Creative media and digital activity

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants is our open-access programme for arts, museums and libraries projects.

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This information sheet relates to Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants. See our website for more information about Project Grants.

In this sheet, we will talk about the following.

**Creative media and digital activity**

**What you can apply for**

- Artists’ film, video, and audio
- Artist-led animation
- Interactive/ immersive arts and culture
- Artistic and cultural games and game-based art
- Live-to-digital ‘captured’ content
- Cultural learning about arts and culture

**What you cannot apply for**

- Arts Council England’s Creative media policy
- Further information
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Creative media and digital activity

For Project Grants, we use the term 'creative media' to refer to artistic and cultural works and content that:

- are created for digital platforms; and/or
- are distributed digitally to engage the public.

We can accept Project Grants applications that help artists and arts organisations, museums and libraries to explore creative media and digital opportunities across the artforms and disciplines that we support.

We want to focus our support for creative media projects on making effective interventions with the greatest value for arts and culture. We do this by supporting artists, creatives, and organisations showing innovation, experimentation and creative risk-taking, and with clear plans for reaching audiences effectively.

We are unlikely to have the resources to support many very high value creative media-focused projects, so we encourage you to think carefully about your partnership funding, and where our investment could have the most impact. If the demand for any particular type of project is very high, we may choose to focus our support on projects that we think are most likely to help us meet our goals.

This area of practice is fast-moving and we’ll be tracking our criteria, and the investments they allow us to make, carefully. If there is an area of practice we’re currently not clear on, we’ll use our yearly review of the programme to look at it again and may change our approach. Always check the website for the most up-to-date version of the guidance document you need.
What you can apply for

Artists’ film, video, and audio

We can consider applications for support towards creative films that involve artists working in our supported artforms and where film is the medium for their work. For example, visual artists’ film, creative documentary that involves artists, screen dance, poetry film, artist’s creative podcasts, artist-led radio drama, sound art, etc.

These projects might be collaboratively produced between a filmmaker and an artist or group of artists.

We can support:

• the production of artists’ film, video and/or audio work for galleries, cinemas, the public realm, publishing, broadcast or online exhibition or distribution
• education, participatory and training initiatives where the focus is on artists’ film, video or audio (e.g. animation workshops for children that have an emphasis on creativity)
• organisational development, or capital items such as equipment, where the focus is on artists’ film, video or audio
• cinemas or production facilities for projects specifically concerned with the development, production or exhibition of artists’ film, video or audio
• programmes of artists’ film, video or audio within wider film or media arts festivals

Your strategy or approach to getting your work shown or distributed is an important factor in our decision-making.

We cannot support:

• filmmaking projects that do not engage creatively with our supported artforms and disciplines
• feature films
• television drama
Artist-led animation

We can support some types of animation projects through Project Grants. We can consider supporting **artist-led animation involving our supported artforms** that is not primarily intended for commercial film, commercial games or mass-market media distribution.

We will prioritise support for innovative artistic practice in this area – for example where artists using animation as a medium (either alone or in collaboration) show a commitment to diversity, experimentation, and creative risk.

Interactive/immersive arts and culture

We can support some types of interactive digital projects through Project Grants, including projects where artists and arts and culture organisations work creatively with Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality. We can consider supporting projects involving interactive or immersive digital projects that aim to give users a new, interactive or immersive experience in our supported artforms or disciplines by using technology.

Artistic and cultural games and game-based art

We can support some types of games projects through Project Grants. We can consider applications for support towards location-based and online games and game-based art that are being designed, scripted, constructed or otherwise created by an artist or group of artists who work in the artforms and disciplines we support. The active participation of the player, participant or viewer must be a central part of the creative or artistic experience.
We cannot support:

- any games-based projects that do not involve artists working in our supported artforms in key creative roles
- games projects where the artistic or cultural experience of the player or participant is not a central aim
- games projects that are intended for commercial distribution

Live-to-digital ‘captured’ content

We can support some types of captured content projects through Project Grants. We want to support projects that extend the reach of live work in the artforms and disciplines we support by capturing it digitally and distributing it to wider audiences.

Capturing work involves significant investment, and we will only fund capture work if there are clear and well-developed plans in place for distribution and engagement, the capture itself is of high quality, and the original live work is of high quality. We also expect applications that are solely for a programme of live-to-digital captured content to include engagement plans that show the captured outcome is likely to benefit a significant number of people.

Cultural learning about arts and culture

We can consider supporting film and digital media projects that reflect on and explore arts organisations’ and museums’ work and artists’ practice in the artforms and disciplines we support, where they are intended to increase public awareness of and participation in arts and culture. We can only consider cultural learning projects that show clear and well-developed plans for distribution and engagement.

These projects might include arts documentaries, podcasts about arts or culture and media-based educational content. Our support is likely to be focused on those projects that include more experimental, interactive or innovative approaches to cultural learning. We can also support media-based cultural learning products that might use gaming as a tool for learning.
We cannot support:

Cultural learning content where the producer or commissioner of that content is a university, school or other educational body.

What you cannot apply for

Some examples of activities that would not be eligible for Project Grants are:

- activities where the main outcome does not benefit the arts or artistic practice
- mainstream commercial activity
- traditional narrative films where film is the artform, this type of work may be more relevant to the British Film Institute
- promotional web-based digital content projects
- websites for self-promotion with no artistic track record

Arts Council England’s Creative media policy

Find out more about Arts Council’s digital innovation initiatives, such as The Space, on the Creative media section of our website.

Further information

Creative activity in the digital domain crosses over to a number of funding bodies’ priorities. This can sometime make it difficult to know which agency to approach. Below is a list of agencies with which we work closely on the digital agenda and that have their own programmes of support. Visit their websites for information on their current opportunities.
Nesta is the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts - a unique and independent body with a mission to make the UK more innovative.

British Film Institute (BFI) is the lead body for film and supporting filmmakers in the UK.


Technology Strategy Board stimulates technology-enabled innovation in the areas which offer the greatest scope for boosting UK growth and productivity. It promotes, supports and invests in technology research, development and commercialisation.

Creative & Cultural Skills give young people opportunities to work and learn in the creative industries. They are an independent charity that provides careers advice and guidance, promotes apprenticeships, and delivers activities for young people.

ScreenSkills is the industry-led skills charity for film, television, VFX, animation and games. They provide insight, career development and other opportunities to help grow and sustain the industry’s skilled and inclusive workforce. This includes individual and organisation funding and bursaries for training.

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