Literature and Grants for the Arts

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1  Grants for the Arts

Grants for the Arts (GFTA) is our Lottery-funded grant programme for individuals, arts organisations and other people who use the arts in their work. Grants are available for activities carried out over a set period and which engage people in England in arts activities and help artists and arts organisations in England carry out their work.

Activities we support must be clearly related to the arts and must be project-based, up to a maximum of three years in length. Grants normally range from £1,000 to £100,000 and we can fund up to 90 per cent of the cost of an activity.

All applicants must also read the ‘How to apply guidance’. Download it from our website or contact us for a copy.

2  Literature and Grants for the Arts

Full details of our eligibility criteria are provided in the ‘How to apply guidance’.

2.1  What you can apply for

We can consider funding:
- digital literature (using technology to create new forms of work)
- literature festivals and programming
- live literature
- magazines publishing original fiction and poetry (including newly translated work)
- participatory activity
- poetry
- prose fiction (including novels, novellas and short fiction, graphic novels)
- publishing
- reader development
- residencies
- storytelling
- translation
- writing and illustration for children and young people
We focus primarily on funding activities relating to original fiction and poetry. We can consider activities with innovative, creative approaches to non-fiction work (e.g. where the work engages creatively with experimenting with genre or form), where the project demonstrates strong literary merit. This applies to memoir, travelogue and biography, for example.

2.2 What you cannot apply for

We generally do not fund screenwriting for film or television. We generally do not fund lifestyle or general arts magazines, or academic publications.

3 Guidance for Individuals

There are now many ways in which writers can create work and reach audiences, from traditional publication, to new digital forms of distribution and production, to a variety of live events and activities.

We encourage all kinds of talented writers to apply for funding, to support exciting projects that will develop their work and engage readers and audiences. This can include residencies, research and development, mentoring, time to write, artistic collaborations and explorations of digital technology and writing.

3.1 Artistic quality

A track record in any artform is a good way of demonstrating the quality of a person’s work. Your track record as a writer will be taken into consideration when we decide whether to fund your activity, so writers who have delivered successful writing projects or who have been traditionally published are often in a better position to demonstrate artistic quality.

All writers will need to demonstrate the quality of their work objectively, i.e. with the secured interest or involvement of an agent, publisher, editor, literary magazines, literature organisation or producer. A supporting letter can be included as part of an application.
We also fund organisations that support emerging writers to develop their work, through a range of services including manuscript assessment, writing courses and one-to-one mentoring. It might be more appropriate for some emerging writers to access support from these organisations first than through Grants for the Arts directly.

It is important that you demonstrate how the activity will lead to significant artistic and/or professional development. To make a strong case for investing in an individual writer, we would need you to show that an investment is likely to support you at a key point in your development. This might include whether a project will allow you to work in new ways, or take your practice in new directions, for example.

### 3.2 Public engagement

Public engagement is an important consideration for any Grants for the Arts application. Applicants will need to demonstrate how readers or audiences will engage with their work e.g. in print, through events or online. Where the focus of the activity is on writing or developing new work, we will base our view of public engagement on how likely this is to reach audiences in the longer term, for example through evidenced support from a publisher. Your application form and any letter of support from an agent, publisher or editor should explicitly address future plans for the publication of the work you are applying to do.

We encourage writers to consider proactive approaches to reaching audiences, whether in the promotion of completed work (e.g. readings, online); as part of its development (e.g. research, sharing work-in-progress); or in specific community projects (e.g. workshops, residencies).

### 3.3 Self-publishing

Writers looking to self-publish their work would need to make an exceptionally strong case for public engagement, particularly around how the work will reach a wide readership without the distribution support of a publisher. Applications for self-published work may not meet our eligibility criteria if a strong case is not made.
3.4 **Budget**

When working out your budget for the project, you should remember that a period of self-initiated writing and development is not a professional engagement, so the costs should not replicate the rates you normally would charge for a public performance or commissioned piece of writing, for example. You will need to tell us how you arrived at your costs, and fees should relate to your level of experience as a writer. If any costs are represented as overheads (e.g. living costs) rather than artistic fees, then the amount you apply for must relate directly to the amount of time you are spending on the activity you are asking us to support and you will need to show how you have worked this out.

4 **Further guidance on specific types of activity**

4.1 **Publishing**

Publishers can apply for activities that may include, for example, a publishing programme or marketing activity. If your activity is a publishing programme, then you should include details of proposed titles and tell us how they fit into the development of your list.

Grants for the Arts is a programme designed to provide project funding for programmes of activity with their own clear objectives and a discrete set of project outcomes, rather than for ongoing activity. You will need to make sure that your application puts forward your activity as a coherent self-contained project. If your budget includes any overheads, then you should show us how costs relate directly to the activity and how you have worked this out. For more information, please see our information sheet on ‘Repeat activities, ongoing overheads and salaries’, available on our website.

If you have a business plan, you can include a relevant section of this as supporting information and refer in your application to how the activity will contribute to your longer-term business development. You should also consider how your publishing activity will be sustained in the longer term.

It is important that you show the wider public benefit of your activity, so you should include details of your distribution and marketing plans.
4.2 Translation

Publishers and translators are eligible to apply for funding to translate work from other languages into English. We are generally unable to support translations from English into other languages.

Usually it is the publisher who applies for a grant, which may cover both translation and promotion. However, translators are also eligible to apply as individuals when appropriate.

On the whole, priority is given to translation of contemporary fiction and poetry, while literary non-fiction titles may also be eligible if they are exceptional in terms of literary or stylistic innovation. We are particularly keen to encourage translation from languages and literatures currently under-represented in English.

Quality
In the application, the publisher or translator should explain the rationale for selecting the text or texts for translation, with brief information about the writer, translator and the literary context. Publishers should explain how the titles contribute to their list.

Public engagement
As with publishing in general, it is important that you show the public benefit of your activity, which in this case usually means demonstrating that the translation will reach readers. In the public engagement section of the application form, applicants need to show strong and well thought out plans for publication, distribution and marketing of the title they are proposing to translate.

Budget
For information on how to pay translators, we refer you to the guidance published by the Translators’ Association (www.societyofauthors.org/translators-association).

We appreciate that activities involving literary translation often require a long lead-in time. Please remember that Grants for the Arts cannot fund services that have been ordered, contracted or paid for before we are able to reach a decision on your application (six working weeks from receipt for applications for £15,000 and under, and 12 working weeks for applications over £15,000). Please ensure you allow sufficient lead-in time when applying.
4.3 Digital innovation and creative media

Grants for the Arts can support writers and literature organisations to explore new digital opportunities. These could include projects that develop and enhance the publication and distribution of literature, or that utilise digital technology for the creation of new work, including collaborative writing, writing for games and other digital forms.

We view projects with a digital focus against the same criteria as all other applications, and look at how the activity will develop the artform and reach audiences. We would look to see whether the activity is likely to provide new ways for audiences/readers to engage with literature. Even if a digital project is technologically innovative, it is important that applicants also clearly demonstrate the literary quality of the proposed activity.

Digital approaches in writing and publishing are constantly developing. Applicants should demonstrate that they have thoroughly researched the area their activity is happening in (social networking or smartphone applications, for example), current literature-related provision in that area, if appropriate, and how their activity builds on what is already available. Applicants should also show that they are working with appropriate project partners.

Applicants may also find it helpful to read the ‘Creative media and digital activity, and Grants for the Arts’ information sheet. Download it from our Grants for the Arts information sheets page, or contact us for a copy.

4.4 Literature festivals

We can support literature festivals to commission, programme and promote literature and literature events. We can also support associated programmes such as outreach activities and talent development work. We focus on festivals that feature literary fiction, poetry, international work and/or new writing.

If you are applying for a festival programme, you should tell us about your draft programme or outline your approach to programming and how the festival offer will reflect your artistic aims.
If you are applying for an annual festival that we have funded before, it is important that your application clearly demonstrates how the activity has been developed since your last event or project. Please also read the information sheet on ‘Repeat activities, ongoing overheads and salaries, Grants for the Arts’. Download it from our [Grants for the Arts information sheets](#) page, or contact us for a copy.

### 4.5 Live literature and storytelling

Individuals and organisations can apply for activities including, for example, a tour or research and development for a show.

If you are applying as an individual, you can demonstrate the quality of the work and its ability to reach an audience through endorsements from or partnerships with a third party, such as a live literature promoter or festival. There is now a developed infrastructure for live literature in England, including specialist organisations, promoters, venues, touring specialists and festivals. For research and development activity, you should provide clear plans for how the public will be engaged with the work in the longer term.

### 4.6 Reader development work

Organisations can apply for the development and delivery of activities that support access to reading for pleasure for individuals and communities. Projects might include reading group activity, events, workshops, residencies and promotions. They might also help readers to enjoy and engage with a diverse range of literature. We focus on activities that promote the reading of literary fiction, poetry and work in translation.

Organisations can apply for reading development work, including work targeting specific audiences such as children and young people and communities requiring access support, e.g. emergent readers or those not yet comfortable with reading for pleasure.
5  Contact us

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