

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

National Lottery Support for Individual Artists Programme

Application Guidance Notes for

- Vedaaranya Artists' Learning & Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan

Deadline for Applications: 12noon, Friday 28 August 2026

Decisions: October 2026

Applications must be submitted on-line at www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding

Please Note: this programme is a Learning and Development Opportunity which will take place between January 2027 and February 2027



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Introduction

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is pleased to announce the continuation of the **Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan**, in association with the British Council and the Shruti Foundation. In 2027, the **Learning and Development Opportunity is open to artists of most disciplines but is particularly suited to visual artists, craftspeople and designers working in textiles and jewellery, dance, music and theatre** to fit with priorities, traditions and developments in the location.

We can offer a one-month Learning and Development Opportunity in the historic town of Ramgarh Shekhawati in the princely state of Rajasthan, founded in 1791, which was one of the richest towns in 19th century India. This is a historic urban landscape (HUL) region of India. **The Learning and Development Opportunity is not a structured programme but is rather an opportunity travel to/ within India and be immersed in unique cultural experiences that can foster creativity, encourage artistic exploration and inspiration.** While the host can help with orientation, the individual will need to be flexible, self-motivated, resourceful and ultimately able to use initiative to maximise this learning and development opportunity. **The selected artist will be required to engage with young people and local community groups and/or undertake school workshops. If you are successful, you will be required to complete a Basic Access NI check, if you do not already have one. The community engagement will be designed between the host and the artist; it is part of the learning and development opportunity which ACNI contributes toward but it is not designed to be a scheduled work experience with pay.** It is therefore important to note that the artist will need to manage their own time well and able to advocate for oneself when it comes to planning and delivery.

Artists may apply for a month-long Learning and Development Opportunity **from January 2027 to February 2027. Artists must be in residence to coincide with the dates of the VHAH FEST (29th January to 2nd February 2027).** Artists will be expected to attend Festival events as per invitation of host and at the discretion of the individual's needs; there may also be opportunities to perform/deliver workshop(s)/speak during the Festival. This will be decided between the host and successful candidate upon award. ***Successful applicant(s) will be strongly advised to communicate with the host in order to agree optimal timing for Learning and Development Opportunity.**

These notes give information on who is eligible to apply to the programme and how to submit an application. It also describes how your application will be assessed, how payments will be made and what you will be asked to do if you are awarded a grant.

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on our website at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan \(opens in a new window\)](#). They may also be requested in

large print or other accessible formats if required. Please contact us at artgrants@artscouncil-ni.org if you need further assistance in this regard, including alternative language versions. **You can also contact ACNI Festivals & International Officer Siobhán Molloy at smolloy@artscouncil-ni.org if you have any queries about any aspect of the programme or its application requirements.**

If you are d/Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent, University of Atypical can provide support with completing your application. Please contact University of Atypical as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time for the support process. Phone: 028 90239450; Email: access@universityofatypical.org.

In promoting these award schemes, the Arts Council particularly welcomes applications from groups referenced in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. **We particularly welcome applications by disabled artists and by artists from the generally unionist community as applications from both these demographics are currently under-represented across our programmes aimed at individuals.**

Is your proposal timeframe suitable?

The **Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan** will only fund a month-long stay that will take place between January 2027 and February 2027. **Artists must be in residence to coincide with the dates of the VHAH FEST which will run from 29th January-2nd February 2027.**

*All eligible expenditure must be incurred within these dates. If this is not the case for your proposal, you should NOT apply to this scheme as the Arts Council will not meet any costs incurred or support a Learning and Development Opportunity which falls outside this period. Receipts must be provided for all expenditure except for Learning and Development stipend.

How much funding is available?

The value of the Learning and Development Opportunity is £3,720 which covers:

- Accommodation costs inclusive of three meals per day and teas and coffee twice a day
- Access to Library, studio space and museum
- Free Wi-Fi
- Local doctor
- Provision of workshop and research materials
- Access to local artist or crafts persons for collaborative work
- Heritage Walk & Travel Sightseeing or Heritage spaces by car of heritage spaces in Ramgarh and adjoining town
- Additional offers will be discussed with the successful artist.

The Arts Council will cover:

- Travel Costs - return flights to Delhi £1,000
- Hotel Costs - Delhi (2 nights) £100
- Internal transport to and from Delhi, organised in collaboration with host.
- The cost of the Tourist Visa, up to £100, which the artist must arrange.
- Stipend £500
- Vaccination costs up to £400
- Travel Insurance and other travel costs e.g. travel to/from departure airport/hotel night before flight/transporting or insuring instrument/equipment up to £400.
- Access NI Basic Check, £16

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants to the **Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan 2027** are as follows.

- **Artists from most disciplines can avail of space and time to create their own work while also delivering upon agreed community engagement elements. Visual artists working in traditional and sustainable materials may find this opportunity beneficial** and it is also particularly suited to craftspeople and designers working in textiles and jewellery, dance, music and theatre
- Employees of statutory bodies¹, undergraduates and postgraduates are eligible to apply but they must prove that the funds which they are seeking are for work/costs which are not properly the concern of their employer and/or are not related to their work or academic study. They must submit evidence of this in the form of a letter on headed paper from their Head of Department.
 - In the case of post-graduate students, the letter must clearly state the title of the student's PhD thesis and include a declaration by the Head of Department. This declaration must state "The project for which funds are being sought does not form part of any academic work undertaken in relation to the above-titled PhD nor will it be assessed as part of any academic course".
 - Applicants undertaking a Masters or a PhD must also include a separate statement which provides information on how the project applied for differs from their Masters or PhD work.

Please note: The Arts Council may use its own judgement in determining this matter.

¹ A statutory body is a formally established organisation that is, at least in part, publicly funded to deliver a public or government service and which is regulated by government legislation. All schools, further education colleges and universities are statutory bodies under the Education Authority.

Eligible applicants must also

- Have made a contribution to artistic activities in Northern Ireland for a minimum period of 1 year within the last 5 years.
- Live in Northern Ireland.
(ACNI's budgets are limited and subject to extremely high demand. Our priority must be for artists living and regularly contributing to the arts within Northern Ireland. If you are primarily living in another region of the UK, Republic of Ireland or elsewhere (i.e. you live in that region for the majority of the year), you should apply to the Arts Councils in the relevant jurisdiction. Where the Arts Council has concerns regarding this matter, we may seek further clarification from you with regard to this.)
- Be at least 18yrs old and not in secondary education.

Who cannot apply?

- Applicants who have broken the conditions of any previous ACNI award and applicants who remain in breach of any previous letters of offer (regardless of the letter of offer date).

How to apply

Help with your application

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on our website at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan \(opens in a new window\)](#). They may also be requested in large print or other accessible formats if required. Please contact us at artgrants@artscouncil-ni.org if you need further assistance in this regard, including alternative language versions. You can also contact ACNI Festivals & International Officer Siobhán Molloy at smolloy@artscouncil-ni.org if you have any queries about any aspect of the programme or its application requirements. Further contact details for all our Artform staff can be found on the Arts Council Website [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Contact Us \(opens in a new window\)](#).

NB: Officers' advice is restricted to general proposal eligibility and general advice on costs. Officers cannot give comment on written proposals until a full application has been submitted. (Please note also, that it is only on submission of the full application that a final determination of eligibility can be made.)

Making an application

You must apply using our online system. We will not accept applications in hard copy or by email. You will find a link to the Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan Programme at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Vedaaranya Artists' Learning and Development Opportunity at Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan \(opens in a new window\)](#)

If you are d/Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent, University of Atypical can provide support with completing your application. Please contact University of Atypical as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time for the support process. Phone: 028 90239450; Email: access@universityofatypical.org.

- Online applications may be edited, saved and returned up to the closing date.
- You must submit all mandatory enclosures associated with the application at the same time as your application, i.e. they must be uploaded to your online application prior to its submission. These enclosures are listed on the Attachments page within the online application and are detailed below.
- **Please ensure that you leave sufficient time to upload all documents to the system as there can be long delays as the closing deadline approaches and the system will shut down at 12noon precisely on the closing date, Friday 28 August 2026.** If your complete application is not **fully** uploaded when the system closes, your application will not be accepted.

- If you submit your application by the closing deadline, you will receive an automated email advising that your application has been successfully submitted to the system. **If you do not receive this email, your application has not been submitted.**

Please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that we receive the application form and uploaded enclosures by the closing time and date.

Mandatory Enclosures

Before you submit your application, you **must** upload the mandatory enclosures as listed below.

Important information on these documents can be read below from page 8 onwards.

Mandatory documents
• Artistic CV
• Statement explaining how you would benefit from a Learning and Development Opportunity in India.
• Artform-appropriate support material
• IF applicable: Letter from Head of Department regarding employment/academic assessment/study
• IF applicable: Masters/PhD statement

Please keep in mind the following important points:

- All mandatory enclosures must be in the accepted formats as listed on page 9 below. We cannot accept documents in other formats.
- **The total size of all your uploaded documents should not exceed 25 Mb.**
- You must submit **all** necessary enclosures with your application form. If any enclosures are missing, your application will be ineligible.
- If you submit an enclosure in a format which we do not accept or which is corrupted or which we cannot open, the enclosure will be considered missing, and your application will be ineligible.
- Do not compress files into one zip file. Files must be uploaded as individual documents.
- **All data must be PC compatible.** If non-PC compatible data is supplied, your application will not be assessed. For example, if using a MAC, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any enclosures uploaded to the online application are PC compatible.
- Unless explicitly stated as permissible in the Mandatory Enclosure details below, the submission of weblinks or website addresses in lieu of enclosure documents is not acceptable and will result in your application being made ineligible.

- Arts Council will accept the use of cloud-based storage; however you must not provide links to any subscription service that requires a login to access. If you provide any such links, the enclosures will be deemed missing, and your application will be made ineligible. Arts Council must be able to access relevant support material at time of eligibility checking; if unable to do so, your application will be ineligible.
- If providing video links, e.g., using YouTube, you must ensure that the links are set as public. If the links are set as private and the Arts Council cannot access the links during eligibility checking and/or assessment, your application will be deemed as ineligible as critical support material has not been made available.

Detailed guidance on mandatory enclosures

Further information on all mandatory enclosures is detailed below. If you have any queries about any of the documents, please contact the Arts Council of Northern Ireland by email at artgrants@artscouncil-ni.org.

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
Artistic CV	Your Artistic CV should show us your track record of artistic practice and contribution to the arts. Starting with the most recent examples of your practice, it should include exhibitions, performances, publications, collaborations etc, as well as any prizes, nominations, awards, commissions, that you have received. If you have a 3rd level/post-graduate or professional qualifications <u>related to your practice</u>, you should also list them in your CV. Do not provide information in relation to educational attainment not related to your artistic practice, or below 3rd level education, i.e., do not list O'Levels, GCSEs or A Levels etc. NB: - Do not provide unnecessary narrative. - Please note web links to the applicant's website or to examples of artistic practice are not acceptable.
Statement	Statement explaining how you would benefit from an artistic Learning and Development Opportunity in India.
Artform-appropriate Support Material	These will be examples of your work as an artist. Unless explicitly permitted below in relation to your project's artform, the submission of weblinks or website addresses in lieu of artform-appropriate support material is not acceptable and will result in your application being made ineligible. Please note: you provide weblinks at your own risk. If the weblinks provided are not working during the assessment period,

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
Artform-appropriate Support Material continued	the enclosures will be considered missing, and your application will be ineligible for assessment. If providing video links, e.g. using YouTube, you must ensure that the links are set as public. If the links are set as private and the Arts Council cannot access the links during eligibility checking and/or assessment, your application will be deemed as ineligible as critical support material has not been made available. NB: You must not provide links to any subscription service that requires a login to access. If you provide such links, the enclosures will be deemed as missing, and your application will be made ineligible. <u>ACCEPTABLE FILE FORMATS</u> All data must be PC compatible. If non-PC compatible data is supplied, your application will not be assessed. For example, if using a MAC, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any enclosures uploaded to the online application are PC compatible. We can accept ONLY the following file formats: Image files (GIF, JPEG, JPG, PNG, TIF, TIFF) Sound files (MP3, WAV, WEBM) Video files (AVI, MKV, MP4) Text files (DOC, DOCx, PDF) Spreadsheet files (XLS, XLSx, CSV)
Artform-appropriate Support Material - Drama	DRAMA <u>Actors, performers, directors</u> Must supply at least one relevant review which clearly identifies the applicant, (a maximum of two relevant reviews can be supplied.) AND may also supply one visual moving image – max 5 minutes duration. <u>Playwrights</u> – Up to 10 pages of draft script <u>along with a synopsis.</u>

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Dance	DANCE Performers must provide one visual moving image of their work up to 5 minutes duration. OR A link to a website address is acceptable but you must clearly identify which 5 minute section you wish us to view. If a link or website is not working correctly, your application will be deemed ineligible as critical support material has not been made available.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Visual Arts / Craft	VISUAL ARTS / CRAFT Artists must provide a maximum of 10 images, <u>with an accompanying image list</u> Please note: The accompanying image list must contain, as a minimum, the title of the work, size of the work, a description of the media and the date it was made. Failure to provide an image list will render your application ineligible. OR A link to a website address is acceptable but you must clearly identify which 10 images you wish us to view. These should be provided in a separate enclosure document entitled “Weblinks”. If a link or website is not working correctly, your application will be deemed ineligible as critical support material has not been made available. If providing a link or a website address, you must also provide an image list. Failure to provide an image list will render your application ineligible.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Film-based visual art/digital art	FILM-BASED VISUAL ART / DIGITAL ART Artists must provide 2 visual moving image clips of their work up to 5 minutes duration. OR 2 weblinks to separate visual moving image clips are acceptable. The links must be directly to the clips; not to a general website. Please remember that you provide links at your own risk. If a link or website is not working correctly or you

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
	provide a clip to a general website page and not a specific clip, your application will be deemed ineligible as critical support material has not been made available.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Performance Artists	PERFORMANCE ARTISTS² Performance artists must provide 2 visual moving image clips of their work up to 5 minutes duration. OR 2 weblinks to separate visual moving image clips are acceptable. The links must be directly to the clips; not to a general website. Please remember that you provide links at your own risk. If a link or website is not working correctly or you provide a clip to a general website page and not a specific clip, your application will be deemed ineligible as critical support material has not been made available.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Music & Traditional Arts (Music) Artform-appropriate Support Material – Music - Weblinks	MUSIC <u>Musicians</u> – Must supply a maximum of 2 sound recordings of no more than 8 minutes each. <u>Composers</u> – Must supply 2 examples of full scores or excerpts from most recent work. Weblinks Instead of uploading audio or video files, you may provide weblinks to audio or visual recordings of a maximum of 2 sound recordings of no more than 8 minutes each. These should be provided in a separate enclosure document entitled “Weblinks”.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Traditional Arts (Music)	TRADITIONAL ARTS (Music) Must supply a maximum of 2 sound recordings of no more than 8 minutes each. Weblinks

² A piece of performance art is an artwork created through actions executed by the artist. It may be witnessed live or through documentation, spontaneously developed or written, and is traditionally presented to a public in a fine art context.

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
	Instead of uploading audio or video files, you may provide weblinks to audio or visual recordings of a maximum of 2 sound recordings of no more than 8 minutes each. These should be provided in a separate enclosure document entitled “Weblinks”.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Participatory Arts / Circus & Carnival	PARTICIPATORY ARTS/ CIRCUS & CARNIVAL A maximum of 2 website links. Each piece of evidence should not exceed 5 minutes in duration. Where web-based evidence is part of a longer piece of recorded material the artist needs to clearly identify the time frame they wish to have viewed / listened to.
Artform-appropriate Support Material – Literature	LITERATURE A maximum of 10 pages of the work in progress for which the application is being made OR A maximum of 10 pages of a recently published work. <u>Applicants in spoken word forms</u> A maximum of 2 recordings of their performance.
Letter from Head of Department/ Supervisor	IF you are an undergraduate, a postgraduate or an academic working in 3rd level education and your project proposal lies within the same artform area as your study or work - you must submit a letter on headed paper from your Head of Department or supervisor clearly stating that that your proposal is not part of your professional or academic employment and/or the work is not related to and does not form part of under-graduate/post-graduate study and is not intended to be assessed as part of any academic course. IF you are a post-graduate Masters or PhD student, the letter must also clearly state the title of the student’s PhD thesis and include a declaration by the Head of Department. This declaration must state “The project for which funds are being sought does not form part of any academic work undertaken in relation to the above-titled Masters/PhD nor will it be assessed as part of any academic course.”

Mandatory Enclosure	Guidance on Enclosure
PhD or Masters Statement	IF you are Masters or PhD student, you must submit a statement which briefly describes the subject of your post-graduate thesis and sets out how the project applied for differs from your Masters or PhD work

After you submit your application

- The Arts Council will acknowledge receipt of the application form.
- The Arts Council will undertake an eligibility check on your application. In the event of missing information, your application will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed to assessment. If ineligible, the Arts Council will issue an email advising reasons for ineligibility.
- During the eligibility checking process, the Arts Council will publish a monitoring form to your application account and issue an email notification advising of same. Completion of the monitoring form is not mandatory and will not affect the eligibility and/or assessment of your application. **However**, we would strongly encourage all applicants to complete and submit the monitoring form as monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements.
- Eligible applications will be assessed by an Arts Development Officer or Head of Artform Team.
- Following the assessment process, if you are shortlisted you will be invited to attend an interview, either online or in person, which will determine the successful artist for 2027.
- The Arts Council will contact you with the final decision by letter by email. If rejected, the Arts Council will provide you with detailed reasons for the rejection.

If you receive an award

Letter of Offer

Following the decision, Arts Council will issue successful applicants with a contract outlining the conditions attached to the award and the specific purposes for which the award can be used.

- You will not be able to incur expenditure until you have received your letter of offer from the Arts Council. You should take this into account when planning your proposal.
- It is important that you read the letter of offer and enclosed conditions carefully before signing and returning it. The letter of offer will set out what you may spend the grant on and by what date the proposal must be completed.
- **If there are any changes to your agreed project from the original application, you must inform the Arts Council immediately in writing before incurring any proposal expenditure.** If you don't tell us about changes you may have to repay the award, and this will affect decisions on any future applications you might make.

Please note successful applicants to this Learning and Development Opportunity will be required to apply for an Access NI check.

How payments will be made

Payments are normally made in stages of 90% and 10%. Each stage will have specific conditions attached to it; your letter of offer will set out these specific conditions and you must comply with them prior to the drawdown of each tranche of funding.

The Arts Council will make payments to UK-based bank accounts in the applicant's name only, or to joint accounts where the applicant is a named account holder. Payments are by BACS transfer only. You will need to complete and return the BACS form issued with your letter of offer.

Post project monitoring

At the conclusion of your project, you will have to submit an End of Project Report and provide a final income and expenditure account for the project, in addition to evidencing the appropriate use of Arts Council and National Lottery branding throughout the course of project delivery.

The project report will include:

- Details of the how the project has benefited you
- Evidence of appropriate use of Arts Council and National Lottery branding where relevant
- An evaluation of the project – was it successful? Did you meet your aims? etc.

We may discuss with you how this information is to be collected.

Post project monitoring – Verification

Your project may also be subject to verification by an ACNI staff member. This will ensure that the project grant has been spent in accordance with your letter of offer. It is therefore important that you retain all the project documentation to evidence this.

How we will make our decision

Assessment Stages and Criteria

There are 3 stages to the assessment process. An application must be rated as *Fundable* at Stage 1 in order to proceed to Assessment Stage 2. Assessment Stage 2 will determine which applicants will be invited to the interview stage.

Why might an application be considered *Not Fundable*?

If, in the view of the assessor and Moderation, the application does not demonstrate

- a sufficient quality of artistic practice by the applicant; or,
- the proposal is not of sufficient artistic quality or innovation; or,
- the proposal lacks critical detail

Stage 1 Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Assessed Against
S1.1 Evidence of the quality of the applicant's artistic practice	Artistic CV and work submitted
S1.2 Artistic quality / innovation of the proposal and its detail	Information provided by written responses within the application form and relevant mandatory enclosures

Stage 2 Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Assessed Against
S2.1 Evidence of the applicant's contribution to the arts	Artistic CV and work submitted
S2.2 Evidence of how the proposal may enhance the applicant's artistic or professional development.	Information provided by written responses within relevant sections of the application form and relevant mandatory enclosures where appropriate
S2.3 Evidence of how the proposal may enhance the applicant's career	Information provided by written responses within relevant sections of the application form and relevant mandatory enclosures where appropriate

Please note an interview will also form part of the application process. Interviews are likely to take place through September 2026.

The decision process

Throughout the assessment process, Officers will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of the wider arts landscape, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated. All assessments are then considered at a Moderation meeting at which final funding decisions will be made.

Is the Arts Council decision final?

If you are unhappy with the Arts Council's decision on your application, please see our website for information on how you can contact us - [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Funding Decisions \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Other Information

If you have any queries about the programme or need any help or advice completing the application, please contact International Officer Siobhán Molloy via smolloy@artscouncil-ni.org. A list of ACNI's Arts Development Officers and their contact details can be found at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Contact Us \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.

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