

Preparing an application for Research and Creation or Concept to Realization

The following tips may help you prepare an application to the [Research and Creation](#) or [Concept to Realization](#) component of the [Explore and Create](#) program.

This document covers:

- Choosing between the two components
- Understanding the peer assessment process
- Responding to the assessment criteria
- General application tips
- Support material tips
- If your application is not funded

You can find specific tips on preparing your budget in [Resources](#).

If you self-identify as Deaf, hard of hearing, having a disability, or living with a mental illness, or are a First Nations, Inuit or Métis person facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers, you may be eligible to apply for [Application Assistance](#).

Choosing between the two components

The components support artistic activities at distinct stages of the creative process.

Research and Creation

- Funds projects at the initial stages of the artistic process including creative research, creation, and project development.
- Generally, the focus of activities is on process, experimentation and creative risk-taking.

Important! If your project involves production and/or post-production of work, you must apply to Concept to Realization.

Concept to Realization

- Funds the full creative cycle, from the initial stages through to production and presentation of completed work.
- Generally, the focus of activities is on artistic outcomes and the impact they will have.
- Requires that your project be finished by the end of your project timeline. For most disciplines, this means your project will be presented to the public. Details are available in the [Concept to Realization](#) guidelines.

Understanding the peer assessment process

[Explore and Create](#) receives many applications and multiple committees are formed for each competition. Each committee is made up of 3-5 peer assessors who review up to 100 applications. New committees are formed for each competition to include different perspectives. You can learn more by going to [Decision-making process](#).

Peer assessors are artists, arts workers, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, academics, and individuals from outside the Council, who bring a range of experience. They evaluate applications based on the assessment criteria published in the guidelines: **Artistic Merit, Impact** and **Feasibility**.

Responding to the assessment criteria

Responding to the assessment criteria throughout your application can help assessors understand how your proposed activities will meet the criteria and makes it easier to score your application against them. You will find some questions below that are prompts to help you reflect on how your project will respond to each criterion. The questions are only intended for personal reflection. You do not need to answer any or all of them.

Artistic Merit (50% of the overall assessment) is defined by:

- The artistic quality of the work
- The artistic rationale for the project
- The potential artistic outcomes

The following prompts may help you reflect on how your project responds to the artistic merit criteria:

Who

- Who are you? What do you want peer assessors to know about you and your artistic practice?
- Whose story are you telling and why? Do you have the appropriate permissions to tell it? See the Canada Council's position on [Cultural Appropriation](#).
- Who are your key collaborators? Why did you choose them? How will you work with them?

What

- What are the themes, subjects, or topics of your project?

How

- How are you going to carry out your project?
- What methods or processes will you use to create or produce your work?

Why

- Why do you want to do this project at this time?
- What do you hope to achieve?

Impact (30% of the overall assessment) is defined by:

The potential of your project to:

- contribute to your or your group's artistic development
- advance artistic practice

And for Concept to Realization only:

- build public interest in and knowledge of the artistic practice.

The following prompts may help you reflect on how your project responds to the impact criteria:

Who

- Who will be involved in and benefit from your project?
- Who is your intended audience or community(ies) and how will you work with them?

How

- How will your project help you grow within your artistic practice?
- How will your project contribute to advancing artistic practice, beyond your own?
- Are you exploring new materials, genres, forms, concepts, etc.?

Feasibility (20% of the overall assessment) is defined by:

- Your capacity and experience to undertake the project
- A reasonable budget, including the ability to provide adequate working conditions

And for Concept to Realization only:

- The inclusion of other revenue sources and the efficient use of resources.

The following prompts may help you reflect on how your project responds to the feasibility criteria:

Who

- Does your CV show you have the experience necessary to carry out your project?
- Have you provided biographies, CVs, and/or samples of relevant work from collaborators?

When

- Does your timeline or project plan give you enough time to carry out your project?
- Did you include key steps and dates (ex: months, weeks, phases, etc.)?

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How

- Have you explained how you will provide safe working conditions for anyone involved in your project? This can include physical, cultural, social, emotional, or other considerations.
- Does your budget include the appropriate costs for your activities?
- For more budget suggestions, see the **Budget Tips** in [Resources](#).

And for Concept to Realization only:

- You can request over \$60,000. Your application and budget should demonstrate why a higher amount is needed to carry out the project.

General application tips

- Read the guidelines and application form before you start:
 - [Research and Creation](#)
 - [Concept to Realization](#)
- Write in your own voice, be clear and avoid jargon. Peer assessors come from diverse artistic practices and may not have deep knowledge of your field of practice. Describe your project so anyone can understand it.
- Your project description, timeline, budget, and support material should be consistent. This shows the assessment committee that you have thought things through and that you can carry out your project.
- Some documents in your applicant profile (such as your CV or group history) are automatically included with your application. You can update them any time before you submit your application. If you need help preparing your CV, go to [Prepare your arts and cultural CV](#).
- If you are working with artistic collaborators, explain who they are and why you want to work with them. Include a short biography or CV, relevant support material samples, and confirmation letters/emails or screenshots.
- If you will be working with a partner to share your work with the public, include a letter/email of confirmation from them. This should describe their role, and how and when they are supporting your project.
- Before you submit your application, ask someone to:
 - read it, offer suggestions, and tell you if something is unclear;
 - check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors;
 - test your support material.

Support material tips

Support material means examples of your creative or cultural work. It helps peer assessors understand your artistic practice and what you want to do. It can include:

- written, visual or audio documentation;
 - examples of previous artistic work or activities that provide context for your artistic practice or project;
 - mock-ups, samples, drafts, or other types of works-in-progress to show what you are proposing to create.
- Peer assessors spend up to 10 minutes reviewing your support material, in addition to reviewing your application. If you upload a longer work, use the viewing instructions to indicate where you want peer assessors to start and stop viewing.
 - Your video or audio links should remain active for up to a year after you submit your application.
 - Do not include promotional texts or videos.
 - Ask for support letters from your collaborators and partners early.

If your application is not funded

Many well-assessed applications do not receive funding due to the Council's limited budget. If yours is not funded, keep the following in mind:

- The volume of applications is high, and the assessment process is competitive.
- Grant writing takes practice - there is no single way to write an application.
- Keep applying! The context for each competition changes, including the peer assessors and the applications they will review. See how many times you can apply here: [Annual Application Limits](#).
- To learn more about the assessment process, consider [nominating yourself](#) to become a peer assessor.
- Check for upcoming [Canada Council webinars and information sessions](#).

Due to the volume of applications received, the Council cannot provide feedback on past applications. We can answer questions about preparing a **future** application. Send your questions to exploreandcreate@canadacouncil.ca