



Young Ensembles Scheme 2024

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: 5.30pm (Ireland time), Thursday 29 February 2024

Note for people with disabilities or access requirements

The Arts Council makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities or access requirements 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, by phone (01 618 0200/01 618 0243) or by email (access@artscouncil.ie) as early as possible before the deadline.

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Key points to remember

- In order to make an application, you **must** be registered for an Arts Council Online Services (OLS) account. If you do not have one, you can sign up for one [here](#). Please note that it can take up to **five working days** for a new user to be registered on OLS, so give yourself plenty of time to do this ahead of the deadline.
- We strongly advise that you read this document carefully before beginning the process of making your application.
- We also strongly advise that you start the process early, and give yourself **plenty of time** to make your application
- We recommend that you aim to upload your application **at least forty-eight hours** before the advertised deadline. That way, if you encounter a technical problem, you will have time to contact us so that we can assist you in resolving it.
- Please note that, on account of the large volume of applicants using the online system on the last day of the deadline, we cannot guarantee that we can resolve any technical issues you may have if you contact us **after 2.00pm on the day of the deadline**.
- Please read the following checklist carefully:

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- I have read and understand these guidelines.
 - In the event that I have had an issue, I have contacted the Arts Council for assistance well in advance of the deadline.
 - I have filled in all of the sections of the application form relevant to my application.
 - I have prepared all required supporting material as set out in these guidelines, and have this ready to upload.
 - I have asked someone else to check over my application to make sure there are no errors and that nothing is missing.
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Getting help with your application

If you have questions about using the Online Services website, visit the FAQ section on our website: www.artscouncil.ie/FAQs/online-services/

If you have a technical question about the online application process and your question is not answered in the FAQ section, you can email onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or call the Arts Council on **01 618 0200/01 618 0243**

If you have a query about your application that is not technical in nature, you should email or phone the arts team to which you are applying for funding.
<http://www.artscouncil.ie/Contact-us/Staff-and-adviser-lists/>

To watch our YouTube guide on making an application, go to <http://www.youtube.com/artscouncildemos>

1. About the Young Ensembles Scheme

1.1 Objectives and priorities of the award

The primary purpose of the Young Ensembles Scheme is to support groups of young people between the ages of ten and twenty-four to create or actively engage with ambitious and original work in any artform (e.g. circus, street art, spectacle, dance, digital media, film, music, theatre, literature, visual arts, architecture or any combination of the above). Groups/ensembles must be made up of three or more members.

The Young Ensembles Scheme has two strands. You should choose the strand that is most suitable for your ensemble and for your proposal. You may only apply to one strand.

Strand 1

This strand is for ensembles that wish to undertake a process or project that will develop the practice and experience of the young people involved. You may apply for up to €10,000. Applicants may be new or established ensembles and must demonstrate their capacity to develop and deliver a high-quality artistic process.

Strand 2

This strand is for ensembles that wish to undertake a larger-scale process or project that develops the work of the ensemble and which will cost more than €10,000 and no more than €25,000. Applicants must be established ensembles with a track record of delivering high-quality artistic processes or projects. Applicants must make clear why a larger budget than is available under Strand 1 is required.

For both strands, priority will be given to applications that demonstrate the following:

- Young people have played a role in developing the proposal, and will play a central role in shaping, delivering, documenting and evaluating the project.
- The proposal will ensure a high-quality artistic process that is ambitious and original, provides a challenging and rewarding experience for the participants, and enables them to develop their artistic skills.
- The proposal will ensure young people have ownership of the work they undertake. This may mean they actively engage in the process of devising, creating, composing or designing an original piece of work or artistic initiative, or that they engage in a process of exploring, interpreting or reimagining a given script/composition/artistic work or series of works in a way that enables them to make it their own.
- The proposal is youth-led, or will actively support and develop youth leadership in the arts.
- The ensemble will benefit from the expertise, support or mentorship of professional artists or arts organisations.
- The proposal includes a presentation or sharing of work or work in progress. This may be small in scale (e.g. for participants and families) or for a wider audience.
- The proposal includes evidence of the ensemble's artistic activities or work produced to date, and how funding will enable the participants to develop their experience further. (In the case of a new ensemble, evidence of other relevant projects in which the young people or artistic mentors have been involved should be demonstrated.)

The Arts Council welcomes in particular:

- Initiatives that enable young people from diverse backgrounds to collaborate in a high-quality artistic process
- Initiatives that enable young people with disabilities to engage in a high-quality artistic process.

For more information, see the Arts Council's [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

Please see section 3.3 for details of the criteria against which all applications will be assessed – these are artistic merit, feasibility, and meeting the priorities of the award.

Please see section 1.7 for mandatory support material that will help you to demonstrate how your application meets these criteria and priorities.

For examples of previous projects that have been funded under the Young Ensembles Scheme and advice on making an application, see <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Young-people--children-and-education/Young-ensembles-scheme/>.

All awards are informed by the Arts Council's ten-year strategy (2016–25), *Making Great Art Work: Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland* (see here: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/arts-council-strategy/>).

This award is informed in particular by the [Arts Council's Policy and Plan for Children and Young People's Arts](#).

1.2 Who can apply?

The Young Ensembles Scheme is open to ensembles whose members are young people between the ages of ten and twenty-four. Examples include:

- Youth theatres
- Youth dance groups
- Youth orchestras
- Young bands
- Youth film, animation or digital-media groups
- Youth circus, spectacle or street-theatre groups
- Youth choirs
- Young traditional-music groups
- Young critics/curators

The award is open to groups that do not define themselves as ensembles but take a similar, collective, approach to creating or engaging with art. This includes:

- Groups of young visual artists who collaborate to create work or exhibitions of their work
- Groups of young poets or writers who publish or perform work together
- Groups of young people who combine a number of artforms to create shared performances/events
- Groups of young people who critically engage as audiences or readers with one or more artforms, and who share their responses and insights with others.

As part of its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), the Arts Council is committed to offering **equality of access, opportunity and outcomes** to all potential applicants regardless of their 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.

Not sure where to begin?

If you are a young person or group of young people who wish to apply under this scheme, you are advised to seek the support of an established organisation. If you are not sure how to do this or where to begin, please contact the Arts Council's Young People, Children and Education team at ypce@artscouncil.ie

Registering as a group or organisation

If you are an individual artist or youth-arts leader and you wish to support a group of young people in making an application, please note that you must register with the Arts Council as a group or organisation (rather than as an individual) before you begin the application (see section **2.1 Register with the Arts Council's Online Services**).

Multiple applications

Multiple applications are not permitted. An ensemble or group may only make one application to the Young Ensembles Scheme in 2024.

Applications from outside the Republic of Ireland

The award is open to individuals and organisations resident in the Republic of Ireland. 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 ensemble or group that will receive any grant offered and who will be required to accept the terms and conditions of that grant. Any grant offered will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of the ensemble or group.

All documentation provided must be in the name of the applicant ensemble or group – e.g. if you apply to the Arts Council for funding under the name Newtown Youth Theatre, then all documentation, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. Variations such as Newtown Youth Club are not acceptable. If you do not already have a bank account in the ensemble's name, you should be aware that this will be required to process payments if your application is successful.

1.4 Who cannot apply?

- Applicants seeking to create work for children and young people but in which children and young people are primarily consumers rather than active participants in developing the artistic initiative

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- Professional artists. However, ensembles are encouraged to partner with professional artists as mentors and collaborators, and may apply for fees to pay these artists for their time and support.
- Applicants seeking to pay fees to ensemble members. Professional ensembles should instead consider applying for other Arts Council schemes and supports. Please see [here](#) for a full list of available funding.
- Commercially driven schools, institutions or companies
- Primary and post-primary schools and third-level institutions
- Applicants in receipt of Arts Council Strategic or Arts Centre Funding in 2024. (However, applicants may avail of support from organisations in receipt of Strategic or Arts Centre Funding as partners, collaborators or mentors).

1.5 What may you apply for?

The maximum award available under Strand 1 is €10,000.

Applicants to Strand 2 may apply for an amount that is greater than €10,000 but no more than €25,000.

Applicants are strongly advised to choose the strand that is most suited to their proposal in order to make the best case for support.

If you apply for Strand 2, the Arts Council reserves the right to offer a lower amount of funding to applicants that have not sufficiently met the criteria for Strand 2 but are deemed suitable and feasible under Strand 1.

Access costs for artists or participants¹ with disabilities

In addition to the maximum amount permitted, the Arts Council will also consider access costs specifically relating to the making of work by artists or participants with disabilities and/or non-capital public-access costs (e.g. audio description, interpretation) in cases where your proposal has a public outcome.

The Arts Council takes the definition of disability from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states: 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'

If you wish to apply for access costs, please upload the following information with your application:

- A short document outlining additional access costs
- An amount for access costs in the expenditure section of your application-form budget. This figure should also be included in the total amount you request.

¹ The Arts Council defines participants as those who express themselves creatively by taking part in artistic activities. In broader terms, this includes anyone who engages with the arts in any way at any level – e.g. those attending an event, reading a book, watching a performance, etc.

What is an access cost?

Access costs for artists or participants with disabilities cover any requirements you may have in order to remove barriers that might stop you from completing your proposal. This may include, for example, costs towards additional time needed to complete an element of your proposal or additional assistance required to deliver your proposed activity.

Note: in the event that you are requesting access costs, you should include information about the costs and how you arrived at them as part of your supporting documentation (see section 1.7 below).

The amount you request is the difference between the **proposed expenditure** and the **proposed income** you indicate in section 3 of the application form.

- **Proposed expenditure** should include all the costs that you incur relating to your proposal. This could include artists' fees, * rehearsal and performance costs, venue/studio-hire costs, technical costs, promotion and publicity costs, administrative costs, etc. How you break down the costs of your proposal and allocate resources gives Arts Council assessors a good picture of the feasibility of your project and whether or not the proposed costs are realistic.

Successful applicants under this scheme are required to document, evaluate and report on how they use the award. Applicants should make provision for the cost of doing this.

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

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

* Note on artists' pay

The Arts Council is committed to improving the pay and conditions of artists. We have published a [policy](#) on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists. It is important that you read this policy in advance of making your application. You will be asked as part of the application process to set out how you will ensure proper pay and conditions for the artists that you work with. This will help us assess the feasibility of your application.

** 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 should also be declared on the income side.

Time contributed by directors or board members may not be reckoned as an in-kind cost.

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

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

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Make sure that the totals are the same on both, and make sure that the amount requested equals TOTAL EXPENDITURE minus TOTAL INCOME.

1.6 What may you not apply for?

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

- Major capital or equipment purchases
- Ongoing core costs
- Course fees or expenses to support full-time training programmes for individuals
- Artistic fees for the young-ensemble members (you may, however, apply to cover expenses that will enable young people to participate and for stipends for youth leaders)
- Activities or costs that do not fit the purpose of the award
- Activities that have already taken place or which will have commenced before a decision on your application will be made. (Decisions can take up to ten weeks following the application deadline. This year's deadline is 29 February 2024, so you should plan for your activities to begin no sooner than 9 May 2024.)
- Activities for charity-fundraising purposes, for participation in a competition, or for primarily profit-making purposes
- Activities taking place in a formal education context (i.e. school or college)
- Activities that have already been assessed by the Arts Council, unless you demonstrate that you have developed the proposal since previously applying **or** if the Council has specifically advised you to redirect your application to this award. Please bear in mind that such advice is not an indication of a successful outcome.

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 what supporting material is required below very carefully, as failure to comply with this is the most common reason for applications being deemed ineligible.

In order for the Arts Council to make an assessment of your application, you **must** submit the following supporting material online:

- Examples of previous relevant work of the ensemble or group – e.g. scripts, recordings, video clips or photos (see [Acceptable file formats](#) in section 2.3). In the case of a new ensemble, evidence of other relevant projects in which the young people or artistic mentors have been involved should be demonstrated.
- Evidence of the young-people's ownership of the proposal where this is not clearly demonstrated within the application form. Such evidence may include written/recorded testimonies or interviews with young people about their ambitions for the ensemble/project.
- Up-to-date CVs or biographies (max. three pages) of any professional artists or other key individuals who will provide mentorship or other support to the project; and/or
- Letters of support from professional artists, arts organisations or other key partners that will provide guidance or support for the proposed project.

If you are citing any collaboration or financial support in your application that is central to the feasibility of your proposal, you need to provide appropriate documentation – e.g. letters of offer, statements of support or similar documents.

We encourage you to collate your supporting material into a single document where possible. This makes it easier for our assessors to understand and review the information you submit. If you are collating material into a single document, please include a page at the front of the document listing the contents.

Additional material required in certain circumstances

If you are seeking additional access costs to support work by individuals with access requirements or to support access to your work by audiences with disability requirements, please provide a document outlining these costs, and outlining how they have been arrived at. Please also ensure that you include this additional amount as part of your budget.

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

For applications involving children and young people under the age of eighteen

The Arts Council requires all individuals and organisations providing services (e.g. cultural, recreational, educational) to children and young people under the age of eighteen to have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place. When making an application, you **must** indicate in section 1 of the application form whether or not your proposal is relevant to this age group.

- If you answer 'Yes' to this question in the application form and your application is successful, as a condition of funding you will be required to confirm and demonstrate that you have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place.
- If successful, you will be required to complete the Arts Council's Child Protection and Welfare Quality Assurance Self-audit at <https://childprotection.artscouncil.ie/>. Please visit www.tusla.ie for more information on Children First.
- You will also be required to update your details in the Profile Information tab in your Online Services account (do this by going to the 'Update your account' section).

For applications involving vulnerable adults

When making an application, you **must** indicate in section 1 of the application form whether or not your proposal involves work with or for vulnerable persons. If you answer 'Yes' to this question, you are indicating that you will work with, or present work to, this cohort as part of your proposal, and that you acknowledge that you have familiarised yourself with and adhere to the *National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse* (see [here](#)).

Please note that you may be asked to provide more evidence of adherence to these policies should your application be successful.

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

Format for supporting material

All supporting material for this funding programme **must be submitted online**. Hard-copy supporting material will not be accepted. Please follow these guidelines for the different kinds of supporting material.

We encourage you to collate your supporting material into a single document where possible. This makes it easier for our assessors to understand and review the information you submit. If you are collating material into a single document, please include a page at the front of the document listing the contents.

Whether you collate your supporting material into a single document or upload a number of supporting documents, please ensure all supporting material is clearly labelled.

For information on the file formats you may use for supporting material you wish to upload as part of your application, see section **2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application**.

Visual stills	Label all images clearly and make sure you supply relevant contextual information. This might include the title and date of works, media and dimensions, where work was presented, etc.
Moving-image work	Provide relevant contextual information. This might include details of the piece, when and where it was performed, how it was financed, and the names of the performers. If you are submitting a single extract, this should be no more than five minutes long. Long pieces should be edited; otherwise a selection of three extracts (max. five minutes each) should be submitted.
Music or sound recordings	Give the names of performers, and detail the instrumentation where appropriate.
Samples of writing	Please submit no more than ten pages of a script – it is not possible for Arts Council assessors to read full play scripts or manuscripts.

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc. must be uploaded as separate documents with your application.

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 do not submit a completed application form through the Arts Council's Online Services (an application form attached as a supporting document will not be accepted).
3. You fail to complete all of the sections in the application form relevant to your proposal.
4. You cannot apply as set out in sections 1.2 to 1.4 above.

5. 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 (except where you are applying for an additional amount to cover access costs).
6. You apply for an activity or purpose that you cannot apply for, as set out in section 1.6 above.
7. You fail to provide all mandatory supporting materials, as set out in section 1.7 above.
8. Your application is better suited to another funding programme offered by the Arts Council or by another funding agency (in this case we will redirect you to the more appropriate funding opportunity).

Note: in the event that your application is ruled ineligible, it will not be assessed, and you will be able to apply again with the same proposal in future funding rounds.

2. How to make your application

2.1 Register with the Arts Council's Online Services

All applications must be made through the Arts Council's Online Services; applications made in any other way (by post, fax or email) will not be accepted.

You must have an Online Services account to make an application. If you do not already have an Online Services account, sign up by filling out the registration form here:

<https://onlineservices.artscouncil.ie/register.aspx>.

Within five working days you will be emailed a unique ARN (Artist Reference Number) and password that you can use to sign in to Online Services.

Requirements for using Online Services

Note: You will need to use a computer/laptop to submit your application. Our Online Services website does not work on phones or tablets.

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

PC Windows 7 operating system or a newer version of Windows with browser versions: Microsoft Edge (v.94) or Firefox (v.27) or Chrome (v.33), or a newer version of any of these browsers.

Mac Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or a newer version of Mac operating system with browser versions: Safari (v.3.1) or Firefox (v.27) or Chrome (v.32) or Microsoft Edge (v.94), or a newer version of any of these browsers.

Note: if Safari 11 prevents the upload of documents, use a newer version of Safari or use a different browser such as Firefox, Chrome or Microsoft Edge.

Note: you will also need to have Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer installed to complete the application form itself. OpenOffice Writer is free software that can be downloaded here: <https://www.openoffice.org>.

OpenOffice Users

Please refer to our video *Using OpenOffice to download, complete and upload the application form* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT9Xxgmg0Eo>

You **must** use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier. More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer than 4.0.1 have changed how our application forms appear when they are submitted through Online Services.

Important notes for Apple Mac users

- Note the section in the YouTube video (at 1 min. 20 secs; link provided above) that deals with the issue of downloading version 4.0.1 on Macs with the operating system Mac OS Mojave or an earlier version installed.

- You cannot download OpenOffice 4.0.1 onto a Mac with the operating system Mac OS Catalina. If your Mac has this operating system or a newer version installed, you will have to download and use OpenOffice version 4.1.9 or newer.

If you cannot meet, or do not understand, any of these requirements, please contact us for advice as far as possible in advance of the deadline.

Give yourself enough time to complete the application

You should become familiar with the Online Services website well in advance of the deadline and in advance of preparing an application. It is likely that there will be heavy traffic on the site on the final afternoon of the closing date. You should prepare your application and submit it well in advance of the deadline.

Upload times can be much longer than download times. It may take longer than you think to upload your supporting materials.

Getting technical support

If you need technical support while making an online application, you can contact the Arts Council by emailing onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or by phoning 01 6180200/01 6180243. We recommend you report any technical issues with us well in advance of the deadline. Please provide a contact phone number and make sure that you are available to receive a return call from us.

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

Please note that there is often a high volume of calls as the deadline approaches and that technical-support calls received after 2.00pm on the closing date may not be resolved before the deadline.

2.2 Fill in the application form

If you have not already done so, download the application form for the award you wish to apply for. The application form is a Microsoft Word/OpenOffice Writer document that you fill in offline (on your own computer). The application form includes guidance on how to fill in each of its sections.

Note: the application form is formatted in such a way that the Arts Council can extract information from the form for assessment purposes. It is **very important** that you type inside the grey boxes in the form, and that you do not delete them and/or type outside them. If you do this, the form will not upload properly.

2.3 Prepare any supporting material required for the application

You are required to include supporting material with your application. For example, this might include a CV or samples of your current work – e.g. text, video, images or sound recordings (see section **1.7 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 for your supporting material.

File type	File extension
text files	.rtf/.doc/.docx/.txt
image files	.jpg/.gif/.tiff/.png
sound files	.wav/.mp3/.m4a
video files	.avi/.mov/.mp4
spreadsheets	.xls/.xlsx
Adobe Acrobat Reader files	.pdf

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

Submitting URL links

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc. must be uploaded as separate documents with your application.

Instead of uploading material directly, you may provide links to material hosted on streaming platforms that do not limit access through financial subscription. To do this, copy the URL (the full address of where your material is hosted) into a Microsoft Word/OpenOffice Writer or PDF document and upload it as a weblink-supporting document.

While not an exclusive list, examples of acceptable sharing platforms would be YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, Bandcamp.

Please note that we will not accept links to file-sharing sites (e.g. Google Drive) nor links to social media platforms nor to individual applicants' websites.

Note: assessors will only view materials as submitted by you according to the URL link that you provide. Check that the link works from within the document you upload – i.e. that it links correctly to your material.

If you do not wish material you upload to YouTube for your application to be publicly viewable, you can flag your video as 'unlisted' in the settings. Please do not flag your material as 'private' as it will not be accessible to Arts Council assessors.

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.

Good filenames for an applicant	russelljack Architecture Project application.doc
	russelljack performance clip.mp4

called Jack	russelljack Architecture Project budget template round 2.xls
Russell	russelljack youtube link.doc

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.

2.4.1 Choose a funding programme and download application form

To start a new application, click the **Make an application** button on your home page, and follow the prompts to choose the funding programme you wish to apply for and to give your application a unique reference by which to identify it. At this stage you can also download the application form (if you have not already done so).

2.4.2 Request funding amount

At this stage specify the expenditure and income related to your proposal, and the amount of funding you are requesting. The **Amount requested** should equal the **Total expenditure** minus the **Total income**. The final figures you enter here should be the same as those you enter in section 3 of the application form and in your detailed budget.

2.4.3 Upload application form and supporting material

Follow the prompts to upload your completed application form, CV or CVs, detailed budget 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.

Note: if you have completed your application form as a **.docx** file and you are confident that your application form is filled in correctly (including typing inside the grey fields) but Online Services displays a message saying 'Cannot upload form', please try saving it as a **.doc** file and uploading it again.

2.4.4 Submit application

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

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

You should receive two emails. The first will be issued immediately your application is received by the Arts Council. The second may arrive a few minutes later and will contain your application number, which will be used in all correspondence relating to this application. **Note:** it is important that you contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie if you **do not** receive the second confirmation email containing the application number.

3. Processing and assessment of applications

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 for funding.

If you do not receive the email with your application number, contact 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.
 - 4 Adviser(s) and/or staff recommend an application as shortlisted or not shortlisted.
 - 5 A peer panel reviews all shortlisted applications and associated materials, then scores and makes decisions.
 - 6 Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants.
 - 7 Decisions are noted by Council.
-

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 available resources. All applications are assessed against criteria of **a)** artistic merit, **b)** how they meet the objectives and priorities of the award, 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 Young People, Children and Education team, 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. This includes:

- The quality of the idea and the proposed arts activity as outlined in the application form and in the supporting materials submitted

- The track record of the applicant demonstrated through the examples of the ensemble's work, CV(s) of mentors or adult leaders, and other supporting materials submitted
- The potential of the applicant demonstrated through the application form and other supporting materials submitted
- The artform/arts-practice context in which the activity is proposed
- The ambition, originality and competency demonstrated by the applicant.

Meeting the objectives and priorities of the award

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

Feasibility

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

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

3.4 Peer panels

The purpose of peer-panel meetings is to allow for a diversity of expert views to inform the decision-making process. Peer panels normally consist of at least three external adjudicators with relevant artform and/or arts-practice expertise.

Each meeting is usually led by an Arts Council member acting as non-voting chair. Arts Council advisers and staff attend as required, and those involved in the initial assessment of applications are on hand to provide information as required. Panellists have access to all shortlisted applications and associated materials prior to the day of the meeting, at which point they review, discuss and score shortlisted applications. Following this, applications are ranked by score. In light of the competitive context and the available budget, it is likely that the Arts Council will be able to fund only a proportion of the applications received.

Declaration of interest

In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, a panel member must declare an interest where they have a close personal or professional link with the applicant or are linked in any way with the application. An 'interest' is either 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' (e.g. familial relationships, personal partnerships, or formal or informal business partnerships, etc.).

The interest must be declared as soon as the panellist becomes aware of it. This may be at the point when they are approached to sit on the panel (if the 'interest' is known at that stage) or following receipt of the list of applicants. Where an interest is declared, the panellist will not receive papers relating to that applicant and will be required to leave the room when the specific application is being reviewed. Where this situation arises, the chair will vote in lieu of the panellist.

In some instances a panellist may not realise that a conflict of interest exists until they receive and review the panel papers. In such instances the panellist must alert an Arts Council staff member or the panel chair as soon as they become aware that a conflict may exist.

In the event of two panellists declaring a conflict of interest for the same application, the chair will be part of the decision-making process for that specific application.

If the nominated panel chair has a conflict of interest they must declare it in writing in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware of it. In this instance the head of team will chair the discussion on the conflicted application.

3.5 Outcome of applications

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

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 or contact the Arts Council for a copy of the appeals-process information sheet.