

# Amateur and Voluntary Practice Pilot Scheme 2021

## Guidelines for Applicants

**Deadline: 5.30pm, Thursday 28 October 2021**

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## Key points to remember

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- This document contains important information about the Amateur and Voluntary Practice Pilot Scheme and how to go about making an application.
- 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.
  - 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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- The Arts Council makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities who wish to submit an application or who have difficulties in accessing Online Services. If you have a requirement in this area, please contact the Arts Council's Access Officer, Adrienne Martin, by phone (01 6180219) or by email ([adrienne.martin@artscouncil.ie](mailto:adrienne.martin@artscouncil.ie)) **at least three weeks in advance** of the deadline day.
- If you have a technical query about using the Online Services website you can email [onlineservices@artscouncil.ie](mailto:onlineservices@artscouncil.ie)
- Answers to common questions about using Online Services are available in the FAQ section of the Arts Council website at: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/FAQ/online-services.aspx>
- To watch our YouTube guide on making an application, go to <http://www.youtube.com/artscouncildemos>
- If you require assistance with the content of your application, call the Arts Council on 01 6180200/01 6180243 or email [awards@artscouncil.ie](mailto:awards@artscouncil.ie)

### **A NOTE ON COVID-19-RELATED PUBLIC-HEALTH GUIDANCE**

**In preparing your proposal, you should base it on the best public-health advice and guidance available at the time you are making your application.**

**Given this, you should ensure that what you are proposing is feasible or adaptable should social distancing and/or other public-health measures impact on all or part of the period to which this proposal applies.**

**In the event that your application is successful and you subsequently need to change or alter some or all of your proposal on the basis of changed public-health advice, you should contact your arts team in advance to discuss this.**

## 1. About the Amateur and Voluntary Practice Pilot Scheme

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The Arts Council's strategy recognises the distinctive role of amateur arts practice, its important contribution to the vitality of the arts in Ireland, including music, theatre and musical theatre, and its many personal, social and artistic benefits.

This pilot scheme is offered as a once-off, action-research opportunity, and seeks enhanced engagement, mentorship and advocacy between the amateur and professional theatre, music and musical-theatre sectors.

This work links to the actions outlined in the Arts Council three-year plan, 2020–22;

*To deliver these supporting actions we will:*

- *Create professional-development opportunities for artists who are interested in developing their skills and sharing their expertise in working with children and young people, and in community-engaged practices.*
- *Support voluntary and nonprofessional participation in the arts through working with a range of agencies and organisations, including the Creative Ireland programme.*

The pilot aims to support the employment of professional artists to work with and develop the capacity of the amateur and voluntary sector.

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 <http://www.artscouncil.ie/arts-council-strategy/>).

### 1.1 Objectives and priorities of the scheme

#### Objectives

The award aims to support theatre and musical-theatre national amateur and/or voluntary resource-and-support organisations for programmes that develop, by working with professional artists, the performance and technical skills of local-organisation members through training, mentorship or other innovative ideas. It envisages that such programmes could be centrally organised and provided.

It is further envisaged that such programmes could be either conceived as in-person or online programmes or both.

#### Priorities

Priority will be given to applications that:

- Are from national-level amateur and/or voluntary-practice support-and-resource organisations (including membership-based organisations) with a proven track record
- Demonstrate a focus on excellence and accessibility of development experience for participants

- Demonstrate their feasibility by providing a clear and realistic budget (including evidence of appropriate and equitable professional payment rates), a clear and feasible operational plan, and additional sources of support
- Demonstrate ambition and vision in creating a considered, imaginative and structured approach.

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<b>* Definitions for the purposes of this scheme</b>	<b>Professional theatre/music practitioner:</b> an individual working professionally in a creative capacity within either artform, is recognised as such by his/her professional peers, and has a relevant track record.
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Applications should demonstrate how their proposal will support or administer support to achieve the priorities and aims of the award. This should include demonstration of:

- a high standard of artistic quality in terms of the mentorship and/or collaboration proposed and a clear demonstration
- overall feasibility, including the provision of additional financial and in-kind supports that may be provided through additional partnerships or collaborations.

## 1.2 Who can apply?

Applications are welcome from national-level amateur and voluntary resource-and-support organisations working in theatre and musical theatre in the Republic of Ireland that are not already in receipt of Arts Council Strategic, Partnership or Venues funding. Priority will be given to applicants who

- Have a track record of offering administrative and other resource-and-production support within amateur practice in theatre, music and/or musical theatre

*and/or*

- Have a track record of offering development supports by professional artists and arts professionals for the amateur sector.

As part of its [Equality, Human Rights & Diversity policy](#), the Arts Council is committed to offering **equality of access, opportunity and outcomes** for all potential applicants regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, or 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.

There are certain exceptions where the Arts Council may deem eligible applications made by those based outside the Republic of Ireland. However, before admitting as eligible any such application, the Arts Council would need to be satisfied that the outcomes of any such proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

### 1.3 Who is the applicant?

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

Any grant offered will be paid only into a bank account held in the name of the applicant.

All documentation provided must be in the name of the applicant (individual dance artist, local authority or arts centre) – e.g. if you apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name Máire de Barra, then all documentation, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. Variations such as Mary Barry or Barry Studios are not acceptable.

### 1.4 Who cannot apply?

Those who are not eligible to apply include the following:

- Organisations in receipt of funding from the Amateur and Voluntary Practice Pilot Scheme, Round 1 2021.
- Organisations in receipt of Strategic, Partnership or Arts Centre Funding. However, if you are such an organisation, you can support proposals by individuals or organisations for the scheme. You will need to certify that any activities you intend to support are distinct from, and separate to, your own funded activities.
- Individual local voluntary theatre and musical-theatre organisations
- Organisations or entities without a track record in the support, development, production and dissemination of amateur practice in theatre and musical theatre
- Organisations seeking funding to support vocational/undergraduate or postgraduate training.

### 1.5 What you may apply for?

The maximum amount awarded to each successful application is: **€125,000**

Applications under the Amateur and Voluntary Practice Pilot Scheme must be accompanied by an application form and a detailed budget setting out all income and expenditure that relate to it. The maximum amount you may request is the difference between the **total expenditure** and the **total income** you indicate in your detailed budget. The expenditure and income may relate to a period of up to one year.

- **Total expenditure** should include the costs of establishing and managing the proposal, including all core and administrative costs, promotion and publicity costs, etc.
- **Total income** should include all income relating to the resource and/or development, including what you expect to receive from other funders, production partners, commercial sponsorship, fundraising, and (where applicable) box-office receipts, programme sales, etc.

It is also important to reflect all in-kind support in both income and expenditure, so reflecting the full and true value of your proposal.

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**Note on** The Arts Council is committed to improving the pay and conditions of

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**artists' pay** artists. In this context, the Arts Council has published a [policy](#) on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists. This includes best-practice principles for all those working in the arts to aspire to.

All artists engaged in Arts Council-funded activities must be fairly paid. Anyone seeking funding from the Arts Council must tell us how they will ensure that artists will receive fair pay and conditions, and provide details of this in their budgets. We will use this as part of the application assessment process, and will not offer funding if we consider pay to be too low or below industry standards, or where the terms of engagement are not appropriate. Through our reporting mechanisms we will monitor compliance.

We do not set or recommend rates of pay, but we recognise the role of those organisations that are mandated to do so, and will refer to these where they exist. We also commit to supporting key representative and resource organisations to review industry rates and develop new tools that support the contracting process.

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

- Online, when you initiate the application (totals only)
- In section 3 of the application form
- In your detailed budget.

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

The Arts Council will consider additional costs if they are specifically related to the making of art by artists with disabilities. If you wish to apply for additional funding on this basis, you should provide information with your application outlining what these additional costs are.

Overall responsibility for the management of funds for the programme will be taken on by the applicant organisation.

## 1.6 What may you not apply for?

Activities and costs that you may not apply for include the following:

- Major capital purchases
- Ongoing core organisation costs

- Activities or costs that do not fit the purpose of the scheme
- Activities that are more suited to another award funded by the Arts Council or operated by other state agencies, such as Culture Ireland
- Activities that have already taken place or that will have commenced before a decision is made on your application
- Activities undertaken for charity-fundraising purposes, for participation in or organisation of a competition, or for primarily profit-making purposes
- Activities that have already been assessed by the Arts Council. An exception will be made if the Council has specifically advised you to redirect your application to this scheme. Please bear in mind that such advice is not an indication of a successful outcome.

### 1.7 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 funding under the scheme, you **must** submit the following support material online:

- A plan of the development programme you propose, including:
  - What you propose to do
  - Details of how you propose to select participants
  - Details of how your proposal intends to have an impact on the sector
  - Details of how your proposal will set and achieve standards of best practice, and how you intend to address the monitoring of this
  - Details of the outcomes you expect the programme to achieve, and how you propose to measure and monitor this achievement
- A detailed budget setting out proposed income and expenditure for your proposal
- Detailed, up-to-date CV (max. three pages) of the people who will oversee or manage the proposed programme
- Documentary evidence for **all** financial assistance (in cash or in kind) itemised within your proposal budget
- If your proposal involves working with vulnerable persons, you must provide a copy of your *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policies and Procedures*. Please see *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
- If your proposal involves working with animals, you must provide a copy of your *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*.



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

- 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 whether or not your proposal is relevant to this age group (in section 1.3 of the application form). 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. Please see [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) for more information.
- If your proposal involves working with vulnerable persons, you must submit an acknowledgement that you adhere to the *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* (see [here](#)).
- If your proposal involves working with animals, you must provide a copy of your *Animal Welfare Protection Policies and Procedures*.

**If you do not submit the required supporting material, your application will be deemed ineligible.**

### **1.8 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 1.2 to 1.4 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 1.5 above.
5. You apply for an activity or purpose that you cannot apply for, as set out in section 1.6 above.
6. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials, as set out in section 1.7 above.
7. 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 permitted to apply again with the same proposal in future funding rounds. If you do reapply, you should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements.

## 2. Making 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 issued (via email) with a unique ARN (Artist Reference Number) and password that you can use to sign in to Online Services.

#### Requirements for using Online Services

Your computer and Internet browser will need to meet the following requirements to use Online Services successfully:

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**PC** Windows 7 or higher  
with  
Internet Explorer 8.0 or higher OR Firefox 27 or higher OR Chrome 33 or higher

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**Mac** Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or higher  
*with*  
Safari 3.1 or Safari 10 OR Firefox 27 or higher OR Chrome 32 or higher

**Note:** if Safari 11 prevents upload of documents upgrade Safari browser, or use Firefox or Chrome

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**Note:** you will also need to have Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer installed to complete the application form. OpenOffice Writer is free software that can be downloaded here:

<http://www.openoffice.org>.

#### OpenOffice users:

##### You must use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier

More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer than 4.0.1 have resulted in problems with the appearance of application forms when they are submitted through Online Services.

Please refer to the Arts Council video *Using OpenOffice to Download, Complete and Upload the Application form* at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ArtsCouncilDemos>.

Apple Mac users should take note of the section that deals with the issue of downloading version 4.0.1 on Macs that have the latest version of Mac OS installed.

**Note:** Mac OS X 10.15 Catalina or later requires OpenOffice 4.1.7 or later.

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 form and submit it well in advance of the deadline.

Upload times can be much longer than download times. It may take you 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 2.30pm 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 current application form for the scheme. The application form is a Microsoft Word/OpenOffice Writer-compatible 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. This might include a CV or samples of your current work – e.g. text, video, images or sound recordings. See section **1.7 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 that are acceptable as part of an application.

File type	File extension
text files	.rtf/.doc/.docx/.txt
image files	.jpg/.gif/.tiff/.png

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sound files	.wav/.mp3/.m4a
video files	.avi/.mov/.mp4
spreadsheets	.xls/.xlsx
Adobe Acrobat Reader files	.pdf

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For convenience, gather together all the files you need in an accessible location on your computer.

### Submitting YouTube links

You may provide links to material hosted on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) instead of uploading the material directly. To do this, copy the URL (the full address of where your material is hosted on YouTube) into a Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer document and upload it as a weblink-supporting document.

**Note:** any links you provide **must** be for YouTube. Links to other hosting sites will not be viewed.

Check that the link works from within the document you upload – i.e. that it links correctly to your material on YouTube.

If you do not wish material you upload to YouTube for the purposes of your application to be publicly viewable, you can flag your video as ‘unlisted’ in its settings.

### 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 application.doc
	russelljackWIP.doc
	russelljack Child Protection Policy.doc
	russelljack youtube link.doc

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

## 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.

### 1. Choose funding programme and download application form

To start a new application, click the **Make an application** button on your the 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. Request funding amount

At this stage you specify the expenditure and income related to your proposal, and the amount of funding you are requesting. The amount you request should equal **Total expenditure** minus **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.

## 3. Upload application form and supporting material

Follow the prompts to upload your filled-in and saved application form, the description of your Theatre Resource and Development Scheme programme, and any other required supporting material (see section **1.7 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.

## 4. Submit application

When you are satisfied that you have uploaded everything you need to support your application, click **Submit**.

Once submitted, your application cannot be amended. Do not submit your application until you are completely satisfied.

You should expect to 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 related 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 The 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 **1.8 Eligibility** above.
  - 3 Adviser(s) and/or staff make a written assessment of the application based on the criteria and prepare recommendations for the Council.
  - 4 The Council will review and discuss the recommendations, and make final decisions on funding amounts based on the budget and the overall arts context.
  - 5 Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.
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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 ten 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 application form and the supporting materials submitted. All applications are assessed against criteria of **a)** artistic merit, **b)** how they meet the objectives and priorities of the scheme, and **c)** feasibility. Each of these criteria is described in turn.

While applicants may select other artforms/arts practices 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 applicant's previous practice as well as on the nature of the proposed activity and includes consideration of:

- The artistic quality of the projects and/or ideas the proposed resource and/or development activity will support or lead to as outlined in the application
- The track record of the applicant organisation demonstrated through the CV(s) and other supporting material submitted
- The artform/arts-practice context in which the activity is proposed
- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated by the proposal.

### **Meeting the objectives and priorities of the scheme**

Applications are assessed on how well they meet the objectives and priorities of the scheme – see section **1.1 Objectives and priorities of the scheme** for details of these.

### **Feasibility and value for money**

The assessment of feasibility and value for money considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the proposed activity and the level to which it enhances the impact of public funding. This includes consideration of:

- The personnel involved in managing, administering and delivering the resource and/or development programme
- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the provision of equitable conditions and remuneration for participating artists
- The involvement of project partners
- The proposed budget
- Other sources of income
- The availability of, and access to, other resources
- The proposed timetable or schedule.

### **Declaration of interest**

In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, a Council 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 Council member becomes aware of it. This may be at the point following receipt of the list of applicants. Where an interest is declared, the Council member will not receive papers relating to that applicant and will be required to leave the room when the specific application is being reviewed.

In some instances a Council member may not realise that a conflict of interest exists until s/he receives and reviews the papers. In such instances the Council member must alert an Arts Council staff member or the chair as soon as they become aware that a conflict may exist.

If the chair has a conflict of interest, s/he must declare it in writing in advance of the meeting as soon as s/he becomes aware of it. In this instance the deputy chair will chair the discussion on the application.

### **3.4 Outcome of applications**

All applicants are informed in writing about the outcome of their application.

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. If your application is not successful, you can request feedback from Arts Council staff. 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 circumstance you will be informed in writing.

#### **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.