



Developing your Creative Practice

Guidance for applicants

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Victoria Fox-Markiewicz –
TRIBE: Still I Rise, 2016
Photo © Harry Cauty

Access support

We are committed to being open and accessible to everyone. We realise that some people may find that there are barriers to applying for a grant or accessing our services. If you experience or expect any barrier with making your application, or need more information on how to apply or access our services, please phone our Customer Services team on 0845 300 6200 or email enquiries@arts council.org.uk.

Our website has a section on Access support, explaining the ways we can help arts council.org.uk/DYCP

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Welcome to Developing your Creative Practice

Welcome to Developing your Creative Practice

Developing your Creative Practice supports the development of independent creative practitioners. This programme will give individuals the opportunity to apply for £2,000 to £10,000, to take a dedicated period of time to focus on their own creative development, and take them to the next stage in their practice.

We would like to see applications for development activities from practitioners working in any of our supported disciplines, where a clear development opportunity has been identified. This could be for a period of research, time to create new work, travel (including international working), training, developing future ideas, networking or mentoring. Developing your Creative Practice encourages development by allowing artists and cultural practitioners to innovate and take creative risks, work in new ways and to eventually reach new audiences.

You may be an independent producer or curator who wants to take time to attend a conference – in England or abroad – and build your networks for future work. You might be a writer who needs time to write and explore a new direction for your work. You may want to take some time to work with other collaborators to explore how you develop, without the pressure of producing finished work to share at the end. These are just examples of how this programme could support your work, and not an exhaustive list. We want to make sure that as an independent practitioner, you have the tools you need to innovate and to build a successful practice.

This is a competitive programme – we receive many more good applications than we are able to fund. We want to focus on investing in the activities that have a real impact on people's artistic or creative development in England.

Yearly refresh of the programme

In April every year we will review the guidance and criteria for Developing your Creative Practice, to see if anything needs adjusting or making clearer.

Please make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this document.

You can do this by downloading a new version whenever you start a fresh application.

If you have any questions, please contact us. We are here to help.

How to contact us

Phone: 0161 934 4317 or 0845 300 6200

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Website: artscouncil.org.uk

Post: Arts Council England
The Hive
49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN

Eligibility

Urban Development: Reload – industry takeover day
Photo © Alexis Maryon

Eligibility: The artforms and disciplines we support

Developing your Creative Practice supports activity focused on these artforms and disciplines:

- Music
- Theatre
- Dance
- Visual Arts
- Literature
- Combined Arts
- Museums practice

Any projects we support must focus on one or more of these artforms and disciplines.

Your creative development may work with these artforms in other contexts. Examples might include:

- creative media and the wider creative industries (for example, film or audio, design or gaming);
- technology, including digital technology (for example, virtual reality or live-streaming);
- other non-arts organisations or settings (for example, residential-care providers, or a science organisation); and
- other non-arts cultural forms or sectors (for example, health and wellbeing, social inclusion, heritage or sport).

We encourage this, as long as your activity also **clearly focuses** on one or more of the artforms and disciplines we can support.

If you're not sure whether your project is eligible, **contact us**. (email enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk or phone 0845 300 6200).

Who can apply

We can support creative practitioners doing work **related to our supported artforms and disciplines**.

- The term ‘creative practitioners’ includes dancers, choreographers, writers, translators, producers, publishers, editors, musicians, conductors, composers, actors, directors, designers, artists, craft makers, and curators

Anyone who applies to Developing your Creative Practice needs to:

- apply as an individual, or as a small group of practitioners who usually collaborate in their work. This could include, for example, artists who usually create work together, or writers and their translators.
Organisations cannot apply, and individuals cannot apply on behalf of an organisation
- be based within (live in) England¹
- have a UK bank account in the exact name they’re applying in (if you apply as a small group of practitioners, one person should submit the application and take the lead on managing the grant, and should provide their bank details)
- be at least 18 years old
- have three years’ creative practice experience outside a formal education context

¹ Or have a home address in England and defined by Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs as ‘resident in the UK’ for tax – see <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/international/residence.htm#5>

What can I apply for?

Activities can be up to one year in length. Some examples of things you can apply for are:

- building new networks for future development/presentation of work
- creating new work
- experimenting with new collaborators
- international travel to explore other practice or work with mentors
- professional development activities
- research and development time to explore practice and take risks

Ineligible applications

We will not view your application as eligible if it doesn't focus on the artforms and disciplines we support, or if it doesn't clearly demonstrate how the activity will develop your practice.

We might also view an application as ineligible if it is not developed enough for us to be able to make a decision (for example, if it does not include the level of detail we need).

We can also view your application as ineligible if it doesn't include the supporting documents/links we need.

We cannot use our funding to support activities, goods or services that have already taken place, been bought or been ordered before we can make a decision on your application.

There may be other types of activity we are not able to support due to technical restrictions on the funds that we distribute. If one of these reasons applies to your activity, we will write to you and let you know why it is not eligible.

When you can apply

There are four rounds per year for this programme; **you cannot apply to more than two rounds within a 12-month period**. We consider a 12 month period to run from the date each round closes, and not the date you submit your application. If you make any ineligible applications these won't be counted.

If your application is successful you won't be able to make another application until three years after the application deadline for the round you were successful in.

Round	Application deadline	Previous unsuccessful applicants who cannot apply
1	12pm, 16 May 2018	N/A
2	12pm, 16 August 2018	N/A
3	12pm, 14 November 2018	Those who previously applied to both rounds 1 (May 2018) and 2 (August 2018) cannot apply.
4	12pm, 21 February 2019	Those who previously applied to two of the three previous rounds (1, 2 or 3) cannot apply.

If you are not sure when you can apply, please contact us (email enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk or phone 0845 300 6200).

Eligibility: Developing your Creative Practice and Project Grants

Developing your Creative Practice is one of our two main programmes that can support individuals – the other is Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants (artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants), which supports individuals and organisations to deliver projects with direct public engagement outcomes. **You cannot apply to both programmes at the same time. If you apply to one, you will need to wait until you have received a decision from us before you will be eligible to apply to another programme.**

When you decide which programme you want to apply to, the main things to think about are:

- will your activity include opportunities for people to engage, become involved with or experience your work; or
- is your activity mainly focused on developing your own practice?

If you are planning to apply as an individual, use the checklist below to see which programme might suit you best.

Developing your Creative Practice

Only open to individuals

You are at an early to mid-point stage in your practice and you need support to make a major change or carry out a period of focused development work

The main beneficiary is you

Grants of £2,000 to £10,000

For activities up to one year in length

There are four deadlines per year

Decisions on applications take up to nine weeks from the relevant deadline

You can apply to two rounds within a 12-month period

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants

Open to individuals and organisations

For individuals, arts organisations and other people and organisations who use the arts in their work. Also for Accredited Museums delivering museum-practice projects and other museum activity

The main beneficiaries are usually the people engaging with the project

Grants of £1,000 to £100,000

For projects up to three years in length

You can apply at any time. There are no deadlines

Decisions on applications for £15,000 or less take six weeks. Decisions on applications for over £15,000 take 12 weeks.

You can apply at any time (unless you are waiting for a decision on a previous application)

Before you apply

Applications are made using our Grantium system – see the separate guidance for details.

- Has your applicant profile been validated by us, or is your existing applicant profile up to date?
- Have you successfully completed the Eligibility questionnaire in our online portal?

Demand for Developing your Creative Practice funding is high, and we are not able to fund all the projects we receive applications for. Think about what you will do if your application is not successful.

Think carefully before applying, and only apply when you are at a point in your practice where you are ready to make the most of a period of development. We wouldn't expect to fund applications from people who are very new to their practice (such as new graduates), and we'd expect successful applicants to already have some track record of practicing (although we can support people who work in a certain way but are applying to take some time to take a new direction in their practice. For example, a painter who wants to move towards working in performance, or a curator working in a museum but wanting to establish their own independent practice).

Applying for Developing your Creative Practice

You've had a great idea and you're eligible to apply. What next?

Read this guidance carefully – it will tell you what we can fund, as well as how to complete your application form

Make sure you have a user account for our online application system, that you have set up an applicant profile, and that the profile has been validated by us (this can take up to 10 working days)

Fill in and submit the application form. This guidance will help you. If you need any additional support then you can get in touch with our Customer Services team

Developing your application

To help you to develop your application, think about the following points:

What will your activity be, and how long will it take?

Why do you want to take this period of development, and why now?

Can you give a one line summary of your development activities?

How much will your development project cost overall, and how much do you need from us?

What are the main things you want to achieve? How will you know whether you achieved these things?

What are the key milestones for your development and when do you expect them to be?

These questions can help you to decide whether you are at the right point in your practice to submit an application to Developing your Creative Practice – if you do not have the answers yet then you may need more time to plan.

The application form

The application form

We will use the information you give us in your application form to decide whether we will offer you a grant.

Before you start

Have we checked and validated your applicant profile (artscouncil.org.uk/welcome-grantium), or is your existing profile up to date?

Have you successfully completed the eligibility questionnaire on our online portal?

In the next section of this guidance will go through the questions in the application form one by one to help you with your answers.

Your work

*** Please tell us about yourself and your creative practice**

(up to 1,800 characters including spaces²)

Think about:

- the main focus of your artistic or creative activities;
- your main artistic or creative achievements to date – for example, exhibitions, productions, publications, and so on;
- any important commissions you've received;
- important pieces of work you've completed;
- if you've worked with any established artistic or creative partners;
- any other information relevant to your track record; and
- whether you have shown that you're at the right stage in your practice to make a step change, and benefit from a development opportunity.

²All character counts given include spaces

Your development

***Tell us about the developmental opportunity you want to undertake, what you hope to get out of it, and how you will go about it.**

(up to 1,800 characters)

Think about:

- how you will seek out opportunities that will benefit your development;
- how ambitious your activity is. We can fund small, one-off opportunities (such as a research trip), but we're more interested in supporting extended periods of development which give you the time to really explore and work in new ways;
- if the application shows that you can manage the activity successfully, and whether what you want to do is realistic and well-planned; and
- if you have plans in place to access the networks you want to work with.
If you plan to travel, do you have contacts in the country you want to travel to?

If your application includes taking part in a residency, please note we would only expect to fund residencies if the experience is tailored to your development, and not off the shelf residencies.

***Why is this important for your practice at this point, and how will this help create future opportunities?**

(up to 1,800 characters)

Think about:

- what your main aims for the project are;
- why this is the right point to take some development time;
- what you want this development to lead to;
- what will be different about your practice as a result of this development.

Your work – attachments

***We'd like to see an example of your work to give us a sense of your practice.**

You can either provide a web link or attach a document. For example, this could be an image, a music file, a sample of your writing, a video, a link to an online portfolio, or anything you think demonstrates your work.

***We also need one supporting document, written by someone other than you, that supports the quality of your practice.**

This can be a review, external views of your work or a letter of support from an organisation or partner you have worked with.

You should give us:

- one document to demonstrate your work (either as a web link or an attachment)
- one supporting document (an attachment)

A document can be a maximum of five pages, and we can only look at a single web page.

Activity focus

What do you want to focus on?

Pick as many as you feel are relevant to your activity.

- building new networks for future development/presentation of work
- creating new work
- experimenting with new collaborators
- international travel to explore other practice or work with mentors
- professional development activities
- research and development time to explore practice and take risks

Expenditure budget

***We'll ask you to break down your spending for the project, and show us how you have worked out your figures in the table.**

You don't need to have any income from other sources to apply to this programme. We just want you to tell us how you will spend the funds you're applying to us for.

When entering your expenditure think about:

- whether you have included a fee for your own time;
- whether your costs have been clearly broken down. You should make sure that you show how all your figures have been calculated in the **description** field. For example, show the number of days and the daily rate for any fees (eg 'specialist mentoring, 2 days @ £200 per day = £400')
- if your costs are appropriate.

Artistic and creative costs

In this section, include any of the artistic or creative costs you need to pay for, and show how you have reached your figures. You should include:

- **The fees for artists or creatives involved in the activity, including yourself**

We are committed to making sure that artists and creatives are paid appropriately for activities we support. The amount is likely to depend on a number of factors, including experience and skills, the type of work and the length of the activity. You should include your own fees here, as well as any artists or creatives you need to work with.

- **Other artistic or creative costs**

For example, the cost of events, commissions, research and development, preparation, conservation, productions and residencies, including any materials or equipment you hire to carry out these things.

Overheads

You can apply for overhead costs that are directly related to the activity you are asking us to support – for example, payments to staff, phone bills, postage and insurance. You can apply for a contribution to your ongoing overheads if these are not covered by other funding. Explain how you have worked out the cost.

Assets – materials, equipment, instruments

If you need to buy any materials, equipment or instruments you should include the costs in this section of the budget and tell us about them in the description field. You should get competitive quotes from more than one business or supplier. Buying assets is not the main purpose of the programme, but we understand that you may need to make some purchases to be able to carry out your development. As part of our eligibility checks we will decide if any proposed asset purchases are appropriate. You may be asked to send invoices for any purchases.

Other spending

Include any other spending for your activity that is not included elsewhere. This can include an amount for unexpected costs (contingency spending).

Personal access costs

These are costs relating to your own access needs, and/or any access needs of the artists you're working with, that you will need to pay to help you throughout your activity, and to manage your grant online. For example, payment for a sign language interpreter to help you manage your activity.

Only include post-application costs for personal access costs in your expenditure table. Do not include costs related to preparing, planning and submitting your application.

You will have told us about the expected costs of your personal access costs, as part of the eligibility questionnaire. The figure you provided will 'pull through' onto the online application form, and pre-populate the basic details section and the expenditure table. If you need to change the amount, you will need to edit the figure on the basic details page, when you do this the budget line for personal access costs in your expenditure table will automatically update. You cannot edit the budget line for personal access costs from the expenditure table page.

To find out more about personal access costs please see **our website** artscouncil.org.uk/DYCP

Project plan

***We'll ask you to use the table to list the main stages and tasks of the development period you're applying for, from your start date onwards, to plan out your time and identify the key milestones.**

You can add as many lines to this table as you need to identify the main stages of the activity, for example: planning, developing partnerships, research, attending events, evaluation, and so on.

We want to see that you have thought about how you will plan your time, and that you are able to manage your activity in the time you've allowed for it. We understand that you might not know exact dates at the time you apply – we want to see that you have considered how best to use your time.

Helping us to evaluate the programme

After you have completed the application we will ask you some additional questions to help us evaluate the programme in the future. We'll ask you about your income in the last 12 months, and about how much of your income in this period came from your practice.

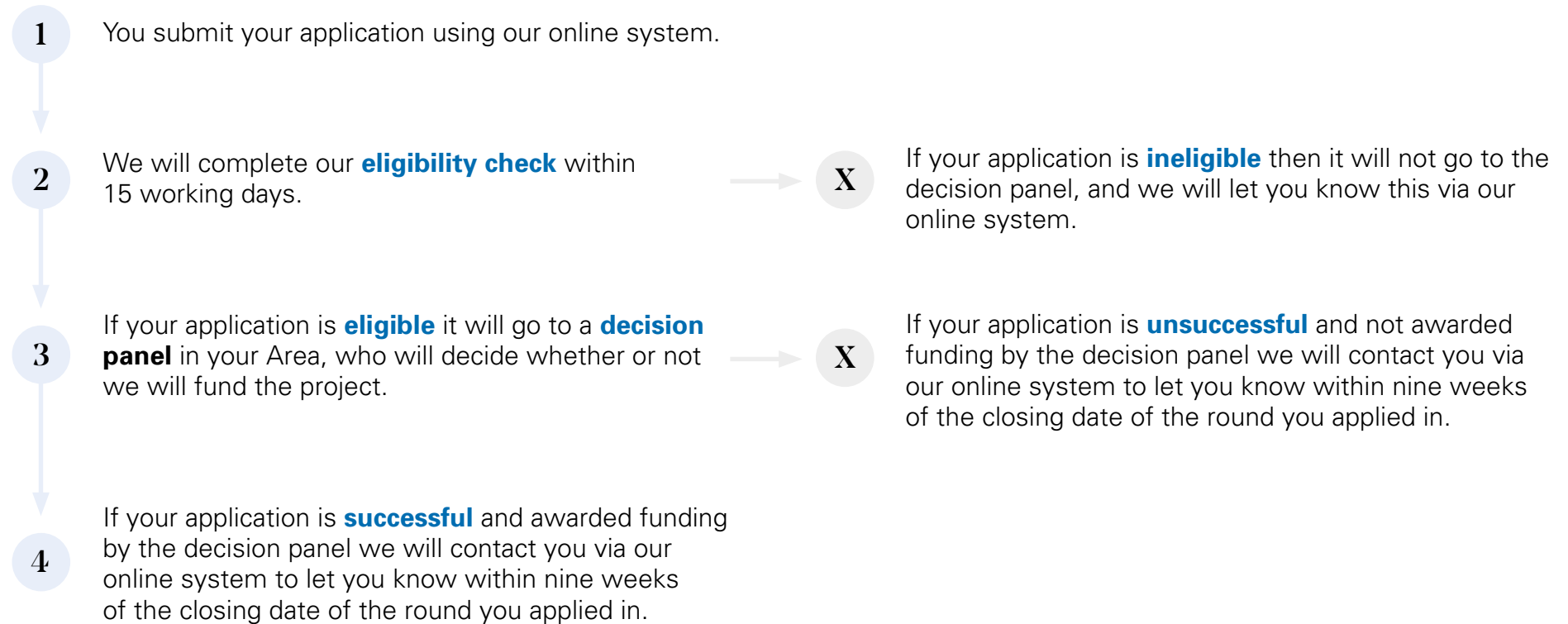
This information will not be used in deciding whether to offer you a grant. No-one involved in processing or making a decision on your application will see your answers to these questions.

We ask these questions because we want to be able to understand the impact of the Developing your Creative Practice programme. We hope this programme will support individuals to make a step-change in their practice, and when we evaluate the programme in the future we will use this data in an anonymised way – alongside other data – to help us understand some of the ways our grants may have had an effect. You can choose not to answer these questions if you prefer.

What happens next

Double Elephant – Cathy King
Photo © Jim Wileman

What happens next



More information on each of these steps can be found in the sections that follow.

Eligibility check

When we get your application we first check whether it is eligible.

If your application is **eligible**, we will send you a confirmation email via the online system.

If your application is **not eligible**, this means that we cannot process it any further and it will not be considered for funding. If your application is not eligible we will notify you via the online system, and will explain our decision.

We will complete our eligibility check within 15 working days of the deadline for applications for each round. If you have not heard from us within this time you can contact us at enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk, or on 0845 300 6200.

Decision making

If your project is eligible, your application will go to the decision making stage.

Decisions are made by a panel of Arts Council staff members in the area where you are based.

We will look the strength of your application alongside other applications we receive.

We will also think about the **range and balance** of different activities we're supporting. The activities we fund must cover a broad range of **activity types, disciplines, applicants** and **geographical areas**. We need to think about our investment in **areas of least engagement with the arts**.

We will review our internal data on our spending so far and look at applications in the light of future demand on our budget.

We will also think about how applications contribute to our Corporate Plan, and our Goals (artscouncil.org.uk/mission).

We receive many more good applications than we are able to fund, and we choose to support the ones that help us achieve a balanced spread of activities. We sometimes have to make difficult decisions about what we can support.

Freedom of Information Act

We are committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our decisions.

We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about how we have reached our decision to any member of the public who asks for them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.ico.org.uk for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications while we are making a decision, as this may interfere with the decision making process.

You can find out more on the Freedom of Information (artscouncil.org.uk/freedom-information) section of our website.

Public sector equalities duty

Your application form gives us information we may use to report to the Government or to monitor the different backgrounds of people who receive grants.

Under the Public Sector Equalities Duty we must research and monitor the different backgrounds of people who receive our grants.



Questions?

Get in touch –
we're happy to help

Reach our Customer Services team here:

Phone: 0161 934 4317
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk
Website: artscouncil.org.uk
Twitter: @ace_national
Facebook: facebook.com/artscouncilofengland