



NI CEP

Frequently Asked
Questions

Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme: Frequently Asked Questions

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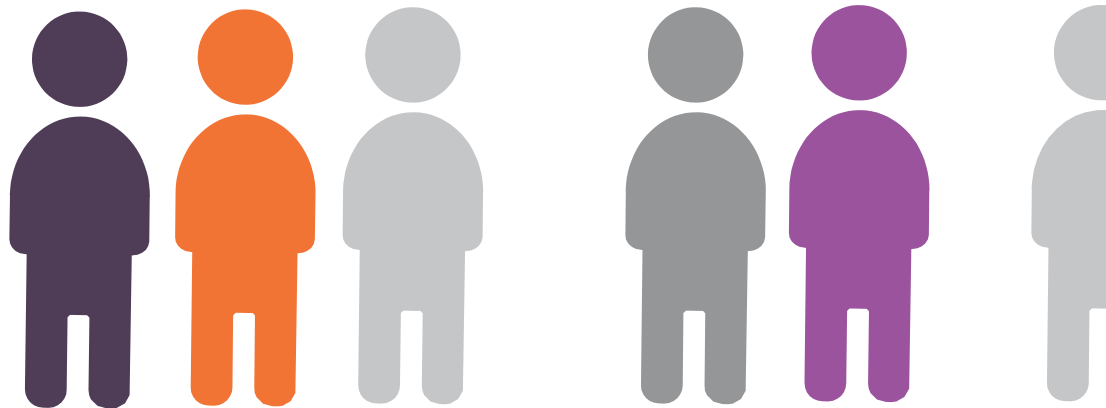
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PLEASE NOTE: While all of the information in this document is current, unfortunately applications for apprenticeships *cannot* be accepted in the final two funding rounds (April and June 2017). This is due to limitations with apprenticeship provision beyond the NI Creative Employment Programme and outside of our control. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact us on nicep@ccskills.org.uk



1. Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme

Q: What is the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme?

A: The Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme (NI CEP) is a £450K fund to support the creation of formal Apprenticeship and paid internship opportunities for young unemployed people aged 16-24 wishing to pursue a career in the arts and cultural sector.

Through the NI CEP we will provide part wage grants to employers who create new apprenticeship and internship job opportunities for young unemployed people aged 16-24. Employers will need to make an application for funding to us in order to access a part wage grant; this is because we are dealing with lottery money.

The focus will be on the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's footprint: music, dance, drama, literature, visual arts, craft, festivals, arts venues, community arts, galleries, museums, circus and carnival arts. However, this includes all employers, both commercial and subsidised that fall within this footprint.

Young people aged 16 - 24 from all backgrounds, from graduates to those with few or no qualifications will get the chance to access on-the-job training and experience to build the skills that employers want.

Q: How did Creative & Cultural Skills become the Provider for the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme?

A: Creative & Cultural Skills applied to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through an open process. Our proposal was supported by a strong track record of delivering similarly large scale, complex and national work-based learning and skills development programmes which have benefitted the arts and cultural sector and have been backed up by high quality research and industry knowledge. Creative & Cultural Skills also currently delivers the Creative Employment Programme in England.

Q: What does the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme hope to achieve?

A: The NI CEP aims to:

- Increase the number of Apprenticeship opportunities across the arts sectors;
- Increase the number of paid interns in the sector, with a view to completely eradicating unpaid internships in the long term;
- Generate long term commitment to sustaining new job opportunities beyond the life of the NI CEP;
- Establish/maintain equitable and fit for purpose recruitment practices;
- Improve understanding of employment challenges associated with the arts;
- Develop robust local partnerships that can help improve employment opportunities for young people;
- Create fairer entry routes into the arts and cultural sector;
- To encourage greater collaboration and innovation by employers to generate jobs in the arts and cultural sector;
- Support the next generation of arts and cultural professionals and enable the growth of the sector by directly addressing skills gaps and shortages.

Q: How does the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme help young people?

A: It is supporting the creation of 100 paid internships and apprenticeships in arts and cultural organisations, giving young people the chance to gain experience in organisations local to where they live.

Young people aged 16 - 24 from all backgrounds, from graduates to those with few or no qualifications will get the chance to access on-the-job training and experience to build the skills that employers want while working in high quality organisations.

Evidence from Creative & Cultural Skills shows that 90% of Creative Apprentices enter employment with the same employer or with a different employer within the sector. This figure is significantly higher than other areas of the economy.

Q: How long will the programme last?

A: The Arts Council of Northern Ireland will fund the NI CEP to run until January 2018. As long as all job opportunities have started (not completed) by September 2017 they are eligible for funding from us.

Q: How will the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme help the sector?

A: There are more than 1 million young people currently unemployed across the UK and there has been an increase in higher education fees for students. This has implications for the future arts workforce and the development of diversity and talent for the next generation. We want to avoid employment patterns where entry routes to the arts and cultural sector are narrow. The programme will help nurture young talent by providing paid experience in the sector.

Traditionally the arts and cultural sector has employed graduates into unpaid internships as the way to enter the workforce. NI CEP addresses this cultural barrier by incentivising employers to adopt fairer employment practices.

Due to the economic climate, some employers have limited resources available to create new jobs at entry level. Employers may also need resources for additional training and support to create new Apprenticeships. For Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), these can be significant barriers. NI CEP will help support employers create these entry level jobs during tough economic times.

Q: Will Creative & Cultural Skills try to stop unpaid internships?

A: We encourage all employers to help achieve fairer entry routes into the workforce, but we have no current intention to “name and shame” those who disagree. However, we reserve our right to only work with those who comply fully with the UK’s employment and anti-discrimination laws.

We published [Internships for the arts](#) which provides guidance to arts organisations on taking on internships. NI CEP will help create a level playing field and provide a fair wage to people joining the arts and cultural workforce.

We expect all NI CEP internships to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

We also have a [Fair Access Principle](#), which we encourage employers to read and sign up to.

Q: What happens after 2018? How is this sustainable over the long term?

A: The funding for the programme is planned to end in January 2018. Introducing NI CEP at a time of economic downturn provides the extra help that employers need. Over the life of the programme, we hope employers will experience real benefits in creating fairer entry routes and a more diverse workforce. The programme will ensure a change in employment practices and a shift to high quality, paid opportunities for young people. The programme will also provide access to an increased talent pool, nurture talent and a new generation of arts professionals.

Q: Arts organisations funded by Arts Council Northern Ireland already receive support. Why is Creative & Cultural Skills helping them to pay wages rather than using the money to support more and different art?

A: The Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme is not designed to only support the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's funded organisations. Both commercial and subsidised employers can benefit from NI CEP funding as long as they fall within the identified footprint. Subsidised employers seeking to employ an apprentice should also be aware of the Department of Employment and Learning's criteria for funding Apprenticeships NI training. See the 'Funding' section in this document for more information.

The Arts Council is trying to build a resilient and sustainable arts and culture sector in Northern Ireland and to do so we need to look at some of the long-term issues it faces. More than a quarter of creative and cultural organisations have had difficulty in recruiting due to a lack of experience and skills in applicants which shows that there is currently a skills shortage in the arts sector.

The current high levels of unemployment mean that many young people across the country are struggling to get the skills and experience they need to build a successful career in the creative industries. It is not just artists who need financial help, this programme is about helping young people across the sector who could become the future administrators, event producers and stage managers of tomorrow.

Q: You say the arts and cultural sector has a skills shortage. What evidence do you have that there is a skills shortage?

A: A survey undertaken by Creative & Cultural Skills in 2010 showed that more than a quarter of employers in the creative and cultural sector have had difficulty in recruiting due to a lack of experience and skills in applicants.

[Creative & Cultural Skills, Assessing the Return on Investment, Evaluation and Impact of Creative Apprenticeships \(2011\).](#)

2. Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to apply for funding through the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme?

A: Employers working across Arts Council Northern Ireland's footprint of Music, Dance, Drama, Literature, Visual Arts, Craft, Festivals, Arts Venues, Community Arts, Galleries, Museums, Circus and Carnival Arts.

Q: Why can't you fund creative employment opportunities outside of the Arts Council's footprint?

A: Arts Council Northern Ireland has identified a specific remit for this project. The Programme can fund job roles in enterprise and freelancing, and it can fund roles that are not strictly 'creative' e.g. business and administration, box office, as long as the employers fall within the identified footprint.

Q: Is the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme only for larger organisations?

A: It is for any organisation, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and sole traders, working across the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's footprint (music, dance, drama, literature, visual arts, craft, festivals, arts venues, community arts, galleries, museums, circus and carnival arts) that wants to provide NI CEP opportunities in Northern Ireland.

Q: Will commercial organisations be eligible for the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme?

A: Yes, NI CEP is part funding work opportunities, not an organisation's core business.

Q: My organisation is very small, can I still apply?

A: Yes. We'd like to receive applications from organisations of all sizes, however if you feel it is difficult to make an application due to your limited capacity, we would encourage you to work in partnership with larger organisations. If you are not sure who you could work with, we can explore this with you so please get in touch.

Q: Can museums apply for funding?

A: NI CEP will support some opportunities in Museums where job roles and skill sets that are common to arts organisations, for example, front of house, education and outreach, marketing, digital media.

Q: Do you need to be an Accredited museum or formally Working Towards Accreditation in order to make an application to the programme?

A: As the programme is open to organisations within the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's footprint that would not be eligible to apply for Accreditation, this is not a formal eligibility criterion for the programme. We would expect those organisations applying to NI CEP that are eligible for Accreditation to be within the scheme and we will take account of Accredited status as an indication of organisational quality assurance within our assessment criteria.

Q: How will young people access the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme? Do they have to be on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)?

A: NI CEP is not exclusively for those claiming Jobseekers Allowance or unemployment related benefits. Young people will be able to access the programme at a local level through a variety of means such as Youth Services, Colleges, Jobcentre Online NI and arts and cultural organisations' outreach programmes.

We will encourage employers to fill all **internship** opportunities with a young person who is, at the time of applying for the internship, claiming unemployment related benefits. However, we acknowledge that many young people, particularly graduates, who are keen to work in the sector take on zero-hours contracts and or part-time work outside of the sector in an effort to secure freelance or part-time work in the creative sector. This programme does not wish to exclude these individuals and is seeking to reach the widest demographic possible amongst young people aged 16-24. We will work with employers to recruit on this basis and specifically target unemployed young people and those who are likely to benefit the most.

All Apprenticeship and internship posts will need to be advertised through the Jobcentre Online NI as a minimum.

Q: Why is the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme just for young people aged 16-24?

A: Young people are disproportionately affected by current levels of unemployment. There are currently more than 1 million unemployed young people in the UK.

Q: Will young people have to prove they are unemployed? If they are not claiming benefits, how can they prove this?

A: All internship opportunities must be filled by a young person who is either registered as unemployed and in receipt of unemployment related benefits (e.g. Job Seekers Allowance) or can demonstrate they are working within a low-paid sector on a part-time or zero-hours contract with a clear aspiration to break into the creative sector. These jobs must be advertised through Jobcentre Online NI. All internship opportunities must be filled by a young person with a qualification of level 4 and above up to the age of 24.

All Apprenticeship posts must be advertised through the Jobcentre Online NI website. As there is no formal way of officially verifying the employment status of some young people (e.g. you cannot be a Job Seekers Allowance claimant if you're 16-18 years old) we ask employers to try and recruit in the spirit of the programme by offering apprenticeship opportunities to those who are likely to benefit the most.

Q: Which Apprenticeship pathways will the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme fund?

We will fund any apprenticeship pathway that is relevant to the arts and cultural workforce. These include Live Events & Promotion, Technical Theatre (Stage, Light and Sound), Costume & Wardrobe, Cultural Venue Operations, Cultural Heritage, Community Arts and Business Administration.

3. Funding

Q: How can I access funding?

A: The Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme has been funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland using lottery funding. This means all funds we distribute through the programme must be awarded following an open and competitive application process. Please see the [guidance for applicants](#) for further information about how to apply for funding.

Q: Will employers receive an incentive towards creating a job?

A: Yes. The programme will offer employers a grant for the new apprenticeship and paid internship job opportunities.

Q: How much wage funding is available?

A: Up to £2500 per paid internship based on a minimum of 26 weeks of employment at 30 hours per week, if the intern is aged 18 – 24 and paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#) (relevant to the intern's age).

The apprentice needs to be aged 16-24, employed for a minimum of 21 hours per week and for at least two years. We offer up to £3500 towards the total wage costs for every new apprenticeship paid at the [National Apprentice rate](#) (£3.40 per hour from October 2016) which applies for apprentices under 19 or 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship. We offer up to £5000 towards the total wage costs for every new apprenticeship paid at the [National Minimum Wage](#) (currently £6.95 per hour).

Our grants make a contribution to the total costs of employing a young person. This does not include the costs of recruitment e.g. job adverts.

Q: Is there other match funding available?

A: You are free to secure additional match funding through a third party such as a Trust and Foundation. However it is your responsibility to secure this and identify it within your application for funding to us.

You must demonstrate that any match funding generated will be dedicated to the new post.

Q: Are there any types of funding that cannot match the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme

A: Yes. Other Arts Council of Northern Ireland funding is ineligible as match.

If you are in doubt, please contact our [Belfast office](#) or email nicep@ccskills.org.uk.

Q: Can the Programme fund general arts programmes?

A: The Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme has been created in order for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to make a direct intervention to address youth unemployment through the arts. The Programme cannot fund other types of arts activity.

Q: Will employers be encouraged or incentivised to keep the person employed after the programme comes to an end?

A: Employers are not required to employ the young person after the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme comes to an end, however we hope to see employers demonstrating a good level of support and guidance to each young person they employ to ensure they have the best chance of securing employment beyond the programme. We will want you to tell us how you will go about providing this support within your funding application to us.

All employers will be encouraged to develop sustainable, long term jobs and opportunities for young people. Bringing in the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme at a time of economic downturn provides the extra help that employers need. Over the life of the programme, we hope employers will have experienced the benefits of creating fairer entry routes and will have seen the positive impact of a more diverse workforce. The programme will also provide access to an increased talent pool, nurture talent and a new generation of arts professionals.

Q: Can I be involved in more than one application for funding?

A: Employers must not submit more than one application for funding to NI CEP at the same time; however employers may be involved in multiple or subsequent partnership bids.

As this is an open application funding programme, you are free to make subsequent applications once you have been notified of the outcome of any previously submitted applications. However, applicants should note that NI CEP

will only fund up to three apprentices or interns per organisation unless you have prior written permission from the Director of NI CEP.

Q: If my application is successful, how will I receive the funding?

A: If you are made a formal offer of funding, then we will need you to sign a funding agreement with us. This will include a payment schedule and any conditions associated with a payment. Once all conditions have been met we will make a BACS payment directly into your bank account using the details you have provided.

4. NI-CEP opportunities

Q: When will the opportunities for young people start?

A: We will be open for applications from May 2015 with the first application deadline being 26 June 2015. The funding applications will run in frequent rounds that will each last 10 weeks (for the dates for each application deadline please visit our [website](#)). This means we hope to make our first funding awards at the beginning of September 2015. We plan to make awards until June 2017; this means some NI CEP job opportunities will continue for some months after the final funding round has closed.

Q: What kinds of jobs are available?

A: Entry level jobs across all aspects of arts and cultural organisations will be available. This could include the likes of Event Management, Arts Administration, Technical Theatre, Visitor Services, Box Office, IT, Digital Media, Festival Production, Collections, Archives and Library, Communications, Marketing, Design, Education, and Stage Management.

All new jobs created through NI CEP must either be a formal Apprenticeship or a paid internship lasting for a minimum of 6 months.

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum length of time for each opportunity?

A: Apprenticeship frameworks require a minimum of 2 years. Paid internships should last for a minimum of 6 months and for no more than 12 months.

Q: How will Creative & Cultural Skills ensure that employers will not unfairly exploit young people?

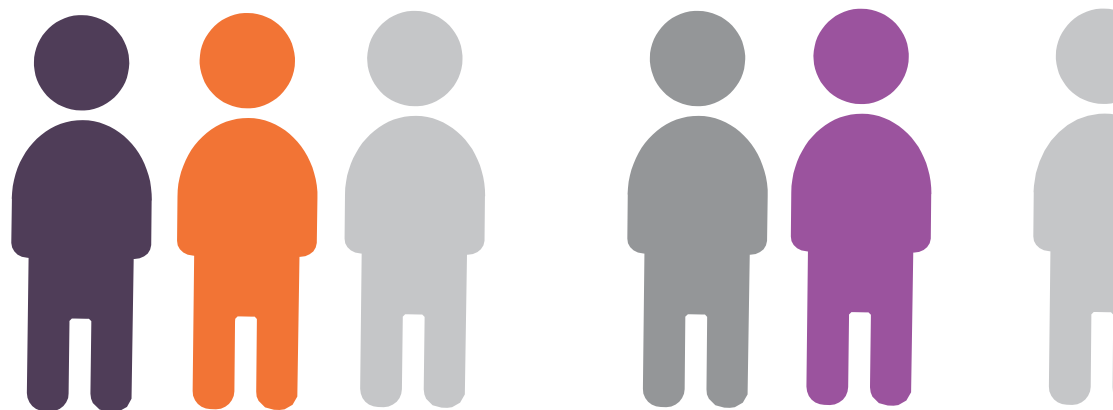
A: All of the new job opportunities created as part of the programme will be paid [National Minimum Wage](#) or [National Apprenticeship rate](#) (where appropriate). All opportunities created through this programme will need to be delivered to a high standard and in line with UK employment regulations. We will monitor the delivery of all NI CEP funded jobs throughout the programme – any employer seen to exploit a young person will have their funding agreement with us terminated and may be asked to pay back any funding that we have already released.

Q: What if someone leaves their job early?

A: If an employee leaves their placement earlier than expected we will not allocate additional funding to help the employer recruit into the role as if starting from scratch. However, the employer may choose to use any remaining funds to recruit a new apprentice or intern on the basis that any shortfall is then covered by the employer. If the employer decides not to use the remaining funding to create a new opportunity we reserve the right to ask for any outstanding funds to be repaid. Any NI CEP funds that have already been legitimately spent do not need to be repaid.

Q: Can I specify in my job advert that I am looking for someone with a certain set of skills and experience?

A: Jobs that are part-funded by NI CEP must be suitable for young people aged 16-24 who are unemployed. We expect the majority of jobs created to be entry-level positions that do not require high levels of previous experience or qualifications. Where employers require specific skills or experience to fill their post careful consideration should be given to ensure that advertisements, job descriptions and selection criteria do not directly or indirectly discriminate against potential applicants. Employers should consider whether particular qualifications or levels of experience are strictly necessary. It is preferable to focus instead on the competencies required in the post.



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