

# Collaborate fund:

How to make an Expression of Interest - information and guidance for cultural sector applicants

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## 1. About the Centre for Cultural Value

The Centre for Cultural Value is building a shared understanding of the differences that arts, culture, heritage and screen make to people's lives and to society. We want cultural policy and practice to be shaped by rigorous research and evaluation of what works and what needs to change. To achieve this, we are working in collaboration with partners across the UK to:

- Make existing research more relevant and accessible so its insights can be understood and applied more widely.
- Support the cultural sector and funders to be rigorous in their approaches to evaluation and to foster a culture of reflection and learning.
- Encourage new research partnerships between academics and the cultural sector through our Collaborate programme.

Based at the University of Leeds, the Centre's core partners are The Audience Agency and the Universities of Liverpool, Sheffield and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. The Centre is funded over five years by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation), Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England.

## 2. About the Collaborate fund

Collaborate is our open-call funding programme. We will invest £200,000 into the cultural sector, which includes arts, cultural, heritage and screen practitioners and organisations, to support the development of rigorous, collaborative research projects into under explored, sector-driven questions of cultural value.

Research topics will be identified by cultural sector partners who will then be supported to find a suitable academic research partner to jointly develop a specific research question, approach, methodology and project funding application. Projects developed through this programme will contribute to deeper understanding of the differences arts, culture, heritage and screen engagement make to people's lives and the range of research methodologies used to explore cultural value.

As well as providing funding for projects, participation in the Collaborate programme will provide opportunities for professional development in collaborative research practice through, skills sharing, active learning and access to a cohort of peers, workshops and learning resources.

We anticipate supporting up to 15 projects, with awards of between £5K and £20K which can be used to cover all or part-costs of collaborative projects lasting between 6-12 months. There

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will be two open-call funding rounds. Round one launches in October 2021 and round two in October 2022.

We will support projects that:

- Investigate currently **under-explored** areas of cultural value  
Covering topics or issues that need further research to strengthen the evidence base and/or which seek to investigate perspectives on cultural value from individuals who are currently underrepresented in cultural value research.  
This includes but is not limited to people who:
  - experience racism (people from migrant communities, Black, Asian and minoritised backgrounds)
  - identify as D/deaf or disabled
  - are from socio-economic backgrounds and communities that are under-represented in the cultural and research sectors
- Are rooted in the real world questions of the cultural sector partner and have **relevance** to their practice - supporting the cultural sector to better understand the value of their work to audiences, participants or communities in a way that is practically applicable.
- Contribute to developing **new and innovative research methodologies** for exploring cultural value. This includes emerging research methodologies – not limited to the field of arts and humanities - and /or the application of proven methodologies in new contexts.
- Model **collaborative and reflective research** practice- demonstrating respect for each partner’s knowledge and skills and placing value on learning from the process, not just the findings.
- Have the potential to form the basis of a **longer-term** partnership or programme of activity continuing to deliver value beyond the life of the project.

### 3. Who can submit an expression of interest?

We welcome expressions of interest to participate in the Collaborate programme from any UK based charitable organisation, individual creative practitioner or independent artist currently working in the arts, cultural, heritage or screen sectors. This includes music, theatre, dance,

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visual arts, literature, combined arts, festivals, circus, carnivals, accredited museums, screen, libraries (where there is an arts, culture, heritage focus), archives and heritage organisations.

### **Ineligible applicants**

For-profit organisations, non-accredited museums, funded sector support organisations.

### **Why you should apply**

You will have an opportunity to explore and more deeply understand an area of cultural value that is highly relevant to your practice, potentially adding new dimensions to that practice, enabling you to communicate the value of your work more effectively and inform organisational planning and development.

Sharing ideas and experiences with academic researchers can help you build new networks, open up new ways of thinking, enhance individual reflective practice and develop innovative research processes and partnerships that you might want to pursue beyond the life of the project.

The programme also offers a professional development opportunity for organisations or individuals interested in developing knowledge and skills in collaborative research practice through, skills sharing, active learning and access to a cohort of peers, workshops and learning resources.

## **4. How does the programme work?**

### **Stage 1: Expression of interest**

Sector organisations are invited through open call to submit an online expression of interest (EOI).

### **Stage 2: EOI Assessment and notification**

An assessment panel will consider EOIs for eligibility and fit with the EOI criteria which are set out below in this document. The top 10 EOIs will be advertised to academic researchers to express their interest in working with you. We will aim to notify everyone who submits an EOI whether they have been invited to the next stage within two weeks of the closing date for submissions.

### **Stage 3: Matchmaking**

An assessment panel will consider all academic researcher submissions for eligibility and fit with the criteria of the Collaborate fund and identify a shortlist of up to three academic researchers who could be a suitable match. You will have two weeks to meet with the shortlisted academic researchers and select your choice of partner. If you do not feel you can

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make a strong match from the potential partners presented, you may withdraw from the programme at this stage.

#### **Stage 4: Partnership and research project development**

Once you have selected your research partner you will both be invited to attend a workshop which will provide support and information to establish collaborative working, build rapport and to work on developing a research question and methodology. You will then have up to six weeks to work together to develop a full project funding application. If you are unable to jointly develop a project funding application within six weeks, you may withdraw from the programme at this stage.

#### **Stage 5: Project application assessment and notification**

An assessment panel will review submitted project funding applications. Decisions will be made according to project funding criteria which will be set out in the guidance for applicants. We expect to be able to award funding for a minimum of five projects in each round.

#### **Stage 6: Funding and research**

Awarded project teams will be issued with contracts and payment schedules set against the milestones provided in their joint project funding application. There can be no payment in advance of activity and payment will be subject to delivery of milestones and evidence of spending as appropriate. The funding shall be awarded to the cultural sector organisation and academic research partner as outlined within the joint project application. Throughout the project, the Centre for Cultural Value will continue to provide support as required through opportunities for peer learning and reflection to ensure effective delivery and to support ongoing project and individual professional development as necessary.

#### **Stage 7: Documentation and dissemination**

As part of the funding conditions, all project teams will be expected to produce information about the research insights and/or learning outcomes that have emerged from their collaborative research project which can be disseminated to the wider sector. We anticipate, at the very least, this taking the form of a final report and/or case study written in plain language. We would also welcome new and compelling ways to present project findings and learning outcomes provided that all documentation can be produced in a way that is accessible.

We will also request that research teams contribute content to the development of a film produced by the Centre for Cultural Value that will be used to showcase and highlight the outcomes from projects supported in each round of Collaborate funding. This may take the form of participating in interviews or sharing images or video from projects that can be included in the film.

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## 5. How will the Centre for Cultural Value support you?

The Centre for Cultural Value will provide support at every stage for the development of mutually beneficial research partnerships that enable cultural sector practitioners to be more confident, skilled and rigorous in how they capture and communicate the cultural value of their work.

- Support materials and guidance sessions will be available to answer questions and clarify your thinking prior to the development of expressions of interest.
- Expert advisors will work with you to identify the most promising research partner
- Information and guidance sessions will be provided to assist the establishment of collaborative working practices, and development of a co-produced research question and methodology before submitting a full project funding application for assessment.
- Project delivery will be supported through opportunities for peer learning and reflection to ensure effective delivery and to support ongoing project and individual development as necessary.
- On completion of the project, the Centre for Cultural Value will explore opportunities to present your collaborative research findings and learning outcomes to cultural sector, academic and policymaker audiences, amplifying its impact.

## 6. Collaborate timeline

### **18 October - 24 November 2021**

Open call for cultural sector project proposals

Deadline for submission: 24 November 2021

### **6 December 2021 - 26 January 2022**

Open call for academic researcher expressions of interest in project proposals

Deadline for submission: 26 January 2022

### **1-21 February 2022**

Matchmaking

### **14 March - 4 May 2022**

Development of project funding application

Deadline for submission: 4 May 2022

### **June 2022 - July 2023**

Project activity and dissemination

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## 7. How to submit an Expression of Interest

Please read the detailed EOI guidance information below and [complete your EOI online](#) by 24 November 2021.

If you prefer you may submit a video application keeping to the same word count indicated in the guidance below. Please submit video applications via email to [ccv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ccv@leeds.ac.uk) using the subject line “Collaborate Funding EOI” by 24 November 2021.

If you require guidance information or a copy of the expression of interest form in an alternative format please email [ccv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ccv@leeds.ac.uk)

### If I have any further questions, who can I ask?

If you have any queries about the Collaborate programme you can find further information at: <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/collaborate-fund/>

Or please get in touch with the Collaborate Partnership Manager:  
Lisa Baxter at [ccv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ccv@leeds.ac.uk)

## 8. Detailed guidance on completing your Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Proposed topic, issue or question is a currently **under-explored** area of cultural value.
2. Demonstrates **relevance** of the proposed topic, issue or question to their practice and/or purpose.
3. Demonstrates **potential contribution** of the findings of the research to the wider cultural sector.
4. Demonstrates consideration of the **knowledge, skills and approach** needed from an academic research partner.
5. Demonstrates how this project has the potential to form the basis of a **longer-term** partnership or programme of activity continuing to deliver value beyond the life of the project.

**For further guidance on each question in the EOI form, please see below.**

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### **1. What is the topic, issue or question you want to explore? (300 words)**

In this section please tell us what it is that you want to explore and understand more deeply about cultural value. Topics must broadly relate to the Centre's social definition of cultural value - *i.e.* "The difference arts, culture, heritage and screen makes to people's lives and society".

Please be as specific as you can in describing your topic and why you think there needs to be further research in this area. For example you might reference what art form(s), aspects of practice you would seek to examine in your research, the ways in which you have identified research gaps in this area and/or would seek to investigate perspectives from individuals who are currently underrepresented in cultural value research. This includes but is not limited to people who:

- experience racism (people from migrant communities, Black, Asian and minoritised backgrounds)
- identify as D/deaf or disabled
- are from socio-economic backgrounds or communities under-represented in the cultural and research sectors

### **2. Why do you want to explore this topic, issue or question? (300 words)**

We would like to understand how relevant this topic is to your practice/purpose and what you think the potential benefits of research in this area would bring to you/your organisation and/or the wider sector.

Please tell us:

- How this topic relates to your organisational/artistic purpose.
- What value/benefits the process/findings would bring to your practice.
- What contribution learning from this project would bring to audiences and/or the wider sector.

### **3. What are you looking for in an academic research partner? (300 words)**

In this section please describe your expectations, needs and understanding of the role of an academic research partner. For example you might reference what types of skills and expertise you would need them to have, what you envisage their role being in the project in relation to your own and how you would ideally like them to approach the project and working with you.

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**4. Please provide details of previous experience of working with academic researchers and/or using research to inform your practice. (200 words)**

**If you have no previous experience, please provide details of the value you anticipate working with an academic research partner might bring to your knowledge and skills (200 words)**

If you have any previous experience please detail as appropriate:

- What research you conducted/used
- Who you collaborated with (if appropriate)
- How you applied learning from the work/ research findings to your practice

You may include web links to detailed project information if available.

**OR:**

If you have no relevant previous experience please detail what value you think working with an academic research partner could bring to you/your organisation that would not otherwise be achieved working alone or with another partner.

**5. How might this project contribute to a longer-term research partnership or programme of activity? (200 words)**

We would like to understand how you see this activity potentially fitting into a longer term vision for your/your organisation's research and practice. In answering this question you might consider:

- How you could continue a research partnership beyond the life of the project.
- In what ways this activity might lead to further research for you/your organisation.
- How the learning from this project might inform or catalyse new activity e.g. fundraising, organisational development, community engagement, project development, staff training.