

Pause Clause – information sheet

About the Pause Clause

The Pause Clause is an important part of the production schedule. It's an opportunity for filmmakers to get meaningful feedback on their film before committing to a final edit. It's also a way for the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) and the film's market partners to assess the cut of the film and its market opportunities.

The NZFC includes the Pause Clause in production financing contracts because we want to work with you to make your film the best it can be, and help you reach the optimum audience.

The Pause Clause means there is a three week break in editing, everyone steps back from the production, and the NZFC hosts a test screening to gauge audience reaction to the cut.

Planning for the Pause

The pause needs to be planned and budgeted for and scheduled as an integral element of post-production.

A date for the pause will be decided mutually by the filmmakers and the film's market partners, including NZFC, after the first viewing of the edit. This cut will not be the cut that is test screened. If there is disagreement about the timing or readiness of the cut, a date for the pause to begin will be set by NZFC

The test screening

The test screening will be the cut that all parties agree is as close as possible to what the finished film will look like.

Test screenings will almost always be held on either a Monday or a Wednesday and held in commercial cinemas.

A DCP for the test screening will need to be created at the filmmakers' expense, and should be included in the film's budget. Cinema hire and audience recruitment costs will be covered by the NZFC.



Step by Step through the Pause Clause

Timing	Activity
More than two weeks before the Pause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screening of cut for market partners including the NZFC.• Set the date for the Pause. We encourage the pause to be written into post-production scheduling, but allow for some flexibility to ensure the agreed cut is ready for an audience.• After screening the cut for market partners, it should be reasonably clear how much work is needed, and at that point a more concrete date for the pause can be agreed.• At an absolute minimum the NZFC will need two weeks advance notice of the start date of the pause.• NZFC to recruit the best possible audience for the test screening.
Pause week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Export cut, temp grade, bash sound mix & DCP creation (costs to be covered by the film's budget).• NZFC to arrange cinema for test screening.• NZFC to create the questionnaire for the film being test screened in collaboration with the film maker and develop appropriate questions for focus group discussion.• DCP will need to be at the cinema at least 48 hours before the agreed date so it can be tested. If the screening is on a Monday, the DCP needs to be at the cinema the previous Friday morning. If the screening is on a Wednesday, it should be at the cinema on the Monday morning. A back-up version should always be provided, in case of problems.
Pause week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test screening either Monday or Wednesday.
Pause week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By the end of week three the results from test screening will have been made available to the producer and director, NZFC and any other market partners.

Next steps

The test screening results will be evaluated by the filmmakers, NZFC and market partners. Our intention is for the parties to work together in good faith and find a consensus on what, if any, action may be required as a result.

Using insights and feedback from the test screening, filmmakers can resume editing to make the best possible film; and market partners and domestic distributors can adjust their marketing strategy and audience engagement plan.

For further information about the Pause Clause, contact our Production Executive. Email production@nzfilm.co.nz. Phone 0800 659 754.



