



Royal Conservatoire  
of Scotland



Creative Enterprise  
Development Office

# Make it Happen



## What is it?

The Make It Happen Fund gives our most recent graduates access to a competitive pot of seed funding to support their career goals, enterprising ambitions and creative development.

The Make It Happen Fund can be used towards:

- Training and learning
- Trying out new ideas
- Starting creative projects or businesses
- Running events or performances
- Meeting people in your industry
- Working with others

There are **25 awards** available of a fixed **£1,500**.

[Click here to make an application.](#)

## Important Dates

**Online Information Session:** 10 June 2026 12:30-13:30

[Click here to register.](#)

**In-person Application Writing Session:** Thursday 25 June 12:00-2:00 Clockwise Room 6.03

[Click here to register.](#)

**Application Deadline:** Friday 24 July 2026 at 17:00

## Who can apply?

To apply you must:

- Have graduated from RCS in 2024, 2025 or due to graduate in 2026
- Live in the UK and be able to provide proof of your visa if required (i.e. if you are on a graduate visa)

You must not:

- Be on a student visa
- Have received the Make It Happen Fund before

## How can I use the funding?

You can use funding towards a wide range of costs including:



- **People & Fees:** Paying yourself, paying your collaborators, artist fees, admin fees, etc.
- **Space:** Rehearsal spaces, venue hire, recording studio (incl. technicians), etc.
- **Small Equipment, Tools & Materials:** Equipment purchase or rental, software, licenses, materials, costume or props, catering, car hire or project-related travel, etc.
- **Learning & Development:** Training courses, workshops, events, conferences, etc.
- **Access:** Interpreters, personal assistants, care cover, captioning, translation, etc.

Your costs must be for work in the future, and we cannot pay you for costs which have already taken place.

You cannot use funding towards:

- Living costs or rent
- Debts or loans
- Business consultants
- New instruments
- Professional membership fees
- Tuition fees
- Projects starting before 31 October 2026

## Can I pay myself?

Everyone working in the performing arts should be paid fairly for their time and expertise. We encourage you to budget in a way that ensures you and your collaborators are properly compensated, even if that means slowing the project down, splitting it into phases, or scaling it to fit your resources.

We strongly encourage paying at least the Real Living Wage, or relevant union rates (e.g. Musicians' Union, Equity), which should be clearly outlined in your budget.

If your project involves community participants through research or workshops, please also consider how you will fairly compensate them for their time and contribution.

## Systemic Barriers

We believe there can be no innovation in the performing arts unless systemic barriers are challenged and structural inequality in the arts and higher education is actively addressed. RCS Engage has therefore committed that at least 50% of this funding will be awarded to projects led by people who identify with one or more of the following communities or lived experiences:

- People from the global majority
- People from working class or low income backgrounds
- Neurodivergent people and/or disabled people
- People with lived experience of mental health challenges or long-term mental health conditions
- LGBTQIA+ people



- Care experienced people
- Migrants and people with lived experience of seeking asylum
- People with lived experience of homelessness
- People with lived experience of the criminal justice system
- People with lived experience of substance use challenges
- People with unpaid caring responsibilities
- Romany, Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities

On the application form, you will be asked whether you identify with one or more of these communities or experiences.

You will not be asked to specify which, and no proof will be required. We trust our RCS community to answer honestly and only select this option if it applies to them.

## How to Make a Strong Application

Applicants should clearly explain their project plans, identify the learning and development opportunities, and how the funding will support the next stage of their career.

Your budget should outline all project costs (e.g. artist fees, venues, websites) using realistic estimates based on research. If your project exceeds £1,500 and relies on additional funding, you must show other funding sources, their application status, any in-kind support, and a contingency plan if funding is not secured.

The panel will be looking to ensure that you and your collaborators are paid fairly for your time and expertise, ideally at least the Real Living Wage or relevant union rates. These should be clearly outlined in your budget.

You may upload a one-page PDF with images, documentation, mood boards, or links to audio/video work to support your application. This is not formally assessed but may help panellists better understand your practice.

Video applications can be submitted by email instead of written applications. We also recommend drafting your application separately before submitting online.

You must include one professional referee who is not related to you. Applications without a referee will not be considered.

### **Remember:**

- **Be clear and simple about what you want to do**
- **Show how the money will help your career goals or creative development**
- **Include a budget showing what the money will pay for (artist fees, space hire, travel, etc.)**
- **If your budget is over £1,500, explain where the extra money is coming from – or explain what your Plan B will be**
- **You can upload 1 page with images, links or mood boards to support your application (PDF only)**



On your application, you can choose to receive the CEDO newsletter for updates on funding and support opportunities for RCS graduates. If you opt in, you'll be asked about your current work situation to help CEDO report on the impact of programmes like the Make It Happen Fund to our funders at the Scottish Funding Council and Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA).

This is in line with our data privacy policy which you can find here: [www.rcs.ac.uk/policy/privacy](http://www.rcs.ac.uk/policy/privacy)

## How To Apply

[Click here to make an application.](#)

Alternately, you can apply by video (or in BSL). To do this please email Stephanie at [cedo@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:cedo@rcs.ac.uk). The application form includes questions and a time limit for each video.

With either option, we will ask you to complete a short form which includes your contact information, graduation details, working information (i.e. are you self employed), and reference information.

## Application Timeline

The **application deadline is Friday 24 July 2026 at 17:00**. Applications made after this time will not be accepted to the Make It Happen Fund.

Applicants should receive an automated email from our online system, Zoho, confirming the form has been received. If you have not received this email, please contact us at [cedo@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:cedo@rcs.ac.uk).

An initial check for eligibility will be completed by members of the CEDO Team.

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel of industry practitioners, including former awardees of the Make It Happen Fund. Applicants will **receive a decision on their application no later than mid-October 2026**.

If your application is successful, we will require a document or official letter with your name and proof of address, dated in the last three months. For example, this could be an energy or phone bill etc. We will also need the following information to complete the payment process:

- Name & address of bank account holder
- Account number
- Sort code

Successful applicants will be provided with the official Make It Happen Fund logo and a written sentence to acknowledge the funding; we kindly ask that these materials be incorporated into all promotional and public-facing aspects of your work, in recognition of our support.

Question	Weak (1- 3 point)	Moderate (4 - 7 points)	Strong (8 - 10 points)
<p><b>1.</b> Tell us about your project. This should be a compelling description of your project which outlines your aims or outcomes, potential collaborators and why you want to work with them. Please note that your project description should clearly connect to your budget and intended use of the funds.</p>	<p>Description of the project lacks clarity.</p> <p>The aims or outcomes of the proposal is lacking description.</p> <p>No information given on potential collaborators.</p>	<p>Satisfactory description of the project.</p> <p>The aim or outcomes of the proposal is clear.</p> <p>Some information provided on potential collaborators.</p>	<p>A clear and compelling description of the project.</p> <p>The aims or outcomes of the proposal is introduced well and garners interest in the project.</p> <p>Potential collaborators are identified and substantial reasons are given for working with them.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Please outline the learning and development opportunity the Make It Happen Fund will enable and crucially the difference that it will make for you as a next step in your career.</p>	<p>No clear connection between the proposed project and the applicant's goals.</p> <p>Unclear how the project will contribute to the applicant's development.</p>	<p>Sufficient connection made between the proposed project and the applicant's goals.</p> <p>Adequate description of how the project will contribute to the applicant's development.</p>	<p>Applicant clearly describes their future goals and outlines how the proposed project will help them achieve those goals.</p> <p>Convincing description of how the project will contribute to the applicant's development.</p>

**Make It Happen Fund Assessment Criteria**



	Poor description of how the applicant will learn and grow as a practitioner.	Partial explanation of how the applicant plans to learn and grow as a practitioner.	Clear plans for how the applicant plans to learn and grow as a practitioner.
<p><b>3. Budget:</b> This should provide an outline of how the funds will be used. Estimated costs will be accepted. If are using funds as part of package of funding, you need to demonstrate the other sources of funding or stage of application (i.e. pending or writing application) within the budget.</p>	<p>No information provided on how the financial award will be spent.</p> <p>Unclear why the applicant needs the award for their project. Little or no evidence the award will impact the project in a conclusive way.</p> <p>The applicant has not considered fair pay for themselves or their collaborators.</p>	<p>Minimal sense of how the financial award will be spent. Some research evident.</p> <p>Satisfactory description of why the applicant needs the award for their project. Some evidence of how the award will impact the project.</p> <p>The applicant has given fair pay some consideration in their budget, and has compensated themselves or their collaborators.</p>	<p>Strong description of how the award will impact the project and a clear outline of what the award will allow the applicant to achieve that would not otherwise be possible.</p> <p>Strong evidence of research and/or quotes provided that provide sense of how the financial award will be spent.</p> <p>The applicant has carefully considered fair pay and developed the project to ensure that both they and their collaborators are properly compensated.</p>