Opera Projects and Production Award 2026

Guidelines for Applicants

for project activities commencing on or after 1 January 2026
and productions presented in 2026

Deadline: 5.30pm (Ireland time), Thursday 27 March 2025

Applicants with disabilities

The Arts Council makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to engage with our services.

If you have a disability and need help with submitting your application, please contact us as early as possible before the deadline.

Contact: Disability Access Officer

Phone: 01 618 0200 or 01 618 0243

Email: access@artscouncil.ie

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Key points to remember

- In order to make an application, you **must** be registered for an Arts Council Online Services (OLS) account. If you do not have one, you can sign up for one [here](#). Please note that it can take up to **five working days** for a new user to be registered on OLS, so give yourself plenty of time to do this ahead of the deadline.

- We strongly advise that you read this document carefully before beginning the process of making your application.

- We also strongly advise that you start the process early, and give yourself **plenty of time** to make your application.

- We recommend that you aim to upload your application **at least forty-eight hours** before the advertised deadline. That way, if you encounter a technical problem, you will have time to contact us so that we can assist you in resolving it.

- Please note that, on account of the large volume of applicants using the online system on the last day of the deadline, we cannot guarantee that we can resolve any technical issues you may have if you contact us **after 2.00pm on the day of the deadline**.

- Please read the following checklist carefully:

☐ I have read and understand these guidelines.

☐ In the event that I have had an issue, I have contacted the Arts Council for assistance well in advance of the deadline.

☐ I have filled in all of the sections of the application form relevant to my application.

☐ I have prepared all required supporting material as set out in these guidelines, and have this ready to upload.

☐ I have asked someone else to check over my application to make sure there are no errors and that nothing is missing.

Getting help with your application

If you have questions about using the Online Services website, visit the FAQ section on our website: www.artscouncil.ie/FAQs/online-services/

If you have a technical question about the online application process and your question is not answered in the FAQ section, you can email onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or call the Arts Council on

- o **01 618 0200**
- o **01 618 0243**

If you have a query about your application that is not technical in nature, you should email or phone the arts team to which you are applying for funding.
http://www.artscouncil.ie/Contact-us/Staff-and-adviser-lists/

To watch our video guide to making an application on YouTube, go to
https://www.youtube.com/artscouncildemos

1. About the Opera Projects and Production Award

1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award

The objective of the Opera Projects and Production Award is to support initiatives by professional practitioners in the development and presentation of opera at three distinct stages, encouraging the development of work of high artistic quality, and supporting developmental presentations and fully staged professional presentations of opera that engage with the public.

The award is intended to support the making and presentation of opera and to provide opportunities for artists in line with the Arts Council's published policy and strategy for opera (available to download from the publications section of the Arts Council website: http://www.artscouncil.ie).

In each of the three strands of the award, priority will be given to applications that demonstrate:

- A clear artistic vision and evidence that the proposed project is or is likely to be of high artistic quality

- Significant development opportunities for professional opera practitioners

- A clear alignment with the Council's policy and strategy priorities for opera.

Note: applications for touring of a previously fully produced production should be directed to the Arts Council's Touring Scheme.

Additional priorities for each of the three strands are also set out below.

Strand 1: Opera Projects: Project Development

The purpose of the Project Development strand is to support artists and creative teams to develop new work (or, on occasion, to develop significant new presentation approaches to existing work). In this strand, while the work should ultimately be intended for public presentation, there is not a requirement to present the work to an audience.

Priority in this strand will also be given to proposals that:

- Focus on collaboratively developing new ideas through innovation and experimentation

- Deliver significant development opportunities to practitioners

- Provide evidence of a high quality artistic focus. The track record of the key artists will be taken into account.

Strand 2: Opera Projects: developmental presentation & smaller-scale full production

The primary purposes of this strand are to:
- Facilitate the public presentation of professional work as part of a developmental creative process
- To provide evidence and impetus to support later opportunities for full production
- To support full production and presentation of small-scale work.

Projects in this strand must engage an audience appropriate for the nature of the work. Proposals may be for a full production, workshop performance or a concert performance of all or part of a work. Proposals can include, as appropriate, an audio or video recording as

part of the project. Applicants are encouraged to consider reaching audiences by a variety of means.

Individual applicants to this strand <u>must</u> be able to clearly demonstrate that the project (including its public-presentation aspect) is feasible, ideally on the basis of a partnership commitment from an experienced producer such as a producing company, a theatre/venue, an established festival and/or another arts organisation.

Priority in this strand will be given to proposals that:

- Are high-quality artistic projects that demonstrate a strong and imaginative approach; relevant samples of work and the track record of the key artists involved will be taken into account
- Are presented to an appropriate public, with a clear plan for reaching that public
- Involve the development and presentation of new opera
- Involve the preparation and public presentation of new performing editions of historic Irish opera
- Demonstrate evidence of a capacity to realise the project successfully – e.g. by the contribution of value-adding partnerships and evidence of sound production planning and budgeting

Strand 3: Opera Production

The purpose of the Opera Production strand is to support full professional productions of complete operas of either new or existing work of medium or larger scale of any genre, reaching and engaging with substantial live and other audiences, and providing opportunities for professional operatic artists in the process. Applications that include well-designed elements to reach and develop new audiences for opera are encouraged.

In reaching audiences, the emphasis of the award is on encouraging a collaborative approach to high quality opera production based on value-adding partnerships between artists, producers and presenters.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the potential quality of the production **and** demonstrate concrete, credible strategies and plans to maximise public reach and engagement through live performance and other audience channels.

In considering proposals, the Arts Council will take into account a balance in the range and type of opera to be funded, and the extent to which proposals address areas of repertoire and public engagement of importance to the Arts Council as expressed in the Council's opera policy and strategy.

Priority in this strand will be given to proposals that:
- Are high-quality production proposals that demonstrate a strong and imaginative approach (relevant samples of work and the track record of the key artists involved will be taken into account)
- Evidence a clear commitment and well-grounded, detailed plans to maximise public reach and engagement, both in terms of live audiences and audiences reached through other means
- Provide opera repertoire that meets particular audience need as part of a balanced national opera provision
- Proposals that reach particular audiences as part of a balanced national spatial and demographic provision
- Demonstrate appropriate experience, sound planning and budgeting of opera production

- Show strong and credible plans for maximising production income from sources other than Council funding
- Use feasible, efficient models of production with appropriate value-adding partners.

Funding requests in Strand 3 that are less than €50,000 should instead apply to Strand 2.

All awards are informed by the Arts Council's ten-year strategy (2016–25), *Making Great Art Work: Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland* (see here: http://www.artscouncil.ie/arts-council-strategy/). All opera awards are further informed by the Arts Council's opera policy and strategy, *Making Great Art Work: Opera Policy & Strategy* (see here: http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/OperaPolicyStrat2016.pdf).

1.2 Who can apply?

Applicants must be resident in the Republic of Ireland. However, we may accept applications from outside the Republic of Ireland. In this case, you must detail in your application form how your proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland. We would need to be satisfied with your explanation.

> As part of its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the Arts Council is committed to offering **equality of access, opportunity and outcomes** to all potential applicants regardless of their
>
> - Age
> - Civil or family status
> - Disability
> - Gender
> - Membership of the Traveller community
> - Race
> - Religion
> - Sexual orientation
> - Socio-economic background.
>
> In this funding scheme the Arts Council particularly welcomes applications that are representative of the diversity of Irish society, including but not limited to any of the characteristics outlined above, and/or initiatives that deliver equitable opportunities or outcomes for those involved.

Organisations (such as producing venues) in receipt of Strategic Funding or Arts Grant Funding may apply, provided that any activity and related funding is demonstrated to be additional to, and separate from, the activities for which that organisation has received Strategic Funding or Arts Grant Funding.

Strategic Funding opera companies may, on occasion, play a positive role in supporting or partnering with OPP applicants. In such instances, the applicant and the supporting company must verify that the support offered and the proposed role of the funded organisation is additional to, and separate from, the activities for which that organisation has received Strategic Funding, and that the supporting opera producer will not publicly or otherwise present the work as its own production or co-production.

1.3   Who is the applicant?

The applicant is the person or organisation that will receive any grant offered and that will be required to accept the terms and conditions of that grant.

Applications being prepared by agents, managers, management companies or consultants on behalf of artists or arts organisations should be submitted by the artist(s) or performer(s) or organisation(s) concerned.

Any grant offered will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of the applicant.

All documentation provided must be in the name of the applicant (individual artist or arts organisation). For example, if you apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name Máire de Barra, then all documentation, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. Variations such as Mary Barry or Barry Studios are not acceptable.

1.4   Who cannot apply?

Applicants who are not eligible to apply include the following:

- Opera companies in receipt of Strategic Funding (see notes in section 1.2 above on support from Strategic Funding opera producers)

- Individuals or organisations who do not have a demonstrable track record as professional artists/producers/organisations

- Individuals who are currently in undergraduate or postgraduate education or who will be during the period for which this award is offered

- Members of the Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI) directly funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

1.5   What may you apply for?

There are three bands of funding available corresponding to the three strands of the Opera Projects and Production Award:

- Strand 1: Opera Development: up to a **maximum** of €25,000

- Strand 2: Opera Developmental Presentation: up to a **maximum** of €120,000

- Strand 3: Opera Production: up to a **maximum** of €450,000 (**Note:** full production funding requests for less than €50,000 should instead apply to Strand 2).

Please note that amounts of this maximum order are more likely to be the exception than the norm in each strand.

In making your application you should be realistic in specifying the funding you are seeking. This amount must be the difference between the estimated costs of the project or productions and a reasonable projection of revenue from different sources, as appropriate. You will need to demonstrate clearly how other income streams (where relevant) will contribute to the feasibility of your proposal.

Applicants may submit more than one application to a single OPP funding round, provided there is no more than one application per strand. You must clearly indicate which strand you are applying for in section 1.5 of the application form.

Applicants should also note that success in funding for strands 1 or 2 is not a guarantee of success or an indication of increased likelihood of success for any subsequent applications to develop that project further in strands 2 or 3.

Access costs for artists or participants[1] with disabilities

We are committed to making our funding schemes and the work we fund accessible to everyone. To meet this goal, we offer financial supports to remove barriers for artists and participants with disabilities. These are known as disability access costs.

We take the description of disability from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with Irish legislation and case law. We broadly include all people with disabilities. For example, people with physical, medical, cognitive, intellectual, learning, emotional or sensory impairments.

There are two types of disability access costs that you may need to consider for your application: personal disability access costs and audience disability access costs.

The Arts Council provides separate funding for personal disability access costs in addition to your core budget. You must fund audience disability access costs from within your core budget.

1. Personal disability access costs

These supports should help you to remove barriers for artists or participants with disabilities who are delivering your proposal. For example:

- You
- The main artists, individuals, groups or organisations involved in your proposal
- Partners, mentors or collaborators
- Production staff
- Core staff or key administrative personnel.

Examples of supports are, but not limited to, the following:

- An ISL interpreter for a participant or participants
- Services of an access support worker
- Additional rehearsal or studio time.

Note: you can apply for these costs in addition to the maximum amount available for the award.

2. Audience disability access costs

These are costs for making your work accessible to people with disabilities. We want to ensure that more people enjoy high-quality arts experiences and that everyone can access and enjoy the work we fund. Access for disabled audience members should be considered a normal part of your work.

Examples of supports to make your work accessible to your audience may be:

- Having an ISL interpreter for your event or performance

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[1] The Arts Council defines participants as those who express themselves creatively by taking part in artistic activities.

- Using an audio-description service

- Making your website compatible with screen readers

- Producing exhibition materials in other formats such as Braille or audio.

Note: the Arts Council does not currently provide additional funding for these costs. You must include these costs in your core application budget.

How to apply for disability access costs

If you include disability access costs in your proposal, you must upload a document listing these costs with your supporting material. An optional template is available on the Opera Projects and Production funding page of the Arts Council website. You must also show the costs in two separate lines in your application form:

- A line for personal disability access costs

- A line for audience disability access costs.

Note: whether you use your own document or the Arts Council template, the two types of disability access costs must be shown separately.

What if the funding I am offered is less than I requested?

If you are offered funding that is less than you requested, we will discuss with you how you plan to deliver your proposed activity when reviewing the revised budget. We will also discuss an appropriate adjustment to your disability access costs.

How do I claim my personal disability access costs?

If your application is successful, we will give you information on how to draw down your funding. Personal disability access costs are drawn down separately from your core funding. You may be asked to complete a short report on how you used these funds.

How much funding should you apply for?

In applying for Opera Projects and Production Award funding, you are required to submit a budget listing all items of income and expenditure relating to your proposed project. A summary budget is included in the application form, and the type of **separate, detailed budgets required for strands 2 & 3**, and optional in strand 1, are specified in section 1.7.

The maximum amount you may request is the difference between the **proposed expenditure** and the **proposed income** you indicate in the budget.

- Proposed expenditure should include all fees,* wages, technical costs, promotion and publicity costs, administrative costs, etc.
- Proposed income should include what you expect to receive from other funders, sponsors, box-office receipts, donors, programme sales, etc.

It is also important to reflect all in-kind** support in both income and expenditure, so reflecting the full and true value of your proposal.

* Note on artists' pay	The Arts Council is committed to improving the pay and conditions of artists. We have published a policy on the fair and equitable remuneration

and contracting of artists. It is important that you read this policy in advance of making your application. You will be asked as part of the application process to set out how you will ensure proper pay and conditions for the artists you work with. This will help us assess the feasibility of your application.

** Note on in-kind support	If you expect to receive in-kind support, you need to put a financial value on it so that the contribution it makes to the real value of your proposal is clear. You should think of in-kind support both as expenditure and as income: whatever amount you declare on the expenditure side, you should also declare on the income side.
	Time contributed by directors or board members may not be reckoned as an in-kind cost.

You are asked to indicate income, expenditure and amount requested at three stages during your application:

- Online, when you initiate the application (totals only)

- In section 3 of the application form (summary budget)

- On any detailed budget that you submit as part of your application (compulsory for strands 2 and 3, optional for strand 1).

Make sure that the totals are the same on all three, and make sure that the amount requested equals TOTAL EXPENDITURE minus TOTAL INCOME.

1.6   What you may not apply for?

Costs that you may not apply for include the following:

- Major capital purchases

- Ongoing core costs not specific to the project or production in question

- Costs that do not fit the purpose of the award.

Activities that you may not apply for include the following:

- Activities that do not fit the purpose of the award

- Activities that are more suited to another award funded by the Arts Council or operated by other state agencies, such as Culture Ireland

- Activities that have already started or have been completed before 1 January 2026

- Projects or productions that are part of, or adjunct to, the formal education of students in schools, colleges or third-level educational institutions

- Activities by registered charities that are for fundraising for other organisations

- Activities that are for participating in a competition

- Activities that are for profit-making

- Activities that have already been assessed by the Arts Council, unless you demonstrate that you have significantly developed the proposal since previously applying **or** if the Council has specifically advised you to redirect your application to this award. Please bear in mind that such advice is not an indication of a successful outcome.

1.7   What supporting material must you submit with your application?

Supporting material means material that is **separate from** and **additional to** your application form. This helps the person assessing your application to get a clearer understanding of your proposal. Please read the following list of which supporting material is required very carefully, as failure to comply with this is the most common reason for applications being deemed ineligible.

In order to be considered eligible for assessment for an Opera Projects and Production Award, you **must** submit the following supporting material online:

- **All strands:** detailed up-to-date CVs (max. three pages) for the principal artists involved in the proposed project

- **All strands:** examples/samples of work: 1–3 (max.) good-quality AV files and/or links (to AV files) demonstrating recent work by the company and/or key artistic personnel that illustrate their artistic practices and track records to date. (**IMPORTANT:** see notes on accepted formats and web platforms below, and note that links to your own website are not currently accepted.) For composers who routinely produce scores as part of their practice, a maximum of three scores or substantial score extracts of recent compositions completed or previously published should be provided. **Note:** scores must be uploaded as PDF files (see below) and should be in addition to the supplied AV files.

- **All strands (where relevant):** evidence of any financial support or sponsorship identified in the project budget – e.g. a memorandum of understanding, a letter of offer, a statement of support, or a similar document

- **All strands (where relevant):** letter/documentation of support from any significant partnering organisations or individuals

- **All strands (where relevant):** if music scores are being submitted in support of an application, these should be presented as PDF files

- **Strand 2**: a separate, detailed budget setting out proposed income and expenditure for the project; this should be in an Excel spreadsheet document. **Note:** this is in addition to the summary budget contained in the application form.

- **Strand 3**: a completed detailed opera-production budget – for this you must use the latest version of the Arts Council's budget template, which you can download from the Opera Projects and Production page of the Arts Council website (http://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/Opera-Projects-and-Production-Award/). **Note:** this is in addition to the summary budget contained in the application form.

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc. must be uploaded as separate documents with your application.

Additional material required in certain circumstances

If you are seeking additional participant or personal disability access costs or audience disability access costs, please provide a document outlining these costs, and outlining how they have been arrived at. Please also ensure that you include this additional amount as part of your budget.

If your proposal involves working with animals, you must provide a copy of your *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*.

For applications involving children and young people under the age of eighteen

The Arts Council requires all individuals and organisations providing services (e.g. cultural, recreational, educational) to children and young people under the age of eighteen to have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place. When making an application, you **must** indicate in section 1 of the application form whether or not your proposal is relevant to this age group.

- If you answer 'Yes' to this question in the application form and your application is successful, as a condition of funding you will be required to confirm and demonstrate that you have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place.

- If successful, you will be required to complete the Arts Council's Child Protection and Welfare Quality Assurance Self-audit at https://childprotection.artscouncil.ie/. Please visit www.tusla.ie for more information on Children First.

- You will also be required to update your details in the Profile Information tab in your Online Services account (do this by going to the 'Update your account' section).

For applications involving vulnerable adults

When making an application, you **must** indicate in section 1 of the application form whether or not your proposal involves work with or for vulnerable persons. If you answer 'Yes' to this question, you are indicating that you will work with, or present work to, this cohort as part of your proposal, and that you acknowledge that you have familiarised yourself with and adhere to the *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* (see here).

Please note that you may be asked to provide more evidence of adherence to these policies should your application be successful.

If you do not submit the relevant required supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.

Format for supporting material

All supporting material for the Opera Projects and Production Award must be submitted online. Hard-copy supporting material will not be accepted. Please follow these guidelines for the different kinds of supporting material.

Include contextual information for all supporting material in a clearly labelled text file.

Video files	For any video files you submit, you must provide relevant contextual information.
	This might include details of the piece, when and where it was performed, thematic/general comments, the names of performers, and how the work was financed (e.g. award, self-financed).
	Extracts should be no more than three minutes long, and no more than

	three relevant extracts should be submitted.
Music or sound recordings	Give the names of performers, and detail the instrumentation where appropriate.
	Please title the files accurately using the following naming convention: *Composer(s) – performer(s)/ensemble – track name*. Audio extracts should be no more than three minutes long, and no more than three relevant extracts should be submitted.

For further information on the formats you may use for supporting material you wish to upload as part of your application, see section **2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application**.

1.8   Eligibility

Your application will be deemed **ineligible**, and will not go any further in the process, if any of the following is true:

1. You miss the application deadline

2. You fail to complete all of the sections in the application form relevant to your proposal

3. You cannot apply as set out in sections 1.2 to 1.4 above

4. You apply for an amount of funding greater than the maximum amount allowed for within the award to which you are applying, as set out in section 1.5 above (except where you are applying for an additional amount to cover access costs).

5. You apply for an activity or purpose that you cannot apply for, as set out in section 1.6 above

6. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials, as set out in section 1.7 above

7. Your application is better suited to another funding programme offered by the Arts Council or by another funding agency (in this case, we will redirect you to the more appropriate funding opportunity).

Note: in the event that your application is ruled ineligible, it will not be assessed, and you will be able to apply again with the same proposal in future funding rounds.

2.   How to make your application

2.1   Register with the Arts Council's Online Services

All applications must be made through the Arts Council's Online Services; applications made in any other way (by post, fax or email) will not be accepted.

You must have an Online Services account to make an application. If you do not already have an Online Services account, sign up by filling out the registration form here: https://onlineservices.artscouncil.ie/register.aspx.

Within five working days you will be emailed a unique ARN (Artist Reference Number) and password that you can use to sign in to Online Services.

Requirements for using Online Services

Note: you will need to use a computer or laptop to submit your application. Our Online Services website does not work on phones or tablets.

Your computer and Internet browser will need to meet the following requirements to use Online Services successfully:

PC	• Windows 7 operating system or a newer version of Windows
	• OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox
Mac	• Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or a newer version of the Mac operating system
	• OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox

Note: you will also need to have Microsoft Word (Desktop) or OpenOffice Writer installed to complete the application form itself. OpenOffice Writer is free software that can be downloaded here: https://www.openoffice.org.

OpenOffice Users

Please refer to our video *Using OpenOffice to download, complete and upload the application form* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT9XxgmgoEo

You **must** use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier. More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer than 4.0.1 have changed how our application forms appear when they are submitted through Online Services.

Important notes for Apple Mac users

• Note the section in the YouTube video (at 1 min. 20 secs; link provided above) that deals with the issue of downloading version 4.0.1 on Macs with the operating system Mac OS Mojave or an earlier version installed.

• You cannot download OpenOffice 4.0.1 onto a Mac with the operating system Mac OS Catalina. If your Mac has this operating system or a newer version installed, you will have to download and use OpenOffice version 4.1.9 or newer.

If you cannot meet, or do not understand, any of these requirements, please contact us for advice as far as possible in advance of the deadline.

Give yourself enough time to complete the application

You should become familiar with the Online Services website well in advance of the deadline and in advance of preparing an application. It is likely that there will be heavy traffic on the site on the final afternoon of the closing date. You should prepare your application and submit it well in advance of the deadline.

Upload times can be much longer than download times. It may take longer than you think to upload your supporting materials.

Getting technical support

If you need technical support while making an online application, you can contact the Arts Council by emailing onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or by phoning 01 6180200/01 6180243. We recommend you report any technical issues with us well in advance of the deadline. Please provide a contact phone number and make sure that you are available to receive a return call from us.

We deal with queries on a first-come first-served basis.

Please note that there is often a high volume of calls as the deadline approaches and that technical-support calls received after 2.00pm on the closing date may not be resolved before the deadline.

2.2 Fill in the application form

If you have not already done so, download the application form for the award you wish to apply for. The application form is a Microsoft Word (Desktop)/OpenOffice Writer document that you fill in offline (on your own computer). The application form includes guidance on how to fill in each of its sections.

Note: the application form is formatted in such a way that the Arts Council can extract information from the form for assessment purposes. It is **very important** that you type inside the grey boxes in the form, and that you do not delete them and/or type outside them. If you do this, the form will not upload properly.

2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application

You are required to include supporting material with your application. For example, this might include a CV, or samples of your current work – e.g. text, video, images, or sound recordings (see section **1.7 What supporting material must you submit with your application?**).

You must submit all such supporting material online – if necessary, you should scan or save material in electronic format.

Acceptable file formats

The following table lists file formats for your supporting material.

File type	File extension
text files	.rtf/.doc/.docx/.txt
image files	.jpg/.gif/.tiff/.png
sound files	.wav/.mp3/.m4a
video files	.avi/.mov/.mp4
spreadsheets	.xls/.xlsx
Adobe Acrobat PDF files	.pdf

For convenience, gather together all the files you need in an accessible location on your computer.

Submitting URL links

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc. must be uploaded as separate documents with your application.

Instead of uploading material directly, you may provide links to material hosted on streaming platforms that do not limit access through financial subscription. To do this, copy the URL (the full address of where your material is hosted) into a Microsoft Word (Desktop)/OpenOffice Writer or PDF document and upload it as a weblink-supporting document.

While not an exclusive list, examples of acceptable sharing platforms would be YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, Bandcamp.

Please note that we will not accept links to the following sources:

- File-sharing sites – e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive
- Social-media platforms – e.g. Meta, Instagram
- Your personal website

Note: assessors will only view materials in the URL links that you provide. It is important that you check that any links in the document work **and** that they bring the viewer to the correct source to be able to access and view your supporting material.

Please do not flag your material as 'private' as it will not be accessible for the assessment. Change the settings on your video to 'unlisted' if you do not wish the application supporting material on your YouTube channel to be publicly viewable.

Naming files appropriately

Give all files that you intend to upload filenames that make it clear what they contain or represent – i.e. it should be clear from the filename whether the document is a CV, a sample text, or a review of previous work.

Please submit supporting documents in separate, appropriately named files.

Good filenames for an applicant called Jack Russell	russelljack Architecture Project application.doc
	russelljack performance clip.mp4
	russelljack Architecture Project budget template round 2.xls
	russelljack youtube link.doc

The total combined limit for all supporting material uploaded with a single application is **40MB**.

Note: these characters are not allowed in filenames **": < >? / **

2.4 Make your application online

To make your application online, you go through four main stages. Click **Save draft** at the end of each stage. You can come back to your application and revise it at any time before you finally submit it.

2.4.1 Choose a funding programme and download application form

To start a new application, click the **Make an application** button on your home page, and follow the prompts to choose the funding programme you wish to apply for and to give your application a unique reference by which to identify it. At this stage you can also download the application form (if you have not already done so).

2.4.2 Request funding amount

At this stage specify the expenditure and income related to your proposal, and the amount of funding you are requesting. The **Amount requested** should equal the **Total expenditure** minus the **Total income**. The final figures you enter here should be the same as those you enter in section 3 of the application form and in your detailed budget.

2.4.3 Upload application form and supporting material

Follow the prompts to upload your completed application form, CV or CVs, detailed budget and any other required supporting material (see section **1.7 What supporting material must you submit with your application?**). You do not have to upload everything at the same time. You can save your application as a draft and come back to it later.

Note: if you have completed your application form as a **.docx** file, and you are confident that your application form is filled in correctly (including typing inside the grey fields), but Online Services displays a message saying 'Cannot upload form', please try saving it as a **.doc** file and uploading it again.

2.4.4 Submit application

When you are satisfied that you have uploaded everything you need to support your application and ticked the declaration, click **Submit**.

Once submitted, your application cannot be amended. Do not submit your application until you are completely satisfied.

You should receive two emails. The first will be issued immediately your application is received by the Arts Council. The second may arrive a few minutes later and will contain your application number, which will be used in all correspondence relating to this application. **Note:** it is important that you contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie if you **do not** receive the second confirmation email containing the application number.

3. Processing and assessment of applications

3.1 Overview

The Arts Council considers all applications, makes decisions and communicates these to applicants in accordance with set procedures. The aim is to ensure that the system for making awards is fair and transparent.

3.2 Assessment process

All applications received are processed by the Arts Council as follows:

1 After you submit your application, you should receive two emails:

- The first will be sent immediately and will acknowledge your application.

- The second should arrive a few minutes later. It will contain your application number, which we will use in all correspondence about your application.

Note: these emails only mean that our online system recognises that you have submitted an application. They do not mean that your application is eligible to be assessed.

If you do not receive the email with your application number, contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie

2 Your application is checked for eligibility. Please see section **1.8 Eligibility** above.

3 Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application.

4 Adviser(s) and/or staff recommend an application as shortlisted or not shortlisted.

5 A peer panel reviews all shortlisted applications and associated materials, then scores and makes decisions.

6 Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.

7 Decisions are noted by Council.

Time frame

The Arts Council endeavours to assess applications as quickly as possible, but the volume of applications and the rigorous assessment process means that it will take up to **twelve weeks from closing date to decision.**

3.3 Criteria for the assessment of applications

Applications are assessed in a competitive context and with consideration of the application form and the supporting materials submitted. All applications are assessed against criteria of **a)** artistic merit, **b)** how they meet the objectives and priorities of the award, and **c)** feasibility. Each of these criteria is described in turn.

While applicants may choose other artforms/arts practices relevant to their application, the assessment will be undertaken by the team specific to the chosen primary artform, and which may, in certain instances, ask for a secondary assessment from another team.

Artistic merit

The assessment of artistic merit focuses on the applicant and those involved in the project as well as on the nature of the proposed arts activity, and might include, among other things, consideration of:

- The quality of the idea and the proposed arts activity

- The track record of the applicant and the artistic personnel involved in the project as evidenced in their CVs and other supporting materials submitted

- The potential of the applicant and the artistic personnel as evidenced in the application form and the supporting materials submitted

- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated in the proposal

- How the application demonstrates innovation, experimentation and collaboration.

Meeting the objectives and priorities of the award

Applications are assessed on how well they meet the objectives and priorities of the award; see section **1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award** for details of these.

Feasibility

The assessment of feasibility considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the proposed activity. This includes consideration of:

- The track record of personnel involved in managing, administering and delivering the project

- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for participating artists

- The extent of involvement and/or verified commitment of identified project partners

- The proposed budget

- Other sources of income

- The availability of, and access to, other resources

- The proposed timetable or schedule and/or production plans.

3.4 Peer panel

The purpose of peer-panel meetings is to allow for a diversity of expert views to inform the decision-making process. Peer panels normally consist of at least three external adjudicators with relevant artform and/or arts practice expertise.

Each meeting is usually led by an Arts Council member acting as non-voting chair. Arts Council advisers and staff attend as required, and those involved in the initial assessment of applications are on hand to provide information as required. Panellists have access to all shortlisted applications and associated materials prior to the day of the meeting, at which point they review, discuss and score shortlisted applications. Following this, applications are ranked by score. In light of the competitive context and the available budget, it is likely that the Arts Council will be able to fund only a proportion of the applications received.

Scoring process

The panel is asked to score applications according to the following system:

- A – Must Fund (10 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have fully met the criteria for the award and merits funding on that basis, to the amount requested where possible.
- B – Should Fund (8 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding should resources allow.
- C – Could Fund (5 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria, but to a lesser extent within the competitive context than other applications.
- D – Not a Priority (2 points): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have not met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding.

Declaration of interest

In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, a panel member must declare an interest where they have a close personal or professional link with the applicant or are linked in any way with the application. An 'interest' is either 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' (e.g. familial relationships, personal partnerships, or formal or informal business partnerships, etc.).

The interest must be declared as soon as the panellist becomes aware of it. This may be at the point when they are approached to sit on the panel (if the 'interest' is known at that stage) or following receipt of the list of applicants. Where an interest is declared, the panellist will not receive papers relating to that applicant and will be required to leave the room when the specific application is being reviewed. Where this situation arises, the chair will vote in lieu of the panellist.

In some instances a panellist may not realise that a conflict of interest exists until they receive and review the panel papers. In such instances the panellist must alert an Arts Council staff member or the panel chair as soon as they become aware that a conflict may exist.

In the event of two panellists declaring a conflict of interest for the same application, the chair will be part of the decision-making process for that specific application.

If the nominated panel chair has a conflict of interest they must declare it in writing in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware of it. In this instance the head of team will chair the discussion on the conflicted application.

3.5   Outcome of applications

All applicants are informed in writing about the outcome of their application.

You will be informed by email if your application has not been shortlisted. If your application has been shortlisted, it will go forward for panel review.

If your application is successful, you will be sent a letter of offer detailing the amount of funding you have been awarded and the terms and conditions of the award. You will also be told how to go about drawing down your award.

The Arts Council receives a large volume of applications, and demand for funding always exceeds the available resources. If your application is not successful, you can request feedback from Arts Council staff. Eligibility and compliance with application procedures alone do not guarantee receipt of an award.

Unsuccessful applicants are not eligible to apply for another Arts Council award to undertake the same activity. If the Arts Council feels that the proposed activity would have been better suited to a different award programme, an exception may be made. In such circumstance you will be informed in writing.

Appeals

Applicants may appeal against a funding decision on the basis of an alleged infringement or unfair application of, or deviation from, the Arts Council's published procedures. If you feel that the Arts Council's procedures have not been followed, please see the appeals process at http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/fundInfo/funding_appeals.aspx or contact the Arts Council for a copy of the appeals-process information sheet.