



Cymru Greadigol Creative Wales

Creative Skills Fund (CSF) 2024

EXTERNAL GUIDANCE NOTES

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These guidance notes are intended to help you to complete the funding application for the Creative Skills Fund (CSF).

1.1 Purpose of Fund

The aims of this fund are to deliver the skills priorities highlighted within the three year [Creative Skills Action Plan](#) launched on 21th September 2022. The Fund is one of a number of actions to deliver against the Programme for Government commitment to establish a Creative Skills Body.

1.2 Background

This is the second round of the Creative Skills Fund, the priorities for which are outlined in the three-year Creative Skills Action Plan for the screen, music, games, animation and immersive technology sectors in Wales.

A link to the projects supported under the first round of funding can be found here

The 10 priorities which have been identified by industry are listed below;

- **Business and Leadership Training**
- **Talent Support**
- **Improve Diverse and Inclusive Recruitment**
- **Entry Level Placements and Opportunities**
- **Upskilling Placements and Opportunities**
- **Education and New Curriculum**
- **Careers Awareness**
- **Innovation**
- **Bridging the Gap Between FE/HE and Industry**
- **Wellbeing of the Workforce and Support for Freelancers**

The Creative Skills Fund will be an open funding call for projects which can deliver against one or more of these priorities.

We are keen for our funding to deliver against recognised skills gaps. The Creative Skills Advisory Panel has identified a number of gaps within each of the three priority sectors. When assessing funding applications priority will be given to those applications that evidence how they are addressing gaps in the industry. Examples include but are not limited to;

- Screen
 - Broadcasting, gallery, OB skills, Live and Pre-Recorded PA skills, and engineer skills eg racks engineers, VT Ops, EVS Ops, sound guarantees
 - Post production and in particular Welsh Language post production roles
 - VFX
- Music
 - Wellbeing of the workforce and support for freelancers
 - Technical skills eg sound/lighting
- Games, Animation and Immersive Technology
 - Training in games engines (Unity / Unreal), back end software, other front end software, optimisation
 - Training in animation 2D/3D software and techniques e.g. Blender, Toon Boom
 - Training for the creative technology space including convergent content (virtual production, immersive applications and the use of AI in creative technology)

We particularly welcome submissions from training providers for projects which will deliver against our priorities of developing a truly diverse and inclusive workforce and Welsh language talent across the screen, music and games and immersive technology sectors in Wales,

The Creative Skills Fund is aimed at organisations / businesses with a track record of delivering high quality skills and training projects within the creative industries.

Up to £500,000 in 2024/25 and £500,000 in 2025/26 will be available for projects in this funding round. A minimum of £25,000 to a maximum of £125,000 will be available per successful project for the eligible period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2026.

Creative Wales is a partner on the BFI Skills Cluster for Wales bid and supported projects for the screen sector will align closely with the work the Cluster is delivering should the application be approved.

1.3 Application Process

This Call for funding proposals will commence on Thursday 14th March 2024, and will close to applications on Friday 10th May 2024 at 12.00 noon. No late applications will be considered.

Our team can provide advice on eligibility. For an application form please E-mail CreativeWalesFundingSupport@gov.wales.

Please note – discussing your project with a team member does not imply approval or assessment of your proposal. This is a competitive scheme where all projects will be assessed and scored to a standard criteria.

Applicants will need to answer all sections of the application form and include all requested supporting information, including full financial details and planned milestone payment schedules for the grant. Completed application forms should be submitted to CreativeWalesFundingSupport@gov.wales. Please note – the Creative Wales team will not provide comments on completed application forms.

Due Diligence will be undertaken on all applications. This will include a review of your financial projections, a fraud check, and checks on Directors of your company. If you are involved in a business which is in debt to the Welsh Government, you are unlikely to be able to apply for further funding and should discuss this with us in advance of any application.

You will be asked to select a number of outputs for your project on the application form. These will be formally measured during and after the project for up to 2 years following project closure.

This is a competitive grant and not all applications will be approved. You should not start on the project until your application is approved and an offer letter has been issued. If you do so, you may invalidate your application completely, even if successful.

Project Appraisal

Funding from Creative Wales is awarded to projects that are in line with the following key principles:

Key principles of funding from Creative Wales :
Funding awarded to businesses should:
Strategic Fit Deliver our priorities for the creative industries in Wales - Funding will be designed to deliver Creative Wales' ambitions for the creative industries, and the priorities set out in the Welsh Government Programme for Government . It will maximise opportunities to support skills and talent development, diversity and inclusion in its widest sense, fair work, sustainability, and promote our culture and Welsh language. Funding will be prioritised towards those projects that make a difference to the creative industries landscape in Wales over the medium to long term.
Maximise the benefits to Wales, including economic benefits Funding will be targeted at projects that maximise return on investment, to ensure limited budgets deliver maximum value for Wales.

Your application should be tailored to show how the above principles are met.

All projects will be appraised in two stages:

- **First stage** – checks will be undertaken to ensure that all the basic eligibility criteria have been met, including alignment of the project with our key principles of funding as outlined in the table above. Applications / projects that do not meet all the eligibility checks (see section 1.5), or do not meet our strategic objectives for funding, will be rejected.
- **Second stage** – Applications that have met all the eligibility criteria and are in line with our key principles of funding, will be appraised and presented to an internal Welsh Government assessment panel according to the appraisal criteria in Annex 1. Projects achieving a minimum pass score will be recommended for Ministerial approval, subject to budget availability (in situations where multiple projects are above the pass score, but budget is not available to support all, projects are ranked with the highest receiving funding).

Project Approval

- All assessed proposals will be submitted to Welsh Government Ministers for final approval.
- Following Ministerial consideration, applicants will be informed of the final decision and offer letters will be issued to successful applicants

- Offer letters will need to be signed and have one copy returned to Welsh Government before project initiation.
- Successful applicants will be asked to sign up to the [Welsh Government – Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#)

Appeals

The Creative Skills Fund is a discretionary fund with no appeals.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email following the assessment panel decision.

1.4 Timescale

Following submission and close of deadline, we will assess applications by Friday 24th May, and confirm an outcome by Friday 31st May, however this timing is dependent on the number of applications received.

The eligible funding period will cover the date of approval on the offer letter until 31st March 2026.

No late applications will be considered.

1.5 Key Criteria for Applicants

- All projects must deliver against at least one of the 10 priorities highlighted within the Creative Skills Action Plan
- Applications must be for either the screen, games, animation and immersive technology or music sector. Projects must not duplicate training provision which already exists within the creative industries in Wales. We will not support duplicate activity or programmes that are being fully funded via other public funding
- Applications must represent good value for money which will form part of the assessment. Please only apply for what you need and not the maximum amount, unless the maximum amount is required
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their training project will bring specific benefit to individuals/companies based in Wales
- Funding will not be awarded to projects that only benefit individual companies. The Welsh Government's [Flexible Skills Programme](#) provides financial support to companies wishing to upskill their staff.
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1.6 Eligibility - Who Can Apply?

- We expect applicants to be able to demonstrate a proven track record in providing high quality skills and training and/or upskilling provision within the wider creative industries, or a similar field, in their applications either as a company or company founder/director.
- Funding will not be awarded to individuals
- Funding will not be awarded to an applicant unless they can provide at least one year's fully independently certified accounts or audited financial statements (you do not need to be VAT registered if your total turnover is below the registration threshold).
- Previously funded applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that they have delivered agreed project outputs and have a clear plan for new activities and deliverables going forward.

General Conditions of application:

As a condition of funding you will agree to undertake up to three years of joint publicity with Creative Wales and will be asked to supply a bank of images and video, and relevant rights, from the project for us to use in press and publicity.

We would like to add all our applicants to our marketing database to ensure you receive timely information about further support options from Creative Wales.

What kind of projects do we want to see?

We will prioritise:

- Projects which deliver against the specific sector priorities as highlighted in section 1.2 and those projects that will deliver against identified skills gaps
- Projects that can demonstrate an inclusive approach to learning and those which seek to improve equality, diverse and inclusive recruitment within the creative sectors
- Projects which seek to provide work placements, mentoring, industry experience, and deliver against the wider employability ambitions set out in the [Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills](#) and the [Young Person's Guarantee](#)
- Projects which can reference how they meet [the seven well-being goals](#) of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Projects which can demonstrate match funding from other partners
- Projects which can demonstrate a financial model for continuing the training provision beyond the lifetime of the project.
- Projects which can demonstrate industry engagement and partnership working with other providers and stakeholders
- Projects which can demonstrate a pan-Wales recruitment process.
- Projects which can deliver training bi-lingually (Welsh and English)
- Selected projects will need to demonstrate clear outcomes with a detailed methodology of how the project will be evaluated.

- Projects will also need to provide details of target participants and recruitment methods.

We do not want to see this type of project:

- Projects which do not meet at least one of the 10 priorities as outlined in the Creative Skills Action Plan
- Projects for sectors other than screen, games, animation and immersive technology or music
- Projects which are the first venture for a new start up with no track record unless the company founders or Directors have a previous demonstrable track record of projects in a similar field
- Projects which primarily consist of marketing or capital costs
- Projects which duplicate existing training provision within the creative industries in Wales
- Please note - Whilst the applicant company can potentially be based outside of Wales, recipients of training provision will need to be companies and/or individuals based in Wales

What can you apply for?

Applications can be made for funding from the Creative Skills Fund for a minimum of £25,000 up to a maximum of £125,000. Creative Wales can pay 100% up to per project. However, any cash match funding leveraged will be welcomed as it will increase the impact, enable our funding to go further and make your case for support stronger.

Costs will only be covered for a maximum period of 24 months. It will not be possible to claim for any retrospective costs, or to extend the project beyond that timescale. Companies may submit a maximum of **one** application per funding call. Applicants that already have funding in place for a separate ongoing project should consult with Creative Wales before making a submission to this fund, as this may not be permitted. Funding is non repayable, however if targets are not met (i.e. the product is not completed, significantly delayed or appropriate claim information is not submitted) – the funding may be clawed back.

All applications will be considered on an individual basis and payment of this grant is at the absolute discretion of the Welsh Government and based on assessment as well as value for money.

What we won't fund:

- Any capital costs such as building developments or renovations;
- Start-up costs, e.g. equipment and office space, recruitment costs etc;
- Costs incurred before the start of award of funding (signed offer letter received by us);
- Redundancy costs;

- Recoverable VAT; Significant historic debt (prior to 1 April 2020);
- Costs related to promoting the cause of beliefs of political or faith organisations;
- Any kind of activity which in our opinion could bring the Welsh Government into disrepute;
- Significant historic debt (prior to 1 April 2024);
- A sum to cover lost income or to re-inflate your reserves;
- Projects which depend on, or encourage, free labour.

1.7 Eligible Costs & Ineligible Costs

Eligible Costs

- Staff salaries
- Promotion and marketing costs (to be less than 5% of project total)
- Preparation of resources for delivery of training project
- Speaker fees
- Travel and subsistence costs specifically related to delivery of the project
- Trainer fees
- Room hire
- Translation costs
- Office/administration costs
- Bursary funding for participants including childcare and travel costs

Ineligible Costs

- Debt and debt service charges
- Dividends
- Interest payments
- Costs incurred which are not specific to this project
- Management fees unless they can be evidenced using an approved methodology
- Apportionment of costs where no clear, fair and reasonable justification for calculation can be evidenced

1.8 Outputs and Outcomes

The funding will focus on a number of key outputs and outcomes, including:

- No. of individuals / freelancers supported
- No of companies supported
- No of workshops/training sessions delivered
- No of work experience placements
- The production of pedagogical resources
- Diverse and inclusive recruitment
- Promotion of the Welsh language
- No. of training and/or work experience placements secured
- An evaluation report to include aggregated anonymised data on participants benefitting from training including;

- gender/diversity
- age rate
- region of residence in Wales

Applicants will be asked to select relevant outputs at the point of application, and these will be noted on the offer letter.

2. Claiming Process and Conditions of Fund

2.1 Claim Schedule

You are asked to provide a planned payment schedule for the complete funding period for your project between June 2024 and March 2026.

A minimum of three claim periods per annum will be a **mandatory** condition of grant for projects covering up to two financial years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, and dates for claim submission will be set out in the offer letter. However, additional claims can be submitted at any time in addition to these set deadlines. If you require additional claim periods, please add to the table provided in the application form.

Payment and Monitoring

- If your application is successful, payment conditions need to be met as set out in the offer letter schedule.
- The funding will be paid in arrears as default. In exceptional cases funding can be paid in advance, where an applicant can demonstrate a satisfactory business case.
- Arrears claims will be paid on evidence and completion of a forecast spend profile and claim form, by no later than the end of March 2026. Advance claims will be paid quarterly based on forecast costs and reviewed at each quarter for the remaining project period. Evidence of spend will be required at the end of each quarter.
- A schedule for claims and profiled spend will be set out as an agreement in the offer letter. The Welsh Government reserves the right to review the award of funding if agreed schedules are not met.
- **‘Costs Defrayed / Paid by you’** is the costs of goods which are discharged by payment or otherwise settled by you. Defrayed evidence will be required for all organisations whether claims are based on advance or in arrears.
- Claim forms will be issued on request and can be submitted via E-mail to CreativeWalesFundingSupport@gov.wales. Project being paid in arrears will need to provide full evidence before any payments as made. Detail of what you need to provide at claim stage will be included in your offer letter.
- Once approved, payment will be made within 10 working days.

Post Completion Monitoring

Delivery and achievement against agreed outputs will continue to be recorded for up to 24 months following completion of the project and will be a condition of the grant offer.

The Welsh Government is committed to evaluating the success of this grant and intends to undertake an internal evaluation of the Creative Skills Fund. It is anticipated that this research will examine the implementation and impact of the activities that have been delivered. It will assess the extent to which the outputs and outcomes can be attributed directly to the scheme activities and examine whether wider anticipated or unanticipated effects have been realised.

The Welsh Government or a third party acting on behalf of Welsh Government may contact you for the purpose of research and evaluation and/or to give feedback on your experience of the scheme. This information will be analysed and presented anonymously in line with the Privacy Notice

Grant Repayment

Applicants should note that the Welsh Government may require repayment of the grant in full or part if the funds are not used for the purposes stated on the application form. The applicant is entering into an agreement and this will be enforced by requesting proof, post grant award.

2.2 UK Subsidy Control

The funding is provided via the Welsh Government registered 'Wales Cultural and Creative Support Scheme (WCCSS)' subsidy scheme SC10468. [Wales Cultural and Creative Support Scheme \(WCCSS\) | GOV.WALES](#)

You must ensure that the use of the Funding is compatible with the applicable agreements contained in the World Trade Organisation rules, UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, any Free Trade Agreement involving the UK the Northern Ireland Protocol and any relevant domestic legislation.

As part of your application you will need to provide details of any previous funding your business has received.

2.3 Publicity

All successful applications will need to:

- Agree to be included on all publicity, press releases and marketing material we produce.
- Agree to include a *Supported by Creative Wales* credit on their promotional material.

As a condition of funding you will agree to undertake up to three years of joint publicity with Creative Wales and will be asked to supply a bank of images and video, and relevant rights from the project for us to use in press and publicity. Any issues relating to this should be discussed with a Creative Wales team member. Successful applicants will be notified and informed prior to the general release of material.

We would like to add all our applicants to our marketing database to ensure you receive timely information about further support options from Creative Wales, but this is not a condition of funding.

2.4 Welsh Language

The Welsh Government is committed to promoting and growing the Welsh language. The creative industries play a key role in contributing to the Welsh Government's priorities for the Welsh language and the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. We welcome applications for projects that support our ambitions and maximise opportunities to promote the Welsh language. Welsh language priorities are one of a range of areas we will consider as part of our assessment of strategic fit when reviewing projects.

2.5 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The objectives of the Act show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the 'well-being goals'. [The seven well-being goals](#) show the kind of Wales we want to see. The Act makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. Reference to and explanation as to how your project meets these goals will be important in the assessment of an application.

2.6 Privacy Notice

Please ensure you have read, understood and accept the 'Guidance Notes' and 'Privacy Notices' **before** you start the application.

- [Link to Grant Funding Privacy Notice](#)

Appendix 1 - Evaluation Criteria

Projects will need to meet the funding principles detailed as described above in order to move to the 2nd stage for assessment. Each eligible project will be appraised against the following criteria and all project scores will then be discussed/verified/agreed at an appraisal panel which will include one Official external to Creative Wales:

AC	Appraisal Criteria	Weighting	Score
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1.	<p>Strategic Fit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the project deliver against the key priorities of the Creative Skills Action Plan, specifically against highlighted sector needs and recognised skills gaps To what extent does the project deliver against wider Welsh Government priorities including; the seven goals of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; wider employability ambitions set out in the Welsh Government's Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales; A Plan for Employability and Skills and the Young Person's Guarantee. To what extent does the project align with the Welsh Government's priority to increase inclusion and diversity within the industry and celebrate Wales, its culture and language. 	x 5	/5
2.	<p>Strength and Quality of project proposal and evidence of need for the skills/training initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall quality of application and description of proposal Benefit and impact e.g. does it deliver measurable benefits in terms of skills development and training for the creative sector in Wales Will the project deliver innovative training? Evidence of adding value to the Creative skills landscape in Wales Delivering in the Welsh language 	x 5	/5
3.	<p>Project delivery plan and track record (Management and ability to deliver)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven track record in similar projects Project plan including timeline and team resources; are the plans and timescales realistic? Management team structure; do they have the expertise, capacity and ability to deliver? Does the project evidence partnership/collaboration with industry/sector? What are the project risks? 	x 4	/5
4.	<p>Project Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of project targets and outputs; are these realistic and in line with delivering strategic priorities? Outputs & deliverables; detailed information on how these will be measured How will success of the project be measured? 	x 3	/5
5.	<p>Project Costs, Funding and Value for Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the overall proposal represent value for money? Are project costs reasonable for planned activities? Are expected benefits proportionate with costs? 	x 3	/5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has evidence been provided for exit strategy and long-term sustainability of proposal?• Are there confirmed elements of match funding in place?• Is Welsh Government funding required for this project to go ahead and will it accelerate the project/ could the project happen without Welsh Government support?		
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