

# Collaborate fund:

**How to make an Expression of Interest –  
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 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 UK cultural sector, which includes arts, cultural, heritage and screen practitioners and organisations. The fund is designed 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 organisations. They will then be supported to find a suitable academic research partner to jointly develop a specific research question, approach, methodology and project funding application.

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.

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### 3. Who can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI)?

To be eligible, you must be:

- based in the UK
- currently working in the arts, cultural, heritage or screen sectors. This includes music, theatre, dance, visual arts, literature, combined arts, festivals, circus, carnivals, accredited museums, screen, libraries (where there is an arts, culture, heritage focus), archives and heritage organisations.

You must **also** be at least **one** of the following types of organisation or individual(s):

- a charitable or not-for-profit organisation, including social enterprises
- a creative practitioner or independent artist (this includes freelance collectives or individual practitioners working together)
- an arts and culture producing organisation, including arts and culture producing NPO (in England), RFO (in Scotland), Arts Portfolio Organisation (in Wales) or Arts Council NI AFP organisation in Northern Ireland.
- a local authority run art gallery, library or museum.

#### **Applying as a duo/partnership/consortium**

Eligible lead applicants may wish to work in partnership or with the support of other organisations or individuals as part of the proposed project. In this case, please complete the relevant section on the Expression of Interest form.

There should also be an eligible single lead organisation or individual for information and communication purposes, and, if successful, be the accountable organisation for any funding. Eligible creative practitioners or individual artists can also apply as freelance collectives or individual practitioners working together.

Again, there must be a lead applicant contact identified for information and communication purposes during the process, and, if successful, be the accountable individual for any funding.

**Ineligible organisations include:**

- Organisations based outside of the UK
- For-profit organisations
- Non-accredited museums
- Arts Council funded sector support organisations
- Bridge organisations
- Museum development providers
- Umbrella and networking organisations\*
- Strategic library and museum partnership bodies
- Other organisations that support the arts and cultural sector as their function as opposed to producing or delivering art and culture\*.

\*Not-for-profit, unfunded sector support organisations, networks or umbrella organisations may support or work in partnership with eligible organisations/individuals to submit an expression of interest, but the eligible organisation must be the lead applicant.

## 4. What types of projects are you looking to fund?

We anticipate supporting up to 15 projects over the two rounds of funding, with awards of between £5K and £20K. The funding can be used to cover all or part costs of collaborative projects lasting between 6–12 months.

### We will support projects that:

- Investigate **under-explored** areas of cultural value

*Covering topics that need further research to strengthen the evidence base and/or which seek to investigate perspectives on cultural value from individuals who are 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.
  - Have the potential to inform the practice of the **wider cultural sector** through their findings.
  - 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.

**Activities that we cannot fund include:**

- Evaluation of existing projects
- Economic impact studies
- Part-funding of an existing project
- Building projects
- Purchase of assets with no public benefit
- Ongoing overheads
- Projects already in receipt of funding
- Training
- Commissioning of art

**Please see [our website](#) for examples of the selected partnerships from the first round of Collaborate funding.**

## 5. The Application Process: at a glance

### Stage One

**Oct** Cultural sector express your interest

Cultural sector orgs or individuals submit an online expression of interest.



**Nov** We select



The assessment panel select the strongest 10 proposals.

### Stage Two

**Jan** Academics respond

Academics submit an expression of interest in response to one or more of the proposals.



**Feb** We select



The assessment panel identify the strongest academic applicants.

### Stage Three

**Feb** Find your perfect partner

Cultural sector and academics choose partners.



**Apr** Develop your project together



With our support, grow your partnership and apply for funding.

**May** We award

The assessment panel awards successful applications.



**Jul** Research starts



Your research journey begins!



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## 6. A detailed overview of the programme

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

Cultural sector organisations and individuals are invited through an 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](#). The ten strongest EOIs will be advertised to academic researchers to express their interest in collaborating on these projects. We will aim to notify everyone about the result of their EOI 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 and identify a shortlist of up to three academic researchers who could be a suitable match. Cultural sector applicants will have two weeks to meet with and select a partner from the shortlisted academic researchers. If cultural sector applicants do not feel they can make a strong match with the potential academic research partners presented, they may withdraw from the programme at this stage.

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

Cultural sector applicants and their selected academic research partner will both be invited to attend a workshop aimed at establishing collaborative working and developing a research question and methodology. They will then have six weeks to work together to develop a full project funding application. If they are unable to jointly develop a project funding application within six weeks, they 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.

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

Awarded project teams will be issued with contracts and payment schedules set against the activities outlined in their project funding application. Payment will be subject to the delivery of activity and evidence of spending as appropriate.

The funding shall be awarded to the cultural sector partner in the first instance. However, any proportion of funding can be made directly to the academic research partner for eligible costs (e.g. research assistant time) if requested and as outlined within the project application.

There is no requirement that any proportion of the funding will be ring-fenced for any specific activity. Please refer to the [FAQs on our website](#) for details of eligible and ineligible costs. All awards are inclusive of any applicable VAT.

## **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. These findings will be disseminated to the wider sector.

We anticipate, at the 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 to the development of content produced by the Centre for Cultural Value that will be used to showcase and highlight the outcomes from projects supported by Collaborate funding. This may take the form of participating in interviews or sharing images or videos from projects that can be included in news pieces, blog posts or films.

## 7. 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. Our aim is to help cultural sector practitioners to be more confident, skilled and rigorous in how they capture and communicate the cultural value of their work.

We will provide:

- Support materials and guidance sessions, to answer questions and clarify your thinking prior to the development of your Expressions of Interest.
- Expert advisors to identify and match you with the most promising research partner.
- Information and guidance sessions, to assist in the establishment of collaborative working practices and the development of a co-produced research question and methodology before submitting a full project funding application.
- Peer learning and reflection opportunities, to ensure effective delivery and to support the ongoing project and individual development as necessary.
- Opportunities to share your learning, raise your profile and present your collaborative research findings and learning outcomes to the cultural sector, academic and policymaker audiences, amplifying its impact.

## 8. Collaborate timeline

### **17 October – 25 November 2022**

Open call for cultural sector project proposals

Deadline for submission: 25 November 2022

### **5 January – 20 February 2023**

Open call for academic researcher expressions of interest in project proposals

Deadline for submission: 20 February 2023

### **28 February – 29 March 2023**

Matchmaking

### **17 April – 26 May 2023**

Development of project funding application

Deadline for submission: 26 May 2023

### **June 2023 – July 2024**

Project activity and dissemination

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## 9. How to submit an Expression of Interest

The online application form will be accessible from Monday 17 October 2022.

Please read the detailed EOI guidance information below and [complete your EOI online](#) by **Friday 25 November 2022 at 11:59pm**.

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 25 November 2022 at 11.59pm.

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)

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

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Individual or organisation meets [eligibility criteria](#)
2. Proposed topic, issue or question is a currently **under-explored** area of cultural value.
3. Demonstrates the **relevance** of the proposed topic, issue or question to their practice and/or purpose.
4. Demonstrates potential contribution of the findings of the research **to the wider cultural sector**.
5. Demonstrates consideration of the **knowledge, skills and approach** needed from an academic research partner.
6. 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.

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

### 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) or 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

We have written this practical [How To Guide](#) to help you discover what research in your potential subject area already exists.

### 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.

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### **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.

### **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.

### **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 activities, e.g. fundraising, organisational development, community engagement, project development, staff training and development.