

Research grants programme round two

Guidance for applicants

Below is an outline summary of key information. Please see [Section three](#) for full eligibility criteria.

Summary of key information	
What is the focus of the fund?	The Research grants programme seeks to build our collective knowledge and deepen our understanding of the impact of arts and culture and to promote greater collaboration and co-operation between the arts and cultural sector and research partners.
What type of applicant is this fund for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lead applicant must be an arts and/or cultural organisation with significant experience and expertise in delivering arts and cultural programmes. The lead applicant must be applying to deliver the activity in partnership with an experienced research partner with suitable professional standards of research quality Consortia (including at least one arts or cultural organisation and research partner). Please note that one arts and/or cultural organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application. <p>The lead applicant can only submit one application to this scheme but can be a partner on another application</p>
Who cannot apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research partners applying as the lead applicant • Organisations based outside of England. Exceptions may be made for Arts Council England National portfolio funded organisations that are based outside of England but who have a registered office in England and where the majority of activity benefits and/or engages people in England. National portfolio organisations based outside of England must contact an Arts Council England Relationship Manager to confirm their eligibility for this fund before submitting an Expression of Interest • Organisations that do not have a partnership in place with an appropriate research partner • You are already in receipt of Research grants funding for the period 2016-17 and/or 2017-18 as a lead organisation and as a research partner. This also applies to consortia in receipt of Research grants funding for the period 2016-17 and/or 2017-18
When is the deadline for Expressions of Interest?	5pm on Thursday 5 May 2016
When is the outcome of Expressions of Interest?	Emails will be sent to all applicants by 5pm on Friday 20 May 2016
When is the deadline for full applications?	5pm on Thursday 7 July 2016
How much can be applied for per application?	Between £50,000 and £200,000

When must the activity take place?	<p>Activities must start no earlier than 1 October 2016</p> <p>Activities must end no later than 31 October 2018</p>
Minimum match funding from other sources	<p>Minimum match funding is not applicable to this fund however we will look favourably on applications that include other sources of funding, including support in kind.</p>
When will we make our decision?	<p>We will aim to notify applicants of our decision no later than 28 September 2016</p>

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Section one – introduction

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Research grants programme round two.

This guidance gives you information on how to apply for funding to the Research grants programme round two.

Arts Council England clearly sets out the role of research in our 10-year strategic framework [Great art and culture for everyone](#).

“Our research programme will seek to build our collective knowledge and deepen our understanding of the impact of arts and culture and will map out and reinforce the changing and complex role it plays in our experience as individuals and on the fabric of our society.”

In March 2014 the Arts Council published an [evidence review](#) which looked at the wider benefits of art and culture to society. The main aims and objectives of the review were as follows:

- assess the strength of the evidence base between 2010-13 about the economic, social, health and wellbeing, education, lifelong learning and environmental impacts and outcomes of arts and culture in England
- assess the evidence base about what works, among whom and in what circumstances
- assess the methodologies and approaches adopted for evidencing the impact of arts and culture
- assess the evidence base in relation to the Arts Council’s five goals
- identify the gaps and weaknesses in the current evidence-base to inform the Arts Council’s future research programme in order to shape future policy in the arts and cultural sector

Therefore the Research grants programme is intended to provide opportunities for collaborative work to develop the evidence base around the impact of arts and culture. Specifically the role of the Research grants programme will be providing us with evidence to:

- better understand the impact of arts and culture
- make the best case for arts and culture in the context of reduced public spending

- promote greater collaboration and co-operation between the arts and cultural sector and research partners

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018, we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

On behalf of the Department for Education, we are investing over £75 million between 2015 and 2016 in a network of 123 Music education hubs across England.

For more information about the Arts Council visit www.artscouncil.org.uk

About Arts Council England's strategic funds 2015-18

Our Strategic funds help us to target particular challenges, opportunities or gaps, creating the environment for further development to take place in the arts and culture sector. Ultimately, they help us meet the goals set out in our strategy, [*Great art and culture for everyone*](#). Our goals, for reference, are as follows:

Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

Section two – purpose of the Research grants programme

Aims and outcomes

With the launch of *Great art and culture for everyone* in October 2013 the time was right to build upon previous reviews of research and refresh our thinking on the impact that arts and culture can have on the cultural, social, educational and economic landscape.

In March 2014 Arts Council England published an evidence review which looked at the wider benefits of art and culture to society. This comprehensive review highlighted gaps in our understanding of the impact of art and culture to individuals and society, which led to the development of the Research grants programme.

The central aims of the fund are:

- **Furthering our knowledge:**
Deepening our understanding of the impact and benefits of arts and culture
- **Increasing capacity:**
Promoting greater collaboration and co-operation between the arts and cultural sector and research partners
- **Working in partnership:**
Working in partnership with others to build and improve the evidence base around the impact of arts and culture
- **Influencing:**
Persuading commissioning authorities to invest in culture to bring positive cultural, social, educational and economic change

How much funding is available?

A total budget of £1,110,000 is available for 2016-18. Applications can be made for grants between £50,000 and £200,000 in total.

Activities must start no earlier than 1 October 2016 and end no later than 31 October 2018.

It is likely that there will be high levels of demand for funding, and there will be good applications that we will not be able to fund. We expect to make in the region

of six to eight awards in this round of the fund. You should think about what you would do if we cannot award funding.

Geographical focus

The Arts Council intends to ensure that a minimum of 75 per cent of all Lottery funding is spent outside London. For this fund we welcome applications from organisations in England; funded activity should benefit audiences from across England.

Section three – eligibility

Please read the eligibility requirements for the fund carefully. If you do not meet any of these requirements we will be unable to consider your application for funding.

<p>Who can apply?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lead applicant must be an arts and/or cultural organisation with significant experience and expertise in delivering arts and cultural programmes. The arts and/or cultural organisation must also demonstrate in their proposal an understanding and knowledge of the topic(s) being explored in the proposed research study. <i>Our understanding and definition of an arts and/or cultural organisation is an organisation that can clearly demonstrate that its primary aims are around arts and culture and that can clearly demonstrate that its activities benefit the arts and cultural sector within England. This includes but is not limited to:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Arts organisations- Museums- Libraries- Music education hubs- Local authority service departments• The lead applicant must be applying to deliver the activity in partnership with an experienced research partner with suitable professional standards of research quality <i>Our understanding and definition of a research partner is an individual, team or organisation within a minimum of three years' experience of carrying out cultural, social, educational or economic research. Research personnel must have research qualifications, professional memberships and/or previous</i>
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research publications. Research organisations must have membership of professional or industry bodies and/or a track record of research publication.

- Consortia (including at least one arts or cultural organisation and research partner). Please note that one arts and/or cultural organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application.
- The lead applicant must be a properly constituted organisation.

The kinds of organisations that are eligible to apply include:

- *Limited companies registered at Companies House (or equivalent, if outside the UK)*
 - *Community Interest Companies registered with the CIC Regulator*
 - *Charities or trusts registered with the Charity Commission*
 - *Limited Liability Partnerships registered at Companies House*
 - *Partnerships established under a Deed of Partnership*
 - *Industrial and Provident Societies or Community Benefit Societies subject to regulation by the Financial Services Authority*
 - *Organisations established by Royal Charter or other legislation*
 - *Statutory bodies including local authorities*
- The lead applicant must be based in England
 - The research partner must be based in England
 - The lead applicant must be able to demonstrate financial stability, appropriate governance and an ability to accept, administer and account for the grant on behalf of the consortium

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lead applicant can only submit one application to this scheme but can be a partner on another application
Who cannot apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Research partners applying as the lead applicant • Organisations based outside of England. Exceptions may be made for Arts Council England National portfolio funded organisations that are based outside of England but who have a registered office in England and where the majority of activity benefits and/or engages people in England. National portfolio organisations based outside of England must contact an Arts Council England Relationship Manager to confirm their eligibility for this fund before submitting an Expression of Interest • Organisations that do not have a partnership in place with an appropriate research partner • Organisations already in receipt of Research grants funding for the period 2016-17 and/or 2017-18 as a lead organisation and as a research partner. This also applies to consortia in receipt of Research grants funding for the period 2016-17 and/or 2017-18
What activity cannot be funded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that directly cover the costs of arts and cultural work • Activities that do not benefit or engage people in England (in the short or long term) or that do not help artists and arts organisations in England to carry out their work • Activities (including buying goods or services) that have started, been bought, ordered or contracted before we make a decision about your application. This is

	<p>because we cannot fund activity retrospectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs that are already paid for by other income including your own funds or any other funding
How much can be applied for per application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants can apply for a grant between £50,000 and £200,000
How much match funding from sources other than ACE is required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum match funding is not applicable to this fund however we will look favourably on applications that include other sources of funding, including support in kind
Delivery timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities must start no earlier than 1 October 2016 • Activities must end no later than 31 October 2018

Consortia and partnership agreements

We will accept applications for funding from organisations working as a consortium. One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application.

All partners within the consortium must show a firm commitment to joint working. Your application must show the benefits and rationale of working as a consortium. If we decide to fund your project we will enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the lead organisation. This organisation must accept our terms and conditions of grant and will be solely accountable to us for all monitoring information, how all the money is spent and for the full and successful delivery of the project.

One of our standard terms and conditions of grant is that the organisation we enter into a grant agreement with cannot subcontract any of the project to other organisations without our prior agreement in writing. So if we award a grant, before

the project can start, we must approve a partnership agreement between the lead organisation and the other partners involved in the project.

There is further guidance about [Partnership agreements](#) on our website.

Section four – what you will be expected to deliver

We welcome applications that will make a contribution to achieving the aims and outcomes outlined in [Section two](#) above.

The proposal should include/demonstrate:

- Originality and importance of the proposed research in the context of existing literature
- Strength of the partnership between the arts or cultural organisation and research partner
- Research methodology and quality
- Project management, budget allocation, timetabling and staff/researcher allocation
- Previous experience and credentials of researchers
- Value for money
- Data management
- Research ethics
- Outputs, dissemination, knowledge transfer and impact

Methodology

Priority will be given to applications that present theory-driven research questions and methodologies that will yield important information about the impact of the arts and culture on individuals, communities, society and economies. Competitive applications will take into account any existing research and knowledge that serves as a basis for a theoretical framework, and helps to motivate the proposed project.

The Arts Council considers there to be under-used research methodologies in exploring the impact of arts and culture. These include (but are not limited to):

- Larger quantitative and/or qualitative and longitudinal studies to look at population(s) at scale and over time to assess the extent and duration of the impact of being involved in arts and culture
- Experimental or quasi-experimental studies, including randomised control trials
- Mixed method research incorporating large-scale quantitative research and complementary qualitative research

We would particularly welcome research studies incorporating these methods, though the methodology must relate to clear research aims and objectives,

research hypotheses and research lines of enquiry, which, in turn, should link back to a theoretical and conceptual framework and build on existing knowledge about the impact of arts and culture.

Projects can involve collection and analyses of solely primary or both primary and secondary data. Primary data collection is an allowable activity, as long as a proposed project also includes analysis of that data. The Arts Council will not fund projects that focus exclusively on data acquisition. Projects may include, but are not limited to, primary and/or secondary data analyses; psychological studies that take place in clinical or non-clinical settings; third-party evaluations of an arts project's or programme's impact; statistically-driven meta-analyses of existing research so as to provide a fresh understanding of the impact of the arts and culture; practice-based research; action-based research projects and comparative studies of the effectiveness and efficacy of an arts and cultural intervention/activity compared to or in complement with other interventions/activity.

The Arts Council is interested in research projects that conceptualise and explore the impact of the arts and culture from a range of different disciplines or from multi-disciplinary perspectives.

The Arts Council would like applicants to consider population diversity when defining their research questions, research population and approaches to sampling. Applicants must consider diversity within their research population, and sample this appropriately in order to make claims about the reliability of the findings for all parts of the population(s). Arts Council England welcomes studies that seek to explore the impact of arts and culture to specific population groups, such as those with [protected characteristics](#), where such research can be linked to knowledge and evidence gaps in previous research literature.

Key areas and themes for funding for the Research grants programme:

Cultural¹

- The concurrent impacts of experiencing arts and culture. During the event, individuals may respond in many ways of which they are not consciously aware at the time it is happening. Individuals may hold their breath, their heart rate may increase, they may lose track of time, or experience chills.

¹ [Understanding the value and impacts of cultural experiences: A literature review, Carnwath & Brown 2014](#)

Some of the physiological responses can be measured at the very moment at which they occur. Psychological engagement is more difficult to measure in the moment, as any conscious reflection on the individual's state may interfere with their experience (ie, interrupt their sense of flow or absorption). We refer to these responses as 'concurrent impacts'.

- The experienced impacts of arts and culture that are consciously perceived. They may start accruing before the event (as reflected in heightened levels of anticipation), and also manifest during the event, and afterwards.

Economy

- Examining the extent to which arts and culture investment influences the economic prosperity of a place, through place making, either through regeneration or attractiveness to live, work and do business, and the effect this has on productivity. A key focus will be how the arts and culture affects the five drivers of productivity: investment, skills, innovation, entrepreneurship and competition.
- Improving our understanding of how cultural and creative spill over drives innovation in places and the wider economy. This would include collaborations between arts and cultural organisations, the creative industries and other sectors.
- Looking at how art and culture influences the image and perceptions of a place, particularly through place making, and what effects this has on tourism both domestically and internationally.

Society

- Further investigating the impact of the ageing population on public services to build on the numerous pieces of research that evidence the impact that the arts can have on the physical, mental and social wellbeing of older people from which key lines of enquiry can be drawn up and suggested for testing.
- Looking at how participation in the arts contributes to reducing social exclusion and isolation, and/or make communities feel safer, particularly among the older generation. How can we unlock and support their creative ability in a way that achieves the above?

- Examining variation amongst different artforms and different population groups.

Environment

- Exploring the links between art and culture and environmental sustainability. To what extent can arts and culture inspire behavioural change amongst individuals and society to care more about the environment and better understand key issues such as climate change?

Section six – how to apply

Expression of Interest stage

If you believe you have a proposal that meets all of the [eligibility criteria](#) and the criteria described within the '[Meeting the Brief](#)' section, please tell us about it by completing the online [Expression of Interest](#) form, which will give you the opportunity to describe your outline proposal in no more than 500 words. Within your submission you should tell us the anticipated overall project cost and the amount you would like to request from us if you are invited to apply. The online Expression of Interest form will open at **12pm (midday) on Thursday 14 April 2016**. Expressions of Interest must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 5 May 2016**.

If we think that your proposal could make a significant contribution to [the Aims and Outcomes of this strategic fund](#), we will inform you by email **by 5pm on Friday 20 May 2016**. If you are invited to make an application you will have **SIX WEEKS** in which to develop your full application and the mandatory supporting documents required, as detailed in this guidance document.

If we decide not to invite you to apply we will also inform you by email **by 5pm on Friday 20 May 2016**. We are unable to give feedback or engage in a discussion about why your proposal is not being taken forward at this time. You are unable to resubmit the same proposal to the **Research grants programme** in any future funding round.

As well as the eligibility criteria, if you are a National portfolio organisation we will also take your current performance into account when deciding whether or not to invite an application.

Making an application

When to apply

The online application form will open at **12pm (midday) on Thursday 26 May 2016**. Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 7 July 2016**. Applications submitted after this time will not be considered.

Application process

- 1. Read this guidance carefully and contact us**

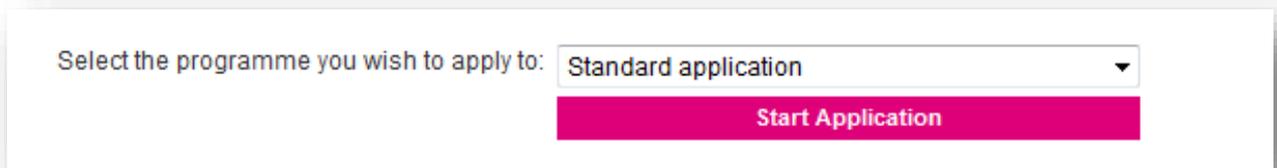
This guidance gives you information on how to apply and answers some

common questions. If you have any further questions you can contact our Customer Services team at enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

2. Prepare your application

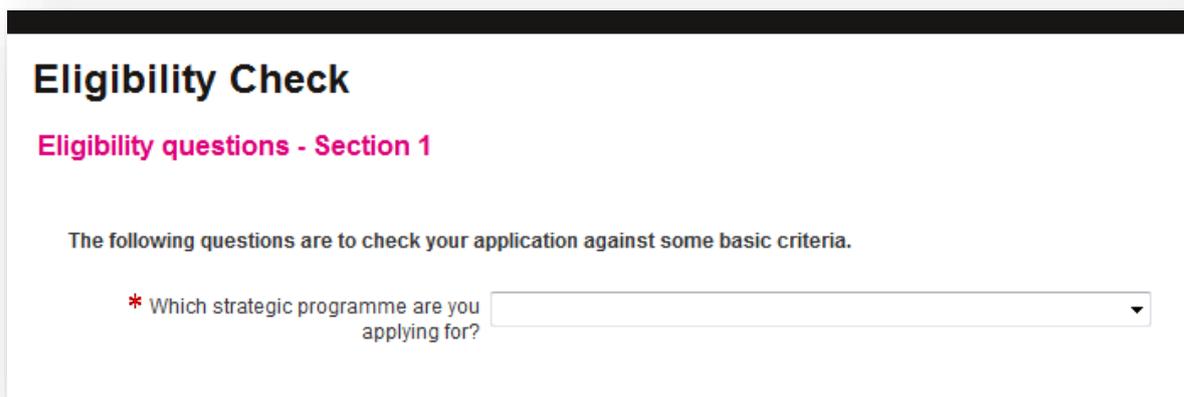
You must apply through our [online application portal](#) using the **Standard application** form:

- i. Once you have logged in (or created a new user account if you have not used the online portal before) you will see the Welcome screen. On this screen, select '*Standard application*' from the dropdown list:



A screenshot of a web form. On the left, the text reads "Select the programme you wish to apply to:". To the right is a dropdown menu with "Standard application" selected. Below the dropdown is a pink button labeled "Start Application".

- ii. When you press 'Start Application', you will be taken to the Eligibility Check section where you should select the name of this fund from the dropdown list:



A screenshot of the "Eligibility Check" section. The title "Eligibility Check" is in bold black text. Below it, "Eligibility questions - Section 1" is in pink text. A sub-heading reads "The following questions are to check your application against some basic criteria." Below this is a question: "* Which strategic programme are you applying for?" followed by a dropdown menu.

- iii. When you have completed the Eligibility Check you will be taken to the full application form which includes questions about you (or your organisation) and the activity you are applying for, and a section called 'Response to the brief' which gives you space to provide a full proposal for your activity. There is also a section where you can

upload the mandatory attachments that we need, and any other supporting information:

iv. Proposal

The proposal can be a maximum of 6,000 words, divided into three sections: 'Meeting the brief' (3,000 words), 'Governance and management of activity' (1,500 words) and 'Financial viability' (1,500 words). You do not need to use the full word count if you do not feel it is necessary. Use the criteria/prompts in [Section seven](#) of this guidance to help you structure your proposal.

v. Attachments

<i>You <u>must</u> upload the following mandatory attachments on the 'Attachments' screen:</i>	
Detailed budget	A detailed budget for the activity showing proposed income and expenditure (as an Excel sheet or similar) Please include a budget for each year of activity, including the amount that you are applying for per year. Applicants can apply for up to £200,000 in total.
Invitation to apply	The email we sent inviting you to apply
Work plan	A work plan for proposed project, including milestones and key review dates
Financial statements	Financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an

	organisation of your size and status (non-National portfolio organisations only)
Management accounts	Your latest management accounts (non-National portfolio organisations only)
Governance documents	Your governance documents (non-National portfolio organisations only)
List of partner organisations with contact details	If applying as a consortium/in partnership with other organisations, a list of all partner organisations [in the consortium] giving their organisation names, address information and contact details for a main contact person
<i>You may also upload the following optional attachments</i>	
	<p>Up to three other relevant attachments. These must each be a maximum of two pages in length.</p> <p>Examples of the types of optional documents we would expect to see for the Research grants programme include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team structure diagrams - Summaries of relevant research studies completed by the research partner - Logic models

The combined limit on file size for all the attachments taken together is 10 megabytes.

We will use the information you give us in your application form and any attachments to decide whether your application is eligible and whether we will offer you a grant. If your application does not contain the information we need in the format we ask for it to be in, we might not be able to consider your application. After you have read this guidance, if you have any further questions please contact us.

Assistance with your application

We are committed to being open and accessible, and want to make the Research grants programme application process accessible to everyone.

If you experience any barriers within the application process or require help to make an application, our enquiries team can be contacted by:

- Telephone on: 0845 300 6200
- Text phone: +44(0) 161 934 4428
- Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

After you submit your application

You will receive an acknowledgement email confirming that we have received your application. This will be sent to the email address which you used to log into the portal. The email will include a PDF copy of your application for your reference.

We will conduct an eligibility check within ten working days of the deadline for applications. 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 write to you to let you know, and will explain our decision.

Section seven – how we will make our decision

We will aim to notify applicants of our decision no later than **28 September 2016**.

We will check your application to ensure that you have provided all the information we have requested.

We will make our decision based on the information you provide in your application, any further information that we request and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission and Companies House websites relating to your constitution and financial statements from the past two years.

Each criterion ('Meeting the brief', 'Governance and management of the activity', and 'Financial viability') will be assessed using a five-point word scoring:

- **Not met**
The application does not meet the criteria
- **Potential**
The application does not meet the criteria but shows potential to do so
- **Met**
The application meets the criteria
- **Met (strong)**
The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities
- **Met (outstanding)**
The application meets the criteria and shows outstanding qualities

On the basis of these ratings we will recommend whether an application is suitable for funding. Applications that do not achieve at least 'met' under all three criteria will not be recommended for funding.

We will assess each application against the following criteria, using the assessment prompts below:

Criteria
Meeting the brief Word count: up to 3,000 words

- Clear and convincing plans to deliver on the fund's [aims and outcomes](#) and all the elements of [what you will be expected to deliver](#), as described in this brief
- Originality and importance of the research
- Alignment of research questions to gaps in the evidence about the impact of arts and culture to people and society:
 - Cultural
 - Economy
 - Society
 - Environment
 - Methodological
 - Overall rigour of the research plan, including the conceptual framework, research design and analytical methods to be used, in addition to the relationship of these elements to the proposed research questions
- Potential to elevate the public profile of arts and culture, and arts and culture related research by:
 - Increasing the diversity of fields of expertise that contribute to arts and culture related research
 - Heightening the relevance of arts and culture related research to policy and practice
- Strength of the partnership:
 - How has the partnership developed in relation to the research question
 - How will there be an exchange of knowledge between the arts and/or cultural organisation and the research partner
 - How will the organisations work together to persuade and influence potential audiences
 - How they will work together to disseminate findings
- Outputs, dissemination, knowledge transfer and impact:
 - Audience for the research
 - Who might be influenced by the work
 - How can people use the data and information
 - Monitoring of the impact of the research after the project has finished
- Activity that builds on and does not duplicate activity funded by other Arts Council grants
- Significance of the research questions in addressing and contributing to the existing literature in the field
- Novelty of the research questions, design, and analytical methods to be used

Management of the activity

Word count: up to 1,500 words

- Feasibility of workplan
- Demonstration of experience, [skill and capacity](#) to deliver the proposed programme
- Appropriate governance arrangements in place and/or planned, including how partners are engaged
- Clarity of the research plan, including a clear demonstration of how the chosen research methods best address the research questions and, in turn, how the research questions will deliver knowledge that is original and significant
- The conceptual framework, research design and analytical methods to be used, in addition to the relationship of these elements to the proposed research questions
- Robust plans for resourcing the activity effectively

Financial viability

Word count: up to 1,500 words

- Financial viability of the applicant and of the project
- Demonstration of appropriateness of proposed budget
- How you have worked out the figures in your budget
- Evidence of organisational buy-in by applicant and project partners, as cash investment and/or in kind support
- The other sources of funding you have applied for, and the progress of any other applications you have made for funding
- Any positive or negative effect the activity will have on your long-term financial position
- How you will manage the finances for the activity, including the financial controls that are in place

In assessing the application we will also consider these balancing criteria:

1. Geography – i.e. where the research consortium members are based and/or where the research activity takes place
2. Artform and/or the type of cultural activity that the research relates to
3. Diversity – i.e. the proposed research population(s) of interest and approaches to sampling

4. Theme

These balancing criteria will be used in addition to the main criteria to ensure a good spread of funded projects according to each balancing criterion, and to differentiate between a number of proposals that are considered strong.

Advisory panel

As part of the assessment process we will also be seeking advice from an external advisory panel, made up of research partners who were successful in round one, about the methodological strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Based on expert knowledge of research literature, the current research landscape and methodological issues, their advice will relate to four key aspects of each proposal:

1. Significance of the research questions in addressing and contributing to the existing literature in the field
2. Novelty of the research questions, design and analytical methods to be used
3. Clarity of the research approach, including the conceptual framework, research design and analytical methods to be used, in addition to the relationship of these elements to the proposed research questions
4. Overall rigour of the research approach, including the research design and analytical methods to be used

The advisory panel will take place during the assessment stage and will inform the overall ratings and recommendations of applications. On the basis of these ratings we will recommend whether an application is suitable for funding. Applications that do not achieve at least 'met' under all three criteria will not be recommended for funding.

Decision making

Once we have scored your application and a recommendation has been made whether to fund it, we will make our decision. To do this we will consider how strongly your activity scored against our criteria, any balancing criteria we have outlined above, and will also consider your activity alongside other applications to the fund.

Complaints procedure

If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your application, please contact us and we will discuss this with you. If you are still unhappy, you can ask us for a copy of our complaints procedure.

Details can be found in [Making a complaint](#), which is available on our website, www.artscouncil.org.uk, or by contacting our enquiries team by email to enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk or by phoning 0845 300 6200.

Please note that you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published procedures when assessing your application. You cannot appeal against the decision.

Section nine – Freedom of Information Act

The Arts Council is 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 funding 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 our assessment 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.gov.uk for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

Contact us

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Manchester
M1 1FN

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