Ards and North Down Borough Council

Individual Artist Grant

2027 - 2028

For opportunities taking place from 1 April 2027 – 31 March 2028

Application Criteria and Guidance Notes

Deadline for applications: Monday 8 February 2027

General Conditions of Application:

- All applications must be: completed in full, submitted with all necessary supporting information and received by the closing date set out in the advertisement and application form.
- Late / incomplete / retrospective applications will not be considered.
- Applications to the Individual Artist Grant will open every year.
- Grants awarded are subject to budget approval.

Applications can be submitted via:

Online via: https://andculture.org.uk/funding/individual-artist-grant

If you require this application form in a different format, please email artsgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or phone 028 9181 0803 before the deadline date.

Please read these guidance notes carefully before submitting an application

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Ards and North Down Borough Council

Individual Artist Grant Criteria and Guidance Notes 2027 - 2028

For opportunities taking place between 1 April 2027 – 31 March 2028

The aim of Ards and North Down Borough Council's Individual Artists Grant is to enhance professional development across all artforms through funding for short term courses/residencies/development opportunities.

This is an annual grant scheme. If in the event that there is remaining budget for this scheme, it may open for a second round of applications in June 2027 for activity taking place from 1 September 2027 – 31 March 2028. Funding is only available to successful applicants once per financial year. Therefore, if the applicant has received an award for this grant scheme in Round 1, they are not eligible to apply for Round 2.

Application to the Individual Artist Grant 2027/28 is by an online application form available via our website: https://andculture.org.uk/funding

If you require special assistance with this application process, or would prefer to complete a Word version of this application, please contact us before the deadline (no later than 12noon on Monday 1 February 2027) so this can be arranged.

Email: artsgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk for more information.

Timescales

Scheme advertised	From 20 Aug 2026
Scheme open	7 Dec 2026 – 8 Feb 2027
Date of Assessment	16 Feb 2027
Award and regret letters issued	From 15 Mar 2027
Letter of acceptance received	Within 30 days of offer
Completion of grant period	31 March 2028
Claim to be submitted	Within 30 days of offer
Monitoring Form to be submitted	Within 30 days of completion of activity
Close of Scheme	31 Mar 2028

Who is eligible?

To be eligible you must meet all the following:

- Resident within the Ards and North Down Borough
- A practicing professional artist[1] in any recognised art form[2] including; visual art, applied art, multi-media, music, dance, drama, literature.
- Applying to, or have been accepted or invited onto, an applicable course/residency/development opportunity to enhance professional development.

The applicant must be able to:

- Demonstrate a quality professional practice
- Have sufficient experience in their creative art form
- Be able to provide evidence of, and clearly show what the course/residency/development opportunity will involve, by providing relevant information relating to the opportunity, details of facilitators, and its benefits to the applicant.
- The course/residency/development opportunity cannot start before 1 April 2027 and must be completed by 31 March 2028.

Please provide the following <u>essential</u> documentation with your application:

- Up-to-date Artist's CV
- Support materials of your artistic practice (Images* and other supporting materials where applicable: publications/examples of writing, audio recordings for examples of music, short video footage of performances, etc).
- Evidence of course/residency/development opportunity (EG: course programme/information, residency facilities, activity timetables, facilitator CV, etc).
- Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs
- Further information relating to the course/residency/development opportunity (EG: course facilitator biography, venue information, advertisement, acceptance letter, or invitation)

It is recommended that you compile the essential documentation in the following formats before completing your application online, ready to be uploaded:

- Up-to-date CV (PDF or Word document ONLY)
- Supporting materials* in the following formats where applicable (Images [JPEG or PNG ONLY] no less than 1MB, audio files no more than 60 seconds in length and under 25MB, video files no more than 60 seconds in length and under 25MB, publications / examples of writing as one PDF or Word document only)
- Evidence of course/residency/development opportunity programme/information (PDF or Word document ONLY)
- Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs (PDF or Word document ONLY)

[1] See Appendix 1 for definition of *practicing professional artist*
[2] See Appendix 2 for definition of *recognised art form*

- Further information relating to the course/residency/development opportunity (PDF or Word document ONLY)

*Supporting Materials:

Visual Artists/Craftspeople may provide up to 6 high quality images of their work which should be of high quality/resolution and clearly demonstrate the work.[3]

Performing artists may provide up to 6 audio or video files no more than 60 seconds in length each, and under 25MB.

Writers may provide up to 6 examples of writing no more than one page in length per example.

NB: Failure to supply the requested essential documentation at time of application will result in your application not being assessed.

What type of course/training or residency* is suitable?

*This grant is for **short term** courses/residencies/development opportunities. Short term course are deemed to be those which are **no longer than 3 months in length** and must take place within the grant financial year (between 1 April 2027 – 31 March 2028).*

Those:

- that improve technical skills which relate to the artist's professional art practice
- that improve the artist's ability to manage their professional art practice
- that develop new skills which support the artist's professional art practice

Please Note:** If the opportunity that you are applying to is an artist's residency, please be advised that we have an Arts Residency Bursary Programme to the **Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Ballinglen Arts Foundation, and the John Hewitt Summer School.** If you wish to apply to any of the residencies listed, please apply through Ards and North Down Borough Council's Arts Bursary Programme** (linked below) as your application will not be considered through the Individual Artist funding stream. Please note the bursary application deadline of **8 December 2025.

**Arts Bursary Programme: andculture.org.uk/funding/bursaries

Grant Guidelines and Exclusions

- Individual Artist Grants of up to a total of £250 max. are available to individual artists per financial year. The Individual Artists Grant can represent up to 90% of the total course/residency/development opportunity costs.
- Applications are welcome irrespective of an individual's religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, whether they have dependents or not, or whether they have a disability or not. Please be advised that those applicants who have indicated that they have a disability or a physical or mental impairment will be required to provide more detail if their application is successful to ensure their needs may be met through putting in place reasonable adjustments (if applicable).
- Grants awarded are subject to budget approval.

[3] See Appendix 3 for tips on photographing your artwork

- Grants can be used in conjunction with other schemes, such as the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Professional Training Scheme but must be for different elements.
- **This grant is for short term courses/residencies/development opportunities. Short term course are deemed to be those which are no longer than 3 months in length and must take place within the grant financial year (1 April 2027 – 31 March 2028).**
- Grants will **not** be given for annual memberships.
- Grants will **not** be given to online courses that have lifetime access / 24 hour access for a period longer than 3 months in total duration.
- Grants will **not** be given for costs relating to courses/residencies/development opportunities that form part of the curriculum for long term or full term opportunities.
- Grants are designed to be one-off payments; successful applications will **not** automatically lead to repeat funding in future financial years.
- Grants are **not** available for equipment.
- Up to 20% of the requested grant aid may be used towards payment of travel/accommodation, and **must not** form the core content of the course/residency/development opportunity.
- Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs must be provided at the time of application.
- All funding must be used for the purpose for which the application was initially made, and in circumstances where this stipulation is not adhered to satisfactorily, Ards and North Down Borough Council will insist on full repayment of the funding allocated. If any change is to occur in relation to any of the projects for which funding has been received, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Arts Service must be informed immediately.
- Retrospective funding is **not** available.
- Applications received after the stated deadline will **not** be assessed.
- The course/residency/development opportunity cannot start before 1 April 2027 and must be completed, and all money must be spent by 31 March 2028.

Scoring

Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- Does the applicant meet all of the eligibility criteria? *(Yes – Eligible / No – Ineligible)*
- Quality of applicant's current professional artistic practice and experience of applicant ***(25%) Assessed under Q8, Q9, Q10 of the application form***
- Quality of course/residency/development opportunity, including value for money ***(25%) Assessed under Q12, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q18, Q19, Q20, & Q21 of the application form***
- Applicant demonstrates how the course/residency/development opportunity will benefit their artist's professional practice/skills ***(50%) Assessed under Q13 of the application form***

Applications will be scored based on a Scoring Matrix.[4]

A pass mark will be agreed and set before applications are assessed. Those who do not reach the pass mark will not be awarded. Those who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed.

In the event of the grant stream being oversubscribed against maximum funding available, allocation of funds will be awarded to successful applicants based on ranked scores, until the maximum available funding is reached.

[4] See Appendix 4 for details on the Scoring Matrix

Assessment Process

- All grant applications will receive an automatic email as soon as your online application has been completed and successfully submitted. A receipt for your response will be emailed to you from the address **no-reply@mail1.citizenspace.com** with the subject "**Response received - Response ID: XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-X**". If it doesn't appear in your inbox within a couple of minutes after submitting your application, please check your "spam" or "junk" folder.
- All grant applications will receive an acknowledgement email after the date of the deadline from the Arts Service of Ards and North Down Borough Council, along with information on the next steps.
- Fully completed and submitted applications received by the closing date and time will be assessed against the criteria detailed in the Criteria and Guidance Notes by an assessment panel.
- Assessment panels will apply a minimum pass mark of 50%; scoring criteria will be detailed in the grant Criteria and Guidance Notes; details of a situation where the amount of grant funding exceeds the available grant budget will be outlined in the grant criteria and supporting guidance notes.
- All applicants will be informed by email of the outcome of the assessments once this process has been completed.
- A Letter of Offer and Form of Acceptance will be issued to successful applicants.

How to draw down the grant:

- 100% of the grant will be paid to successful applicants on receipt of a completed Form of Acceptance.
- **Any money not utilised or accounted for must be returned to Ards and North Down Borough Council.**
- Evaluation forms will be forwarded to successful applicants and must be returned one month after the completion of the course/residency/development opportunity.

What happens to your Application?

- Applications to the Individual Artist Grant are assessed after each deadline by a panel made of Ards and North Down Borough Council Officers.
- The deadlines for receipt of applications are published on the cover of the application form. All training/residencies/courses must take place between 1 April 2027 and 31 March. Completed applications should be submitted to Ards Arts Centre by the relevant deadline.
- A pass mark will be agreed and set before applications are assessed. Those who do not reach the pass mark will not be awarded.
- In the event of the grant stream being oversubscribed against maximum funding available, allocation of funds will be awarded to successful applicants based on ranked scores, until the maximum available funding is reached.
- Applicants should note that while careful consideration will be given to each application, it may not be possible to assist every applicant even if all the criteria are met.
- You will be contacted by email to inform you of the outcome of your application. This usually takes four weeks from the application deadline.
- Please refer the Council website regarding appeals procedure. www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Equality of Opportunity, Section 75 and Good Relations

Ards and North Down Borough Council is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability or without
- persons with dependants or without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, Council is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Council is committed to fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties across all functions (including service provision, employment and procurement)

Freedom of Information

Ards and North Down Borough Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act came into operation on 1st January 2005. Applicants should be aware that the information provided in the completed application document could be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council will proceed on the basis of disclosure unless an appropriate exemption applies. No information provided by applicants will be accepted "in confidence" and Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept liability for loss as a result of any information disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ards and North Down Borough Council does not have a discretion regarding whether or not to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, unless an exemption applies. Decisions in relation to disclosure will be taken by appropriate individuals in Ards and North Down Borough Council having due regard to the exemptions available and the Public Interest. Applicants should be aware that despite the availability of some exemptions, information may still be disclosed if the Public Interest in its disclosure outweighs the Public Interest in maintaining the exemption. Applicants are required to highlight information included in the application documents which they consider to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, and should state the precise reasons, why that view is taken. In particular, issues concerning trade secrets and commercial sensitivity should be highlighted. Applicants are advised against recording unnecessary information.

In accordance with the Lord Chancellors Code of Practice on the discharge of public functions, Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept any contractual term that purports to restrict the disclosure of information held by the Council in respect of the contract or grant process save as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act. The decision whether to disclose information rests solely with Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Ards and North Down Borough Council will consult with applicants, where it is considered appropriate, in relation to the release of controversial information.

Data Protection

Ards and North Down Borough Council values the right to personal privacy. We collect this information solely for the purposes of this application and do not share it with anyone. We comply with the DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held any longer than necessary.

For further information our Privacy Statement can be viewed at https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies

Appendix 1

Definition of 'Professional Practicing Artist'

An Artists CV, and up to 6 support materials of examples of work must be included with the application, plus other supporting evidence that demonstrates that you meet the required level of professional experience as listed in the criteria.

Applicants must have a demonstrable high standard of original, quality, consistent body of work with a specialist skill set within their art form AND be working consistently on a full time or part time basis within the arts sectors.

Those who do not meet at least one of the listed criteria will be considered on an individual basis on merit, for example: a recent graduate who has not yet had a solo exhibition or a self-taught artist with a high-quality body of work who does not hold a professional qualification.

A professionally practicing artist is defined as someone who meets at least one of the following (see relevant art form):

Visual Arts / Applied Arts / Craft / Digital Art:

- Degree or Diploma from a recognised third level college in your arts specialism
- Hold Professional Level membership to a recognised arts body (eg: Visual Artists Ireland, Crafts Council Ireland)
- One-person / solo exhibition (including time-based events) in a recognised gallery or exhibition space (EG: Local Authority gallery/arts centre, publicly funded art gallery). Please note any commercial gallery solo exhibitions will only be considered if selected on merit as part of the gallery's visual arts programme.
- Participation in an exhibition/visual art event which was selected by a jury in which professional artists or recognised curators participated (EG: Royal Ulster Academy)
- Participated in a national/international craft/trade show (EG: Gifted-The Contemporary Craft & Design Fair)
- Work is sold at a reputable retail outlet / craft design retail specialist outlet (EG: CRAFT NI)
- Work has been purchased by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Work has been commissioned by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Have been awarded a bursary, residency, materials grant or otherwise grant aided by the Arts Council/Arts Council of Northern Ireland/local authority or other funding body
- Have been awarded tax-exempt status by the Revenue Commissioners, or are on schedule D as a self-employed artist in Northern Ireland

Performing Arts:

- Degree or Diploma from a recognised third level college in your arts specialism
- Hold Professional Level membership to a recognised arts body (eg: Musicians Union, The Actor's Guild)
- One-person / lead performance in a recognised performing arts venue (EG: Local Authority venue/arts centre, publicly funded performance venue).
- Participation in an arts festival or performed at an event programmed by a recognised arts body (eg: local authority arts festival, Grand Opera House, Lyric Theatre, etc)
- Work has been purchased by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Work has been commissioned by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Have been awarded a bursary, residency, materials grant or otherwise grant aided by the Arts Council/Arts Council of Northern Ireland/local authority or other funding body
- Have been awarded tax-exempt status by the Revenue Commissioners, or are on schedule D as a self-employed artist in Northern Ireland

Literary Arts:

- Degree or Diploma from a recognised third level college in your arts specialism
- Hold Professional Level membership to a recognised arts body (eg: The Society of Authors, etc)
- Work has been published by a recognised publisher.
- Participation in an arts festival or performed at an event programmed by a recognised arts body (eg: local authority arts festival, Grand Opera House, Lyric Theatre, etc)
- Work has been purchased by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Work has been commissioned by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Have been awarded a bursary, residency, materials grant or otherwise grant aided by the Arts Council/Arts Council of Northern Ireland/local authority or other funding body
- Have been awarded tax-exempt status by the Revenue Commissioners, or are on schedule D as a self-employed artist in Northern Ireland

Appendix 2

Definition of ‘Recognised Art Form’

The following are examples of recognised art forms:

Visual Arts:
This includes traditional painting, drawing, printmaking, illustration, sculpture, photography, and more contemporary forms such as lens-based, installation art and digital art.

Craft:
Craft is considered as those disciplines defined by the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (https://www.dcci.ie/). This can include ceramics, textiles and fashion, woodworking, silver/goldsmithing, glasswork, stonework. *Please note that in this instance for this grant scheme, ‘Upcycling’, candle making / work containing candles or wax melts, cosmetics / soaps / skin care, and electrical goods will not be eligible.*

Literary Arts:
This includes poetry, prose, creative writing, and other forms such as screenwriting and songwriting.

Performing Arts:
This includes music, theatre, dance, and other forms of live performance.

Digital Art:
This refers to artwork created exclusively in the digital space, including online artwork, digital installations, and digital applications that deliver artistic content. It can either exist in the digital space or be translated into a physical object or tangible experience through technology.

AI generated works will not be eligible.

Appendix 3

Tips for photographing your artworks

- Position the artwork on a plain flat surface or hang on a wall, and position the camera looking straight at the artwork.
- Ensure the full artwork is shown in the photograph and not cropped.
- You may provide a detail/close up image of artwork if you have included a photograph of the full artwork as well.
- You may provide scale for the artwork by taking a distance photograph showing the work in situ in a gallery setting.
- Use bright, indirect, natural light avoiding glare/reflections on the artwork or on glass of framed work.
- Do not use your camera flash.
- Do not include other objects in the photograph other than the artwork unless providing a high quality photograph of the artwork in situ in a gallery space.
- Ensure that the photograph is clear (not blurred or too dark) and an accurate depiction of your artwork.
- Please ensure the photograph is of high quality and resolution.

Appendix 4

Scoring Matrix

The following scoring matrix will be applied when assessing applications:

Score	
10	Exceptional response that fully meets and exceeds all criteria.
9	Excellent. Very strong response that meets all criteria with only minor, non-critical gaps.
8	Very Good. A solid application that meets most criteria well, though there may be some areas for clarification or development.
7	Good. Generally good response, meeting the majority of the criteria. Some aspects may be underdeveloped, unclear, or require further detail.
6	Satisfactory. Acceptable application with some strengths, but key elements are missing or inadequately addressed.
5	Fair. Meets some basic criteria but lacks depth, clarity, or cohesion. Shows some potential, but significant development needed.
4	Weak. Does not adequately meet several criteria. Application lacks coherence or clear rationale. Limited potential demonstrated.
3	Poor. Major gaps in response. Application fails to address core requirements and lacks clarity or focus.
2	Very Poor. Severely lacking across all areas. No clear artistic rationale, feasibility, or impact.
1	Inadequate. Completely fails to address the criteria. No artistic merit or relevance apparent. Application may be incomplete or off-topic.
0	Not Applicable. No response provided to relevant criteria, or application is ineligible or disqualified.