Make It Happen Fund

Information & Guidance Notes 2024-2025

What is the Make It Happen Fund?

The purpose of the Make It Happen Fund is to give our most recent graduates access to a competitive pot of seed funding to support their career goals and ambitions. The fund supports our graduates' early-stage career development, in a range of areas such as: training, networking, testing ideas, starting up companies, staging pop-up events or digital performances, and forming new collaborations.

Our graduates from 2022, 2023, or 2024 can apply for a fixed award of £1,500.
There are up to 10 awards available. The deadline for application is: **Wednesday 25 September 2024.**

Click here to make an online application.

Who is eligible for funding?

To be eligible to apply to the Make It Happen Fund, you must be a graduate of the RCS within the past three years. (i.e. you will have graduated in Spring or Autumn in 2022, 2023, or 2024). Eligible graduates include undergraduate, taught postgraduates, PhD and DPerf students.

Applicants must reside in the United Kingdom and be able to provide the RCS with proof of home address (example: utility bill or council tax bill). Those holding a Student (formerly Tier 4) visa cannot be in receipt of public funds and cannot be self-employed, therefore cannot be awarded the Make It Happen Fund.

Individuals can only be awarded funds once through this initiative.

All awardees are responsible for their own tax.

Systemic Barriers

We believe there can be no innovation in the performing arts unless systemic barriers are challenged, and actions taken to address structural inequality in the arts and higher education. We have therefore committed that at least 30% of this funding will be awarded to projects which are led by:

- people from the global majority and those from the global south

- people from working class backgrounds

- those who are neurodiverse and/or disabled people

- members of the LGBTQIA+ community

- care-experienced people

- migrants

- people who are or have been homelessness

- those with lived experience of the criminal justice system

- Romany travellers

- those who face barriers to opportunities due to mental health issues, substance misuse, and unpaid caring duties

If you feel that this list is not representative of people facing systemic barriers, please let us know, so we can continue to improve our process.

On application forms, you will be asked if you identify as part of one or more of these communities (you will not be required to select which category). No proof will be required, and we expect our RCS community to be honest and only select this option on the form if it does apply to them.

What size are the funds?

There are up to 10 awards available. Each award is £1,500. Please note that the application process will be competitive, and funds will be granted to those who make the strongest case for support.

The award can either fully-fund your project or part-fund your project. However, if your project success is dependent on additional funding, we would encourage you to highlight information on your other funding sources and a plan if other funding is not available. If you 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. If you need any support on how to do this, please contact the KE Team at keadmin@rcs.ac.uk.

How do I make a strong application?

We are looking for applicants to be specific and clearly articulate the learning and development opportunities that the award will provide. It is vital that you highlight the difference that this funding, and your project, will make to the next steps in your career.

Your project budget should provide an outline of all associated costs with your project (i.e. artist's fees, website costs, venue booking). Estimated costs will be accepted but should be realistic and it is expected you would undertake background research to ensure costs are reasonable.

If your project budget is more than £1,500, and the MIHF will be used in a package of funding, you need to demonstrate clearly the other sources of funding and the stage of application (i.e. awarded funding, pending application, writing application) within your budget. You should also be able to demonstrate how the project will move forward if funding is not secured from other sources. You should also indicate all in-kind support* secured within the budget.

We have put together an example budget for you to reference. This includes one budget for £1,500 and one for more than £1,500.

We recommend that you draft your application in a document before submitting it in the online form. This will allow you to edit your application beforehand to ensure it is as strong as possible.

You must ask one person who knows you professionally to act as a referee to support your application. The referee cannot be related to you. We may contact you or your referee if we have questions about the application. Applications submitted without a referee will not be considered.

*In-kind support is support (or an agreement) you have received which does not have a monetary contribution, but would ordinarily have a cost associated (for example, a venue is providing rehearsal space free of charge).

Can I pay myself and my collaborators?

Within our community of artists, it is vital that you are paid fairly for your expertise and your time. This is not only important for yourself but as a form of solidarity with others. Paying yourself and your collaborators fairly should be an industry standard to help ensure that everyone is able to access and create art.

We encourage you to plan your project in such a way that you can ensure that you, and any of your collaborators, are paid fairly for their time and effort. This may mean slowing your pace, splitting your project into phases, and taking care to not fit a big project into a small budget.

We strongly encourage payment of at least the Real Living Wage for yourself and for all people being employed to undertake work in your project.

You may also use your chosen union rates (i.e. Musicians Union, Equity, etc), which should be clearly identified in your project budget. If you're not sure about union rates, then you should be using the Real Living Wage as a guide.

In your project, if you are engaging with the community through research or workshops, we would also encourage you to consider carefully what offer you are making to these participants to ensure a fair transaction for their time and work.

What can I get funding for?

Recipients can use the fund for the following types of activities:

- Planned projects that take place after 15 November 2024
- Seed funding for early-stage ideas, performances or ventures
- To test or prototype an idea, project or collaboration through a lab week or rehearsal week, pop-up event, marketing campaign, brand development
- Performance or digital performance related costs such as venue hire and equipment or streaming platforms
- Costs associated with taking a show to Festivals or Online Festivals
- Costs related to producing collaborative projects – space hire, pop-up events, marketing materials
- To support starting up a company (e.g. set up costs, market testing, website)
- Registration costs for attendance at industry training, networking events or trade fairs that will support your career development
- Artist's fees to cover your time and expertise on the project

The fund will not cover:

- Living costs, rent, overhead bills (Subsistence costs)
- Debts
- Business Consulting costs
- New instruments
- Membership of professional bodies
- Formal tuition fees
- Projects that commence before 15 November 2024.

If you have any questions with regards to the use of the fund please contact keadmin@rcs.ac.uk.

Application Timeline

The application deadline is 17:00 on Wednesday 25 September 2024. Applications made after this time will not be accepted to the Make It Happen Fund.

Applications will be acknowledged within three days of receipt of the application form and each applicant will be provided with an applicant number. An initial check for eligibility will be completed by staff from the Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) department.

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel of industry practitioners. Applicants will receive a decision on their application no later than mid-November 2024.

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 account holder
• Account number
• Sort code

Successful applicants must document their funded project and submit a short report (between 250 – 500 words) by **Friday 2 May 2025**. The report should include:

- Details of how the funding was used;
- Reflection of the difference the funding made to your project and your development more broadly;
- A secondary form of documentation alongside the text-based report (this can include: short videos/ vlogs; audio recordings; photographs; performance notes; posters/marketing materials).

Every individual project requires a unique kind of documentation. Documenting your work can help your project develop and help you seek further funding after the Make It Happen Fund.

Documentation and reporting will also help the Knowledge Exchange Team by ensuring that we can tell the story of our RCS alumni community and continue to provide this support and funding for RCS graduates in the future.

Successful applicants will be added to a Knowledge Exchange Database to ensure they are asked to complete an annual survey. The Knowledge Exchange Team is required by the Scottish Government to monitor and report on those supported through this scheme.

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

What happens if I am unsuccessful?

We will communicate decisions to applicants by mid-November 2024. Please note, this is a competitive fund and only a small number of applicants will be successful.

The Knowledge Exchange Team will provide feedback on your application if requested.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact Stephanie Edwards at keadmin@rcs.ac.uk.

Make It Happen Fund Assessment Criteria

Question	Weak (1- 3 point)	Moderate (4 - 7 points)	Strong (8 - 10 points)
1. 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.	Description of the project lacks clarity. The aims or outcomes of the proposal is lacking description. No information given on potential collaborators.	Satisfactory description of the project. The aim or outcomes of the proposal is clear. Some information provided on potential collaborators.	A clear and compelling description of the project. The aims or outcomes of the proposal is introduced well and garners interest in the project. Potential collaborators are identified and substantial reasons are given for working with them.
2. 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.	No clear connection between the proposed project and the applicant's goals. Unclear how the project will contribute to the applicant's development. Poor description of how the applicant will learn and grow as a practitioner.	Sufficient connection made between the proposed project and the applicant's goals. Adequate description of how the project will contribute to the applicant's development. Partial explanation of how the applicant plans to learn and grow as a practitioner.	Applicant clearly describes their future goals and outlines how the proposed project will help them achieve those goals. Convincing description of how the project will contribute to the applicant's development. Clear plans for how the applicant plans to learn and grow as a practitioner.
3. Budget: 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	No information provided on how the financial award will be spent. Unclear why the applicant needs the award for their project. Little or no evidence the award will impact the project in a conclusive way.	Minimal sense of how the financial award will be spent. Some research evident. Satisfactory description of why the applicant needs the award for their	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.

sources of funding or stage of application (i.e. pending or writing application) within the budget.		project. Some evidence of how the award will impact the project.	Strong evidence of research and/or quotes provided that provide sense of how the financial award will be spent.