



Invitation to tender

For Work Experience Pilot

**Invitation to tender from ScreenSkills,
on behalf of Discover! Creative Careers**

**Date tender issued:
18th March 2025**

ScreenSkills, on behalf of the [Discover! Creative Careers](#) programme, is inviting tenders for a contract for a new work experience pilot focused on the creative industries, which will deliver in-person placements for students in Years 10 and 11 in England.

The pilot, which will run from April 2025 to March 2026, is designed to address skills gaps and shortages across the creative industries and to help build a more diverse and inclusive workforce for the future.

About ScreenSkills

ScreenSkills is the industry-led skills body for the UK's screen-based creative industries, including film, high end and other television, VFX, animation and games. We work across the UK with employers, individuals, learning/training providers, trade associations, unions and government to ensure the screen industries have the skilled workforce they need. We identify training needs and help tackle them. ScreenSkills is the lead delivery partner of Discover! Creative Careers, administering the programme with, and on behalf of, the wider creative industries.

About Discover! Creative Careers

Discover! Creative Careers is a free to access, government funded, industry-led, national programme working to inspire and inform young people aged 11-18 about careers within the creative industries. It currently focuses its support on schools and young people in [priority areas](#) identified as those facing the greatest disadvantage. As the lead delivery partner, ScreenSkills works closely with its appointed Discover! Creative Careers team and the programme's steering group of industry partners. Designed in collaboration with sector bodies and employers, it provides a year-round, hybrid programme of activities, events and resources that support schools and colleges across England to meet several Gatsby Benchmarks¹. By ensuring that every young person has access to the information, advice and guidance they need to consider a career in the creative industries, the programme aims to support the development of a strong, inclusive and diverse creative industries workforce, one that is more representative of the national population.

The Autumn Budget 2024 confirmed the Government's continuing commitment to broaden and diversify the talent pipeline into the creative industries by providing additional funding to support the expansion of the Creative Careers Programme (Discover! Creative Careers) in 2025-26, giving school children the opportunity to learn more about career routes and to directly engage with the workplace.

Overview

The Department for Education is introducing a new work experience guarantee. Building on Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of Workplaces, the guarantee will ensure that all pupils participate in two weeks' worth of work experience by the time they leave Year 11, by the end of this Parliament.

As part of Discover! Creative Careers' expansion, we are seeking to recruit a delivery partner to plan and deliver in-person* work experience encounters that showcase careers in the creative industries to young people aged 14-16, focusing on those from the programme's priority areas. Please note that in 2025-26 there will be an increase from 77 to over 100 priority areas identified

¹References

[Careers and Enterprise Company: Gatsby Benchmarks](#)

by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). These are listed in Annex A of this document. Please note these are subject to final checks, but alignment to these is encouraged.

As part of the move towards all young people accessing two weeks of work experience before they leave school, one or more in-person work experience placement undertaken at any point during the Year 10/11 curriculum, must allow pupils to experience a real working environment, including opportunities to meet a range of different people from the workplace, and begin to develop work-based skills and behaviours. For this pilot, work experience should be delivered in 3-5 day placements involving active engagement with employers in all instances.

Opportunities should be developed, designed and delivered through close partnership between schools and employers, involve two-way employer interaction and give young people the opportunity to access a wide range of career opportunities that go beyond the horizons of their immediate friends and family.

Although the format of these opportunities may vary, they should showcase the creative industries across the twelve sub-sectors we have identified (see Context below) and provide ways for young people to gain experience of a variety of roles across one or more of them.

*Whilst the baseline expectation is that placements will be in-person, there is some scope to explore virtual placements if universal remote working is common practice in a particular sub-sector.

Who can apply?

This is an open tender competition with a single contract awarded. ScreenSkills welcomes applications from organisations or partnerships that have a proven track record of delivering successful engagement projects with young people. We particularly welcome applications from providers who are regionally based.

Applicants who are already delivering similar programmes and can expand their offer to include the scope outlined below are also welcome to apply.

Background

[Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy](#)² sets out the government's plan to ensure investment and growth over the next ten years across eight key growth driving sectors, including the creative industries. A core objective of the strategy is a focus on place; in particular, areas with the greatest potential for growth clusters. Discover!'s priority areas for 2025-26³ will align with key cities and regions, and this project will focus on reaching young people in these key areas, in order to support skills development in the local future workforce.

The [Skills England: Driving growth and widening opportunities paper \(Sep 2024\)](#)⁴ recognises that growing the economy will only be possible if we harness the talent of our people, meet businesses' skills needs and break down the barriers to opportunity.

This pilot will support Skills England's ambitions 'to build a high-skill, high-productivity workforce that is matched to employers' needs and ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, can access the opportunities they need to thrive.' Through this project, we aim to raise the profile of the

² [Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy - GOV.UK](#)

³ There will be 100 priority areas identified by DCMS, and alignment to these will be encouraged where possible. We expect these to be linked with the [priority areas for the Industrial Strategy](#), and will share these as soon as possible.

⁴ [Skills England: Driving growth and widening opportunities paper \(Sep 2024\)](#)

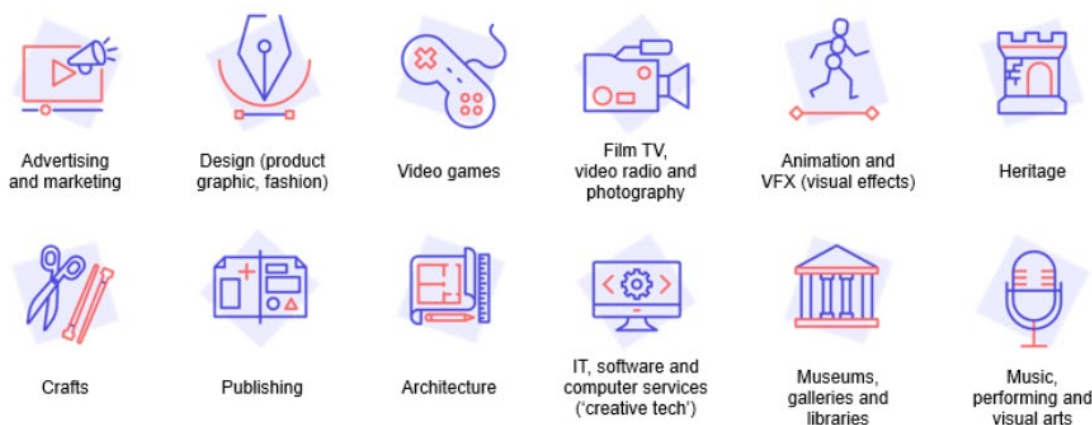
various creative industry sub-sectors with our target audiences, and demonstrate the wide variety of backgrounds, skills, routes and pathways that make up their workforce.

The Government's [Get Britain Working White Paper](#)⁵ identifies the complex challenges facing young people leaving compulsory education. The establishment of a Youth Guarantee in England will oversee a raft of enhanced and additional provision for young people aged 18-21, including: the transformation of the Apprenticeship Levy into a more flexible Skills and Growth Levy; an enhanced careers offer in schools that will include a 2-week work experience placement; and the launch of Youth Guarantee Trailblazers in eight mayoral authorities across England. This project will support the Government's vision to utilise the expertise of industry and young people in order to help them thrive, and to work in partnership with organisations at a national and local level.

According to the Government, the term work experience refers to *'all forms of work-related activity, including work tasters, running a student enterprise, participation in a social action project, volunteering or a placement with an external employer. It aims to give young people the opportunity to develop their career choices, get a first taste of work, and develop those critical employability skills needed for real working conditions'*.⁶

The pilot will engage creative industry partners and connect them with schools, providing them with the tools needed to deliver robust, impactful and (where possible) curriculum-linked work experience opportunities.

For the purposes of this project, the creative industries are broken down into the following categories:



In line with the revised [Gatsby Benchmarks](#), the work experience programme should provide

*"meaningful and varied encounters and experiences (that offer) a variety of encounters (and give) young people time to prepare and reflect and use technology alongside, **but not instead of**, in-person activity."*

[Meaningful encounters](#)⁷ should include preparatory activities, as well as the opportunity to reflect on learnings after the event. This programme will help schools to meet the following benchmarks:

- **Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees**
- **Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces**

[UCAS's Next Generation report \(2023\)](#)⁸ highlights the importance of exposure to education and career options in building young people's confidence to make decisions about their future. This project seeks to demystify the job opportunities available in the creative industries by opening doors

⁵ [Get Britain Working White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2024 to 2025 academic year - GOV.UK](#)

⁷ [Careers and Enterprise Company resource – making it meaningful](#)

⁸ [UCAS's Next Generation report \(2023\)](#)

and showing young people what the world of work has to offer. It will support young people to understand their options when it comes to career paths, as well as the soft and hard skills required in a variety of workplaces. Young people surveyed for the UCAS report were clear that they needed more exposure to, and experience of, the world of work to make informed choices about their next steps. The project will meet this need and act as a bridge between industry and education, supporting both sides to engage with each other and deliver measurable outcomes.

The report also indicates that helping young people to choose a sector or industry to work in - as opposed to deciding on a specific role they might like to pursue – works as a broader decision-making tool and provides more flexibility later in the education journey.

Of the 1000+ young people surveyed, 95% believe that relevant work experience is important, but only 39% have had it. We want to address this gap in provision and support education providers to access high-quality, impactful work experience for their students, wherever in the country they are based.

Objectives of the Project

The overall objectives of the project are:

- To provide young people in Years 10 and 11 with meaningful in-person work experience opportunities that showcase the breadth of career opportunities in the creative industries, and the varied routes and pathways into these careers
- To address misconceptions about creative industry careers and the roles and opportunities available within them
- To engage young people who are traditionally underrepresented in the creative industries and help diversify the future talent workforce
- To support decision making through secondary education and beyond
- To help inform young people about careers opportunities in their region
- To facilitate partnerships between local industry and education providers

Deliverables

The successful applicant will need to demonstrate their understanding of the [careers guidance](#)⁹ landscape, including the recently updated [Gatsby Benchmarks](#). They should also be able to clearly demonstrate the challenges around diversity facing the creative industries workforce and how this work experience pilot can help address this.

The applicant will design, manage, market and deliver the work experience programme, and will be responsible for recruiting participating schools and industry partners across England, with a focus on [Discover!'s priority areas](#).¹⁰

The programme should include the following, based on [Gatsby benchmarks](#) requirements for a meaningful encounter:

- Activities with a clear purpose, which are developed in collaboration with employers and schools
- Two-way interactions between the young person and the employer
- Opportunities for young people to meet a range of different people from the workplace
- Opportunities for young people to perform a task set by the employer or to produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace

⁹ [Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers \(DCMS\)](#)

¹⁰ [Discover! Creative Careers: Priority Areas](#)

- Opportunities for the employer to provide feedback to the young person about their work
- Be followed by opportunities for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience.

Minimum requirements:

- a) Design a programme that is focused on young people in the programme's priority areas.
- b) To engage a minimum of 600 students on 3-5 day in-person work experience placements. This must be aimed at students in years 10 and 11 and align as far as possible with schools' key work experience periods across June and July. Work experience opportunities offered at other points across the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years are an option where appetite can be demonstrated to help achieve the minimum target outlined above.
- c) Design opportunities to align with Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees and Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces.
- d) Create opportunities that are open to young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND).
- e) Monitor and evaluate the programme with guidance from the externally contracted evaluator.

Diversity aims:

- For gender, 50% female
- For ethnicity, 20% minority ethnic
- For disability, 10% disabled and people who have a learning difference, impairment or long-term condition
- For sexual orientation and gender identity, 10% lesbian, gay, bisexual & trans
- For nations and regions, 50% outside London

Whilst these are aims and not minimum requirements, engaging young people from diverse backgrounds is key to our delivery objectives and all partners should demonstrate their commitment to meeting this criteria.

Timescale

ScreenSkills would like the majority of the work experience to be delivered across June and July 2025, although we are open to proposals that include relevant key moments in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years such as National Careers Week, National Apprenticeships Week, the summer holidays. A final report on the pilot's success should be submitted by 30th April 2026. Please ensure this is worked into your timeline.

Below is an indicative timescale:

Invitation to tender issued	18 th March 2025
Deadline for ScreenSkills response to clarification questions	28 th March 2025
Deadline for submission of tenders	8 th April 2025 at 12.00 noon
Completion of evaluation, including clarification of any queries from ScreenSkills	16 th April 2025

Preferred bidder identified and notified	18 th April 2025
Contract start – inception meeting	21 st April 2025
Review of draft delivery plan	28 th April 2025
Monthly review meetings commence (to be held on 29 th May 2025 and the last Thursday of each month thereafter)	29 th May 2025
First written progress report, to include details of industry and school sign-ups, and budget update. To be submitted on 26 th June 2025 and ad hoc thereafter.	26 th June 2025
Contract end date	31 st March 2026
Final written report and financials submitted	30 th April 2026

Budget

The total budget for this tender is £299,250.00. However, costs will be a primary factor in our assessments of proposals, so ScreenSkills asks that any potential savings are factored into proposals.

A full resource schedule including a breakdown of activities, time allocated and daily rate of each member of the project team, including their respective job titles, should be included as part of your fee proposal.

Applicants are asked to provide the following:

- A breakdown of costs associated with each element of the project;
- Total figures inclusive of all costs (e.g. VAT and travel / accommodation);
- Number of days spent working on the project;
- The daily rate for each member of the project team.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must:

- develop a clear structure for the programme, ensuring that it meets the minimum delivery requirements outlined above, and the Gatsby benchmark requirements for a meaningful encounter.
- draw on research from the Government, education and youth sectors around what good work experience looks like,
- demonstrate how they will engage young people from the programme's priority areas.
- demonstrate their understanding of the creative industries across England and provide evidence of appropriate, recent engagement and contacts with creative industry employers.
- demonstrate how they will meet critical diversity targets as outlined in this tender, including:

- making reasonable adjustments to the offer (whether face-to-face or online) to make it accessible to a diverse audience – we will ask for evidence of your approach and implementation
- have an equality policy in place as an employer
- have a monitoring system in place to track the diversity of the delegates
- have experience of working with an external evaluation partner to gather data and evidence from participants in order to prove the impact of the programme.

Applicants best suited to this work will have an understanding of;

- Employer/industry-led career engagement initiatives across the creative industries;
- The needs and expectations of secondary schools and colleges when it comes to careers provision and work experience;
- Requirements relating to the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and curriculum-linked learning;
- The creative industries including Film, Television, Animation, Music, Theatre, Computer Games, and Interactive Media.
- Government policy relating to education and industry engagement

Applicants will be able to demonstrate;

- Experience of designing and delivering programmes for schools and young people;
- Experience of recruiting and working with creative industry partners including how they will be recruited;
- How they can bring to the table a diverse range of organisations from across creative industry sectors;
- How young people from schools in the programme's priority areas will be engaged;
- Existing contacts with schools and industry to ensure the targets can be met;
- How potential challenges will be dealt with;
- Capacity and approach to meeting the delivery timescales of the project;
- Value for money;
- Quality;
- Fitness for purpose;
- Commitment to diversity which includes relation to: race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, social status, language (only in relation to the Welsh language and the legal requirements of the Welsh Language Act), disability, long-standing or debilitating disease or age;
- Safeguarding and child protection policy in place;
- Track record of previous goods/service supplied;
- Understanding of the tender process as outlined;
- A breakdown of costs as outlined.

Evaluation Criteria

Please send your proposal to Discover! Programme Lead Mary Rose:

mary.rose@ScreenSkills.com by **12pm on 4th April** with the email subject: *Tender for Discover! Creative Careers Work Experience Pilot*. The proposal should demonstrate the following:

The relevance and quality of the proposed engagement plan (weight 25%)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a clear overview outlining how you will plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate the pilot, (maximum 6 sides of A4).
<p>Level of fee for carrying out the services (weight 25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include pricing schedule as a budget template, providing a fixed cost for delivery of the project to include all expenses and including daily rate for each member of the team (maximum 2 sides of A4).
<p>Understanding of the pilot, the scope of requirements and services to be provided (weight 20%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a clear scope with aims and objectives (maximum 2 sides of A4).
<p>Project team (weight 10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of key personnel to be assigned to deliver this project, including past, relevant experience, and their role in delivering this project, including stated percentage time (maximum 1 side of A4).
<p>Schedule of work (weight 10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an indicative work plan, including a schedule of work with timeframes and milestones (maximum 1 side of A4).
<p>Risks and mitigation (weight 10%)</p> <p>Provide an indication of the main risks and how you would approach them, with particular reference to health and safety and safeguarding (maximum 1 side of A4).</p>

Response Checklist

Please ensure you have provided all the relevant documents in the table below when submitting your Tender Response.

Engagement Plan	
Pricing Schedule (Appendix B)	
Project Team	
Indicative Work Plan	
Company Information	
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy	

Queries

Any questions or points of clarification from tenderers must be submitted electronically via email. Be advised that even after the closing date (e.g. after submission of tender materials), tenderers must still utilise email for communication.

Please send your queries to

Mary Rose

Programme Lead

mary.rose@ScreenSkills.com

Appendix A: Priority Regions

East Midlands

- Chesterfield
- Derby
- Leicester
- Nottingham

East of England

- Basildon
- Bedford
- Colchester
- Dacorum
- Hertsmere
- Ipswich
- Luton
- Norwich
- Peterborough
- Southend-on-Sea
- Stevenage
- Tendring
- Watford

London

- Central London (*Camden, City of London, Kensington and Chelsea, Southwark, Westminster*)
- East London (*Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Havering, Lewisham, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest*)
- North London (*Barnet, Enfield, Haringey*)
- South London (*Bromley, Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth*)
- West London (*Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Richmond upon Thames, Hillingdon, Hounslow*)

North East

- County Durham
- Gateshead
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- North Tyneside
- South Tyneside
- Sunderland

North West

- Bolton
- Bury

- Calderdale
- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Halton
- Liverpool
- Manchester
- Oldham
- Preston
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Stockport
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Warrington
- Wirral

South East

- Ashford
- Basingstoke and Deane
- Brighton and Hove
- Buckinghamshire
- Canterbury
- Hastings
- Havant
- Maidstone
- Medway
- Milton Keynes
- Oxford
- Portsmouth
- Reading
- Runnymede
- Rushmoor
- Slough
- Southampton
- Spelthorne
- Swale
- Thanet
- Woking
- Wokingham

South West

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
- Bristol, City of
- Cheltenham
- Cornwall
- Dorset
- Plymouth
- Swindon

- Wiltshire

West Midlands

- Birmingham
- Coventry
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Telford and Wrekin
- Walsall
- Warwick
- Wolverhampton

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Barnsley
- Bradford
- Kingston upon Hull, City of
- Kirklees
- Leeds
- Rotherham
- Sheffield
- Wakefield