

Application Guidance - Creative and Social Futures Fund 2025-26

The Creative and Social Futures Fund is a joint innovation fund to support early-stage projects in Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences that have entrepreneurial and impact potential, providing an opportunity to extend the reach and impact of research.

The programme is offered in partnership by the University of Glasgow (UofG), the Glasgow School of Art (GSA), The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), and Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), and it is seen as an important route for Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences entrepreneurship.

We welcome proposals from projects that are at an early stage of development and embrace innovation and entrepreneurship in the Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences.

The fund can provide up to **£8,000-£15,000** per project for a maximum of 6 months, commencing 1st January 2026.

Funding and training are provided to support awardees to develop their concepts, identify potential impact, have conversations with external stakeholders such as customers and partners, and develop networks.

Applications for the fund open on 5th November 2025, with an **application closing deadline date of 3rd December 2025 at midday**.

Key Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts

The key goals of the Creative and Social Futures Fund are to:

- **Support development:** support the development of early-stage projects in the arts and humanities that are seeking to deliver sustainable impact at scale via potential commercial opportunities. This can be done through potential new ventures*, licensing opportunities, or other commercial possibilities that support creative, community, policy, economic, social, or technological impact.
- **Promote collaboration:** extend collaborative activity between UofG, GSA, RCS and GCU, and develop innovative ways of working in partnership on projects with an entrepreneurial outlook.

* Venture here is defined as a company backed by the academic institution and underpinned by academic research or academic expertise

Application Forms, Deadlines and Process

It's strongly recommended to contact a member of the Creative and Social Futures Fund team for advice and guidance well in advance of submission. Completed forms should be emailed no later than **3rd December 2025 at midday** to the following offices:

- University of Glasgow: Paige Mccaleb innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: Deborah Keogh D.Keogh@rcs.ac.uk
- Glasgow School of Art: Nicola Duncan n.duncan@gsa.ac.uk
- Glasgow Caledonian University: Andrew Campbell - Andrew.Campbell@gcu.ac.uk

Please do note the following points when writing up your proposals:

- This fund is competitive, so do seek advice from the representative at your institution's innovation office (email address above) at the earliest moment to maximise your chances of success.
- Projects are expected to begin promptly when funds are awarded and must be completed within six months.
- Do be careful when considering your budget; refer to the eligible costs and seek guidance from your institution's innovation office.
- We welcome applications from Research Assistants, Research Associates, Research Fellows, LTS and Research-only colleagues. However, individuals in these roles should discuss this with PIs and ensure they have permission from their Head of School.
- Projects that engage in cross-institutional partnerships with RCS, GSA, GCU and UofG are greatly encouraged.

Dates and Duration

Creative and Social Futures Fund projects must specify a proposed start date and project duration, and extensions to this period are not available. If you have any concerns, please contact your respective institutional office:

- University of Glasgow: Paige Mccaleb innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: Deborah Keogh D.Keogh@rcs.ac.uk
- Glasgow School of Art: Nicola Duncan n.duncan@gsa.ac.uk
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All projects funded in this round must be completed within 6 months in all cases. All funding must be spent by 31st July 2026, however project activities can continue until 31st August 2026.

Eligible Costs

The Creative and Social Futures Fund will provide between to £8,000-£15,000 per project, depending on the stage of the project and the activities that are being undertaken.

The funding may be used to pay for the direct costs of developing the scope of an idea, concept or opportunity; undertaking a proof-of-concept study; research to develop the business proposition including validation of interest from stakeholder; and/ or external research associated with developing the project.

Please note that the fund cannot be used for academic research, the development of tools exclusively for use in further research; PI salary costs; or PhD costs associated with studentships

Please contact the below offices for further advice on eligibility, suggested activities, and financial costing:

- University of Glasgow: Paige Mccaleb innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: Deborah Keogh D.Keogh@rcs.ac.uk
- Glasgow School of Art: Nicola Duncan n.duncan@gsa.ac.uk
- Glasgow Caledonian University: Andrew Campbell - Andrew.Campbell@gcu.ac.uk

Assessment of Application

Applicants should write their proposal for a non-specialist audience and avoid using discipline-specific terminology and acronyms.

Applications will be processed in two stages:

- **Stage 1:** The applicant's institution will carry out an initial review of the proposed project to determine its eligibility for the fund.
- **Stage 2:** Applications deemed eligible by the applicant's institution will subsequently be reviewed by a panel consisting of the fund partners and external experts.

Factors that will be considered by reviewers:

- Appropriateness of the project's scope
- Innovative or experimental approaches to either collaboration between the institutions, and/or arts and humanities projects in an entrepreneurial context
- Degree of clarity on how funding will be used
- The quality of the case made particularly how the research context and opportunity are outlined in line with the entrepreneurial theme of the fund
- Evidencing of the relevance of the contextual research or any research base the project draws upon
- The appropriateness of the project's activities and their relationship to any proposed outcomes
- The realism of the project plan
- The financial risk of the project and any potential de-risking already outlined
- Consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles

Creative and Social Futures Fund Priorities:

- Engagement with an entrepreneurial outlook, even at the early stages, for example being willing to have discussions with potential users and customers and giving consideration to potential ways of de-risking the project.

- A focus on partnerships, especially those involving co-creation and collaboration between the Glasgow School of Art, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the University of Glasgow

Post Award Requirements

On completion of the project, fund awardees will provide a summary report and be available for discussions with their respective institutions.

If the project spend is higher than the budgeted amount, the Creative and Social Futures Fund will not contribute towards the additional costs. If, on completion of a project it is found that the project is under-budget, these allocated funds will be returned to the Creative and Social Futures Fund for re-allocation.