Visual Arts Bursary Award 2027 Round 1

Guidelines for applicants

Deadline for submitting applications:

5.30pm (Ireland time)

Thursday, 17 December 2026

Strand 1

Emerging Artists

Strand 2

Visual Artists

Strand 3

Curators

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Important notes

You need an Arts Council Online Services account to apply for the Visual Arts Bursary Award 2027.

You must register for an Online Services account at least five working days before you apply.

It can take us up to five working days to process your registration.

Your registration name and the applicant name on the application form must be in the name of the person applying. If you receive funding, it will be paid into the bank account of the applicant.

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 Team
- Phone: 01 618 0200 or 01 618 0243
- Email: disabilityaccess@artscouncil.ie

Learn more about disability access costs for artists or participants with disabilities.

Data protection

The Arts Council collects data from you as part of your application. We ask you to supply this data to enable you to apply for funding and to allow us to assess your application.

The data we collect includes personal data such as your name and email address. We recommend that you read our privacy notices for information on how we process and protect your personal data.

If you have any concerns about your data, contact us at dataprotection@artscouncil.ie.

Freedom of Information

Information provided to the Arts Council may be disclosed in response to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

If recipients consider that certain information should **not** be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, recipients must, when providing such information, clearly identify such information and specify the reasons for its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity.

If recipients do not identify such information as confidential or commercially sensitive, it is liable to be released in response to a Freedom of Information request without further notice to, or in consultation with, the recipient.

The Arts Council will, where possible, consult with the recipient about confidential or commercially sensitive information so identified before making a decision on a request received under the Freedom of Information Act.

To familiarise yourself with the provisions of the Act, see the Freedom of Information Act website.

You can also review our policies on the Arts Council's Freedom of Information webpage.

1. About the Visual Arts Bursary Award

1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award

The objective of the award is to support professional visual artists or independent visual art curators at various career stages to **significantly develop** their practice.

It is intended to enable artists and curators to 'buy time' for their practice when it is at a **critical stage**.

It provides professional visual artists and independent visual arts curators with the time and resources to think, research, reflect and critically engage with their work.

This bursary is a one-year award that is intended to support artistic or curatorial practice for a period of up to 12 months. It is not a multi-annual award.

Note: The award supports the development of artistic and curatorial practice. It does **not** support costs directly associated with the public presentation of work such as costs relating to transport, installation, or exhibition.

Description of visual arts practice

The award is open to applications from visual artists and visual arts curators working across the breadth of contemporary visual arts practice, including:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Sculpture
- Printmaking
- Photography

- Moving image
- Installation
- Performance art
- Digital and new media
- Lens-based practices
- Socially engaged practice.

Applicants will need to demonstrate evidence of a track record of practice that is well-situated within visual arts contexts. We will take into account your track record of practice and where and how the work is created, presented and delivered.

Visual artists

A visual artist may be described as an individual working by themselves, or as part of a group/collective, that conceptually and technically develops, produces and presents artistic works.

Most contemporary visual artists shape and investigate forms, challenge traditions, explore materials, structures and concepts.

They elevate technique, materials and method, site and context, and modes of display. They may also engage with social, cultural and political contexts.

Visual arts curators

A visual arts curator may be described as an individual working by themselves, or as part of a group/collective, that conceptually and technically develops, produces, mediates, and presents visual arts work by visual artists.

Most contemporary visual arts curators support, shape and investigate artistic practices; challenge traditions; and explore presentation and dissemination formats, structures and concepts.

They elevate techniques, materials and method, site and context, and modes of display. They may also engage with social, cultural and political contexts.

Note: Applications from beyond the scope of contemporary visual arts practice are **not** eligible for this award. Some examples include:

- Traditional crafts and applied arts
- Jewellery-making
- Design
- Commercial practices in illustration, photography, filmmaking, animation, as well as art direction and art businesses
- Documentary filmmaking
- Film/TV/Theatre: prop-making, scenic art / backdrops
- Costume making
- Fashion design
- Heraldry.

Picture-book artists and people who make graphic novels/comics should apply for the Literature Bursary Award.

Strands of the Visual Arts Bursary Award

There are three strands to the award for 2027.

Strand 1: Emerging Artists

The objective of this strand in 2027 is to support individual professional visual artists at an earlier stage of their careers to **significantly develop** their visual arts practice at a **critical point**.

In Strand 1: Emerging Artists, you can apply for **€10,000 only**.

Strand 1 is **only** open to artists who have **not** previously received any of these Arts Council awards:

- Bursary Award
- Next Generation Award
- Markievicz Award.

We will aim to support at least five artists under this strand.

The award emphasises the value and benefit that an extended process of engagement with their practice can bring to an artist's development. It has been designed to provide early career/emerging artists with access to this extremely competitive award. We receive many very good proposals in each round but can only support applications of excellent or exceptional quality.

You can use this bursary to spend time:

- Developing your artistic practice
- Developing and resolving a specific body of work
- Re-engaging with your practice after a break.

You can also use this bursary to support you with:

- Your workspace costs
- Research facilities
- Residencies
- Training
- Your work with mentors, producers and/or collaborators.

Note: Early stage/emerging applicants can choose to apply to Strand 2: Visual Artists instead if you feel that it is better suited to your proposal.

There are fixed award amounts depending on which strand you choose.

You can **only** apply for €10,000 under Strand 1: Emerging Artists, but you can apply for €15,000 *or* €20,000 under Strand 2. See 1.5 How much can you apply for?

Strand 2: Visual Artists

The objective of this strand is to support individual professional artists at any stage of their careers to **significantly develop** their visual arts practice at a **critical point**.

This includes artists who identify as early stage/emerging, mid-career, or established, as well as those who would prefer not to say or do not identify with any of these career stages.

The award emphasises the value and benefit that an extended process of engagement with their practice can bring to an artist's development. It is an extremely competitive award. We receive many very good proposals in each round but can only support applications of excellent or exceptional quality.

You can use this bursary to spend time:

- Developing your artistic practice
- Developing and resolving a specific body of work
- Re-engaging with your practice after a break
- Re-evaluating your practice after a continuous period of outcome-based, deadline-driven project work.

You can also use this bursary to support you with:

- Your workspace costs
- Research facilities
- Residencies

- Training
- Your work with mentors, producers and/or collaborators.

Strand 3: Curators

The objective of this strand is to support individual professional independent visual arts curators at various career stages to **significantly develop** their curatorial practice at a **critical point**.

We will aim to support at least four curators under this strand.

The award emphasises the value and benefit that an extended process of investigation, discovery and engagement can have on the progression of a curator's independent practice.

It provides visual arts curators with the time and resources required to plan, research, and expand their curatorial strategies and methodologies.

Another objective of the award is to build the capacity of curators to commission and produce ambitious, high-quality visual arts exhibitions, events and activities in Ireland. For example, this could be through the development of collaborations and partnerships between curators, artists, groups or organisations.

It is an extremely competitive award. We receive many very good proposals in each round but can only support applications of excellent or exceptional quality.

You can use this bursary to spend time:

- Developing your independent curatorial practice.
- Planning, researching, developing or resolving a body of work relevant to the progression of your independent curatorial practice.

- Supporting your ongoing development of reciprocal partnerships, collaborations and opportunities with artists, producers, organisations and institutions.
- Re-engaging with your independent curatorial practice after a break.
- Re-evaluating your independent curatorial practice after a continuous period of outcome-based, deadline-driven project work.

You can also use this bursary to support you with:

- Your workspace costs
- Research facilities
- Residencies
- Training
- Your work with mentors, producers and/or collaborators.

Michael Byrne Trust Award

In 2027, the Arts Council Trust will offer a special once-off additional Bursary Award with a maximum value of €20,000 to commemorate the late print artist Michael Byrne (1923-1989). The award is made possible through the generosity of the Michael Byrne Trust Fund.

All artist applicants to the Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 1 will be considered for the Michael Byrne Bursary Award.

This award supports an artist of significant potential to pursue their practice in printmaking.

We will award the Michael Byrne Bursary to the highest-scoring applicant with a printmaking practice or project.

This award is valued at €20,000.

Note: If you're awarded the Michael Byrne Bursary Award, you'll be contacted to confirm your acceptance of this award. You cannot receive both the Visual Arts Bursary Award and the Michael Byrne Bursary Award.

1.2 Changes to Round 1 of the Visual Arts Bursary Award 2027

- For 2027, we've added more information to the Description of visual arts practice.
- We've also made some adjustments to the mandatory supporting materials.
- We have extended the time frame for decisions by three weeks for this round only. This means increasing the assessment timeline to 15-18 weeks.
- We've updated the guidance in Section 2.4 for applicants who want to use OpenOffice on an Apple Mac.

1.3 Who can apply

This award is open to professional visual artists and independent visual arts curators who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.

A **professional visual artist** or **independent visual arts curator** is someone who:

- Actively pursues a career as a visual artist or independent visual arts curator. Please refer to Description of visual arts practice for more detail.
- Has a professional artistic/curatorial practice evidenced by a sustained track record of working within visual arts contexts. Applications may be deemed ineligible if this is not sufficiently demonstrated.
- Considers their visual arts practice to be their main profession or career. This applies even if their work in the visual arts is not their main source of income or they have other employment.
- Is recognised by their peers as a professional practising visual artist or visual arts curator.

We may accept applications from applicants who are not resident in the Republic of Ireland. In this case, you must explain in section 2.3 of your application form how your proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

We'll determine the eligibility of your application based on your explanation.

Bursary rounds and strands

You can only apply for one round of any Bursary Award 2027.

If you apply for Round 1of the Bursary Award 2027 in any artform/arts-practice area, you cannot apply for Round 2.

You cannot apply for more than one Bursary Award in any artform or arts-practice area in any one round of funding.

For example, you cannot apply for a Visual Arts Bursary Award and a Theatre Bursary Award in the same round or in the same calendar year. You also cannot make more than one application for a Visual Arts Bursary Award in the same round.

Note: You cannot apply for the Bursary Award 2027 and the Agility Award 2027.

Note about equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, we encourage applicants from all areas of the community.

This includes, but is not limited to, any of the characteristics in the list below. It also includes initiatives that deliver equitable opportunities or outcomes for everyone involved.

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Civil or family status
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community
- Socio-economic background.

1.4 Who cannot apply

We will not be able to accept your application if you're:

- Not a professional visual artist or visual arts curator (see Description of visual arts practice in 1.3 Who can apply).
- An organisation.
- A full-time undergraduate student (including foundation courses).
- Looking for support towards fees for postgraduate/higher education or study (including unaccredited courses). For example, you cannot apply for a QQI accredited course such as a FETAC certificate, a degree or a master's degree.
- Looking for support towards work you're doing as part of a formal course, internship or volunteer work.
- In full-time employment, unless you're seeking time away from employment to work on your practice. How you plan to approach this should be outlined clearly in your application.
- Not resident in the Republic of Ireland (see 1.3 Who can Apply for exceptions to this).
- An Aosdána member in receipt of a *Cnuas*.

1.5 How much can you apply for?

We offer funding for this bursary according to **bands**. You should apply for one of the following amounts:

- **Strand 1:** €10,000
- **Strand 2:** €15,000 *or* €20,000
- **Strand 3:** €10,000 *or* €15,000 *or* €20,000

Applicants under Strand 1: Emerging Artists can **only** apply for €10,000*

Applicants under Strand 2: Visual Artists can **only** apply for €15,000 or €20,000.

Curators applying under Strand 3: Curators can **only** apply for €10,000, €15,000, or €20,000.

If you apply for any other amount, we round it down to the next lowest band. For example, if you request €19,500, the maximum possible award you can receive is €15,000.

You **cannot** apply for amounts below €10,000 or above €20,000. If you do, your application will be ineligible and we will not assess it.

However, visual artists and visual arts curators with disabilities can include additional personal disability access costs in their application. This is separate from the amount that you request for your proposed activities.

The emphasis of the award is on professional visual artists and independent visual arts curators 'buying time'. Therefore, the amount you request should include the amount you will pay yourself for the time you will spend developing your practice as an artist. This can be up to 100% of the award.

Note about the Paying the Artist Policy

The Arts Council is committed to improving the living and working conditions of artists. Our Paying the Artist policy outlines this commitment to fair and equitable remuneration and contracting. Recipients of Arts Council funding are expected to pay artists fairly and engage them appropriately.

When you're considering an appropriate fee to pay yourself or to pay a collaborator or mentor, you should consider the following:

- We recommend that you review rates offered by resource organisations that are specific to your artform.

- We publish a list of these representative and resource organisations which includes links to the resources they provide.
- When reviewing these rates, you should consider the low base from which current standards are set and understand that minimum rates are not an acceptable ambition.

The fee you propose to pay yourself and any individual, organisation or group should also reflect:

- Your/their career stage
- The nature of your/their practice
- The duration of your proposal and the full scope of any collaborators' involvement

You should also think about the terms with which you contract collaborators or mentors.

Our Paying the Artist policy includes a list of Best Practice Principles. These should be applied by anyone engaging other artists and freelance arts workers.

Note about in-kind support

'In-kind' support refers to anything that your proposed activities receive that is not financial. For example, this could be someone providing space, equipment or expertise to your project without charging a fee.

If you expect to receive in-kind support, you must put a financial value on it. This is to make the value of your proposal clear.

You should think of in-kind support as both expenditure and income. We must see your in-kind figure in both the expenditure and income section of the application form.

1.6 What costs can I apply for

Strand 1: Emerging Artists AND Strand 2: Visual Artists

This award also allows you to include other costs that may support you to develop your practice.

For example:

- Fees for the time that any mentors, trainers, producers or collaborators may give you while working with you on the activities from your application.
- Costs for materials or hiring services that are critical to the development of your practice. These materials or services must be clearly linked to purpose of 'buying time'. The material costs can add up to 15% of the total amount that you request. This is not equipment costs related to personal disability access costs.
- Other costs and expenses that you incur in time spent developing your practice.

Strand 3: Curators

This award also allows you to include other costs that may support you to develop your curatorial practice. For example:

- Research costs
- Training costs.

These costs might also come from:

- Developing relationships with artists
- Developing partnerships with organisations or institutions
- Advancing opportunities for professional mentoring or collaboration
- Cultivating sources of funding and supports
- Developing the capacity to commission and produce high-quality and ambitious visual arts activities.

1.7 Disability access costs for artists or participants with disabilities

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

To meet this goal, we offer financial supports to remove barriers for artists/curators and participants with disabilities. These are known as disability access costs.

We take the description of disability from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with Irish legislation and case law. We broadly include all people with disabilities. For example, people with physical, medical, cognitive, intellectual, learning, emotional, or sensory impairments.

Personal disability access costs

These supports should help you to 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, mentors or collaborators
- Production staff
- Core staff or key administrative personnel.

Examples of support may include:

- An ISL interpreter for a participant or participants
- Services of an access support worker
- Additional rehearsal or studio time.

Note: You can apply for these personal disability access costs in addition to the maximum amount available for the award.

How to apply for personal disability access costs

If you include personal disability access costs in your proposal, you must upload a document listing these costs with your supporting material.

A template is available from the Visual Arts Bursary Award webpage on the Arts Council website.

In your application form, you must also:

- Select ‘Yes’ in section 2.7
- Enter the costs as expenditure in section 3.1.

The Arts Council treats data related to disabilities confidentially and securely. For more on how we’re protecting your data, see our privacy notices.

Note: This consent is for receiving sensitive data and supporting material. If you're awarded personal disability access costs, we hold on to relevant data on a different basis for legal and other requirements.

What if the funding I'm offered is less than I requested?

If you're offered funding that is less than you requested, we'll discuss an appropriate adjustment to your personal disability access costs.

How do I claim my personal disability access costs?

If your application is successful, we'll give you information on how to draw down your funding. Personal disability access costs are drawn down separately from your core funding.

1.8 What are your chances of receiving support?

This is an extremely competitive award. We receive many more applications than it's possible for us to fund. We can only support applications of excellent or exceptional quality.

In Round 1 2026, 16% of Visual Arts Bursary Award applications (across applications from both artists and curators) were successful.

There were 439 applications in total for Round 1. We shortlisted 120 applications and we funded 70 applications.

If your application is successful, we'll try to provide you with the full amount of funding that you've requested.

However, we reserve the right to offer you a lower amount if your proposal is feasible at a reduced scale.

1.9 Costs that you cannot apply for

You cannot apply for:

- Costs that do not fit the purpose of the award.
- Capital requests for purchasing equipment or improvements to workspaces.
- Subscriptions that are unrelated to this proposal. This includes ongoing software licences.
- Membership fees.
- Costs for formal education – for example, you cannot apply for a QQI accredited course such as a FETAC certificate, a degree or a master's degree.

1.10 Activities that you cannot apply for

You cannot apply for:

- Activities that do not fit the purpose of the award.
- Activities that are better suited to another Arts Council award.
- Activities that are better suited for support from another government agency or public agency. Some examples include Culture Ireland, Screen Ireland and third-level institutions.
- Non-artistic activities, such as academic activities.
- Activities that you've already completed.

- Activities that you'll have started before we make a decision on your application (learn more about decisions in 5. After you apply – what happens next).
- Activities by registered charities that are for fundraising for other organisations.
- Activities that are for participating in a competition.
- Activities that are for profit-making.

You cannot apply for activities that the Arts Council has already assessed unless you can demonstrate that you have significantly developed the proposal.

The exception to this is if we have specifically recommended that you redirect your application to this award.

Note: This recommendation is not an indication that the application will receive funding.

1.11 Supporting material that you need to submit

You must include supporting material with your application in addition to your application form. These documents help the person assessing your application to get a clearer understanding of your proposal.

If you do not upload supporting material, your application is incomplete and we cannot assess it. Missing mandatory supporting material is the most common reason for ineligible applications.

It's important that you read the information below carefully and that you include the supporting material that we ask for in your application.

Note: You can submit your supporting documents **as a single combined file** *or* **as separate files**.

We **strongly encourage** you to combine them into one document where possible. This means that assessors and staff who review your supporting materials can access them more easily. It also allows you to choose the viewing order of the supporting materials.

Mandatory supporting material for all applicants

- **Your current artistic or curatorial CV**, whichever is relevant to your practice. You should **not** submit a biography.
    - This will form a central part of your application. It should detail your achievements and your track record as a professional visual artist or visual arts curator.
    - It should be a maximum of three pages.
- **If you are applying as a curator**: Your **current curatorial statement** describing your independent curatorial practice. It should be a maximum of one page.
- **Good-quality examples of your work** that demonstrate your practice to date. You should clearly label all still and moving images. Where relevant, include a brief written context for each work in an image list. Depending on the media that you use in your practice, you should include the following:
    - Ten good-quality still images showing the whole of each artwork, plus up to five detailed images and/or installation shots if desired.
    - A maximum of three excerpts from moving-image / audio / similar work or documentation of past projects if relevant (three-minute

samples) with corresponding explanations **in addition** to the ten images above.

- A maximum of three short excerpts of written examples of your work, if relevant.

If you've included other people or organisations in your proposal, you must also submit additional supporting material with your application:

- **Brief biographies** outlining their expertise, accreditations and track records
- **Letters of support/confirmation** outlining their involvement in your proposed work.

Additional material in certain cases

In some cases, you may need to submit some additional supporting material with your application.

Disability access costs

If your application includes disability access costs, you should upload a document listing these costs.

Include your total disability access costs in a separate budget document. This can be your own document or the disability access costs template that you can download from the Visual Arts Bursary Award webpage.

Learn more about disability access costs for artists or participants with disabilities.

Working with animals

If your proposal involves working with animals, you must provide a copy of your *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*.

Working with children or young people

If your proposal provides cultural, recreational, educational or other services to children or young people under the age of 18, you must have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place (section 1.4 of the application form).

If you receive an offer of funding from the Arts Council, you will only be able to draw down the funding after completing the Arts Council's Self-Audit of Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

We review each Self-Audit that we receive. We check them to make sure that they meet the standards of our Quality Assurance Framework.

The Arts Council can ask for copies of any documents, records, or other information mentioned in the Self-Audit.

You do not need to upload an additional document when you're submitting your application.

Working with vulnerable adults

If your proposal involves working with vulnerable adults, you must indicate this in section 1.5 of the application form.

By doing this, you acknowledge that you adhere to the National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse.

Note: We may ask you to provide more evidence of adherence to these policies and procedures if your application is successful.

1.12 Eligibility – applications that we will not accept

We will not accept your application in the following situations.

- You missed the application deadline.
- You did not upload your application form and supporting material through our Online Services funding portal.
- You did not meet the criteria in 1.3 Who can apply?.
- You did not complete all the required parts of the application form.
- You did not provide the supporting material that we asked for.
- You did not provide your supporting material in the correct format. See 2.6 Preparing your supporting material.
- You asked for more or less than the allowed amounts. However, you can ask for additional personal disability access costs if your proposal requires it. See Disability Access Costs for artists or participants with disabilities.
- You applied for activities or costs that are not covered by this award. See 1.9 Costs that you cannot apply for and 1.10 Activities that you cannot apply for.
- Your application is better suited to another Arts Council award. If this happens, we'll direct you to the other award.
- Your application is better suited to another government body or public body.

If your application is ineligible, we will not assess it. You can apply again with the same proposal to a future funding round if you address the issues that made your application ineligible.

1.13 Getting technical help for your application

To learn more about using the Online Services funding portal, visit the Guidance for Applicants section of our website. You can also watch our video guide on downloading, completing and uploading your application form.

If you need technical support while you're making your application, you must contact the Arts Council in the following ways:

- **Email:** onlineservices@artscouncil.ie
- **Phone:** 01 618 0200 or 01 618 0243

You must report any technical issues to us as soon as possible ahead of the deadline (for example, not being able to upload your documents).

We deal with queries on a first-come first-served basis.

Note: There is often a high volume of calls as the deadline approaches. We may not be able to resolve technical support calls that we receive after 2.00pm on the deadline date.

2. Before you apply

Read this section before you start your application.

It contains advice to help you create your application in the correct way and on time.

2.1 Breaking the application process into steps

We recommend breaking the application process into the following steps. This will help you to make sure that you submit your application on time.

1. Check if you're eligible

We only assess applications that meet the eligibility criteria for this award.

Read 1.3 Who can apply? and 1.4 Who cannot apply? to make sure that this award is right for you.

2. Register on the Online Services funding portal

You must create an account on the Arts Council's Online Services funding portal to make an application.

Register early. It can take up to five working days for us to process your registration.

3. Prepare your supporting material

You must upload your supporting material to the Online Services funding portal in the correct file formats.

Make sure that you have enough time to prepare your documents in these formats.

4. Submit your application on Online Services

Make sure to familiarise yourself with the Online Services funding portal before you submit your application. It's a good idea to do this well before the deadline date.

2.2 Registering for an Online Services account

We can only accept **online** applications for the Visual Arts Bursary Award.

We do not accept application forms or supporting material in any other way (for example, by post, fax or email).

You need an Online Services account to submit your application. You must have a PPS number to create an Online Services account. If you do not have a PPS number, contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie

New applicants

If you're applying for the first time, you should register for your account as soon as possible.

It can take up to five working days for us to complete the registration process for you.

Online Services will email you a unique Artist Registration Number (ARN) and a password for your account within five working days.

How to register

1. Go to the Online Services funding portal.
2. Click **Sign up**.
3. Select **An individual**.
4. Click **Next**.
5. Enter your email address and PPS number.
6. Click **Next**.
7. Under **Name**, select your title and enter your name.
8. Under **Contact details**, enter your address and select your country.
9. Under **Email and PPS**, enter a contact number.
10. Enter the code for the spam filter.
11. Click **Register**.

Previous applicants

If you've previously registered for an account, you do not need to create a new account for this application.

You should use your existing account and ARN to apply. If you've forgotten your password, you can request a new one.

Technical requirements for using Online Services

To use the Online Services funding portal, your computer and web browser must meet the following requirements.

PC

- Windows 7 operating system (or a newer version of Windows)
- The latest version of one of these browsers:
    - Microsoft Edge
    - Google Chrome
    - Safari
    - Mozilla Firefox

Mac

- Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard (or a newer version of Mac OS)
- The latest version of one of these browsers:
    - Microsoft Edge
    - Google Chrome
    - Safari
    - Mozilla Firefox

2.3 Making sure that you apply under your name

We can only pay any funding that we offer into a bank account that is held in the name that you registered with and entered in section 1.1 of the application form.

This means that any documentation that you submit as part of your application must be in your name.

Example

- You apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name ‘Maire de Barra’.
- Any documentation that you submit must be in this name.
- The bank details and tax details that you submit must also be in this name.
- We cannot accept variations such as Mary Barry or Máire Barry.
- If your application is successful, we’ll only pay any funding that we offer into a bank account held in your name.

2.4 Checking the software on your computer before applying

You must use a desktop or laptop computer to submit your application. You cannot apply using a mobile phone, tablet or other device.

You need to use Microsoft Word (Desktop) or OpenOffice Writer to complete your application form. Make sure that you have one of these programs installed on your computer.

Using OpenOffice

OpenOffice Writer is free software that you can download from OpenOffice’s official download page.

You can learn more about using OpenOffice to complete your application form in this Arts Council video.

You must use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier.

On Windows PCs

If you have a Windows PC, you must use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1.

More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer can alter how our application forms appear when they're submitted through Online Services.

On Apple Macs

If you have a Mac with the operating system macOS Catalina (10.15) or later, you must use OpenOffice version 4.1.16 or newer.

If you have a Mac with the operating system macOS Mojave (10.14) or earlier, the OpenOffice website might tell you that you must use version 4.1.16. Ignore this recommendation and use version 4.0.1 instead.

Troubleshooting

If you have any issues installing or using OpenOffice, contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie as soon as possible before the deadline. This is to make sure that we have enough time to help you resolve the issue.

2.5 Taking time to prepare your application

You should give yourself plenty of time to prepare for submitting your application. This is so that you have enough time to make the best possible application that you can.

Download the application form from your Online Services account as early as possible so that you can get familiar with it.

Make sure to check that:

- You're applying for the right award
- You've downloaded the correct application form
- Your application follows the guidelines in this document
- You have enough time to complete all the application tasks before the deadline.

You should upload your application to the Online Services funding portal **at least 48 hours** before the deadline.

That way, if you have any technical difficulties, you'll have time to contact us to help you.

Note: Online Services often has heavy traffic on the final afternoon of the closing date and your documents may take much longer than usual to upload.

2.6 Preparing your supporting documents

You must include supporting documents with your application in addition to your application form. This helps the person assessing your application to get a clear understanding of your proposal.

To see exactly what you need to submit, see 1.11 Supporting material that you need to submit.

We'll only accept supporting documents that you upload in electronic format to the Online Services funding portal. If you have documents that are not in electronic format, you should scan them and save them so that you can upload them.

Note: You can submit your supporting documents **as a single combined file** *or* **as separate files**.

We **strongly encourage** you to combine them into one document where possible. This means that assessors and staff who review your supporting materials can access them more easily. It also allows you to choose the viewing order of the supporting materials.

Acceptable file formats

Check the table below to see the file formats that you can use as part of an application. You can only submit these file types.

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
Spreadsheet file	.xls
PDF files	.pdf

Naming your files

It's a good idea to collect all your files in one folder on your computer so that they are easier to upload together.

Use filenames that make it clear what your files contain or represent.

It should be clear from the filename whether the document is a CV, a budget sheet or another type of supporting material.

Here are some examples of files with clear filenames for an applicant called Jack Russell:

- Jack Russell – Visual Arts Bursary application.docx
- Jack Russell – Performance Clip.mp4
- Jack Russell – Personal Disability Access Costs.doc

Note: Certain special characters and symbols are not allowed in file names, such as **" * : < > ? / . , ‘ ’ \ + & ^ ! ~ = #** .

File-size limits

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

2.7 Preparing your URL links

To provide us with **samples of your work**, you can:

- Upload them directly to Online Services
- Use URL links (the full addresses where your material is hosted) to streaming platforms for moving image, audio, or similar work.

If you want to use links, copy the URLs into a Microsoft Word (Desktop), OpenOffice Writer or a PDF document. Then, upload the document in Online Services along with your supporting documents.

Some examples of acceptable sharing platforms include YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, and Bandcamp.

We do not accept links to the following sources:

- File-sharing sites such as Google Drive or OneDrive.
- Social-media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram.
- Streaming platforms that limit access to paid subscribers.
- Personal websites.

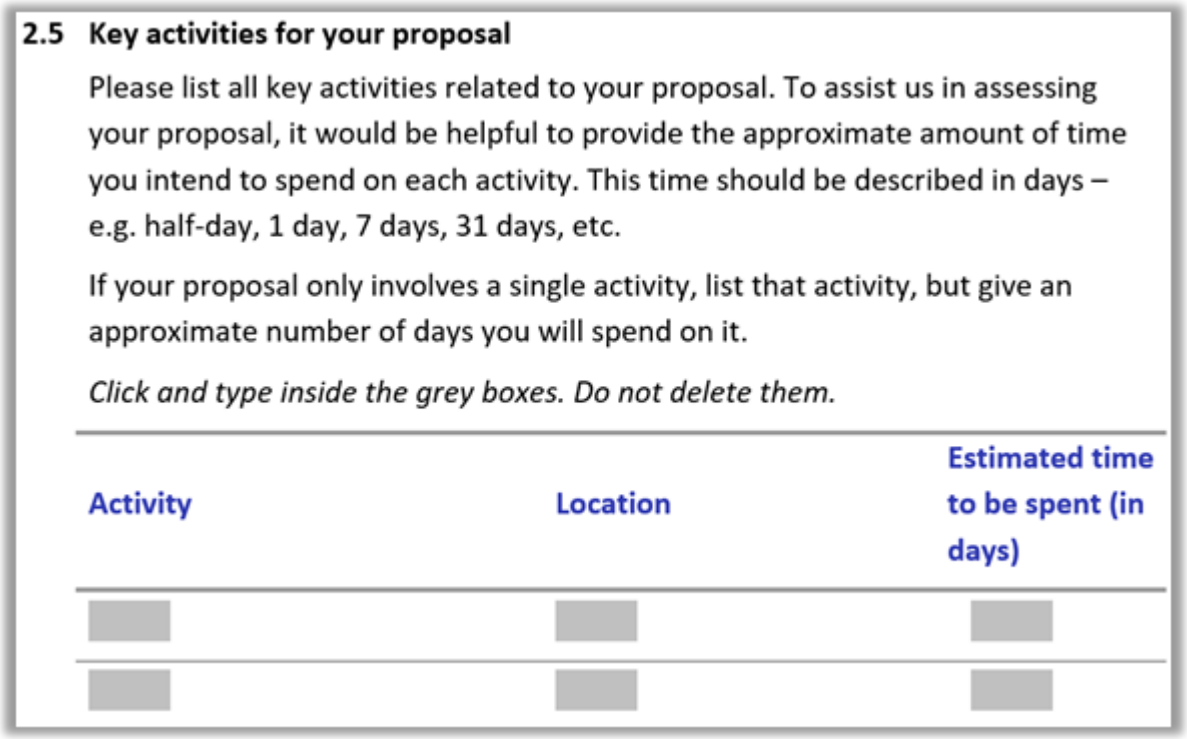
Important: You can **only** provide samples of video, audio, or other such works using URLs. Other supporting materials, for example CVs or letters of support/confirmation, must be uploaded as files and **not** provided via URLs.

Tips for using URL links

- Assessors can only review the materials in the URL links you provide.
- Make sure to check that any links you submit are working and make sure that they bring the viewer to the correct source.
- Make sure that you set the viewing permissions of your material to 'Public'.
- We will not be able to view materials that are set to 'Private'.
- If you want to share a YouTube video with us but you do not want the video to be public, you can change your video's privacy setting to 'Unlisted'.

3. Completing your application form

Each section of the application form has guidance to help you know what to include.



2.5 Key activities for your proposal

Please list all key activities related to your proposal. To assist us in assessing your proposal, it would be helpful to provide the approximate amount of time you intend to spend on each activity. This time should be described in days – e.g. half-day, 1 day, 7 days, 31 days, etc.

If your proposal only involves a single activity, list that activity, but give an approximate number of days you will spend on it.

Click and type inside the grey boxes. Do not delete them.

Activity	Location	Estimated time to be spent (in days)

You can also use the tips below to help you answer the questions in the form.

When you answer them, think about:

- Your track record and potential
- How your proposal will help you develop new skills or ideas
- The potential impact of your project (e.g. on an audience or a community)
- How your proposal fits your area of practice
- How workable your proposal is (e.g. if your project can be done within the suggested budget and time frame).

You must complete all the required sections of the application form. If you do not, your application will be ineligible and we cannot assess it.

Important: The application form has a special format so that we can extract information from it for assessment.

It's very important that you:

- Type inside the grey boxes in the form
- Do not delete them or type outside them.

If you do not follow this advice, your application form will not upload.

4. Submitting your application

After you've completed your application form, you can follow the steps below to upload it to the Online Services funding portal and submit it.

4.1 Log in to your account to start your application

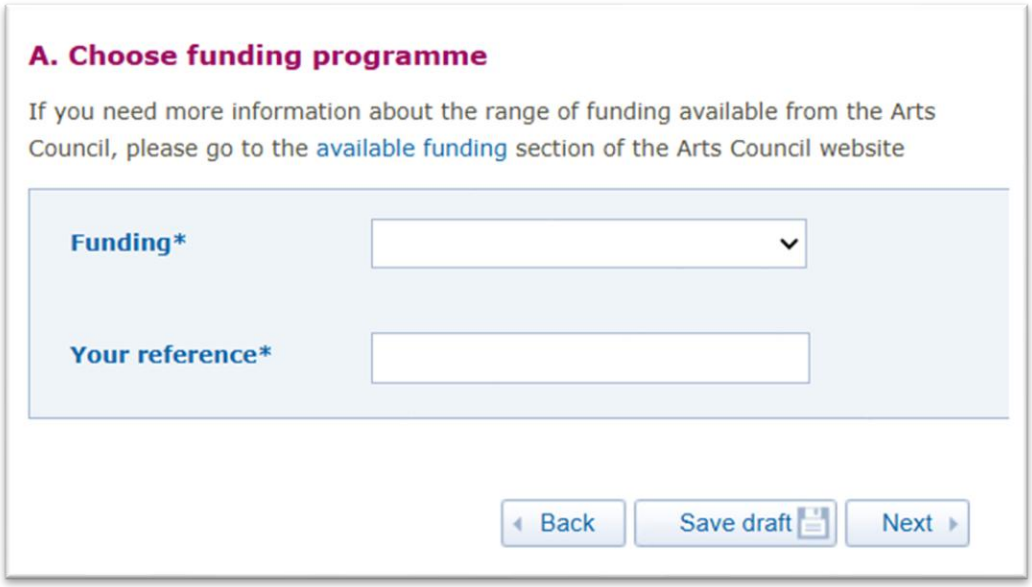
1. Go to the Online Services login page.
2. Log in to your account.
3. Click **Make an application** at the bottom of the page.

4.2 Check your contact details

4. Under **Declaration of identity**, check that the contact details are correct.
    - If they're correct: tick the checkbox next to **Please confirm that your details are correct**.
    - If they're not correct: click **Do you need to update your profile?** and update your contact details.
5. Click **Next**.

4.3 Choose the funding that you want to apply for

6. Under **Choose funding programme**, select **Bursary** using the Funding dropdown menu.



7. Under **Available award**, select the relevant artform or arts practice.
8. Enter a name for your application in the **Your reference** field.
9. Click **Download application form** to download the form for this award.

Learn more about completing your application form

10. Click **Next**.

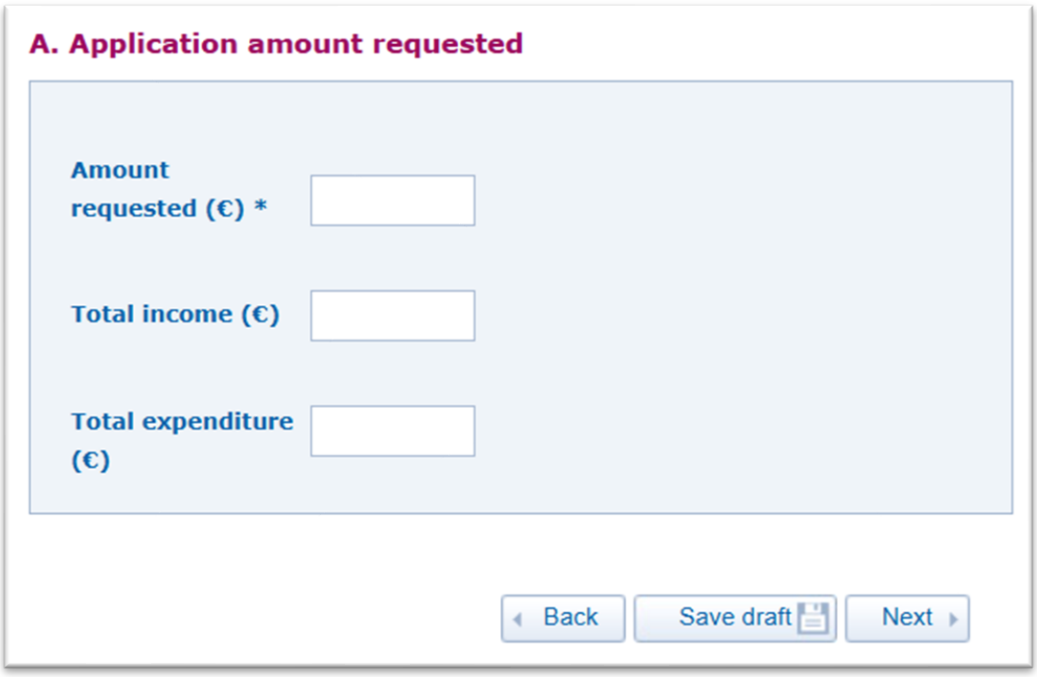
Note: While you're completing the form, you may get logged out of Online Services. You can sign back in to continue submitting your application.

4.4 Enter your requested funding amount

11. Under **Application amount requested**, enter:
    - The amount you want to ask for

- The total income you expect
- The total expenditure you expect.

The **Amount requested** should equal the **Total expenditure** minus the **Total income**.



12. Click **Next**.

4.5 Upload your documents

13. Under **Upload application form**, click **Choose File**.

14. Select your application form from where you've saved it on your computer.

15. Click **Upload**.

Note: If you see a message that says, 'Cannot upload form', try saving your

application form as a .doc file and upload it again. If you still cannot upload it, contact us.

16. Under **Upload supporting material**, select the type of document you want to upload using the dropdown menu.

Important: Do not select 'Post document'.

17. (Optional) Add a note here to describe the material that you're uploading.
18. Click **Browse**.
19. Select the supporting document file from your computer.
20. Click **Upload**.
21. Repeat steps 16–20 for all of your supporting documents.
22. Click **Next**.

4.6 Submit your application

23. Check the details of your application carefully.
24. Under **Declaration**, tick the checkbox beside **I agree to the above declaration**.

Note: You cannot submit your application unless you tick this box.

25. Click **Submit**.

Notes about submitting your application

- Click **Save Draft** at any time to save your application without submitting it.
- You can come back to your application and make changes until you submit it.
- After you submit your application, you will not be able to make any more changes. Review it carefully before you submit it.
- If you realise you've made a mistake after you've submitted your application, contact us as soon as possible.

Need technical support?

You must contact us if you need technical support while submitting your application before the deadline.

- **Email:** onlineservices@artscouncil.ie
- **Phone:** 01 618 0200 or 01 618 0243

We cannot guarantee technical support if you call after 2.00pm on the closing date.

5. After you apply – what happens next

After you submit your application, you'll get:

- An email immediately to tell you that we received your application
- A second email a few minutes later with your application number.

Note: If you do not receive these emails from us, contact us at onlineservices@artscouncil.ie as soon as possible.

For your decision, you'll get:

- An email within 15 to 18 weeks to let you know if your application has not been shortlisted. If your application has been shortlisted, it will go forward for panel review.
- An email within 15 to 18 weeks to tell you if your application has been successful or not.

Note: This time frame depends on the volume of applications that we receive.

5.1 How we make decisions

The Arts Council assesses all eligible applications that we receive. We make decisions on these applications and communicate our decisions to applicants according to our procedures.

Our aim is to make sure that the system for awarding funding is fair and transparent.

We process all applications that we receive as follows:

1. We check the eligibility of the application. All eligible applications progress to the assessment stage.
2. We notify any ineligible applicants by email.
3. In some cases, we may think that the arts area you applied to may not be the best fit for your proposal. In these cases, we'll contact you and ask you if you're happy for us to move your application to a more appropriate arts team. You can then choose to move it or leave it as it is.
4. Arts Council staff and advisers assess the eligible applications based on our criteria for assessment and our scoring process.
5. Arts Council staff and advisers recommend some of the applications for shortlisting.
6. A peer panel reviews all shortlisted applications and their associated supporting materials. The panel then scores the applications and makes decisions.
7. We communicate the decisions by email to applicants.
8. The Arts Council board notes the decisions.

The arts team for the primary artform that you selected on your application form is the team that will assess your application.

If you also selected other artforms or arts practices as relevant to your application, the primary assessors may ask for a secondary assessment from the relevant team.

5.2 How we assess your application

Arts Council awards are competitive. We assess applications in this competitive context.

Our assessors are specialists in different artforms and arts-practice areas. You can select other artforms or arts-practice areas as being relevant to your application. However, your application will be assessed by the team responsible for **your chosen primary artform**.

In certain instances, the primary artform team may ask for a secondary assessment from another team.

Assessment criteria

In this assessment, we consider the following criteria:

- Artistic quality
- How the proposal meets the objectives and priorities of the award
- Feasibility.

Artistic quality

Our assessment of artistic quality focuses on your previous practice as well as the nature of the proposal.

This assessment includes:

- Your track record and the potential that you've demonstrated through your application form, your CV and the other supporting materials that you submitted.

- The proposed arts activity or activities that you've outlined in your application form.
- The practice that you've demonstrated through the supporting materials that you submitted.
- The artform/arts-practice context that your proposed activity is in.
- The ambition, originality and competency that you demonstrated.
- **If you intend to work with a mentor:** the track record of the mentor and quality of the mentorship programme, as demonstrated through the application form, CV and other supporting materials submitted.
- **If you intend to work with partner organisations:** the quality and appropriateness of supports offered by the partner organisations.

Meeting the objectives and priorities of the award

We assess applications on how well they meet the objectives and priorities of the award. See 1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award for more information.

In this assessment, we consider:

- How much your arts practice might benefit from the proposed activity and how it might develop as a result of it.
- How much your proposed activity addresses the priorities of the award.

Feasibility

We assess the feasibility of your application based on how you demonstrate your capacity to deliver your proposed activities.

The aspects of feasibility that we assess depend on the strand that you choose.

In this assessment, we consider:

- The feasibility of your proposed timetable or schedule.
- The feasibility that the amount of funding you requested is suitable for the nature and duration of the work that you propose.
- Where relevant, the availability of other supports/partners that you identified in your application.

5.3 The peer panel process

We use peer panels to include a diversity of expert views in our assessment process.

Peer panels normally consist of at least three external adjudicators. These adjudicators generally have:

- Relevant artform expertise
- Arts practice expertise
- A broad working knowledge and general understanding of the professional arts.

In the case of artforms with smaller numbers of applications, we may convene panels to consider groups of applications at the same panel meeting.

Each peer panel meeting is usually led by an Arts Council member acting as non-voting chair. Arts Council staff and advisers also attend if required. Team members who were involved in the initial assessment of applications are available to the peer panels to provide information if needed.

Panellists have access to all the shortlisted applications and associated materials before the day of the meeting. During the meeting, they review, discuss and score shortlisted applications. They then rank the shortlisted applications by score.

Note: The level of competition for awards is high. The Arts Council can only fund a proportion of the applications that we receive.

Panel scoring process

We ask each panel member to score applications according to the following system:

- **A – Must Fund (10 points):** The application has fully met the criteria for the award and merits funding to the full amount requested (if possible).
- **B – Should Fund (8 points):** The application has met the criteria to a sufficient extent to merit funding if the funding scheme has enough budget.
- **C – Could Fund (5 points):** The application has met the criteria, but to a lesser extent than other applications.
- **D – Not a Priority (2 points):** The application has not met the criteria well enough to merit funding.

5.4 Declaration of conflict of interest

The Arts Council has a Conflict of Interest (CoI) Policy to make sure that the assessment process is not unfairly influenced.

To ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, staff members, advisers and panellists must declare a conflict of interest where:

- They have a close personal or professional link with the applicant
- They are linked in any way with the application.

An ‘interest’ can be either ‘pecuniary’ or ‘non-pecuniary’.

- Pecuniary: where a person may stand to gain financially from a decision.
- Non-pecuniary: familial relationships or partnerships, personal friendships, or formal or informal business partnerships, etc.

The staff member, adviser or panellist must declare their interest as soon as they become aware of it.

The Arts Council will ensure the staff member, adviser or panellist is not involved in any aspect of the decision-making process relating to this application.

Declaration of conflict of interest of panellists

Panellists must declare a conflict of interest as soon as they become 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.

When a panellist declares a conflict of interest, they will not receive assessment materials relating to that applicant. They will also be required to leave the room when the specific application is being reviewed. The chair will vote instead of the panellist.

In some situations, a panellist may not realise that they have a conflict of interest until they receive and review the assessment material. In these cases, the panellist must alert an Arts Council staff member or the panel chair as soon as they become aware of the potential conflict of interest.

In the event of two panellists declaring a conflict of interest for the same application, the Arts Council staff member would replace one of the panellists so that two are not sharing the same conflict. If this is not possible, the art team's manager and the panel 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 become aware of it. In this situation the head of the relevant art team will chair the discussion on the application.

5.5 Next steps if your application is successful

If you're successful, we'll email you with an offer.

This offer has the details of the amount of funding we have awarded you and the terms and conditions of the award.

You must accept your offer of funding through your Online Services account.

In a separate email, you'll receive the payment guide for this award. This contains instructions on how to accept your offer and how to draw down your funding.

5.6 Next steps if your application is unsuccessful

The Arts Council receives a large volume of applications.

If your application is not successful, you can request assessment report from Arts Council staff.

Note: Complying with our eligibility guidelines and application procedures does not guarantee that you'll receive funding.

Applying again with the same activity

If your application is unsuccessful, you cannot apply for the same activity for another Arts Council award.

If we feel that your proposal is better suited to a different award, we may make an exception.

In this case, we'll contact you.

5.7 Making an appeal

You can appeal against a funding decision if you feel that:

- We did not follow our published procedures for administration and assessment
- We did not apply our published procedures for administration and assessment fairly.

You must be able to show us the reasons for your appeal.

Learn more about our appeals process