

Selection and Engagement of Artists / Creative Practitioners

Introduction

The Arts Council's vision is for an Ireland where artists whose exceptional talent and commitment lead them to work professionally in the arts and can have productive and rewarding careers. We seek to create an environment in which artists can make work of ambition and quality, and be remunerated appropriately.

This document is intended to offer support to schools participating in the Creative Schools initiative, but it is the responsibility of each school to manage their own procurement processes. It aims to provide guidance to Creative Schools and their Creative Associates on the selection and engagement of artists / creative practitioners. By practitioners we include designers and craftspeople or those working in mediums used for the purpose of creative or interpretative expression. They can come from the arts, culture, heritage, creative industries and other sectors. Practitioners can be freelance individuals or work within organisations.

As part of their Creative School Plan schools may choose to spend some, or all, of their award on engaging artist(s) / practitioner(s) to support them to implement their Creative School Plan.

Best- practice principles

This guidance draws on Paying the Artist: An Arts Council policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists, the full document can be found [here](#). Recipients of Arts Council funding, including Creative Schools are expected to pay artists / practitioners fairly and engage them appropriately. The policy highlights a range of best-practice principles including:

- Being open, transparent and upfront in communications with artists / practitioners to ensure clarity from both perspectives on the ask and the offer.
- Complying with rates, terms, practices and standards recommended by representative and resource organisations, and utilising available toolkits and resources to support the contracting process.
- Ensuring all engagements are covered by a contract.
- Ensuring that remuneration and contracts reflect the full scope of what an artist / practitioner is expected and required to deliver and ensuring they have a voice in negotiating terms and conditions.
- Being clear about the nature and status of an engagement and ensuring that payments reflect and/or differentiate between fees and expenses, including per diems or other relevant payments.

- Being clear and upfront about how and when payments will be made.

Useful pointers

The following provide some useful pointers for schools to also consider when engaging artists / practitioners:

- Be careful not to be too prescriptive in specifying what you want artists / practitioners to do - leave room for them to bring their creativity to a role. Be open to new ideas and be prepared for the unexpected.
- Alongside considering their knowledge, skills and experience ensure you understand their approach, practice and the qualities they will bring to working creatively with children, young people and teachers.
- Children and young people should have a role in the selection process. The learning benefits of this include children and young people having greater levels of engagement as stakeholders in the programme which can lead to much high levels of participation in the activities.
- Be sure to account for contact time as well as any preparatory work you want artists / practitioners to do and any materials or expenses you are asking them to incur.
- Involve artists / practitioners in the detailed planning of the activity at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Consider how teachers and other school staff should work alongside them in the classroom/learning environment, in ways that allow both skill sets to complement each other and for learning for all to take place.

Selection and engagement

Schools are likely to have their own developed procurement policies and guidelines for procurement which will need to be followed. The Office of Public Procurement has a useful guide called Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services which can be found [here](#). In addition a summary of the requirements for a range of contract values can be found at Appendix 3.

Artists / practitioners may be selected and engaged in a variety of ways including:

1. The further development of an existing relationship with a school through their engagement with the Creative Schools process.
2. Being identified by the school through research and / or recommendations in partnership with the Creative Associate.
3. Through a competitive process either limited to invited practitioners or an open process where practitioners propose what they can provide and quote their costs. When undertaking an open competitive process your Creative Associate can advise on the most relevant networks through which to advertise your call.

Documents to support the selection and engagement of Artists / Creative Practitioners

The following documents can support schools in the selection and engagement of practitioners:

- Appendix 1: Brief for selecting practitioners
- Appendix 2: Paying practitioners
- Appendix 3: Procurement guidelines

APPENDIX 1: Brief for selecting artists / practitioners

To support the selection of artists / practitioners schools may wish to issue a brief. A template brief is attached.

Artist / Creative Practitioner Brief Example	
School name:	
Address:	
School website	
School email	
Contact name	
Contact email	
Closing date	
Queries and clarifications	
Interview date	
Main artform/area of practice required	
Focus of the activity/project	
Who we are looking for:	
Scope of the work and the offer	
Brief description of the activity/project	
Criteria for assessment	
Information required from applicants	

Notes on filling in a brief:

Queries and clarifications

Insert the email address of the contact for queries and clarifications and the deadline for receipt of any queries/clarifications.

Closing / Interview dates

If possible allow at least 2 weeks between circulating the brief and the closing deadline. This will help to ensure that a good number of artists / practitioners will see it and have time to respond. If you decide to hold interviews give those dates with the brief.

Activity / Project focus

Please try to summarise your initial ideas for the activity / project into one or two sentences including any specific age groups, curriculum area and focus. This is designed to help artists / practitioners to decide at a glance whether they are suitable and interested in the activity/ project.

Who we are looking for?

Describe the type of person or people you'd like to work with. You will of course want your artist / practitioner to be able to work successfully with pupils and you could include knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, attributes, interests and qualities you and the children and young people in your school are looking for.

Scope of the work

Details of start and finish dates and, if possible, guidance on the minimum commitment required, e.g. working in school for half a day a week for term X in the 2020/21 school year.

Include information about your school and the school community. Include the total fee available.

Include requirements for Garda vetting in this section.

Brief description of the activity/project

This is your chance to describe your initial ideas in greater detail. Bear in mind that you will spend time discussing, devising and agreeing your final activity/project plan with your artist(s) / practitioner(s). So try not to be too prescriptive in your description and focus more on starting points for discussions, including your area of focus and any anticipated learning outcomes for pupils, teachers and the school you hope to achieve through the activity/project.

Criteria for assessment

Here you should provide details of how you evaluate the tenders responses based on your criteria. Below is an example of award criteria and how they might be weighted but you must decide what is relevant in each case.

- The knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, attributes, interests and qualities of the applicant – weighting of 35%

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of the work – weighting of 35%
- Proposed costs – weighting of 30%.
- **Information required from applicants**
 Insert what information you require from applicants which may also include insurance requirements if successful. Below is an example of the type of information you may require: Name, address, email and phone contact details
- Information about their understanding of the brief
- Information on relevant knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, attributes, interests and qualities as they relate to the brief (this can be in the form of a CV)
- Confirmation that insurance requirements will be met
- Confirmation that they have the capacity to deliver the work.

Interviewing

Artists / practitioners are generally not paid to attend or be involved in interviews. Face to face interviews are generally best but travel time, cost and availability may mean the other digital approaches like Zoom or Skype interviews might need to be considered. Generally speaking you should try to keep the interview to a maximum of 45 minutes.

It is worth discussing fees at the interview so you are clear about what is and is not included in a price.

Finally, once you've selected your artist(s) / practitioner(s) please ensure you inform the unsuccessful applicants within 24 hours. At this stage it is good practice to give verbal feedback on why the applicant wasn't successful.

APPENDIX 2: Paying artists/ practitioners

We are committed to making sure that artists / practitioners are paid appropriately for their work in Creative Schools however there are no standard or set rates of pay. The amount is likely to depend on a number of factors, including experience and skills, the type of work and the length of the contract.

The Arts Council acknowledges the role of representative and resource organisations in providing information and advice, including guidelines on rates of pay. A useful document which includes details of organisations that either represent the interests of, or provide resources to professional artists can be found [here](#). It provides contact links and, where appropriate, identifies pay rates, resources, toolkits, template or guidelines that can be accessed through these bodies. The list is broken down on the basis of arts sectors.

APPENDIX 3: Procurement guidelines

If a school does not have its own guidelines and policy on procurement the following table drawn from guidelines on good practice in public procurement, will be useful.

Estimated value exclusive of VAT	Tender Action Required
Up to €1,000	Minimum of 1 written quotation required
€1,001 to €5,000	Minimum of 2 written quotations required
€5,001 to €25,000	Minimum of 3 written quotations based on a clear written specification of requirements

Note: Appendix 1, Brief for selection of artists / practitioners can be used to seek written quotations.