution of the education sector to the screen sector remains a dominant theme. 62% of employees and freelancers recognise the benefits of academics and industry practitioners working together to design sector specific formal accredited programmes.

+87%

ON THE JOB TRAINING

Reflecting the importance of workplace learning in this sector, over 87% of respondents valued on-the-job training especially in the technical areas, while 76% would value opportunities for mentoring or shadowing.

+50%

SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND TRAINING

The freelancers who responded showed a strong preference for short term full or part-time courses with over 50% having attended an Screen Skills Ireland skills development event.

MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION FORUM 2019

UPSKILL THE SECTOR

The reoccurring theme from industry stakeholders at the round table discussions was the need to upskill the sector not just the individual productions. There is an opportunity to allow cross training between different companies and studios.

ENGAGEMENT

The Education sector is keen to engage more with Screen sector, building on the strong relationships where industry and education have co-created and co-delivered programmes.

VISIBILITY

The screen sector needs to become more visible and attractive as a career option to a wider cohort of graduates and the general public.

COEXISTENCE OF TRAINING

Graduate and post-graduate education programmes provided by educational institutions and more focused training courses designed to meet specific or specialised skills gaps can and should co-exist.

01

INTRODUCTION

> *The Irish Governments' Audiovisual Action plan, launched in June 2018 under the Creative Ireland Programme has the ambition to not only increase the number of full-time industry employees to an estimated 24,000, but to grow its gross value to nearly €1.4 billion (Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2018).*

In line with the Audiovisual Action Plan, in 2018, Screen Training Ireland rebranded as Screen Skills Ireland to better reflect the broader remit and range of activities undertaken by the organisation.

Further supports for the wider audiovisual sector were announced during 2018, with the extension of Film Credit (Section 481) to 2024 and the regional uplift of 5% to provide an additional incentive to increase Irish and international production across the regions (Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2018).

The changes in Section 481 tax credit also require beneficiary companies to provide skills development in the course of production. Commenting on the changes James Hickey, then Chief Executive, Screen Ireland said: The new skills development requirement is wide-ranging and inclusive, covering skills development across all levels of production, focusing on quality over quantity in terms of the outcomes it delivers (Screen Ireland, 2019). Screen Ireland is the national development agency for the Irish film, television drama and animation industry. Screen Ireland is also responsible for the strategic skills development of the Irish film, television and animation industry through Screen Skills Ireland. Screen Skills Ireland have been assigned the role of assessing certain Skills Development Plans required as part of an application to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for a certificate under Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (Screen Ireland, 2019). Eligible producer companies must work with Screen Skills Ireland to develop a comprehensive Skills Development Plan. Producer companies are required to set out planned training and skills development initiatives and are encouraged to undertake a skills needs analysis to ascertain not alone the skills development needs of the production and/or the company but also the skills needs of the individuals engaged on the production and the wider screen sector.

This more formal process for identifying skills needs, responding to the needs and documenting the impact is a change for the screen sector. Screen Skills Ireland have developed resources to assist beneficiary companies to comply with the new processes.

This report presents the data from the 2019 online Skills Analysis Survey carried out by Screen Skills Ireland. The Skills Analysis Survey was undertaken to estimate the education, training, and skills development needs within the screen sector both currently and into the future. It is designed to be a support to the key stakeholders in the sector.

It also presents qualitative feedback from the second Screen Industry Education Forum. The analysis of both these initiatives are supported by the business insights and intelligence gathered by Screen Skills Ireland staff as they interact with stakeholders such as Screen Producers Ireland (SPI), Screen Guilds of Ireland (SGI), Animation Ireland and many others as well as with trainees and educators. Screen Skills Ireland actively engages with stakeholders in the screen sector. Each department within Screen Skills Ireland holds regular focus groups with stakeholders in relevant areas.

The report is structured as follows:

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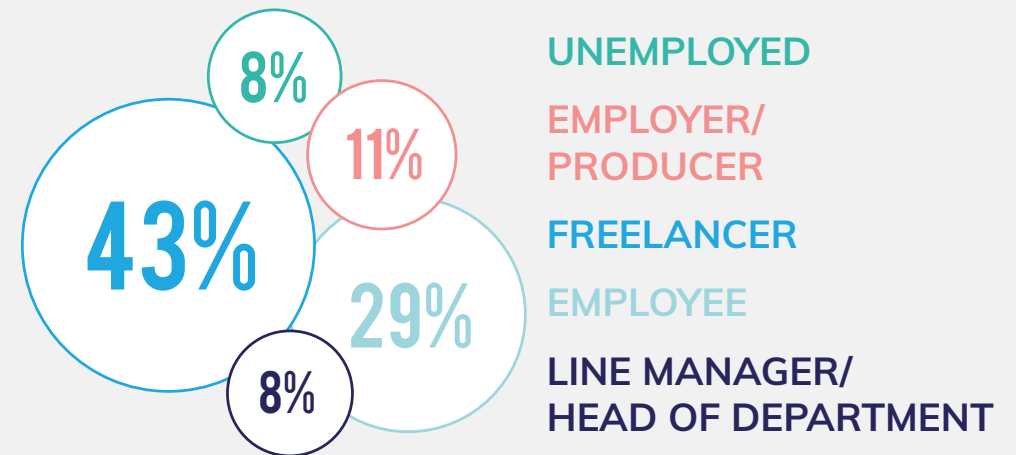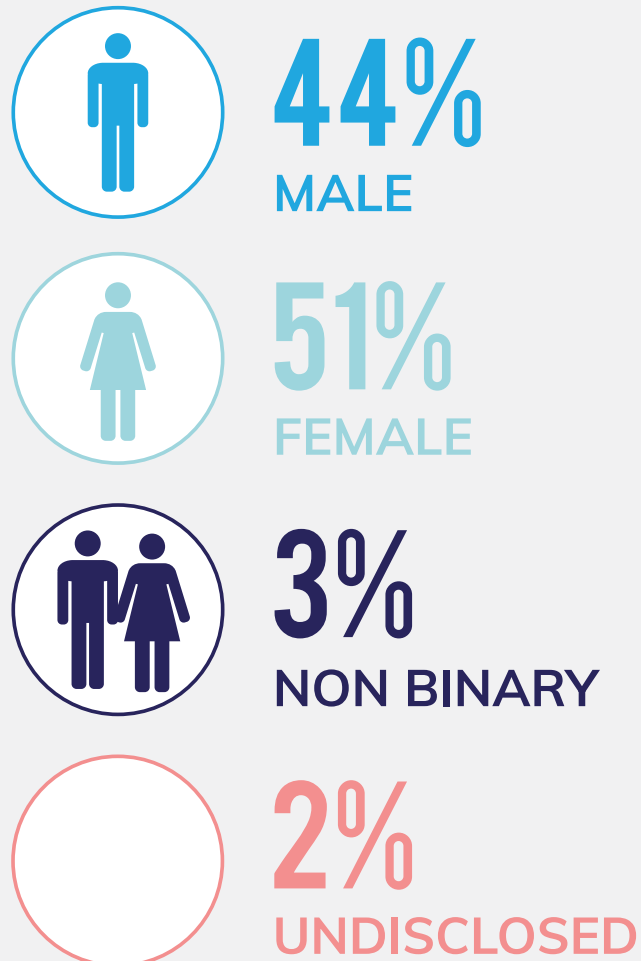SUPPORT ACTIVITY

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02
METHODOLOGY

Screen Skills Ireland has a membership database of 12,000 members. These members have interacted with Screen Skills Ireland either by taking part in a training programme or by subscribing to the Screen Skills Ireland industry email newsletter.

Screen Skills Ireland also have strong relationships with the 21 Guilds in Screen Guilds of Ireland (SGI), who act as a representative body for many crew members and below the line talent, and Screen Producers Ireland (SPI), Animation Ireland, VFXAI , Imirt, VR Ireland, Screen Directors Guild Ireland (SDGI) and Writers Guild Ireland (WGI), who represent the above the line talent.

In line with the Audiovisual Action Plan (Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2018) and the recommendations of the Olsberg report, there was a recommendation to capture the views and the perspectives of those actively involved in the screen sector regarding their own or their organisation's skills needs. (Olsberg SPI, 2017).

The ambition was to identify current and future skills gaps and to support the ongoing professional development of the industry. Opinions were sought from four specific groups across the sector, (1) Producers/Employers, (2) Heads of Department, (3) Freelancers and (4) Employees.

ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

An online Skills Needs Analysis was designed and hosted on the Screen Skills Ireland website. The link to the Skills Needs Analysis was sent to each of the Guilds and to members of other stakeholder groups such as SPI, Animation Ireland, SDGI, and WGI. It was also sent to the 12,000 members on the Screen Skills Ireland database.

The questions covered the technical skills, the people development skills and the future skills across all roles.

The survey, which was available from 23rd September to 18th October 2019,was promoted online using social media.. The survey was also promoted at Screen Skills Ireland events such as the Responsible Production event and the Screen Industry Education Forum.

➡ *1217 people responded to the Online Skills Needs Analysis Survey.*

TV NON FICTION
FILM & TV DRAMA
ANIMATION
POST PRODUCTION
VFX
GAMES
OTHER

EMPLOYEE   PRODUCER   ANIMATION   POST PRODUCTION

02

METHODOLOGY

44% MALE

51% FEMALE

3% NON BINARY

2% UNDISCLOSED

8% UNEMPLOYED

11% EMPLOYER/ PRODUCER

43% FREELANCER

29% EMPLOYEE

8% LINE MANAGER/ HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The responses were analysed, and the key findings are presented in the next section.

02

METHODOLOGY

—

SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM 2019

The second Screen Industry Education Forum was held on 5th November 2019 at The Alex Hotel in Dublin. Over 200 people attended. The aim was to bring together screen industry stakeholders, education/training providers and policy influencers to focus on the skills development challenges and opportunities of the screen sectors in Ireland, including Film, TV, Animation, VFX, Games and AR/VR. The audience included producers, academics, government bodies, writers and other stakeholders in the creative sector.

The morning session had a number of panels organised across the themes of Skills , Collaboration, Education and Diversity

The afternoon session comprised of a series of round table conversations where a range of industry stakeholders were given 3 structured questions to answer.

Screen Skills Ireland staff members recorded the responses from each table and transcribed them. The themes were collated, coded and analysed and the key themes are presented in section 4.

The analysis of both the Online Skills Needs Analysis Survey and the round table discussions are supported by the business insights and intelligence gathered by Screen Skills Ireland staff as they interact with producers, guilds, trainees and educators.

03
KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY
— PRODUCERS OR EMPLOYERS

The results of the online Skills Analysis Survey are presented by the industry groupings of Producer/Employer, Line Manager/Head of Department, Employees and Freelancer.

PRODUCERS OR EMPLOYERS

124 producers / employers completed the survey. Over 54% of the respondents in this group were production company owners and over 60% worked in the TV nonfiction or the Film and TV drama area. Most of the producers were based in Dublin (65%) with almost 10% based in Galway and 4% in Wicklow.

48% had a process in place to identify potential skills gaps in their employees or freelancers. 86% had identified skills gaps in their teams.

THE KEY AREAS OF SKILLS GAPS IDENTIFIED WERE:

- *Producing Skills and Development Skills*
- *Business Development*
- *Crew Production skills*
- *Creative*
- *Technical Skills*
- *People Development Skills*

In the Skills Analysis, the producers were offered a range of options to address the skills gaps in their production crew.

THEIR PREFERRED SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SKILLS GAPS WERE:

67% ON-THE-JOB TRAINING **65%** SHORT-TERM PART-TIME COURSES **52%** MENTORING **49%** SHADOWING
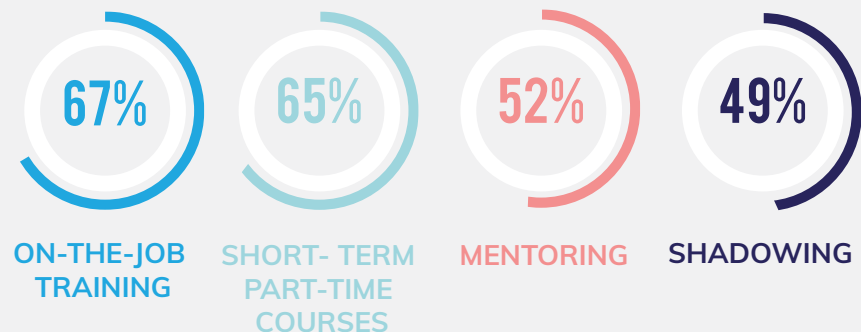
Three of the solutions identified by the producers would require a People Development Strategy where staff would be trained in how to mentor and train others.

This type of deliberate strategy has worked well on productions such as Red Rock and more recently the NIGHTFLYERS Production Training Scheme at Troy Studios, as well as other productions such as Green Knight. The strategy required the Heads of Department (HODs) or supervisors to identify learning opportunities on the busy production. Where this strategy is in place either formally or informally, the learning fits more easily into the workflow. There is also the added advantage that the person who is shadowing or being mentored has the opportunity to develop their social capital, as they interact not just with their own HOD but with other departments also. This broader knowledge can enhance their understanding of the wider production and reduce misunderstandings or communication breakdowns.
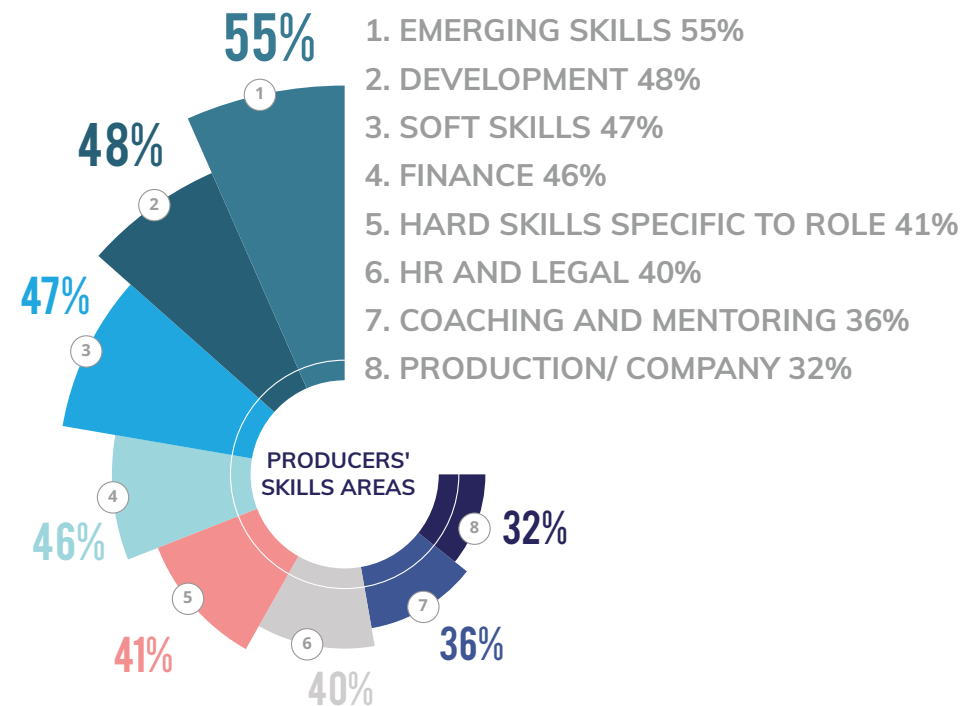
03

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

─ PRODUCERS OR EMPLOYERS

In future productions, the appointment of a Skills Development Coordinator might facilitate production specific Skills Needs Analysis and improved measurement of the impact of the skills development activity.

92% of the producers/employers also identified skills gaps in their own professional development. The changing landscape of production both in Ireland and internationally may account for the producers recognising the need for these emerging skills. While technical skills are highlighted, the recognition of the value of developing a broader skillset encompassing soft skills and coaching and mentoring may indicate a growing focus on developing people.

PRODUCERS' SKILLS AREAS

1. EMERGING SKILLS 55%
2. DEVELOPMENT 48%
3. SOFT SKILLS 47%
4. FINANCE 46%
5. HARD SKILLS SPECIFIC TO ROLE 41%
6. HR AND LEGAL 40%
7. COACHING AND MENTORING 36%
8. PRODUCTION/ COMPANY 32%

PRODUCERS'
SKILLS AREAS

55%
48%
47%
46%
41%
40%
36%
32%

03

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

LINE MANAGERS/ HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

88 Line Managers/Heads of Department/ Production managers completed the survey. 40% were Heads of Department and 20% of the were production managers. 54% worked in the TV nonfiction or the Film and TV drama area, while 33% worked in animation. Most were based in Dublin (62%) with almost 20% based in Kilkenny.
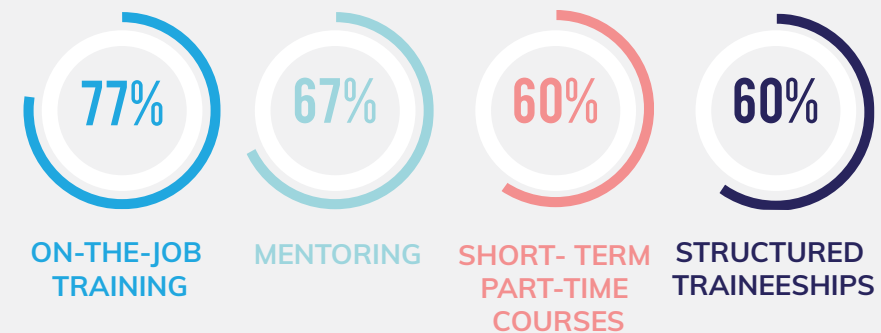
90% of managers had a process in place to identify potential skills gaps in their employees or freelancers. 90% had identified skills gaps in their teams.

THE KEY AREAS IDENTIFIED WERE:

40%	26%	23%	21%
PRODUCTION	**2D ANIMATION**	**EDITING**	**ACCOUNTS**
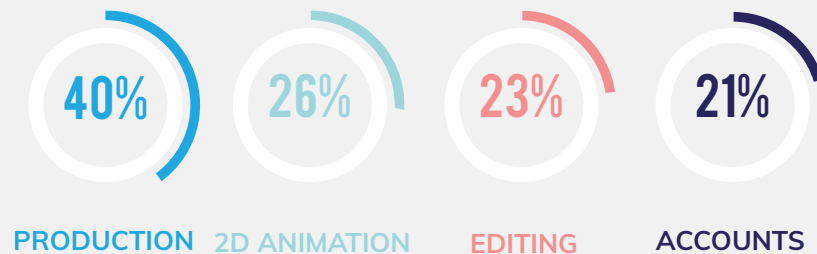
The managers were offered a range of options to address the skills gaps in their production crew.

THE PREFERRED SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SKILLS GAPS WERE:

77%	67%	60%	60%
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	**MENTORING**	**SHORT- TERM PART-TIME COURSES**	**STRUCTURED TRAINEESHIPS**

The top 2 solutions identified by the managers rely on the relationship that people have on set. Building on the tradition where line managers informally mentored people, this process would be improved if there was a structured approach to identifying who needed support and how the improved skillset would be measured. Often the HOD or production manager is too busy to deliver this type of training, but it can be delegated to a supervisor or more experienced staff member. In some animation companies they have built learning into the work schedule by using Drop Everything and Learn (DEAL) micro training sessions.

03

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY
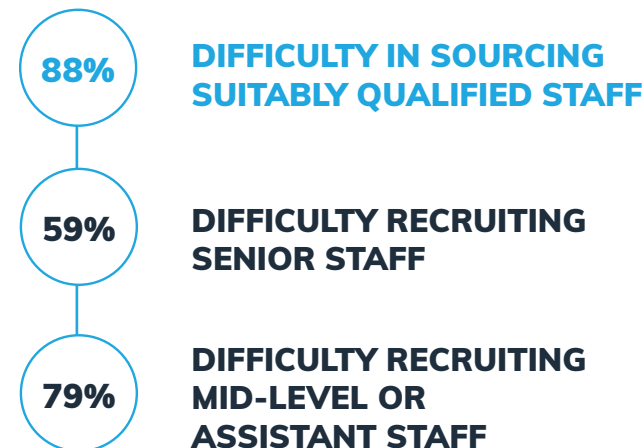
LINE MANAGERS/ HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

88% of the managers reported difficulty in sourcing suitably qualified staff and crew, across all departments. The difficulties in sourcing staff occurred at all levels with 59% of managers reporting difficulties recruiting senior staff and 73% recruiting mid-level or assistant staff.

This shortage of key staff is not limited to the Irish Film Industry as similar results were reported in the UK Quarterly Skills Barometer with 68% of respondents suggesting that it was difficult to recruit for similar roles (The Work Foundation , 2019).

The managers also identified skills gaps in their own professional development. 57% identified the need to develop future skills, 40% highlighted soft skills including leadership and unconscious bias, and 46% identified the need to become more skilled in the area of HR and legal.

THE ROLES MOST IN DEMAND WERE:

- *Production Accountants*
- *1st Assistant Directors*
- *Production Staff, Editors*
- *Costume Supervisors*
- *Lighting Technicians*
- *Production Buyers*
- *Set Decorators*
- *Development Executives*
- *Riggers (Animation and VFX)*
- *2D Artists*
- *3D Modellers*
- *Technical Directors*
- *Storyboard Artists*
- *Compositors*

88% DIFFICULTY IN SOURCING SUITABLY QUALIFIED STAFF

59% DIFFICULTY RECRUITING SENIOR STAFF

79% DIFFICULTY RECRUITING MID-LEVEL OR ASSISTANT STAFF

03

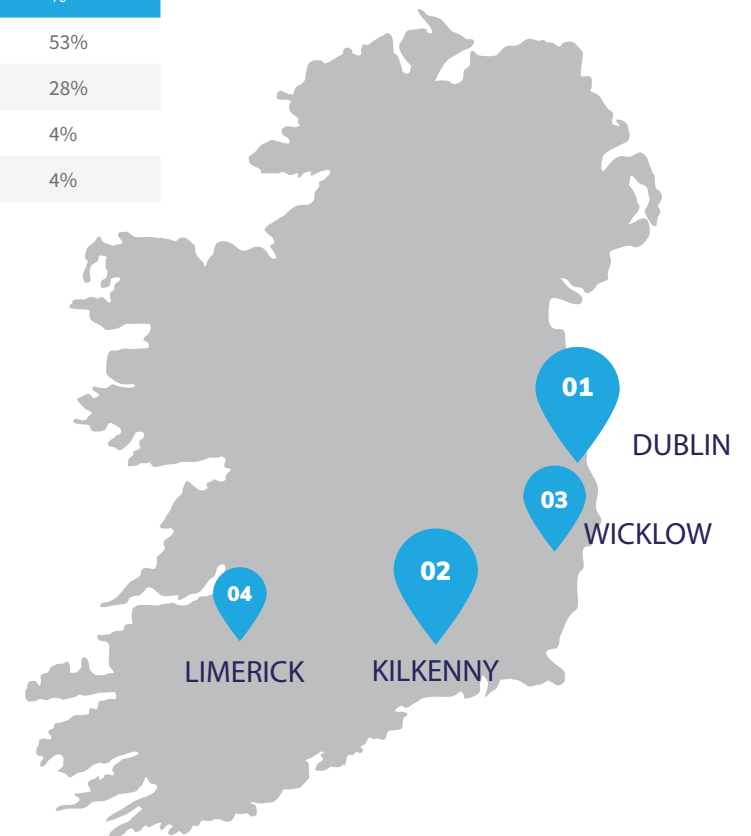# KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

— EMPLOYEES

356 employees and 105 people who were not in employment responded to the survey. Over 60% of the respondents have been working the screen sector for over 5 years. 6% had only worked for less than 1 year and 11% were graduates or new entrants. 45% worked in animation and 30% in the Film and TV drama area. Most of the employees, 53%, were based in Dublin with almost 28% based in Kilkenny, 4% in Limerick and 4% in Wicklow. They identified key areas where they had identified a skills gap in their professional development. The technical skills areas were most prominent including editing, animation skills and directing. The soft skills such as leadership and management were also mentioned by several respondents.

The employees' preference in tutors was local (77%) and international industry professionals (87%). They were open to online delivery of training (48%).

50% of employees had taken part in Screen Skills Ireland training and they expressed a preference for short-term part-time courses (85%) and on-the-job training (87%). Those who had not attended a Screen Skills Ireland training event did not know about the event (42%) or the timing was not right (28%) or the location was not suitable (27%).

When asked what course should be run in the future, the most popular were animation, writing, directing and software training.

|	County	%
01	Dublin	53%
02	Kilkenny	28%
03	Wicklow	4%
04	Limerick	4%

03

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SKILLS NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

—— FREELANCERS

472 freelancers responded to the survey. Over 50% of the respondents have been working in the screen sector for over 10 years. 7% had only worked for less than 2 years and 5% were graduates or new entrants. 69% worked in the Film and TV drama area. Most of the freelancers, 68% were based in Dublin, with 6% in Wicklow, 5% based in Kilkenny, 5% in Limerick and 4% in Cork.

Their roles reflected the diversity in the screen sector, actors 13%, screenwriters 12%, director 8% , camera operator 4%.
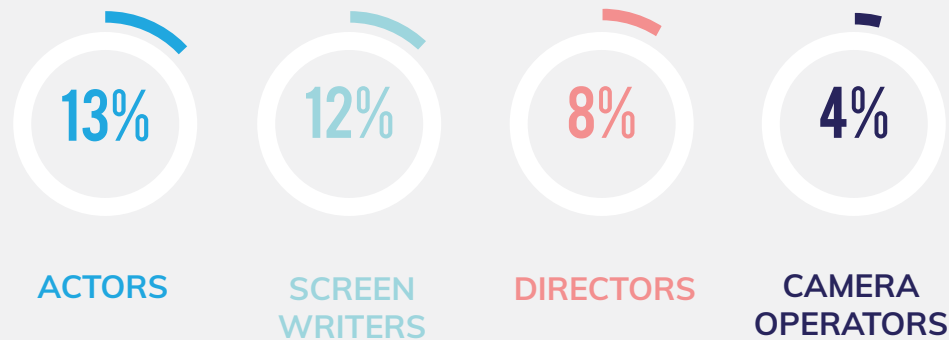
THEY IDENTIFIED A WIDE RANGE OF AREAS WHERE THEY WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS INCLUDING:

➡ *Editing*

➡ *Screenwriting*

➡ *Directing*

➡ *Post-production*

13%

ACTORS

12%

SCREEN WRITERS

8%

DIRECTORS

4%

CAMERA OPERATORS

In common with others in the survey they expressed a preference for short-term full-time courses (75%) but shadowing (80%), on the job training (87%) were the most popular. In their responses they seem to link the opportunity to upskill with the opportunity to be on set. They mentioned being involved in projects and understanding the workflow. Some of the freelancers mentioned a desire to move within the industry.

They valued access to local industry (79%) and international (88%) professionals and were open to online delivery. 62% had attended a Screen Skills Ireland training event. Those who did not attend mentioned timing (35%) and not knowing about the training (25%).

04

SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND - STAKEHOLDER INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Screen Skills Ireland has a history of engaging with stakeholders in the screen sector. Each department within Screen Skills Ireland holds regular focus group sessions with stakeholders in that area. For instance, the Film and TV Drama Focus Group brings together people from the Irish screen sector, typically Producers , Line Mangers and representatives from the Guilds It may also include stakeholders from the Higher Education Authority, the Further Education and Training sector and the regional skills sector. Throughout 2019 production companies across Animation, VFX, and Film and TV Drama submitted feedback on Skills Gaps in the Wider Industry / Production / Departmental Needs. The aim of the Focus Groups is to support and assist Screen Skills Ireland in relation to the skills development requirements of Film and TV Drama.

The objective of each Focus Group is to advise on the training priorities and skills development needs of the screen sector in their area. They may also advise on an annual skills development plan based on identified needs in their area. The advice and recommendations made by the Focus Group are collated and submitted for consideration by the Screen Skills Ireland Manager, the Screen Skills Sub-Committee and Screen Ireland Board (as required).

SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND -
INTELLIGENCE GATHERING THROUGH SECTION 481.

Throughout 2019 numerous productions submitted their Skills Development Plans to Screen Skills Ireland to comply with the requirements of Section 481. The Skills Needs Analysis which accompanied each of the Skills Development Plans has provided a deeper level of insight into the specific skills development requirements for the companies/producers, the employees and the people engaged on the production. It has also provided valuable information on the needs of the sector and the region.

ROLES MOST IN DEMAND

Transitioning to the new system of applying for the S481 tax credit using the self-assessment model, could put pressure on the accounts department and the parent production company. This shortage of skilled behind the scenes workers is also reported by the UK and Northern Ireland screen sector.

ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

→ *Account Assistants*

→ *New Entry-level Accounts Assistants*

→ *Production Accountants*

04

SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND - STAKEHOLDER INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

➡ *New Entrants in Production*

➡ *Assistant Coordinator*

➡ *Production Coordinator*

➡ *Production Manager*

OTHER ROLES MOST IN DEMAND

➡ *First ADs*

➡ *Editors*

➡ *2D Artists*

➡ *Location Managers*

➡ *3D Modellers*

➡ *Costume Supervisors*

➡ *Technical Directors*

➡ *Set Decorators*

➡ *Storyboard Artists*

➡ *Production Buyers*

➡ *Compositors*

ADDRESSING SKILLS GAPS THROUGH S481

In animation and VFX 121 people were upskilled and tracked over various productions as part of the new Section 481 skills requirements between April and December 2019. People were upskilled across animation, art direction, CGI, compositing, Directing, design, FX, HR rigging and storyboarding.

In Film and TV Drama, through S481, between April-December 2019, there were 235   people upskilled across the Accounts Department , the AD Department , Art Department, Camera Department, Construction , Costume , Editing , Engineering , Hair , Floor Management , Locations , Post Production , Production , Sound , Props , Script Editing , Shadow Directing and VFX.

05

OVERVIEW OF SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION FORUM

The Screen Industry Education Forum brought together industry stakeholders, education providers & policy influencers to focus on the skills development challenges and opportunities related to the screen sectors in Ireland. This event was open to those who are involved in education or production related to the Screen Sector (Film, TV, Post Production, VFX, Animation, Games and AR/VR) in Ireland.

The morning session had a number of panels organised across the themes of Skills , Collaboration, Education and Diversity

Panel 1 – Identifying Skills Needs on Production and Capturing Outcomes and Impact of Skills Activity

Panel Guests – Gemma O'Shaughnessy (Production Manager), Jane Leonard (Really Useful Training & Development), Emer MacAvin (Screen Skills Ireland), Eoin Holohan (Locations Manager), Gerard O'Keeffe (Camera Trainee), Kaye Elliott (Screen Skills UK) and Panel Chair: Andrew Barnes (Olsberg SPI)

Panel 2 – Education Collaborations with Industry in Practice

Panel Guests – Rónán Ó'Muirthile (National Film School at IADT), Richard Gavin (LIT), Celine Curtin (GMIT), Fran Keaveney (Screen Skills Ireland), Dr. Caroline O'Sullivan (TU Dublin), Lorcan Dunne (Dundalk IT) and Panel Chair: Andrew Barnes (Olsberg SPI)

Panel 3 – Current Skills Development Landscape in Ireland and Influencing Skills Development Policy/Funding

Panel Guests – Joan McNaboe (SOLAS/SLMRU), Claire McGee (Ibec), Alan Power (Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation/EGFSN), Natasha Kinsella (Dublin Regional Skills Forum), Gareth Lee (Screen Skills Ireland), Orla Clancy (Creative Europe Desk Ireland), and Panel Chair: Andrew Barnes (Olsberg SPI)

Panel 4 – Effective Skills Development Models for Industry (Innovation Labs, Writers Rooms, Mentoring, Shadowing)

Panel Guests: Jesse Cleverly (Wildseed Studios), Laurence Knell (Strategic Innovation Partners), Paul Walker (Showrunner), Andrew Schlussel (Director of Global Talent Development at Framestore), Lisa Mulcahy (Director), Jenny Oman (Set Decorator) and Panel Chair: Andrew Barnes (Olsberg SPI)

The afternoon session comprised of a series of round table conversations where speakers from the panel and a range of industry stakeholders engaged in discussion around 3 key questions.

06

KEY THEMES FROM THE SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

The key themes presented below emerged from the seven round table discussions at the Screen Industry Education Forum. The tables comprised of a diverse group of people from different parts of the screen sector. Each table was presented with three questions.

Q1 WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS FACING THE SCREEN SECTOR IN IRELAND?

Q2 WHAT ARE THE BEST SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MODELS FOR ADDRESSING THESE NEEDS?

Q3 HOW CAN THE INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS, EDUCATION TRAINING PROVIDERS, AND POLICY INFLUENCERS WORK BETTER TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE SECTOR?

The feedback and the conversations among the stakeholders confirmed the findings in the online Skills Needs Analysis. The respondents to the Skills Needs Analysis had reported a need to improve their expertise in a broad range of skills and this was echoed in the round table discussions. The challenge to identify the most production critical skills was also discussed, as was the value in conducting a skills needs analysis.

As in the skills needs analysis, a number of different responses to the skills gaps were discussed including industry professionals communicating more with educators and academics. The need to ensure the alignment of formal courses with industry requirements was highlighted.

In the response to open questions in the skills needs analysis, many freelancers and employees had identified the benefit of linking upskilling with being on-set or getting experience by working on productions. The stakeholders shared this perspective and recognised the need to create learning opportunities at all stages of production.

In addition, several of the participants recommended several actions that could be taken by policy, industry and the education sector either separately or in collaboration with each other. There was a sense of urgency and the clearly expressed desire to identify measures that could deliver both short term and long term impact for the screen sector.

Q1 WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS FACING THE SCREEN SECTOR IN IRELAND?

The main theme in response to this question was the shortage of technical skills and people development skills. There was a recognition that the skills needs are not only reliant on the demand created in the domestic market. International companies' expectations, such as Subscription Video on Demand (SVODs) and technology changes were creating demands for new skills, while making other skills redundant.

Reflecting the changing business model in the screen sector, Marketing, Business development sills and the ability to identify audiences were also discussed as important skills.

While some people focussed on the technical skills such as software gaps most people discussed the core transferable skills required in most roles.

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KEY THEMES FROM THE SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

The non-technical skills discussed ranged from HR to management for senior staff. For new entrants and graduates the non-technical skills focussed on communication, problem solving and resilience. This skills deficiency affected staff retention, communication, managing expectations and the ability to progress in your career.

These types of skills have been identified as crucial in other industries and sectors, where they have been incorporated into competency frameworks. It was suggested that the screen sector also included the non-technical skills in the competency framework being developed by Screen Skills Ireland.

This question also encouraged the groups to reflect on how they as an industry rather than as a company or a production could work together. There were suggestions around cross company training initiatives, work placements and Step Up programmes. The Passport to Production programme was recognised as a very valuable preparation programme and it was suggested that it be rolled out several times a year.

Reflecting the changes in section 481 one of the key questions was "How do I conduct a Skills Needs Analysis for my department?"

The need for more gender and diversity was also discussed and people felt that more could be done to remove some of the structural barriers to encourage more women into productions. People cited examples that were common in other sectors such as creches, and programmes to assist women returning from maternity leave.

Q2   WHAT ARE THE BEST SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MODELS FOR ADDRESSING THESE NEEDS?

There were three main themes in response to this question.

- ➜ Experiential learning
- ➜ Competency and skills
- ➜ Formal education

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

All groups expressed a need for an experiential model of learning where people are immersed in the work and learn by doing. But they also acknowledged the challenges of making time for training on a busy production. However, some people shared how they had managed to allocate time and budget for training. They spoke of the benefit and the positive impact of deliberately making the training part of the production. The need for mentors and peer to peer support was highlighted as a need at all levels from new entrants to writers and producers.

COMPETENCY AND SKILLS

> "A big issue at the moment is that standards are not set in stone "

The need to upskill people was one of the most pressing challenges and the upskilling need to

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KEY THEMES FROM THE SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

deliver an impact for the person and the production. This need for skills highlighted the need for a more formal approach to competency development. The use of competency frameworks was discussed as way to ensure that people understand which skills were required in each stage of their careers.

The conversations also addressed the need for structure in the provision and the capturing on the learning. This would facilitate a standardised measurement of training levels in line with international standards. It would also feed into a clearer career progression path and support people in their career ambitions.

The discussion on competencies went beyond the technical skillset and the need for problem solving, management and leadership skills was highlighted.

FORMAL EDUCATION

Educators can not teach every role and every tool so they need to hear from companies regarding what areas to priorities and what the companies expect from the graduates.

The work readiness of graduates was discussed. This has been reported by many other sectors. The need to bridge the gap between industry and education was seen as a very important measure. Step up programmes, mentoring and peer support were highlighted as possible ways to bridge the gap.

Despite the difficulties, the strong relationship between education and the screen sector was a recurring theme. The need to share more information with educators was mentioned and some suggested using Skype or virtual platforms to allow industry experts to deliver classes for students. In line with other sectors, the graduates entering the screen sector face a difficult transition from third level to industry.

The education sector was also discussed as a possible way to encourage more graduates to join the industry. The need to communicate the breadth of roles available in the screen sector to school leavers and career guidance professionals was discussed. There are many job opportunities in roles such as production accountant and production buyers that are often not considered.

It was suggested the film festivals have a valuable role to play in providing a space where educators and industry can meet, network and connect.

Q3 HOW CAN THE INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS, EDUCATION TRAINING PROVIDERS, AND POLICY INFLUENCERS WORK BETTER TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE SECTOR?

WE NEED TO PLAN FOR GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY IS THE KEY

The discussions around this question reflected the willingness of the different stakeholders to work together to sustain the growth in the screen sector. Partnerships with third level colleges and commercial bodies were identified as a way to increase collaboration and sharing information. These partnerships might also provide opportunities for joint funding applications for training and innovation.

The potential contribution of the 21 Guilds, acting as a collective voice, to create different connections between the Guilds and educators, to promote the importance of competency

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KEY THEMES FROM THE SCREEN INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND SKILLS FORUM

development and support career progression was discussed.

There is a need for more proactive communication between educators and industry to improve the alignment of the skills required and those provided. In live action, the need to incorporate industry specific topics into the modules was discussed. The lack of technical skills in the indigenous workforce requires animation and VFX companies to recruit staff from other countries. This is common in all areas of ICT and is due to the rapid advancement of new technologies in these sectors.

One of the key challenges identified was the need to tell the story of the screen sector to a wider audience. Both in the panel discussion and at the round table discussions, there were comments made that the sector needs to market itself, to make the industry more visible to students, career guidance, parents and career changers. There was a recognition of the need to compete with other sectors who are attracting the type of graduates who are needed by the screen sector.

This need to recruit people from a wider population has also been highlighted by Gareth Ellis-Unwin of Screenskills, speaking at the Cannes film festival (Thorpe, 2019). The ability to attract from non-traditional talent sources might also result in a more diverse workforce.

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THE SECTOR AND SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND SUPPORT ACTIVITY

While numerous industry practitioners are involved in the delivery of programmes, this involvement needs to be strengthened and encouraged. The regular industry stakeholder focus groups, the results of the 2019 survey and the feedback from the Screen Industry Education Forum 2019 will form a key part of the development of new courses into the future. These initiatives will also help other stakeholders in the sector to identify the skills gaps and to design ways to address them.

Ballyfermot College of Further Education, IADT, DCU, Griffith College, Pulse College, Colaiste Dhulaigh, Dundalk IT, Carlow IT, Limerick IT and GMIT, provide degrees and diplomas in areas such as television and film production, animation, and set design.

In 2019, Screen Skills Ireland also developed 3 new certified programmes in collaboration with Irish academic institutions: 'Creative Leadership' and 'Advancing Producers' (both in partnership with Technological University (TU) Dublin) and 'Production Management for Animation' (in partnership with IADT Dun Laoghaire). The 'Creative Leadership' programme offers a Post Graduate Diploma at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), aimed at creative sectors like animation, games, VFX, and immersive technologies and is available to participants via Springboard+

In Ireland there has been considerable growth in education and training provision in film and television and growing experience and sophistication in content and modes of delivery, which includes strengthened connections with international centres of excellence. Given the size of our market, there is also a need to connect producers with international co-producing and funding opportunities. Screen Skills Ireland in partnership with Screen Skillnet, recently hosted a very well received Co-Pro lab conference. This conference allowed the participants to work through case studies with Irish and international industry experts.

In relation to skills development, it is important to note that some very specific skills are required, which vary across genres e.g. animation skills are clearly very different from live action film skills etc. In addition, skills requirements change regularly, particularly in the era of convergence, and this is a dynamic area that needs a responsive approach.

In response to production needs, Screen Skills Ireland has developed and delivered a number of new entrant work-based learning programmes (over 14 programmes) between July 2018 and October 2019 including the well-received 'Passport to Production' programme.

In 2019, Screen Skills Ireland delivered 78 courses and allocated places to 1309 participants. In addition, Screen Skills Ireland also offered 7 certified programmes; delivered 48 masterclasses and workshops at leading Irish film festivals and seminars in partnership with various organisations; and provided funding to 29 Irish industry professionals to attend high-level skills development programmes and workshops with international organisations through the Bursary Award Scheme.

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THE SECTOR AND SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND SUPPORT ACTIVITY

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Some of these Screen Skills Ireland courses are listed below:

CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS	**FILM AND TV DRAMA**
Directing and Acting for Intimate Scenes	SyncOnSet – The Digital and Collaboration Tool for Film & TV Production
Investigating Characters	Improving Your Photography Skills for Location Scouting
Directing and Composing Workshop: Understanding Music and Its Effect on the Perception of Film	Production Management for Film & TV Drama
Music for Films and Games: Demo Derby	Costume Skills Course – Making, Altering, Breakdown and Dyeing
Scene Analysis: The Building Blocks of Scene Writing and Sequence Structure	Movie Magic Scheduling and Budgeting
Screenplay Unlimited: Advanced Development for Experienced Producers, Directors and Development Executives	Drafting for Film & Television
The First Draft and Beyond	Production Accountancy
Exploring Genre – Screenplay Unlimited Thriller Workshop	Film Camera Shooting for Camera Assistants
Exploring Genre – Screenplay Unlimited Comedy Workshop	Leading Successful Teams
Developing an Animated Television Series	AVID Media Composer Fundamentals
General American Accent for Actors	Making Movies Without Making A Mess
Advanced Audition Workshop	Certified Chemical Handling
Irish Writers Pitching Programme for TV Comedy & Drama	Accredited Abrasive Wheel Course & Handling Abrasive Wheeled Equipment
Story Development and Treatment Writing for Feature Films	Managing Mentoring Workshop
LA Writers Room Placements	QQI Level 6 Train The Trainer Course
The Core Principles of Storytelling on the Screen for Composers and Directors	Building Resilience And Time Management Skills
Mapping the U.S. TV & Global Streaming Landscape 2019	Intro to Project Management: Navigating Projects & Managing Your Time

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THE SECTOR AND SCREEN SKILLS IRELAND SUPPORT ACTIVITY
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NEW ENTRANT AND CERTIFIED PROGRAMMES	**TV NON FICTION**

NEW ENTRANT AND CERTIFIED PROGRAMMES

→ *Passport to Production: Film and TV Drama New Entrant Training Programme*

→ *Certificate in Production Management for Animation (Level 9 on NFQ)*

→ *TG4 Media Training Development Scheme*

→ *CGI Technical Artist Apprenticeship (Level 8 on NFQ)*

→ *Media Production Assistant Traineeship (Level 5 on NFQ)*

→ *Post Graduate Diploma in Creative Leadership (Level 9 on NFQ)*

→ *Post Graduate Certificate for Advanced Producers Programme (Level 9 on NFQ)*

→ *Animation, VFX & Games Graduate Traineeship*

TV NON FICTION

→ *TV Development: Steps to Creating TV Ideas That Stand Out*

→ *Cracking Edit Producing*

→ *Archive Research for TV & Film Documentary*

→ *Camera Trainee Workshop*

→ *The Full Deck: Mastering the Essential Deliverables Required for Commissioning Success*

→ *The Story Fix: Solving Story Problems in Factual Programmes*

→ *Multi-Camera Directing in Association with IADT*

→ *TV Production Research Skills*

→ *Copyright: What You Need to Know*

→ *Social Media Strategy for Independent Producers*

→ *Mojo Techniques*

→ *Understanding Diversity and Inclusion*

→ *Creative Thinking Techniques*

→ *Unconscious Bias in the Workplace*

In terms of promoting careers in the screen sector to those at secondary school level throughout 2019, the "Careers in Screen" event was run by Screen Skills Ireland in March and December with the IFI and production company collaboration. To connect with a wider audience, Screen Skills Ireland hosted another Careers in Screen event at the Cork Film Festival in 2019. This event was aimed at 3rd year to 6th year students. The speakers discussed the nature of filmmaking as a career and the different skillsets involved and gave a comprehensive look at the screen industry in Ireland.

ANIMATION, VFX
AND GAMES

- *An Introduction to Editing for Animation using Adobe Premiere*
- *An Introduction to Creating High Quality Texturing for Games*
- *An Introduction to Nuke Compositing*
- *Visual Storytelling Skills for Animation Storyboard Artists*
- *The Basics of ZBrush*
- *Storyboarding with Storyboard Pro*
- *Global Vista Training*
- *Toon Boom Harmony – Character Animation Workshop*
- *Assistant Editing for Animated Features*
- *Introduction to Photorealistic Compositing with Nuke*

BUSINESS
AND ENTERPRISE

- *Time to Board? A Guide to Boards & Corporate Governance*
- *Creative Leadership Masterclass: Getting Ideas Commissioned*
- *Visa Requirements for the Screen Sector Seminar*
- *Business Model Innovation & Design Thinking Workshop*
- *Managing Staff in line with Legal Requirements & HR Best Practice*
- *Television Drama - Writing, Structuring and Developing a Hit TV Show with John Yorke*
- *X-Pollinator*
- *Conference: Co-Pro Lab – Connect/Create/Produce*
- *Sales & Distribution for Filmmakers*
- *Market Ready Day*
- *Post Graduate Certificate for advanced producers programme (Level 9 on NFQ)*

To provide a clearer road map in the screen sector, Screen Skills Ireland created a 'Careers in Screen' portal in 2019, WWW.CAREERSINSCREEN.IE, a new online service that proactively maps career paths within the industry. This portal allows both new entrants and industry professionals in Ireland to see at a glance the large range of roles available in the screen industries, as well as the key skills required for all roles across Film, TV (drama and non-fiction), VFX and Animation.

08
RECOMMENDATIONS
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These recommendations are based on the responses to the online Skills Needs Analysis Survey and the Screen Industry Education Forum and are also influenced by feedback from the series of stakeholder working groups convened by Screen Skills Ireland in 2019.

The recommendations in this report are presented as constructive commentary on potential next steps. Screen Skills Ireland are fully committed to supporting the career development and training of those working within the industry, across all areas of production and development and Screen Ireland want to see upskilling, mentorships and shadowing integrated into all of the productions that they fund (Screen Ireland , 2019).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUS ON THREE MAIN AREAS:

THE NEED TO DEVELOP CAPACITY TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY

THE NEED TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE TALENT PIPELINE

THE TRANSITION INTO THE INDUSTRY

01   THE NEED TO DEVELOP CAPACITY TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY

Ireland's competitive tax credit, experienced talent base, and distinctive landscapes have all contributed to making the country a unique and valuable co-production partner. Ireland has co-produced with almost every European territory, as well as Canada, Australia, and South Africa. It has a wealth of experienced co-producers across all forms of film, television and animation (Screen Ireland , 2019). The creativity of screen content across feature film, TV drama, TV animation and computer games has the potential to create jobs and increase inward investment, promote Ireland as a place to visit for tourists (Olsberg SPI, 2017). If the Irish screen sector wants to compete internationally, to take advantage of the global increase in the demand for content and meet the standards required by the Streaming Video on Demand giants (SVODs) it will need to attract talented candidates and will need to consider how it develops and retains them.

02   THE NEED TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE TALENT PIPELINE

In line with other national Skills Needs Analysis surveys, this research highlights a shortage of skills in the screen sector. The screen sector is facing competition from other productions within the screen sector to attract the skilled workforce it needs. As in the UK, independent producers may struggle to compete with large scale productions. The animation companies may face competition from outside the sector from gaming and VFX companies (The Work Foundation, 2019).

The responses to the online Skills Needs Analysis survey and the feedback from Screen Industry Education Forum demonstrate that many people want to upskill, want to improve how they work and take advantage of opportunities available to them.

Research suggests that workers in all sectors are prioritising ongoing and continuous learning throughout their lifetime, recognising the need to take an active role in future-proofing their own skills (Business in the Community Ireland, n.d.). For many, the training programmes provided by their organisations do not meet their needs, with more than half of workers reporting that the development programmes provided are not helpful or that they are not given time to attend (Capgemini Research Institute , 2017). The screen sector has an opportunity to learn from other sectors and to create a bespoke people development strategy.

While the participants value short courses, they report that work is the best place for them to learn. The challenge is for productions to build on their existing practices and to formalise the training and make skills development of all staff part of their way of working. The use of a competency framework would allow people to track their progress and their areas of improvement. It might also improve the hiring and selection process.

The Screen Industry Education Forum reports that freelancers and employees value the role of academics in supporting their professional career. Academics have expressed a willingness to build on legacy screen sector collaboration models such as the collaboration between Ros Na Run and GMIT, and the Red Rock model. At the Screen Industry Education Forum, there was a strong sense of cross fertilisation and a willingness to work together. The goal is to extend the conversation beyond the room and to implement some of the great ideas.

03 THE TRANSITION INTO THE INDUSTRY

In common with other sectors, the screen sector graduates may lack some of the "work readiness" expected by industry (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018). Other sectors have responded to this by creating stronger links to educators, 31% of employers surveyed in the Irish National Employer Survey are involved in work placement collaborations with HE institutions, with 24% collaborating on the upskilling of staff and 19% collaborating on apprenticeships (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2018).

Other ways to improve the work readiness of new recruits at all levels include, developing supported induction periods and providing structured mentoring. This could be achieved in the screen sector under the new Section 481 Skills Development Plans which have the capacity to deliver a positive impact on the person and the production.

The recommendations also reflect the reality of transition from legacy ways to new ways of developing people. Screen Skills Ireland have developed resources for producer companies to allow them to capture data related to skills activity, including outcomes and impact. This new Section 481 requirement could act as a catalyst, to allow companies to build learning into their workplace. Once the skills needs analysis is completed, the Skills Development Plan could be an opportunity to move from reactive, just in time, skills development or learning to proactive, planned skills development to improve performance levels. Due to the nature of the creative sector it is more important to adopt a more relevant model of skills development, capture and evaluation The key thing is that focusing on skills development means people can do their job better, in this production, and carry those skills to the next production or role.

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