Innovation Studio Seed Fund 2026-27



Part 2 – Common Questions

innovation studio

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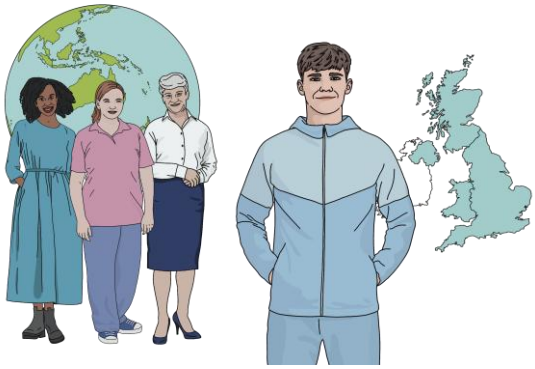


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1. Do I need to live in the UK to apply?



Yes. The main person applying must live legally in the UK between **November 2026 and October 2027.**



You can still work with people from other countries, but the main person applying must live in the UK during this time.

2. Can I apply if I am on a visa?



Yes. You can apply if you have a Student visa, but you must follow Home Office rules.



You must not:

- be **self-employed**. This means you work for yourself



- do jobs your visa does not allow. For example, work as an entertainer.



- use the fund for running a business, or to start a business



- pay yourself or others on student visas for performance work



- work more than your visa allows



- During term time you can work up to 20 hours a week.



- During the holidays you can work full-time.



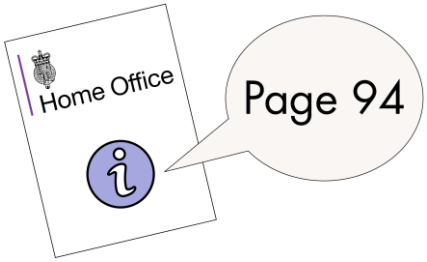
You can check the term dates here – Term Dates



You can still use the fund for **pre-trading work** like planning, training, or research.



You can read more about visa work rules on the UKCISA website. **UKCISA** is a website that explains visa rules for students.



This government guide explains the Student visa rules. Look at page 94 onwards.



If you have a Visitor visa, you cannot do paid work. You can only take part as a volunteer.

3. What is trading?



Trading means running a business. For example, selling tickets, selling products, or being paid for services.

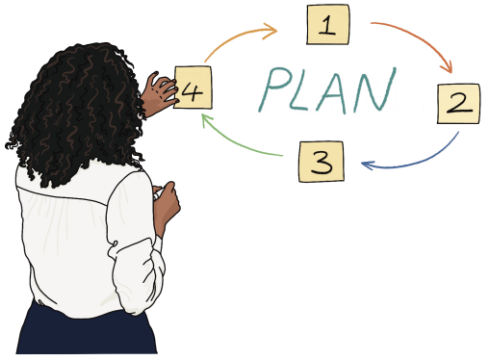


If you are on a student visa, you cannot use this fund for trading.

4. What is pre-trading work?



Pre-trading work means you are preparing for a business, but not yet selling anything.



For example:

- planning a business



- getting training or mentoring

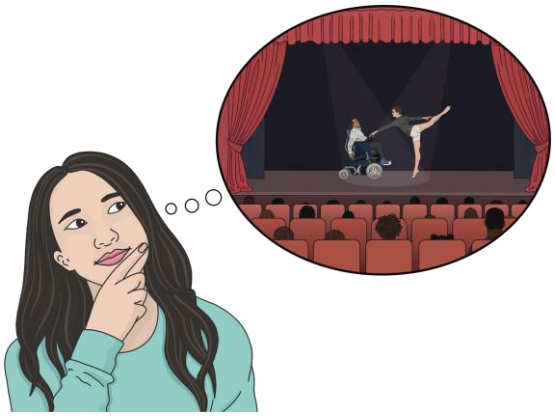


- research or market testing



- making **prototypes**.

  prototype is a first try at a new creative idea. For example, a short performance, a pilot workshop, a test version of an artwork, or an experiment with new technology.

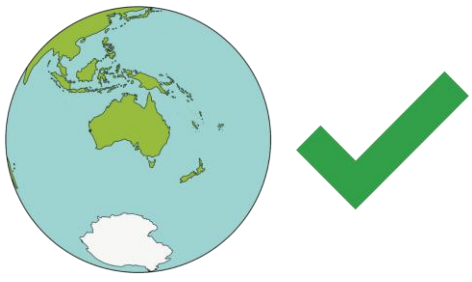


It is not fully finished or perfect. But it helps you and others see how the idea could work before developing it further.



You can use this fund for pre-trading activities even if you are on a student visa.

5. Can I work with people from other countries?



Yes. You can work with people outside the UK, or do projects that connect with other countries.

6. What do you mean by people who face barriers?



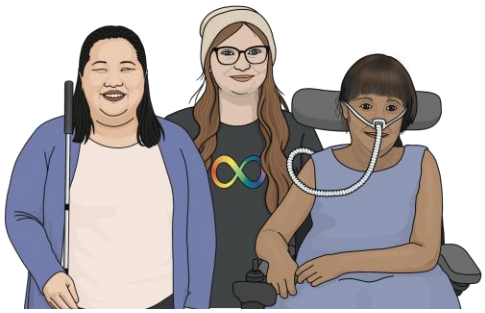
Barriers are things that make it harder for people to take part. This includes:



- People of the global majority (Black, Brown, or mixed background)



- People from working class backgrounds



- Disabled or neurodivergent people



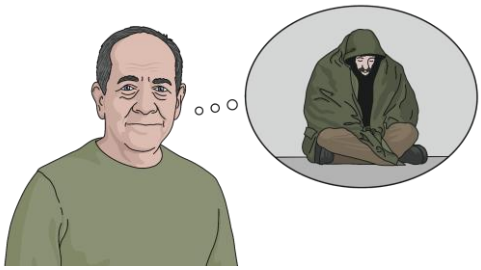
- LGBTQIA+ people



- Care-experienced people.



- Migrants



- People who have been homeless



- People who have been in prison or in the justice system



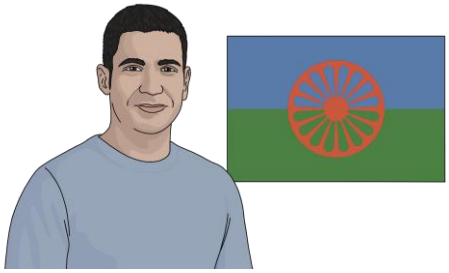
- People with mental health problems



- People with problems with drugs or alcohol



- People who care for others without pay



- Romany or Traveller communities

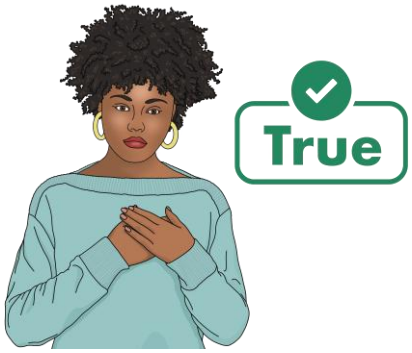


half

At least half of the money will go to projects led by people who face barriers.



When you apply, we will ask you if you are part of one or more of these groups.



Please answer honestly. We will not ask for proof.

7. What can I use the money for?

You can use the award for:



- Software, websites, or web hosting



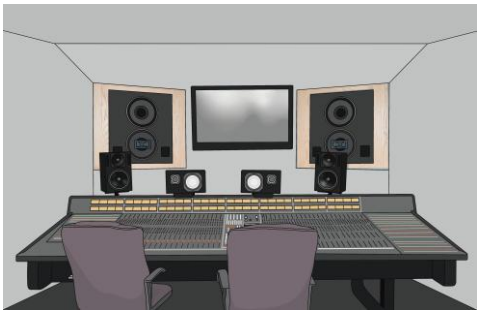
- Licences or permissions you need



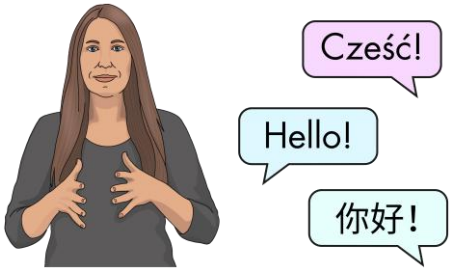
- Small equipment



- Promotion and marketing, including printing



- Venue or room hire



- Translation or interpretation



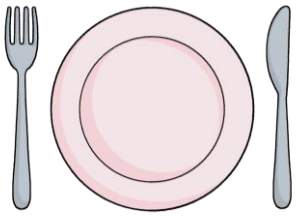
- Travel. Please only ask for overnight travel if you really need it



- Books or articles



- Workspace or rehearsal space hire



- Money for meals. You must explain why you need this



- **Artist fees**. This is money you pay yourself or other artists for the creative work you do on the project



- **Admin fees**. This means money you pay yourself or other people for organising the project. For example, sending emails, planning budgets, and doing paperwork.



- Research to test your ideas or audience

8. What can I not use the money for?

You cannot use the award for:



- your coursework or graded projects



- tuition fees



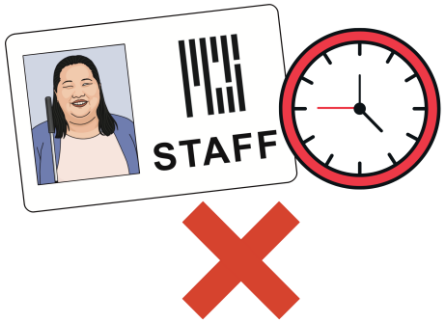
- living costs, like rent or food



- expensive equipment, like laptops or vans



- legal costs. But we can help you with this separately



- extra staff time for full-time RCS staff

9. Can I get help with access costs?



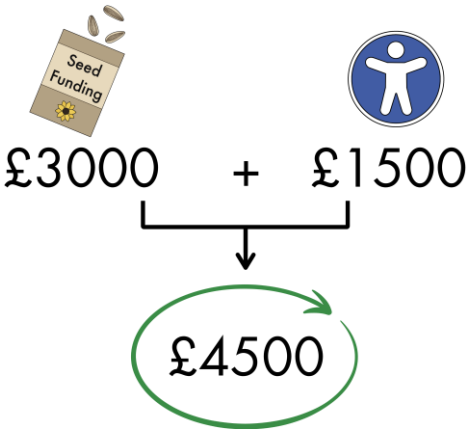
Yes. You can ask for extra money for your access needs, or the needs of people you work with. This money is called an **Access Award**.



Access awards are on top of your £1000 or £4000 award.



They cannot be more than half of your project budget.



For example, if you ask for £3000 from the Seed Fund, you can also ask for up to £1500 for access costs. This makes a total of £4500.

10. What counts as access costs?

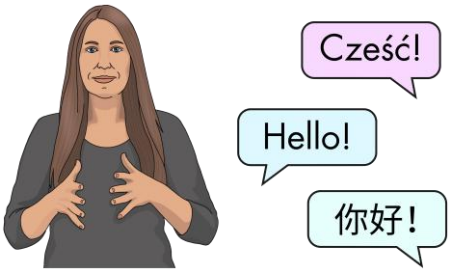


Access costs are things that help you or your team members take part fully in your project.

For example:



- Support for disabled or neurodivergent people. For example, personal assistants, captioning, or adjustments



- Translating things into different languages



- Extra costs for carers, so they can take part in your project. For example, paying for respite care to cover their caring duties while they work on the project.

11. How do I ask for access costs?



On the application form, we will ask if you need access costs.



If you do, fill out the **Access Budget Template** on page 2 of the Budget Template.

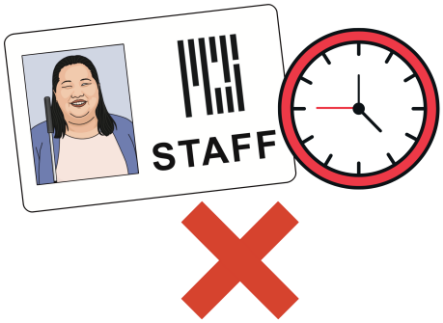
Add your access costs into this template.

12. Can you help me make my project accessible to others?



Yes. If we fund you, we can help you make your project more accessible to other people.

13. Are there any special rules for RCS staff?



Yes. If you are a full-time RCS staff member, you cannot ask for extra pay for the hours in your staff job.



But you can still:

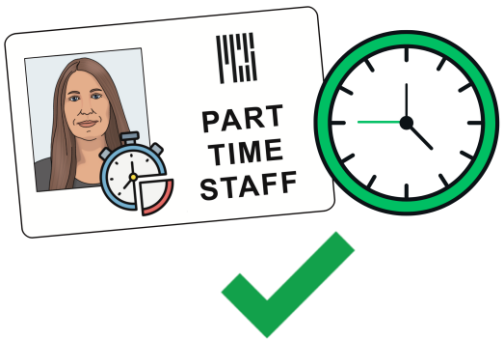
- apply for the Seed Fund



- ask for money to cover **artist fees** - creative work outside your normal role.



- ask for money for **project costs** like materials, travel, or venue hire



If you are part-time staff, you can include fees for your time on the project.

14. What should I put in my budget?

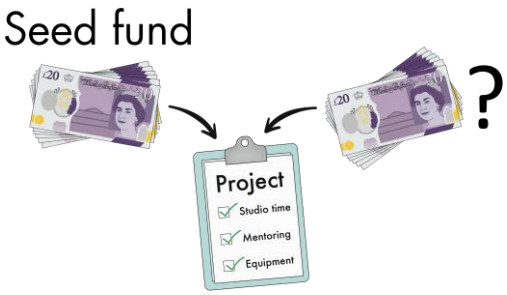


Your budget is a list of all the money you need for your project.



It should include:

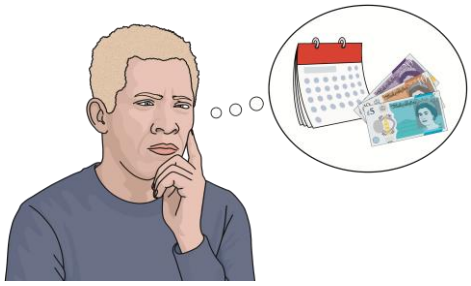
- how much you will spend on each thing



- any other money you are getting. For example, from another funder



- any **in-kind costs**. These are things you get for free, like free space or donated materials

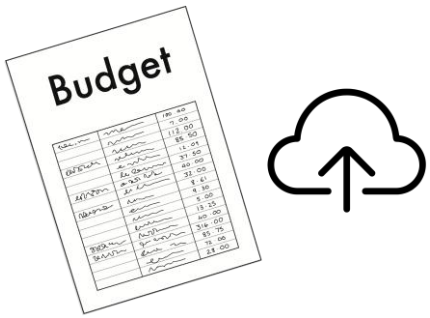


Be realistic about the time and money you need.

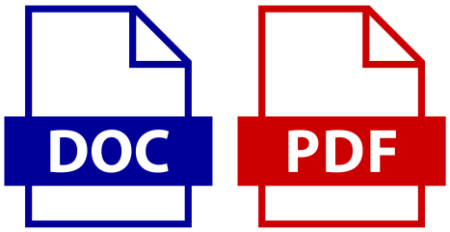


If you need help making a budget, email innovationstudio@rcs.ac.uk.

15. What format should my budget be in?

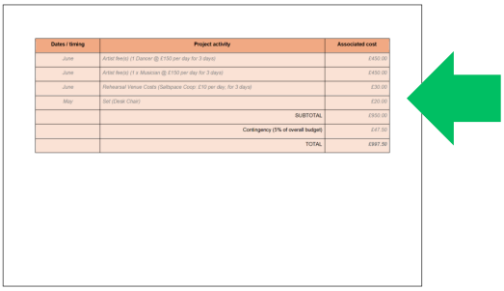


You must upload your budget when you apply.



It must be:

- a Word document (.doc), or
- a PDF (.pdf)



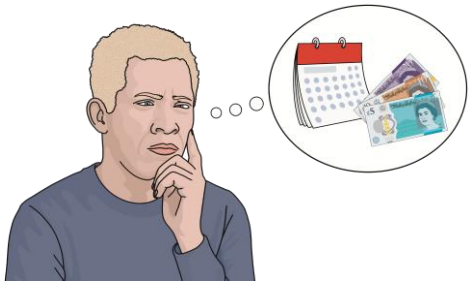
You can use the Project Budget Template to help you.

You can also look at the example budget on pages 3-4 of the template.

16. How will you decide?

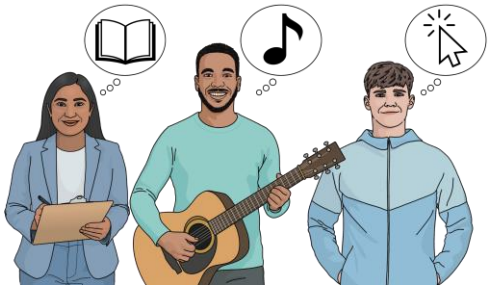


A panel will read your application.



They will look at:

- if your project is realistic



- the skills and experience of your team



- how you and your partners will work together



- how your project fits with Innovation Studio's goals:



  - trying new things



  - working together



  - bringing together people with different skills or areas of work.

17. How can I ask for help?



If you have questions or need support, email:

innovationstudio@rcs.ac.uk

18. Do I need to share my work at the end?



Yes. You must:

- give a short talk at a community event. The talk will be 5 – 10 minutes long.



- **or** meet one to one with the Innovation Studio team



You must also fill in an evaluation form

19. Do I need to record my project?



Yes. From the start, you should plan how you will **record your project**. This means keeping a note of what happens in your project.

You can record your project in many ways, for example:



- taking photos or film



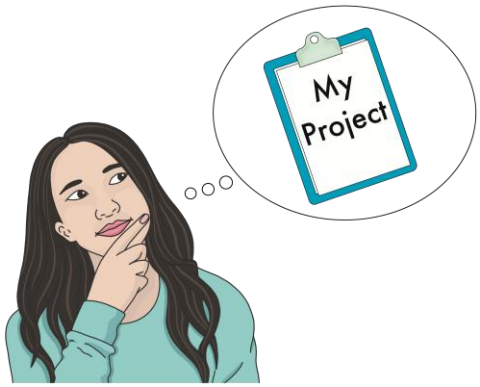
- making audio recordings



- writing notes or diaries



- printing short booklets or summaries



Each project is different. You should choose the kind of recording that makes sense for you.



Recording is important because it can:

- help you look back and develop your ideas



- help you apply for more funding in the future



- help Innovation Studio share the story of our community

20. What support will I get for recording?



£200

We will give you **£200 extra** to record your project. You do not need to include this in your budget.



We will run a workshop on how to record your project.



In return, you must share a small selection of your records with us. For example, some photos, film clips, or notes.

21. Do I need Public Liability Insurance?



Yes. You must have **Public Liability Insurance**.

This protects you if someone is hurt or something is damaged during your project.

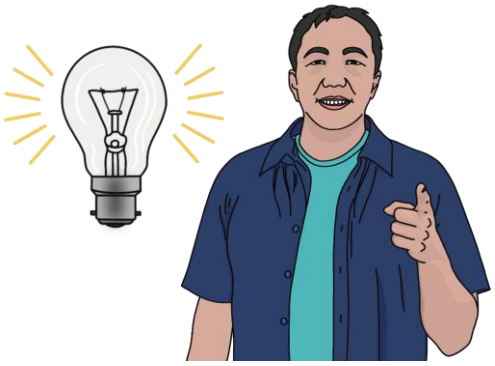


Students and staff must show proof.

Some unions include this insurance:

- BECTU
- Equity
- Musicians' Union (MU)
- Scottish Artists Union (SAU)

22. Do I own my idea?



Yes. The work you make belongs to you.



You must say that Innovation Studio and RCS supported your work.

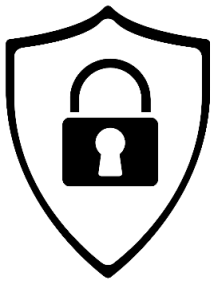


RCS have rules about who owns ideas. You can read them here.



It is not in Easy Read, so let us know if you need help to understand it.

23. Will you keep my data private?

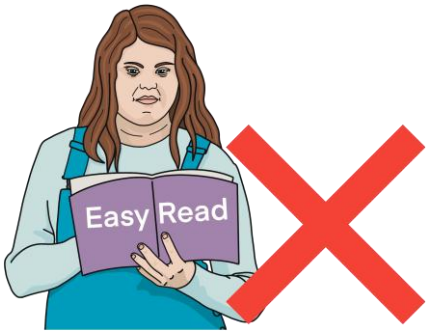


Yes. We will keep your data safe.



You can read our privacy notice here:

www.rcs.ac.uk/policy/privacy



It is not in Easy Read, so let us know if you need help to understand it.