



Older Artists' Bursaries 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Who can apply?

You must be:

- Aged 50 or over by the application deadline.
- Resident in Scotland.
- An artist working in any artform, including visual arts, music, writing, performance, film, craft, heritage crafts and poetry.

What do you mean by an "older artist in the early stages of a new artistic career"?

The bursaries are intended for people who:

- Have developed a creative practice later in life.
- Are returning to an artistic practice after a long break.
- Are working in the arts sector and are looking to change direction. As examples, you might be currently working as a producer and are looking to develop a creative practice, or you could be an established artist who is looking to change direction within your artistic practice, for example moving into a new artform or new way of working.

Can I apply if I've exhibited, performed or published before?

Yes, though the bursary is aimed at people in the early stages of a new artistic career, so we wouldn't expect you to have extensive experience of sharing your work with an audience.

If you have an established art career, it doesn't matter if you have shared your earlier work with an audience, however the proposed activity must represent a new direction for you.

Can I apply if I'm in formal education?

Yes, but only if you are studying part-time. Unfortunately we can't accept applications from full-time students.

Is there an upper age limit?

No. There is no upper age limit.

Will there be bursaries specifically for artists from ethnically diverse backgrounds?

At least one bursary will be awarded to an artist from the Global Majority, although more may be awarded depending on the applications received.

What can the bursary support?

Generally, the bursary is for a project or activity that will make a difference to your practice or career, and it is up to you to identify what is most needed to progress at this point. For examples of what we have supported in the past, you can find a list of 2025 recipients and their projects here: <https://luminatescotland.org/project/2025-bursary-recipients-announced/>

How much can I apply for?

You can apply for any amount between £500 and £1,000.

Can I include a fee for my own time?

Yes. You may include an allocation for your own time within the budget. However, you should ensure there is still sufficient funding left to support the development activity itself. In a lot of circumstances, it may be most useful to allocate a stipend for yourself for the days you spend on the project – e.g. £50 a day to cover your food and expenses if you are attending a course away from home.

Can I use the bursary to pay someone else?

Yes, most commonly people paid tutors and mentors for their time.

Can I apply to attend training courses?

Yes. Training is a common and appropriate use of the bursary. Courses can be:

- In Scotland or elsewhere.
- In-person or online.

Can I apply for the bursary to pay for mentoring?

Yes. Mentoring is eligible, including support from more than one mentor if this is appropriate for your development.

Do I need to identify my mentor before applying?

Ideally yes. You should identify potential mentors so you can explain why those individuals would be beneficial to your development at this time.

Can I use the bursary for travel & accommodation?

Yes, where travel contributes directly to your artistic development, such as research trips, archive visits, attending training, conferences or events.

Can I apply for equipment?

Equipment may be eligible where it is clearly part of a development activity and supports progression in your practice. You should explain how the equipment contributes to your artistic development. You cannot apply for equipment as the sole purpose of the bursary.

Can I apply for materials?

Yes, where materials form part of a development activity or project. You cannot apply for materials as the sole purpose of the bursary.

Can I apply for an element of a bigger project?

No, your proposal needs to be a standalone project. The exception to this would be a discrete strand of activity that supports a larger project, as long as it is clearly developmental and the main project can proceed without it. As an example, in the past we have paid for a mentor to work with a writer who wanted support to complete their first novel.

Can I apply if the total cost of my development activity exceeds £1,000?

No. This fund only supports development activities that cost between £500 and £1,000.

What isn't eligible?**Can I use the bursary for marketing or promotion?**

No, marketing costs and other business development costs are not an eligible expense. The focus of the bursary is on artistic development and progression.

Can I use the bursary to support a formal education qualification?

The bursary is intended to support professional and artistic development rather than formal Further or Higher Education pathways. If you are unsure what you are applying for is considered formal education, please do get in touch.

Can I use the bursary to support the day-to-day of my practice?

No. While we recognise the day-to-day is an important element of a creative practice, the bursary is for developmental activities that will help you progress your practice and career.

Application process

Can I submit my application in a format other than writing?

Yes. Applications can be submitted by video or audio recording. If you would like to do this, you should contact Luminate for guidance.

What examples of work should I include?

Applications should include a small selection of work that best represents your practice. This can be:

- Online links;
- A PDF of up to five pages or five images.

I'm changing direction and only have one example from my new area of practice. Can I include examples from my previous work?

Yes. It can be helpful to include examples that demonstrate your previous artistic experience alongside newer work, particularly if they help explain your transition into a new area of practice.

Do I need to produce a final artwork, exhibition or performance?

No. There is no requirement for a specific creative outcome. The focus is on development and learning. Successful applicants will be asked to reflect on the impact of the bursary on their practice.

Do you accept joint applications?

If you are an artistic duo or collective – i.e. you always work together, then yes. If you have separate practices, you need to demonstrate why it is important for the progression of both of your practices to apply together. In both cases, the maximum you can apply for is still £1,000.

Can I submit more than one application?

No. Only one application per artist/collective is accepted.

Timescales and payments**When is the deadline?**

Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 22 October 2026**.

When will applicants hear the outcome?

Applicants will be notified by **5pm on Monday 16 November 2026**.

When does the activity need to take place?

Activity must take place within 8 months of the award, so you will have until 16 July 2027 to complete your activity.

What if I need to book a course before the funding decision is made?

You may book places before the decision date at your own financial risk. If you are applying for a course and won't know if you will be accepted before the deadline, you need to make this clear in your application.

How is the funding paid?

Successful applicants will receive 90% of the award upfront and 10% on completion of the funded activity and reporting requirements.