

Collaborate fund:

How to make an Expression of Interest - information and guidance for academic 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 to support the development of collaborative research projects between cultural sector partners and academic researchers investigating under explored, sector-driven questions of cultural value.

Research topics have been identified by cultural sector partners and we are seeking expressions of interest from suitable academic research partners 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 will be two open-call funding rounds. Round one launched in October 2021 and round two launches 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 individual academic researchers or research teams from any discipline. The lead applicant must have a PhD or similar qualification or research experience at the time of application and

currently be employed at a UK or Republic of Ireland-based university or higher education institution. All participants must be open to exploring and co-creating a research project in partnership with a cultural sector organisation or creative practitioner.

Ineligible applicants

- Academic researchers or research teams based outside of the UK or Republic of Ireland
- Academic Researchers who are not currently employed at a UK or Republic of Ireland based university or higher education institution
- Academic researchers who have not yet been awarded their PhD or who do not have similar qualifications or research experience
- Independent researchers or those working in for-profit organisations

Why you should apply

While many universities are currently constrained in their support for small-scale pilot projects, the Collaborate programme offers the opportunity to co-develop innovative research processes, pilot research activity with live audiences and to test existing methodologies in a new context that could be developed beyond the life of the project.

It's also an opportunity to support the cultural sector at a time of crisis, following the devastating effects of the pandemic. You'll develop a research partnership working on live research topics with engaged research partners, to more deeply understand an area of cultural value that is highly relevant to their practice. And, of course, the research could also form the basis for future research publications, be cited as strong impact activity for future REF case studies or the foundation for further funded research.

Whilst the programme cannot fund core HE staff time (our funders are clear that the Collaborate funding must directly support the research activity of the cultural sector partner) it can support costs of research assistants to carry out data collection and any direct costs of events and activities associated with the research. It also offers a professional development opportunity for researchers at any point in their career interested in developing collaborative research practice skills. There will be access to a cohort of peers, learning resources and the opportunity to develop skills in research leadership and new ways to communicate research.

4. How does the programme work?

Stage 1: Expression of interest

Academic researchers are invited through open call to submit an online expression of interest (EOI) responding to one or more project proposals put forward by cultural sector individuals or organisations.

Stage 2 : EOI Assessment and notification

An assessment panel will consider your EOIs for eligibility, fit with the project proposal(s) and EOI criteria which are set out below in this document. 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

If successful your EOI will then be shortlisted for the project proposal(s) you have expressed your interest in working with. You will be put in touch with the lead contact(s) for the proposed project(s) and have two weeks to discuss any aspect of the project further. If after this stage, either you or the lead contact(s) for the proposed project(s) do not feel you can work together on developing a joint project funding application, your application to the programme will end at this stage.

Stage 4: Partnership and research project development

If you and the lead contact(s) for the proposed project(s) both wish to proceed with the next stage of project development, you will both be invited to attend an online information session. This will provide details on completing a joint project funding application as well as support and guidance on establishing collaborative working, and co-creating a research question and methodology. You will 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 in the first instance, however, a proportion of funding can be made directly to the academic research partner for eligible costs (e.g. research assistant time) if required and 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 short interviews and/or sharing images or video from projects that can be included in the film.

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.

- Support materials will be available to answer questions and clarify your thinking prior to the development of expressions of interest.
- 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

7. How to submit an Expression of Interest

Please read the detailed EOI guidance information below and [complete your EOI online](#) by 26 January 2022.

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 using the subject line "Collaborate Funding EOI" by 26 January 2022.

If you require guidance information or a copy of the expression of interest form in an alternative format please email 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

8. Detailed guidance on completing your Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Demonstrates **relevance** of the proposed topic, issue or question to their research interests/expertise.
2. Demonstrates **potential contribution** of this project to developing new knowledge or understanding for their own research area and academic skills.

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3. Demonstrates **understanding** of the **knowledge, skills and contributions** of a cultural sector research partner.
 4. 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, please see below.

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1. Please indicate which project you are expressing an interest in working with [dropdown list]

You may express an interest in more than one project, however, you will have to complete a separate EOI for each project and if successful you may only work on one project.

2. Please describe your areas of research expertise and interests and how they are relevant to this project proposal (max 300 words)

This information will help the assessment panel to identify how relevant a proposed research topic would be to your research area and to shortlist potential academic research partners for projects.

If shortlisted, this information will be shared with potential cultural sector partners, so you should write for a non-academic audience and describe your research interests and expertise taking particular care to focus on how it matches to the topic/issue or question described in the project proposal. You may want to highlight anything in particular which attracts you to this proposal and how your research might add value to the cultural sector.

3. What benefits do you see in this project for you, your research and/or its impact? (300 words)

In this section, please be as specific as possible in describing what value you think the project could have for:

- your own professional development
- developing your area of research
- achieving research impact

4. What are you looking for in a cultural sector research partner? (300 words)

In this section please describe your expectations, needs and understanding of the role of a cultural sector research partner. In answering this question you should outline:

- What types of skills and expertise you would expect them to have.
- What you envisage their role being in the project in relation to your own.
- How you would ideally like them to approach the project and working with you.

5. Please provide details of any previous experience you have of collaborative research practice. (200 words)

If you have any relevant previous experience please detail as appropriate:

- What research you conducted
- Who you collaborated with
- How you applied learning from the process to your research practice

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

6. 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 research practice. In answering this question you might consider:

- How you could continue the research partnership beyond the life of the project.
- In what ways this activity might lead to further research opportunities or funding.
- How the learning from this project might inform or catalyse new partnership activity.