

# WBD ACCESS X SMI

## RULES & REGULATIONS

### 1. Introduction

WBD Access x SMI Writers Programme in partnership with Max ("workshop") is a training programme conceived, organized, and delivered by SERIES MANIA INSTITUTE, the educational arm of SERIES MANIA FESTIVAL. SERIES MANIA is internationally recognized as a major festival for high-quality series and it organizes a professional forum aiming to stimulate international co-production.

The Workshop is made in partnership with Warner Bros. Discovery and MAX

### 2. General description of the process

Six mid-level European writers from France, Germany, Spain, and the UK will be selected to take part in the Workshop. Each writer will develop an original series project.

The selected participants will take part in two onsite sessions (first in Lille in March, second in London in June 2025) and two online mentoring meeting (in April/May).

The objective of the programme is to help mid-level European screenwriters develop their project and deliver a spec script for their series project.

Key features of the programme include:

- Two writer mentors to follow the six participants throughout the programme, through individual and group meetings, and writers' room simulation.
- Opportunities to meet renowned international series professionals during exclusive masterclasses.
- Training on pitching techniques.

### 3. Schedule

The timeframe of the programme will be structured as follows:

- December 18, 2024: Call for applications opens.
- January 13, 2025: Application deadline for round 1 at 11:59 AM (CET).
- January 17-31, 2025: application round 2 - deadline January 31 11.59 AM CET
- By February 21, 2025: Results of the call for projects announced by email.
- Session 1 (Lille - France, Creative Bazaar, March 2025) : 7 nights (session + Series Mania Forum)

- 2 online mentoring sessions (between April and May 2025)
- Session 2 (London, June 23-27, 2025\*) : 5 nights (session + final pitch) \*subject to change

All the participants must be available and participate in the whole workshop. Any absence without proper justification can cause the exclusion of the participant.

Sessions 1 and 2, taking place exclusively in person in Lille and London, will only be accessible to participants who are legally authorized to enter and stay in France and the United Kingdom. Participants are responsible for completing the necessary steps to secure their legal entry and stay in these countries, including obtaining visas if required. SERIES MANIA INSTITUTE and Warner Bros. Discovery do not handle visa applications and cannot be held responsible for a participant's inability to attend the workshop due to failure to complete the required entry procedures or a visa denial.

#### **4. Language**

The common working language of the residency is English: this means that all written and spoken materials, at all steps of the process, must be in English.

#### **5. Participation fees**

The Workshop is totally free of charge for the participants. The programme includes:

- Pedagogical programme for both sessions and one online mentoring session.
- Travel, lunches, and accommodation for both sessions.
- Accreditation for Series Mania Forum.
- Visibility on Seriesmaniaplus digital platform.
- A networking dinner during Series Mania Forum.
- €3,000 stipend for each participant.

#### **6. Application rules**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the rules below and within the specified dates.

##### **6.1. Participant eligibility**

- Be a European screenwriter based in France, Germany, Spain, or the UK (either citizen or resident) with a project in development.

- Have at least two professional writing credits on a broadcast or streaming TV series, OR one professional writing credit on a TV series and one feature released in cinemas or in festivals in the past 3 years.

## 6.2. Application requirements and materials

Applications can be made only by individuals. Applications must be in English.

To qualify for the selection, applications must be made online on the dedicated website page: <https://submissions-series-mania.festicine.fr/wbd>

No submission by email, post, or any other means will be accepted.

When applying, each applicant must provide the following elements:

### Round 1

When applying, each applicant must provide the following elements:

- 
- A writing sample from one of their scripts from current or past projects, to show their writing style (max. 3 pages)
- A CV outlining their relevant professional experience

### Round 2

Applicants selected to progress to Round 2 will be contacted by Series Mania Institute and asked to submit a one to two page pitch matching a brief.

Please do not submit these documents at the first stage in the application. Longlisted applicants will be notified in January 2025 and asked to submit their pitch.

If you are ultimately selected, this idea will be the spec script you develop over the course of the programme, with the support of the Series Mania Institute and your mentors throughout the programme.

When thinking about the pitch, your idea must adhere to the steers detailed below. This is your opportunity to showcase your voice and demonstrate the stories and themes you're passionate about exploring, while also working to a creative brief.

- Category: Series only (TV films, feature films, etc. will not be accepted).
- Length: 45-60' episodes, 6-8-episode seasons
- Genre: Mostly drama, but with a heavy interest in genre-based storytelling
- Returning or with the ability to return (though with a strong season arc too - not purely episodic)
- A smart and powerful story engine :
  - ideally character-driven
  - with clarity of theme

- with clarity of genre
- Differentiating, "premium" : genre-defying, genre-defining or fresh in some way (due to the choice of character, angle, or other strong defining factor)
- Contemporary, not period
- Not or less of a focus : comedies and dramedies, miniseries, 26-30' episodes, Police procedurals, Young Adult content, arena-based content
- Only original concepts for season 1 will be accepted. Remakes of foreign or domestic series, season 2s or series already broadcast will not be accepted.
- The project must have international potential.

All applications are totally free of charge.

Submission to the workshop will be open for applications on December 18, 2024.

The application deadline for Round 1 is on January 13, 2025, at 11:59 AM (CET).

The application deadline for Round 2 will be January 31, 2025, at 11:59 AM (CET).

## **7. Selection process**

The results of the official selection will be announced by e-mail to the candidates by February 21, 2025.

### **7.1. Selection committee**

The applications will be examined by a selection committee composed by professionals from the series industry.

### **7.2. Selection criteria**

The selection committee will make its decision at its sole discretion, taking into account the following criteria:

- The artistic value of the project
- The applicant's experience
- The project's international potential and its commercial appeal in relation to industry needs
- The originality of the concept compared to other series already available on the international market

Particular attention will be given to promoting all forms of diversity, with the aim of ensuring gender diversity and equal opportunities for applicants of all genders and backgrounds, in line with an inclusive approach.

## **8. Intellectual Property**

Applicants must hold all rights to the series project submitted as part of their application and on which they will work during the programme if selected. They declare and guarantee that they are the sole authors of the series project subject to the pitch submitted with their application and commit to retaining their rights and not entering into any agreements regarding the project until the final pitch of the programme if selected; they specifically commit not to grant any options or transfer or grant any rights to a production company, broadcaster, or platform.

## **9. Confidentiality and communication**

All the documents and information supplied within the submission are strictly confidential and will not be published for any reason.

## **10. Applicable law**

The relationships in the context of the call for applications, the selection process, and the workshop are governed by French law.