**Unlimited (III)**

**Guidance for applicants**

Below is an outline summary of key information. Please see [Section three](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cmcrossan%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5CO1C6DYTT%5CAmbition%20for%20Excellence%20applicant%20guidance%2020%20April%20DCE%20OMG%20with%20requested%20amends%20MC%20edit.docm#_Section_three_–) for full eligibility criteria.

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| --- | --- |
| **Summary of key information** |  |
| **What is the focus of the fund?** | The primary aim of the Unlimited (III) fund is to support the development and commissioning of a range of new works by Deaf and disabled artists alongside realising showcasing and presentation opportunities to include working collaboratively with Southbank Centre on the delivery of their Unlimited Festival in 2018 and 2020.Unlimited (III) supports our aim of addressing the under representation of Deaf and disabled artists across the arts sector by supporting the creation of ambitious new work, developing opportunities for new collaborations and increasing the range of diverse work available to audiences. |
| **Who can apply?** | * Arts organisations (including National portfolio organisations)

To be eligible to apply organisations must have an annual turnover of over £800,000 and must evidence a track record in leading and coordinating commissioning and artists’ development programmes. |
| **Who cannot apply?** | * Organisations based outside of England
* Individuals
* Major partner museums
* Local authorities
* Museums
* Libraries
 |
| **When is the deadline for applications?** | 5pm on Thursday 11 February 2016 |
| **How much can be applied for per application?**  | Up to £1.8 millionApplicants can apply for flexible amounts across financial years however please note that we would expect broadly comparable delivery and therefore spend across each year of the four years. |
| **When must the activity take place?** | Activities must start no earlier than 1 September 2016Funded activities must end no later than 1 December 2020 |
| **Minimum match funding from other sources** | 10 per cent of total project budgetAt least 10 per cent of the total cost of the activity to come from sources other than the Arts Council. This can include in-kind support. |
| **When will we make our decision?** | We will aim to notify applicants of our decision no later than 30 April 2016 |

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# Section one – introduction

## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Unlimited (III). This guidance gives you information on how to apply for funding.

We are committed to a fundamental shift in our approach to equality and diversity over the period 2015-18 and to ensuring that the arts sector becomes more reflective of the society it aims to serve.

The Unlimited (III) fund will build on the headway made since the first Unlimited programme in 2012 and support the development, commissioning and presentation of a range of new works by Deaf and disabled artists. The intention is for the work of Deaf and disabled artists to be seen as a vital and exciting element of arts and culture in the UK today and, in so doing, to lever new routes to partnership, presentation and participation opportunities for such artists now and in the future.

## 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.

We believe that our national diversity is one of our great resources and we expect that the work that we fund will reflect this and will be alive to the opportunities that diversity offers.

Arts Council England strives to comply with the public Sector Equality Duty and to promote equality in relation to the characteristics protected by the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance). We are also committed to promoting equality across differing socioeconomic groups.

By diversity we mean the multitude of ethnicities, faiths and socioeconomic classes which reflect contemporary England. Our concept of diversity includes disabled people, older people and people of all genders and sexual orientations. It also recognises the breadth of England’s regions, from the most rural to the inner city.

Our arts-driven concept of diversity as opportunity represents a shift in perspective, from regarding the imperative towards diversity as a prescriptive aspect of equality legislation to understanding its creative potential and the ways in which it can promote long-term organisational resilience. We call this the [Creative case for diversity](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creativecase). In preparing their application, applicants should find opportunities to tell us how their work will support this progressive and positive perspective.

For more information about the Arts Council visit [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://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*](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/mission). 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

**All of these goals are important, but we expect the successful applicant to the Unlimited (III) fund to make a strong case under Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries, while also contributing to Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries.**

# Section two – purpose of Unlimited (III)

In 2013 Arts Council England invested £1.5 million of Lottery funding in a single award to deliver Unlimited (III), which is due to finish in November 2016.

The aim of the Unlimited (III) fund is to build on the success of the work to date and the positive profile of the Unlimited brand in supporting and realising the artistic ambition of Deaf and disabled artists. The overall intention is to promote the work of Deaf and disabled artists as a vital and exciting element of arts and culture in the UK and, in so doing, to lever open new routes to partnership, presentation and participation opportunities for artists now and in the future.

The central aims of the Unlimited (III) fund are to:

* Create and deliver an open and accessible commissioning programme which places Deaf and disabled people at the heart of the process and which focuses on quality and ambition
* Create and deliver a complementary mentoring and artists’ development programme which seeks to support emerging artists including encouraging access to opportunities beyond Unlimited
* Develop showcasing and presentation opportunities including working collaboratively with Southbank Centre on the delivery of their Unlimited Festival in 2018 and 2020
* Identify particular challenges, gaps or opportunities and utilise the commissioning and development strands alongside other opportunities to address these
* Promote critical review and sector debate as well as offering insight into creative practice and opportunities for shared learning through an arts sector symposium, workshops or debates

## How much funding is available?

A total budget of up to £1.8 million is available for the funding period 2016-20. Applicants can apply for flexible amounts across the four years, but please note that we would expect broadly comparable delivery and, therefore, broadly comparable spend across each of the four years.

Activities should be for the four-year funding period 2016-20 but we recognise that preparation and planning will be required and that the programme may not run concurrently with the financial year. Activities may therefore start on or after 1 September 2016 and may run up to 1 December 2020.

**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.

|  |  |
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| **Who can apply?**  | * Arts organisations (including National portfolio organisations)

To be eligible to apply organisations must have an annual turnover of over £800,000 and must evidence a track record in leading and coordinating commissioning and artists’ development programmes.* Consortia are eligible to apply but the named lead applicant must be an organisation as defined above
 |
| **Who cannot apply?** | * Organisations based outside of England
* Individuals
* Major partner museums
* Local authorities
* Museums
* Libraries
 |
| **What activity can be supported?**  | * Running a commissioning and development programme for Deaf and disabled artists working in a range of art forms
* Working collaboratively with Southbank Centre on the delivery of the Unlimited Festival 2018 and 2020
* Promoting opportunities for shared learning through an arts sector symposium, workshops or debates
* Brokering new partnerships and presentation opportunities across the UK
* Offering seed commissions or development opportunities
* Facilitating training and networking opportunities
* Working with Arts Council England and its partners including National portfolio organisations, the British Council, Creative Scotland, Arts Councils of Wales and Northern Ireland in the development and promotion of work by Deaf and disabled artists
 |
| **What activity cannot be funded?**  | * Activities that are not related to the arts
* 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 because we cannot fund activity retrospectively
* 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?**  | * Up to £1.8 million

Applicants can apply for flexible amounts across financial years but please note that we would expect broadly comparable delivery and therefore spend across each of the four years. |
| **How much match funding from sources other than ACE is required?** | * 10 per cent of total project budget

At least 10 per cent of the total cost of the activity to come from sources other than the Arts Council. This can include in-kind support. |

## 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](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/information-funded-organisations/guidance-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](#_Section_two_–) above.

The proposal should include/demonstrate:

* The approach to delivering an open and accessible commissioning programme which places Deaf and disabled people at the core
* The approach to delivering a complementary mentoring and artists development programme
* The approach to partnership working and brokering collaborations that lever in additional funds as well as develop opportunities for further presentation and showcasing
* An understanding of the particular challenges and gaps within varying arts and Disability arts provision as well as within previous Unlimited programmes and how these might be addressed within Unlimited (III)
* A commitment to extending reach and sharing practice across the arts sector with a view to opening up opportunities in conjunction with as well as beyond the Unlimited programme
* An understanding of, and strategy for dealing with, the current changes in welfare and access support legislation which may impact on Deaf and disabled artists
* A quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the programme and a demonstration of how this might be shared to widen its impact
* A commitment to equality and diversity and support for the Creative case for diversity

# Section five – experience needed to deliver against the fund’s aims

Successful applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the skill and capacity to deliver the proposed programme. They must show that they have appropriate governance arrangements in place, including in relation to how partners are engaged.

Key skills/experience required for delivery against this fund’s aims include:

* a track record in leading and coordinating artistic commissions that have led to high quality outcomes
* a track record in delivering artists’ development programmes that have led to successful professional and personal outcomes
* an up-to-date understanding of the specific challenges and barriers faced by Deaf and disabled artists and audiences
* a demonstrable understanding, knowledge and experience of working with the cultural sector
* a track record of working collaboratively and in partnerships to achieve shared aims
* scope to provide or recruit appropriately skilled staff to manage projects, and sufficient resources and capacity to meet any increase in demand during the project term
* well-established financial management and reporting systems in place, including a procurement policy that matches public sector best practice
* rigorous project management and quality assurance systems and procedures in place that have been proven on previous projects
* recruitment, training and management of an external advisory/steering group, if relevant

To be eligible to apply to this programme the lead applicant must be properly constituted as an organisation and must be able to make available copies of their governance documentation. This includes:

* limited companies registered at Companies House
* community interest companies (CIC) 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 (FSA)
* Royal Charter companies
* statutory bodies

# Section six – how to apply

## Making an application

## When to apply

The online application form will open at **12pm (midday) on Thursday 14 January 2016**. Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 11 February 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](https://forms.artscouncil.org.uk/officeforms/Arts_Projects.ofml) using the **Standard application** form:

* + 1. 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:



* + 1. 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:



* + 1. 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:
		2. **Proposal**

The proposal can be a maximum of 6,500 words, divided into three sections: ‘Meeting the brief’ (3,000 words), ‘Governance and management of activity’ (2,000 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](#_Section_seven_–) of this guidance to help you structure your proposal.

* + 1. **Attachments**

|  |
| --- |
| ***You must upload the following mandatory attachments on the ‘Attachments’ screen:*** |
| Detailed budget | A detailed budget for the activity showing proposed income and expenditure (as an Excel sheet or similar) |
| 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 |
| ***You may also upload the following optional attachments*** |
|  | Up to three other relevant attachments. These must each be a maximum of five pages in length.  |

**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 Unlimited (III) 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 10 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 30 April 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](#_Aims_and_outcomes) and all the elements of [what you will be expected to deliver](#_Section_four_–), as described in this brief
* Appropriate partners with clear roles and responsibilities
* Robust plans for resourcing the activity effectively
* Activity that builds on and does not duplicate activity funded by other Arts Council grants
* Clear and convincing plans to deliver on the fund’s [aims and outcomes](#_Aims_and_outcomes) and achieve all the objectives outlined in [what you will be expected to deliver](#_Section_four_–), as described in this guidance
* A demonstrable track record in leading and coordinating commissioning and artists’ development programmes
* Evidence of an in-depth understanding of the work and practices of Deaf and disabled artists
* Appropriate partners with clear roles and responsibilities
* Robust plans for resourcing the activity effectively
* Details of proposed outcomes and measures of success
* Activity that builds on and does not duplicate activity funded by other Arts Council grants
 |
| **Management of the activity**Word count: up to 2,000 words* Feasibility of work plan
* Demonstration of experience, [skill and capacity](#_Section_five_–_1) to deliver the proposed programme
* Strong strategic fit with the applicant’s other activity
* Appropriate governance arrangements in place and/or planned, including how partners are engaged
* Demonstrates how equality and accessibility will be addressed
 |
| **Financial viability**Word count: up to 1,500 words* Financial viability of the applicant and of the project
* Demonstration of appropriateness of proposed budget
* Evidence of organisational buy-in by applicant and project partners, as cash investment and/or in-kind support
* Clear case for any proposed capital expenditure
 |

#### 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, 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](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/making-a-complaint/), which is available on our website, [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://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 eight – 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](http://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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