IMMERSIVE ARTS

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SHORT SUMMARY

This document outlines the guidelines for applying to the 2025 round of Immersive Arts funding. You can find other other accessible formats [here](#).

We recommend you read this document in full before applying, below are some key points.

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- There are three strands of funding available: [Explore (£5,000](); [Experiment (£20,000]()); [Expand (£50,000)](). Designed to support artists at different stages of their creative development with immersive technologies.

- We know the term immersive art means different things to different people. We define it as **'art that uses technology to actively involve the audience'.**

- Applications must be made via our [application portal]().

- **The deadline for applications is 14.00 BST, Monday 29 September 2025.**

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ABOUT IMMERSIVE ARTS

Immersive Arts is an ambitious three-year programme taking place across the UK, using an artist-led approach to working with immersive technologies. The programme is run by a [collaborative consortium](#) who are embedded within the UK's immersive arts and research communities and committed to creating positive change in the sector.

This exciting programme encourages artists of all backgrounds and experience to explore, experiment or expand how they work, or would like to, with immersive technologies.

You don't have to be tech-savvy (though you can be) to apply. All you need is a curious mind and a creative practice. Then, through a mix of funding, training, research and events, Immersive Arts will

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support you in developing your creative ideas and skills.

Essentially, it's all about breaking down barriers, making what can be an exclusive field of practice, much more accessible to all. In this way, we want to amplify as many different voices as we can, to help disrupt established ways of being, doing, thinking and creating.

Funding for Immersive Arts is provided through a collaboration between the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Arts Council England, the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), Creative Scotland and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). Funding from Creative Scotland, ACW and ACNI is provided by The National Lottery.

[You can read more about us on our website.](#)

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ABOUT THE FUNDING

With over £3.6million funding available between 2024 and 2027, Immersive Arts will support over 200 UK-based artists through three strands:

- [Explore £5,000](#)
- [Experiment £20,000](#)
- [Expand £50,000](#)

Each strand is designed to support artists at different stages in their creative development with immersive technologies.

You can read more about each funding strand below. If you are unsure which to apply for, you can take our [online quiz.](#)

Eligible artists can submit one application in this round of funding, to either Explore, Experiment or

Expand. You can apply for this round of funding regardless of whether you applied in a previous round.

Applicants should apply for the full amounts in each strand (ie £5,000, £20,000 or £50,000). You do not require match funding to apply.

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Explore – £5,000

Grant period	up to 6 months
This is for:	• artists with little or no experience in immersive arts • individuals, small creative collectives or organisations (of 10 people or fewer)
Helps artists with:	• early stage exploration of immersive technologies • developing basic immersive arts skills and knowledge • experiencing immersive artworks • meeting potential collaborators and partners • expanding immersive arts networks *We don't expect you to make a finished piece of work with the Explore funding,*

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	but we will ask you to share learning in a short report at the end.
Criteria that will be used to review applications.	**The proposed activity:** 1. has a clear question(s) the artist wants to explore that uses immersive technology in a creative way. 2. has the potential to positively impact the applicant's creative practice. 3. is clear, achievable and resourced appropriately when considering the budget and timeline; and includes any relevant facilities, technology, partners or roles.

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Experiment – £20,000

Grant period	up to 9 months
This is for:	• artists who have a creative idea, or concept, they want to develop and test with small audiences or focus groups • individuals, small creative collectives or organisations (of 10 people or fewer)
Helps artists to:	• create experimental artworks, proofs-of-concept or prototypes to test out with small audiences in order to gain learnings or insights • experiment with immersive technology in a way that is new, or develops their practice • embed access, diversity and inclusion relevant to their project. *We don't expect you to make a finished piece of work with Experiment funding (although you can if you wish), but you will be expected to test your project with a small audience, or*

	user-group, and write a short report at the end.
Criteria that will be used to review applications.	**The proposal:** 1. communicates a strong, artistic idea that will enable the applicant to experiment with immersive technology. 2. outlines a clear rationale and plan for testing the work with an audience, and can articulate how this will impact the project development. 3. has the potential to positively impact the applicant(s)' creative practice. 4. contains relevant and appropriate access, diversity and/ or inclusion considerations in the development of the work. 5. budget and timeline are relevant, clear, and achievable. 6. is appropriately resourced, outlining clearly any relevant team members, collaborators, partners, facilities, and/or technology required.

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Expand – £50,000

Grant period	up to 12 months
This is for:	• artists wanting to develop an existing immersive artwork prototype/ proof of concept • creative teams, collectives and organisations (of 50 people or fewer)
Helps artists to:	• significantly progress an existing prototype • bring well-developed concepts to fruition with comprehensive support • enhance audience engagement and reach • embed access, diversity and inclusion relevant to the project. *We don't require you to make a finished piece of work with the Expand funding (although you can if you wish), but you will need to make significant progress and write a short report at the end.*

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Criteria that will be used to review applications.	The proposal: 1. presents a clear and original immersive artwork, focused on the development of an existing prototype or proof-of-concept. 2. shares evidence, documentation and learning from an existing prototype or proof-of-concept, and demonstrates a clear vision and plan for the next stage of their project. 3. presents a clear rationale and plan for reaching an audience, either in depth of engagement or scale of reach. 4. contains relevant and appropriate access, diversity and/ or inclusion considerations in the development and/ or presentation of the work. 5. budget and timeline are relevant, clear and achievable. 6. is appropriately resourced, outlining clearly any relevant team members, collaborators, partners, facilities, and/or technology required.

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Training and support

As well as funding, each strand includes bespoke training and support.

Strand	Training & Support offered
Explore	3 x meetings with an Immersive Arts Producer - Facilitated Peer to Peer network - Nation-specific events and opportunities
Experiment	- Development Labs (see below for more information) 3 x meetings with an Immersive Arts Producer - Facilitated Peer to Peer network - Nation-specific events and opportunities
Expand	- Bespoke mentoring designed by Crossover Labs 3 x meetings with an Immersive Arts Producer - Facilitated Peer to Peer network - Nation-specific events and opportunities

Development Labs (Experiment only)

This training provides focussed support for Experiment funded projects, led by Crossover Labs with a team of expert industry mentors.

The labs will focus on developing project concepts, user experience, audience strategy and practical elements - such as finance plans, timelines and prototype planning.

We will have two flexible options:

- **Residential (March 2026)**
  One week (five days)
- **Relaxed online track (March-April 2026)**
  Ten half days spread over a longer duration in response to the cohort. Designed for artists with access requirements and/ or caring roles for whom a residential model may not be a good fit.

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HOW & WHEN TO APPLY?

All three funding strands are open for applications until **14:00 (BST), Monday 29 September 2025.**

Round two timeline

Funding strand	Deadline	Applicants notified	Contracting	Project durations
Explore	29 September 2025	January 2026	January 2026	Feb - July 2026
Experiment	29 September 2025	January 2026	January 2026	Feb - October 2026
Expand	This strand has two-stages to the application process, to help protect artists' time.			
Stage one expression of interest	29 September 2025	December 2025	January 2026	Feb 2026 - Jan 2027
Stage two interview	December 2025	January 2026		

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How to apply

To apply for funding you need to create an account on our [application portal](#). We recommend reading this [step-by-step guide](#) before you start your application.

You can make an application by text, audio or video, and in English, Welsh or British Sign Language.

Please check the specific guidance in the application form for each question to ensure your answers are within the word count, time-limit and file size.

You can save and return to your application - you don't have to complete it in one go. Make sure you complete all required sections and upload all requested documents before submitting.

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If you need help accessing or submitting your application, please [get in touch](#).

Supporting documents

You can upload documents or links to support your application, make sure they meet the following criteria:

- **Weblinks**

  Please link to specific pages, projects, articles, etc, that you want us to look at, rather than a general website homepage or social media account.

- **Documents**

  Can be a maximum of two pages or slides and no more than 5MB We accept the following formats - .pdf/ .doc/ .docx/ .ppt/ .pptx/ .xls/ .xlsx

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- **Image files can be a maximum of 5MB**

  We accept the following formats - .jpeg/ .jpg / .png/ .gif

- **Video files can be a maximum of 10MB**

  We accept the following formats - .mp4/ .mov/ .avi

  If you need to reduce or compress your video files you can use tools such as [handbrake](#).

- **Audio files can be a maximum of 10MB**

  We accept the following formats - .mp3/ .wav/ .aac

Note we can only review 10 minutes of audio and video files per application. If the file you are sharing is longer, please specify the time codes for the 10 minutes you would like us to review.

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ACCESS SUPPORT

What is available?

You can apply to Immersive Arts by audio, video or text, and in English, Welsh, or British Sign Language using our [application portal](#).

[These guidelines are available](#) to download in:
- large print
- easy read
- audio
- British Sign Language
- Welsh.

If you prefer to prepare your answers offline, you can [download previews of the application forms](#).

How to request access support

In some cases, we can help you with your application by supporting access costs, like

support workers or interpreters.

The deadline to request access support is **17:00 (BST), Monday 1 September 2025**. This is four weeks before the application deadline, which gives us a bit of time to ensure you get the support you need.

To request application access support, please [complete this form](#).

You can find more information about access support and how to contact us on our [access support page](#).

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ELIGIBILITY, ARTFORMS & TECHNOLOGIES

Eligibility criteria

You are eligible to apply for an Immersive Arts grant if:

- you are an individual artist, creative practitioner or creative technologist
- you are an arts-based organisation, small group or collective (10 people or fewer for Explore and Experiment, up to 50 people for Expand)
- your application is artist-led and/ or arts-focussed
- you are based in the UK
- you are aged 18 or over
- you have a UK bank account in your own name.

See also the criteria for each funding strand on pages 4-8.

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What counts as 'immersive art'?

We know the term 'immersive art' has many meanings for different people and across many sectors. For this programme, we mean **'art that uses technology to actively involve the audience'.**

We are interested in the use of virtual, augmented and extended reality in the creation of artwork that bridges physical and digital spaces, engages multiple senses, and connects people to each other and/ or to their environment.

Proposals must meet the above definition of 'immersive art' to be eligible for funding.

Below are some examples of immersive technologies that meet our definition, you can

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read more about them in our [glossary](#).

- Augmented Reality (AR)
- Binaural sound
- Extended Reality (XR)
- Haptics and sensory feedback
- Mixed Reality (MR)
- Responsive environments
- Spatial audio
- Spatial computing
- Virtual Reality (VR)
- 360-degree video

All artforms are eligible as long as the applicant demonstrates a genuine interest in exploring, experimenting with, or expanding their use of immersive technologies in their creative practice. We

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are also interested in supporting bilingual or multilingual productions.

What doesn't meet our definition of 'immersive art'?

We welcome applications which make the case for using other technologies that enable an audience to be actively involved in the artwork.

However, when reflecting on applications in our first open call, technologies frequently found to be out of scope included; projections and projection mapping; light shows; artist films, concerts and performances; where proposals did involve technology, but not in a way that actively involved the audience.

We also received a number of applications that seemed well shaped for other sources of public

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funding, but that did not meet our criteria. Such as business development; tools development; technology for marketing; funding to run another programme that was funding artists; and academic research.

You can read more detail in the [Round 1 Commentary](#) on our website.

What can the funds be used for?

You will need to outline a budget as part of your application. Please read the short overview for each strand for information on the criteria and focus:

- [Explore](#)
- [Experiment](#)
- [Expand](#)

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The Immersive Arts programme does not require you to have match funding in order to apply.

Eligible costs

You will need to outline your budget as part of your application. See below for the types of things you can use our funds for:

Project Development	Planning, research and development, and execution of immersive arts projects.
Materials and equipment	Purchase or rental of materials, equipment, software licences and other technical tools.
Professional fees	Payment for your own time and any other artists, collaborators, technical

	support and other professionals involved in the project (see [guidance on fair pay](#) on page 20).
Training fees	Formal or informal support or learning related to the project.
Travel, accommodation and subsistence	For collaborations, research, residencies, attending relevant events, workshops or project-related activities.
Marketing/ audience development	For Experiment and Expand strands only.
Venue hire	Studios or spaces required for project development, rehearsals, events or exhibitions.

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*Access and inclusion	Costs that support accessible, diverse and inclusive audience engagement and participation (eg sign language interpreters, captioning, creating accessible formats, etc).

*Access costs for artists/ artists teams do not need to be included at this stage. We will ask all successful applicants for details of any access requirements needed to participate in the programme (ie support workers, interpreters and travel costs). Where relevant, we can provide some additional funding to contribute to that access support. Find out more on our [access support page](#).

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Ineligible costs

While Immersive Arts aims to provide comprehensive support for the development of creative practice, there are certain activities and costs that are not eligible for funding.

Understanding these ineligible costs will help ensure your application aligns with the funding eligibility and criteria.

Examples of ineligible costs:
- capital expenditures
- overheads/ general running costs not related to the project
- debt repayment
- non-artistic activities
- fundraising events
- equipment not directly related to the project
- formal education and tuition fees

- academic activity (eg work undertaken as part of a university course, or teaching or research)
- costs already covered by other income or funding
- alcohol

Guidance on fair pay

Ensuring fair pay for all individuals involved in your project is a key principle of the Immersive Arts programme. We therefore expect any applicant seeking funding to pay themselves and others involved with their project fairly.

Fair pay helps to maintain industry standards, supports sustainability in the arts and fosters a professional and respectful working environment.

Where applicable and appropriate, we expect applicants to state an appropriate industry pay

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standard in their budgets. These resources may help you incorporate fair pay into the budget section of your funding application:

- [Artist's Union England](#)
- [Artists' Union Scotland](#)
- [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#)
- [a-n The Artists Information Company](#)
- [Unlimited's Nothing for Nothing campaign](#)

Guidance on VAT

This funding is inclusive of any VAT which may be applicable. Therefore you should budget for any relevant VAT associated with your project proposal.

Guidance on ineligible academic research/activity

We understand that academic and research collaborations may be part of your creative

practice. Artists can apply with a project that has an academic partner involved, but academic organisations cannot be a lead applicant.

The funding can be used to pay for costs to access university facilities (eg loaning kit, renting lab or test spaces, technician support, etc). It cannot be used to pay for formal academic activity (ie work undertaken as part of a university course, teaching, or research). If an academic researcher is involved with your project, we would expect their costs, including their time and any associated Full Economic Costing (FEC), to be met through other means.

If you're unsure about ineligible costs, please get in touch.

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SELECTION PROCESS

Initial eligibility check

- Submitted applications will undergo an initial review to ensure they have been completed correctly and meet the eligibility criteria ().

- Applications that meet the funding criteria will progress to the next stage.

Criteria evaluation & scoring

- Eligible applications are reviewed by a panel of experts in the field of immersive arts. Our reviewers are from a broad range of backgrounds, reflecting the programme's values regarding access, diversity and inclusion.

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- Explore applications that meet the criteria ([see page 4](#)) will be recommended for funding. If there are more qualifying applications than funds available, a longlist from each nation will be created using random sampling. That selection will move forward to portfolio balancing.

- Experiment and Expand applications will be reviewed and scored against their relevant criteria (see [page 5-8](#)). The highest scoring will move forward to the interview and/ or portfolio balancing.

Interview (Expand only)

- Shortlisted applicants for Expand will be notified in late November/ early December 2025 and invited to interviews in December

2025.

- Shortlisted applicants will be asked to prepare a short presentation, alongside a detailed budget and schedule.

Portfolio balancing

- A final process of curation and balancing will be made by the Immersive Arts national partners, ensuring a range of ideas, artforms, geographical location and lived experience are represented in the cohort.

- All applicants will be told in January 2026 whether their application has been successful or not.

Application feedback

We will not be able to give individual feedback, as we are expecting a high volume of applications. But we are committed to sharing learning from the programme - we will write a short report reflecting on this round of applications to share insight into why some applications were more successful than others.

You can read the feedback from our first round here