

**INVEST FAQs and Criteria**

Please make sure to read this document before submitting completed applications.
**Timeline**

* Open for applications from Monday 19th December 2022.
* INVEST Information Session on Zoom with Gail McGarvey, (TDNI Deputy Director) and Steven Atkinson (TDNI INVEST Project Manager) Wednesday 21st December, 12:45 – 13:30. [Please click here to sign up for the information session.](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/invest-information-session-tickets-490386989687)
* Deadline for submission to the programme is Tuesday 3rd January 2023 at 17:00. Please ensure any supporting material is submitted with your application.

**1 Background**

INVEST is a freelance artist development programme based in Belfast with a national and international reach, designed to support, upskill and help create the next generation of inclusive artists to lead Northern Ireland’s theatre and dance sectors.

The programme, which includes 9 bursaries (2 at £1000, 4 at £3,000 and 3 at £5,000), will enable professionals including directors, theatre and dance makers, choreographers, curators, technicians, producers or anyone involved in theatre and/or dance from diverse groups in Northern Ireland to reflect on and grow their creative practice.

This programme is funded by Belfast City Council, Foyle Foundation and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

**2 Frequently Asked Questions**

**When is the deadline?**

Tuesday 3rd January 2023 at 17:00.

**Who can apply?**

* We welcome applications from emerging talent through to established artists, looking to develop their practice in new directions where they are less experienced.
* You must have an active membership with Theatre and Dance NI. If you are not a member you can sign up by [clicking here](https://theatreanddanceni.org/membership/become-a-member/#join).
* We welcome applications from artists who have never applied for public funding before.

**Who cannot apply?**

* Those living outside of Northern Ireland.
* Full-time students.
* Under 18s.
* Organisations.
* Groups.
* Theatre and Dance NI staff and board members.
* Belfast City Council, Foyle Foundation or Arts Council of Northern Ireland staff or board members.

**What will I do on INVEST?**

You will work on a project / idea to reflect on your practice and grow and develop your creative skills.

You will propose a process to deliver this work that starts in January 2023 and should run no later than June 30th, 2023. Given the levels of renumeration this will be a part-time project and we expect pockets of activity will be strategically spaced out across this activity period. This programme of activity will be a hybrid of remote online and in-person working in Greater Belfast.

Running alongside the activity plan that you propose to deliver with the support of the bursary, we will provide a free-to-attend programme consisting of:

* One-to-one professional mentoring with a mentor (N.I, UK, ROI and internationally based practitioners) selected with your collaboration.
* Residentials and workshops in professional and personal skills and wellbeing.
* Subject to availability, access to physical space and collaboration with organisations and practitioners in Belfast.

To raise awareness of your work, we are interested in how you will document and share your process whilst taking part in INVEST.

We are seeking to support creatives who will in future contribute to the cultural life of Belfast.

**How much can I apply for?**

There are 3 levels of bursary:

* £1,000 - For applicants with less than a years’ experience in professional practice.
* £3,000 - For applicants with one to four years’ experience in professional practice.
* £5,000 - For applicants with more than four years’ experience in professional practice.

We have linked the size of bursary to length of practice because we expect more established creatives to have existing networks and demonstrable experience with which to bring projects to fruition.

We ask applicants to choose the bursary level that accurately reflects their experience level.

What can I spend my bursary on?

We ask that you identify a creative project / idea that you want to develop, and your own costs to prepare, research, participate in and to reflect on this activity should be costed in your application.

You should use the industry standard day/week rates relevant to your discipline. Please see Equity, UK Theatre, Writers’ Guild and Independent Theatre Council for guidance on the correct rates of pay.

We are looking to support projects / ideas that are achievable within your bursary bands and your experience level.

Other costs could include:

* Training course fees.
* Individual tuition and additional mentoring.
* Project related travel and accommodation to festivals etc.
* Professional development training including but not limited to intensives, classes, workshops, conferences, and meetings.

You can list additional funding, cash and in-kind contributions to your proposed project / idea if their inclusion helps demonstrate your ability to successfully realise your activity. Please indicate in the application if this additional support is already secured / committed or if it is pending.

**What can the bursaries NOT be used for?**

* All forms of production – INVEST is about developing creatives skills through R&D and mentoring, not presenting a produced work or creative idea.
* Requests for retrospective support.
* Commercial projects.
* Work that forms part of under-graduate or post-graduate study or that will be assessed as part of an academic course.
* Work that forms part of existing professional or academic employment.

**When do I need to do the work?**

Selections will be made in January. All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the panel's decision.

If successful, you will need to complete your project and report by the completion deadline we agree with you. The completion deadline will be no later than June 2023.

Please do not commence any work until you hear about the outcome of your application.

**Will you assign me a mentor?**

We will assign a mentor/s based upon your application. This will be a dynamic process with the Project Manager balancing your needs, the needs of your project, and the willingness of the potential mentor/s to get involved. If you have a specific mentor/s in mind, you can include this in your application.

**I have more than one project in mind, what should I do?**

We advise that you think carefully about which project you could make the strongest case for support and only submit one proposal.

**How important are my past achievements in the sector to this application?**

Experience is great however this is a development fund therefore NO application will be dismissed solely on the lack of support material. We expect to see evidence of you working as a creative and your previous activity however we want to support your future artistic journey.

The selection panel will not necessarily have prior knowledge of you or your work. Please include everything you feel relevant to the proposal. Your application will be solely judged by the information you choose to include.

**I work for an organisation as a curator and/or producer, can I apply?**

This programme is designed for independent creatives only. If you are part- time in a creative role within an organisation, you are still welcome to apply if you can show that the professional development activity benefits your independent practice rather than the organisation or your role with the organisation. In addition, participants will be expected to attend some compulsory group meetings and training, so we urge you to consider this upon submission. You cannot apply if you are employed full time within an organisation.

**I have had a bursary from Theatre and Dance NI (or Theatre NI or Dance Resource Base) before – can I apply again?**

Yes. You must have completed your previous evaluation report.

**Do I have to apply using the application form?**

You can apply using the application form or you can answer questions 10 to 13 via a pre-recorded video/audio file. Use WeTransfer or Dropbox to share your video/audio file. Please make sure the link/s are working before your submission.

If you are applying via pre-recorded video/audio, submit your link under each relevant question on the digital application form.

**What supporting evidence should I provide with my application?**

* Supply no more than two examples of your artistic work.
* Supporting evidence that best exemplifies your work and is of good quality video/audio.
* Clearly label the work with a title (i.e. in the file name) to show what it is or where it was presented.
* If your practice is performance-based, share a clip of a relevant event/show, rather than still images.
* Choose a clip from a performance, rather than promotional film as we want to see examples of your work.
* Do not submit video/audio materials that are more than five minutes long or work that contains large amounts of text.
* Use WeTransfer or Dropbox to share files and make sure the link is working before submission.

**Is my information kept private?**

Yes. All information provided to Theatre and Dance NI will be held in strict confidence. Any information you provide within your application is solely to evaluate your application. Information about Bursary recipients will be shared publicly with the approval of the Artist.

**I’ve read the guidance and FAQ but still have a question. What should I do?**

Attend the Zoom information session at 12:45 on Wednesday 21st December 2022.

**3 Criteria for decisions**

**What is the INVEST panel looking for?**

The INVEST panel will select the applications that best deliver the stated mission of the programme:

* Support a diverse group of artists to develop careers and practice.
* Support artists in the longer term to create and produce work to the highest professional standards.

We ask that applications highlight any links to the areas that we are looking to support:

* A range of lengths of professional creative practice.
* A range of lived diversity in the broadest sense.
* To support creative residents in Belfast and elsewhere in NI with a willingness to work in Belfast.

A good application will give a snapshot of your current creative practice and the idea/project you wish to undertake through INVEST. We encourage you to be realistic about what can be achieved given the limited funds available. The panel will use their professional experience to assess the likelihood of your success at achieving your stated aims with the resources and activity plan that you describe in the application.

We make decisions based on the information provided in the application and on the artistic potential represented in background information and support material.

The decision-making process is evidence-based. It is important to include all the details in the application and support material. Do not assume that the selection panel have any prior knowledge of you or your work.

4 Decisions

**The Expertise**

The panel making the decisions will be independent. Additional advice will be sought if a particular form of arts practice is believed to be outside the panel's expertise.

**Successful applications**

The 9 successful applicants will receive a contract from TDNI and payment of 70% once relevant paperwork has been received. The final 30% will be paid on delivery of your project report.

**Unsuccessful applications**

We will let you know this in an email by the end of January 2023.