



# Arts Council Commissions Award 2025

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: 5.30pm (Ireland time), Thursday 27 February 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](mailto:access@artscouncil.ie)**

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## Key points to remember

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- 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:

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- 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.
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## Getting help with your application

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If you have questions about using the Online Services website, visit the FAQ section on our website: [www.artscouncil.ie/FAQs/online-services/](http://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](mailto:onlineservices@artscouncil.ie) or call the Arts Council on

- **01 618 0200**
- **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 Commissions Award

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## 1.1 Purpose and objectives of the award

The purpose of the Commissions Award is to enable the commissioning of new work from freelance artists.

In general, the finished work may be in a form capable of being presented, exhibited, published, performed and/or disseminated in its entirety at the point of completion, or it may be capable of being presented as a work-in-progress, either live or online. Please see the artform/arts area specific guidance below for the priorities for the award in each area.

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/>) and by individual artform/arts-practice policies.

All awards and schemes are also informed by the [Arts Council Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy](#) and [Paying the Artist](#).

## 1.2 Award strands

### Strand 1: Artform commissions

Commissions can be applied for in the areas of:

- Music
- Opera

This means that any applicant, whether an organisation or an individual, can apply to commission an artist working within one of these artform areas.<sup>1</sup>

### Strand 2: Cross-arts-area commissions

In order to assist with the animation of arts organisations working across different artforms and with the commissioning of work by artists working in particular contexts, the award is open to organisations in the following categories:

- Festivals

In these cases, organisations can apply to commission an artist working in any artform, with the exception of festivals applying for a commission in Music or Opera, which should apply directly to those artforms in Strand 1. The application will be assessed primarily in relation to the context in which the commission is proposed. The Arts Council's artform specialists will provide a secondary comment where their artform is integral to the proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants to this award **must** be registered for an Arts Council Online Services (OLS) account. See section 2.1 below.

### 1.3 Priorities of the award – individual artforms

Within the general objectives of the scheme (as outlined in section 1.1), different priorities apply to the different artforms/arts areas, as outlined in this section.

#### Strand 1: Artform commissions

##### Music

The maximum amount that may be awarded to each successful applicant is:

**€17,000**

**Note:** the award of funding under the Music Commissions Award **must** lead to:

Creation of a completed work **and**

Public performance or some other form of public dissemination or presentation of the commissioned work in Ireland or abroad.

In **Music**, potential commissions could be those that:

- Enable individual performers/ensembles to commission a composer or composers to write a new work for a specific performance or specific performances and/or published recording(s) and/or broadcast(s)
- Enable promoters, venues or festivals to commission works for Irish or international performing artists for performance at their events
- Foster new or experimental ways of creating and presenting musical works.

The award prioritises applications that:

- Propose commissions of high artistic quality, in particular from Irish composers
- Are planned to reach significant audiences through live performance, broadcast, recording and/or other audience channels, with a particular (though not necessarily exclusive) emphasis on audiences in Ireland
- Provide for an extended life (further performances and/or extended public reach, digital dissemination, etc.) and impact for the work or project that has been created
- Demonstrate a strong collaborative-engagement process between the commissioner, performers, audience and the commissioned artist(s) in the development and presentation of the new work
- Demonstrate innovation and deepen the experience and understanding of the artform
- Are from new types of commissioners, including non-professional performers of high standard.

## Opera

The maximum amount that may be awarded to each successful applicant is: **€45,000**

**Note:** the award of funding under the Opera Commissions Award **must** lead to:

Creation of a completed work **and**

Public performance or some other form of public dissemination or presentation of the commissioned work in Ireland or abroad.

In **Opera**, potential commissions could be those that:

- Enable opera producers to commission a composer and/or librettist to write a new work for a specific performance or specific performances and/or published recording(s) and/or broadcasts and/or other means of public dissemination
- Foster new or experimental ways of creating and presenting opera.

The award prioritises applications that:

- Propose commissions of high artistic quality, in particular from Irish composers and librettists
- Are planned to reach significant audiences through live performance, broadcast, recording and/or other audience channels, with a particular (though not necessarily exclusive) emphasis on audiences in Ireland
- Demonstrate a strong collaborative engagement process between the commissioner, performers, audience and the commissioned artist(s) in the development and dissemination of the new work
- Demonstrate innovation, new or experimental ways of conceiving and presenting opera, and/or deepen the experience and understanding of the artform
- Are from new types of commissioners, including non-professional performers of high standard
- Provide for an extended life (further performances and/or extended public reach, digital dissemination, etc.) and impact for the work or project that has been created.

## Strand 2: Cross-arts-area commissions

In order to assist with the animation of arts organisations working across different artforms and with the commissioning of work by artists working in particular contexts, the award is open to organisations in the following category:

### Festivals

The maximum amount that may be awarded to each successful applicant is: **€10,000**

For **Festivals**, potential commissions could be those that:

- Enable a festival to introduce/test a new strand of programming or support the development of an existing strand of programming by commissioning new ambitious work for festival audiences
- Provide opportunities and an environment for inter/multidisciplinary experimentation between different artforms, supporting artists to develop formally ambitious new work
- Enable new collaborations that develop the artistic practice of the artist and the artistic programming practice of the commissioning organisation
- Will lead to the development of ambitious, high-quality artistic works that can also be appreciated by a wider public.

The award **prioritises applications** that:

- Enable artists from diverse backgrounds to be commissioned to create new and ambitious work for festival audiences
- Enable commissions that foster the growth and development of Street Performance and Spectacle artists, and which support opportunities to test and present these works to audiences.

Low priorities for this award include:

- Regular or repetitive commissioning partnerships that do not foster the development of the artist or the artistic practice of the commissioning organisation.

**Note:** it is anticipated that the Arts Council will be able to offer between two to three festival commission awards in total; this will depend on the demand within the scheme and the budgetary context.

#### 1.4 Who can apply?

The Commissions Award is open to organisations<sup>2</sup> and individuals to apply to commission an artist or artists.

The commissioner can make an application to commission an individual artist or a group of artists in a single application. The commissioner may submit more than one application to commission from different artists to the same application round.

Applications can only be made by the commissioner, and **not** by the artist(s) to be commissioned.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this award, an organisation is not required to be constituted as a CLG or a DAC. However, as per section 1.3 above, the applicant organisation must be able to provide bank-account and tax-clearance details in the name of the organisation.



### Commissioner and artist must have ARNs

**Note:** for the Commissions Award, both the applicant (the commissioner) and the proposed artist must be registered (separately and individually) with Online Services and must have their own Artist Reference Number (ARN). The commissioner needs to have the artist's ARN to hand when filling in the application form.<sup>3</sup>

- Organisations based outside the Republic of Ireland are eligible to apply if they are commissioning an Irish-born or Irish-resident artist. Similarly, Irish-based organisations may commission artists from outside Ireland – however, in such cases the commissioned work must be for the ultimate benefit of Irish audiences.

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.

## 1.5 Who is the applicant?

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

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<sup>3</sup> If you and/or the commissioned artist are not currently registered with the Arts Council OLS website, select 'New user? Sign up'. Please note that it can take up to **five** working days for an ARN to be issued.

Any grant offered will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of the applicant\* (except where the commissioner is based outside of Ireland; in this instance the award will be paid into the bank account of the commissioned artist).

All documentation provided must be in the exact name of the applicant – e.g. if you apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name Bray Productions, then all documentation, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. Variations, such as Bray Enterprises or Bré Productions, are not acceptable.

**\* Note:** the full amount of any commissioning funding awarded must be paid by the successful applicant to the commissioned artist.

## 1.6 Who cannot apply?

Those who cannot apply to this award include the following:

- Organisations in receipt of Strategic Funding, Partnership Funding or Arts Centre Funding may not apply to:
  - Strand 1: Artform commissions in **Music and Opera**
  - Strand 2: Cross-arts-areas commissions in **Festivals**
- Organisations applying to commission an artist who is an employee of that organisation
- Individual artists applying to commission themselves

## 1.7 What may you apply for?

See section 1.3 above for the upper limit for the award within the arts area under which you are applying.

The commissioner can make an application to commission an individual artist or a group of artists in a single application.

The commissioner may submit more than one application to commission from different artists to the same application round.

The Commissions Award **only supports fees paid to the artist(s)** by the commissioner. Where relevant, fees may incorporate essential costs that the artist regularly incurs in order to carry out their work. All other costs relating to the rehearsal, production, presentation or dissemination of the commissioned work must be borne by the commissioner.

In the event that a commission is collaborative, involving more than one person, the applicant must clearly state fees for each artist.

## 1.8 How much funding may you apply for?

Even though the Arts Council will only fund the commission fee you propose to pay the artist, you must provide details of **all** income and expenditure relating to the project in order to demonstrate the overall viability of the commission in terms of its public engagement.

You must supply the details of proposed expenditure and income in section 3 of the application form. In addition, you may submit a separate budget document outlining the proposed expenditure and income in greater, appropriate detail (this should be in a spreadsheet document).

Proposed **expenditure** should include:

- The fee you propose to pay the commissioned artist\* from Arts Council funding
- Any additional fee you propose to pay the commissioned artist from any other sources of funding
- All performance costs, venue-hire costs, technical costs, promotion and publicity costs, administrative costs, etc. of the performance(s) or other public event(s) for which the work is being commissioned.

Proposed **income** should include what you expect to receive from other funders, box-office receipts, programme sales, commercial sponsorship, etc.

It is important to reflect all in-kind support\*\* in both income and expenditure, so reflecting the full and true value of your proposal, and to provide an indication or verification (where possible and appropriate) of the security of projected income.

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**\* 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 that you work with. This will help us assess the feasibility of your application.

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**\*\* 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.

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The maximum amount you may request is the difference between the **expenditure** and the **income** you indicate, and must not exceed the maximum stated above (except where it relates to persons with disability).

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

- Online, when you initiate the application (totals only)
- In section 3 of the application form (itemised and totals)

- In your detailed budget (if you choose to provide one).

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

Because the amount you request must be used entirely to pay the commissioned artist, the TOTAL INCOME must be exactly equal to the TOTAL EXPENDITURE *excluding* the fee you propose to pay the artist from Arts Council funding. In other words, without the proposed Arts Council-funded artist's fee, income and expenditure must balance exactly.

### **Access costs for artists or participants<sup>4</sup> with disabilities**

The Arts Council is committed to making our funding programmes and the work we fund accessible to everyone.

The Arts Council takes the description of disability from Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states:

‘Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’

You can include disability access costs within your application and there are two types that you can apply for.

#### **1. Participants or personal disability access costs**

These costs should 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 or collaborators
- Production staff
- Core staff or key administrative personnel.

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

- An ISL interpreter
- Services of an access support worker.

**Note:** you can apply for these costs in addition to maximum amount available for the award and include them in the total amount requested.

#### **2. Audience disability access costs – costs for making your work accessible to others**

We want to ensure that more people enjoy high-quality arts experiences and that everyone can access and enjoy the work we fund.

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<sup>4</sup> The Arts Council defines participants as those who express themselves creatively by taking part in artistic activities.

These are costs for making your work accessible to persons with disabilities and should be considered a normal part of your work.

Example of access costs to make your work accessible to your audience may be:

- Having an ISL interpreter for your event or performance
- Using an audio-description service
- Making your website compatible with screen readers
- Producing exhibition materials in other formats such as Braille or audio.

**Note:** you should include audience disability access costs in the total amount that you request. They must be within the maximum amount available for the award.

#### **What if the funding provided 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-

#### **How to apply for disability access costs**

We need to understand why you are applying for disability access costs and how they meet the needs of your participants or your audience.

If you include disability access costs in your proposal, you must show the costs in two separate lines in the application form.

- A line for personal or participant disability access costs only
- A line for public disability access costs only

You must also upload a document listing these costs with your supporting material. An optional template is available on the [Commissions award](#) funding page on the Arts Council website.

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

To see how we assess your application, see section 3 of the guidelines below.

## **1.9 What may you not apply for?**

You may not apply for costs that:

- Are separate from the commission fee to be paid to the artist
- Are in relation to commissions that have already been completed or where the fee has already been paid.

You may not apply for activities that:

- Duplicate an organisation's existing work
- Are more suited to another award funded by the Arts Council or to awards operated by other organisations
- Do not fit the purpose of the award

- Are an intrinsic part of, or directly related to, ongoing formal education
- 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.
- Are for fundraising for other organisations by registered charities
- Are for participating in a competition
- Are for profit-making.

### 1.10 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 what 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 a Commissions Award you **must** submit the following supporting material online:

- Detailed up-to-date CVs or biographies (max. three pages) of the principal personnel involved in the proposed commission
- in the case of Music and Opera, CVs for the commissioner and the commissioned artist/s must be provide. Note: these must be submitted as separate supporting documents – links to relevant information on websites are not acceptable
- Up to three (max.) samples of previous work of all artists involved in the creation and performance/presentation of the commissioned work.

**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.

In the case of Music, examples/samples of work: 1–3 (max.) good-quality sound recordings and/or AV files and/or links (to audio/AV) that illustrate the artistic practice and track record to date of all artists involved in the creation and performance/presentation of the commissioned work. 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 and should be in addition to the audio/AV files provided.

In the case of Opera, examples/samples of work: 1–3 (max.) good-quality AV files and/or links to AV that illustrate the artistic practice and track record to date of all artists involved in the creation and performance/presentation of the commissioned work. 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 and should be in addition to the AV files provided.

- Depending on the nature of the commission, this might be:
  - Sound files
  - Scores
  - Libretti
  - Audio-visual files
  - Writing samples (max. ten pages)
  - Image files.

Please see section 2.3 below for information on file types and formats

- In addition, as set out in section 1.10 above, you may submit a separate budget document outlining the proposed expenditure and income in greater, appropriate detail. This should be presented by means of a spreadsheet.

#### **Additional material required in certain circumstances**

If your application includes disability access costs, you should upload a document listing these costs. If you are applying for both participant or personal disability access costs and audience disability access costs, you should include a document for each type. 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](http://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 required supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.**

For 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**.

#### **1.11 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 1.4 to 1.6 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 1.8 above (except where you are applying for an additional amount to cover participant or personal disability access costs).
5. You apply for an activity or purpose that you cannot apply for, as set out in section 1.9 above.
6. Where your proposal does not result in the creation of a completed work **and** a public performance or some other form of public dissemination or presentation of the commissioned work in Ireland or abroad (Music and Opera applications)
7. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials, as set out in section 1.10 above.
8. 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

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### 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:

- 
- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>PC</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Windows 7 operating system or a newer version of Windows</li></ul> <p>OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox</p>              |
| <hr/>      |   |
| <b>Mac</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or a newer version of the Mac operating system</li></ul> <p>OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox</p> |
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**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=iT9Xxgmg0Eo>

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](mailto: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 **1.10 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
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.

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

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

**Note:** these characters 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/CVs, detailed budget and any other required supporting material (see section **1.10 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](mailto:onlineservices@artscouncil.ie) if you **do not** receive the second confirmation email containing the application number.

## 3. Processing and assessment of applications

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### 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:

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- 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](mailto:onlineservices@artscouncil.ie)

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- 2 Your application is checked for eligibility. Please see section **1.11 Eligibility** above.
  - 3 In some cases, the arts area to which you have applied may not be the best fit for your proposal. In such a case, we will contact you and ask you if you are happy for us to move your application to a more appropriate arts team. You will then have a choice to have your application moved, or for it to remain under the arts area to which you applied.
  - 4 Adviser(s) and/or staff make an assessment of the application based on the criteria for assessment.
  - 5 Adviser(s) and/or staff recommend an application as shortlisted or not shortlisted.
  - 6 A peer panel reviews all shortlisted applications and associated materials, then scores and makes decisions.
  - 7 Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.
  - 8 Decisions are noted by Council.
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### 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 15 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 available resources. All applications are assessed against criteria of a) artistic merit, b) how they meet the objectives and priorities of the award, c) feasibility. Each of these criteria is described in turn.

While applicants may select other artforms/arts practice areas as being relevant to their application, the application will be assessed by the team responsible for 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 artist's previous practice as well as on the nature of the proposed activity and includes:

- The quality of the idea and the proposed arts activity as outlined in the application form
- The track record of the arts personnel involved in the project demonstrated through the CVs and other supporting material submitted
- The potential of the applicant, of the artist and of the idea demonstrated through the application form and other supporting materials submitted
- The proposed arts activity as outlined in the application form
- The artform/arts-practice context in which the activity is proposed
- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated in the proposal.

#### Meeting the purpose and priorities of the award

Applications are assessed on how well they meet the purpose and priorities of the award (see sections **1.1**, **1.2** and **1.3**).

#### Feasibility

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

- The personnel involved in managing, administering and delivering the commission
- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for the commissioned artist/s
- The nature of the involvement of any project partners
- The proposed budget
- Other sources of income
- The availability of and access to other resources

- The proposed timetable or schedule.

### 3.4 Peer panels

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 becomes 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. 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 more suited to a different award programme, an exception may be made. In such circumstances you will be informed in writing.

Whether your application is successful or unsuccessful, you may request assessment feedback from Arts Council staff.

### **3.6 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](http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/fundInfo/funding_appeals.aspx) or contact the Arts Council for a copy of the appeals-process information sheet.