

Frequently Asked Questions

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This Frequently Asked Questions document addresses general questions. When in doubt, please consult the [grant guidelines](#), review the work sample and support material interactive PDF or contact N.C. Arts Council staff for answers to any questions not covered here. Contact information can be found at the end of this document.

► **What is a fellowship?**

Fellowships are awards of merit to individual artists to recognize excellence, as evidenced in a recent body of work. These unrestricted \$10,000 grants are intended to allow artists to continue developing their work by providing them with the time, equipment, or other support necessary to practice their art.

► **How often are fellowships offered?**

Fellowships are offered on alternating years in ten discipline categories. Choreographers, craft artists, visual artists, and film/video artists may apply at the November 1, 2017 deadline. Prose writers, poets, playwrights, screenwriters, songwriters, and composers will be eligible to apply for the November 1, 2018 deadline.

► **Am I eligible to apply for the fellowship?**

Are you an 18-year-old US citizen or permanent resident alien and a non-student who has been a year-round resident of N.C. for at least one year immediately prior to your application? Will you also will remain an N.C. resident and be physically present in the state during the grant period? If you answered yes to all these questions, chances are pretty good you qualify, but if you have any questions or concerns, please contact program staff.

► **Can you apply if you work collaboratively with another artist? How do you go about it?**

Artists applying as a team are treated as a single artist in terms of the number of work samples allowed. It is generally recommended that teams present collaborative work in their work samples; however, if the collaboration is only proposed or not yet documented, members of a team can submit individual work samples, as long as they fall within the prescribed limits. Members of an artist team may not also apply individually in the same cycle. All members of a team must meet the eligibility requirements of the grant and upload résumés with the application.

► **When will I hear whether I received a fellowship?**

This is a fairly lengthy process—one that includes N.C. Arts Council staff review for eligibility and completeness, expert panel review, approval of the panel recommendations by the Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources, and the passing of a budget for our department by the General Assembly for the grant year. We send letters out as soon as we can, typically in late July or early August

► How does the Arts Council select its fellowship recipients?

Fellowship recipients are selected by panels of artists and arts professionals with expertise in the discipline under review. The recommendations of the panels must be approved by the Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources.

► What is the panel looking for in a fellowship recipient?

Okay, first the bad news. There is no magic formula for developing a successful fellowship application. A lot depends on variables beyond your control, like who else applies and who the panelists will be for the review process (who aren't selected until after the deadline). But there are things you can do in advance that may increase the competitiveness of your application. The primary criterion that panelists will consider is artistic merit, so we can't stress enough that your work samples are the most important component of your application. Please be sure to follow the [Work Sample and Support Material Interactive PDF](#) to make sure you are uploading all that we require.

► How are panelists selected?

We try to have the panels represent the range of work and diversity of artists in the applicant pool. For example, in visual arts, a typical panel might have someone with expertise in two-dimensional work, another with a focus on three-dimensional work, and a representative conversant with more experimental forms of artmaking. We strive to balance our panels in other ways as well, especially with regard to racial, gender, and geographic diversity. The staff consults with colleagues with discipline expertise within the state and from other state agencies and asks for recommendations from the field to develop a roster of potential panelists. Panelists change every cycle to ensure that fresh points of view are incorporated into the process. Panels generally include two out-of-state panelists and one in-state panelist.

► How is the review process conducted

For all review processes, the first round is conducted remotely, with each panelist assessing individually the submitted work samples over a period of several weeks to two months, depending on the number of applications. They rate the work on its artistic merit and their scores are combined to determine which artists advance to the finalist round. Panelists then consider the narratives, artist statements, and résumés of the shortlisted artists prior to convening to discuss the finalists. At the meeting, panelists discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the applications until they arrive at a consensus for the awards. Alternates are also selected, in case one or more of the artists is unable to accept the grant, or funds become available to support additional recipients.

► What is the staff's role in the panel process?

The staff's role is to ensure that the process runs smoothly and fairly. The staff provides clarifying information when needed, but does not in any way attempt to influence the panel's decisions. In addition to maintaining impartiality as facilitators, the staff also monitors potential conflicts-of-interest on the part of panelists. Panelists must abstain from all voting related to any applicant with whom they have a conflict-of-interest and must leave the room during discussions of that applicant.

► Does the Arts Council have quotas for media, race, gender, or geography in its fellowship distribution? Does the panel consider financial need when reviewing applications?

There are no quotas in the selection of fellowship recipients. The Arts Council seeks diversity and balance in the panels it convenes to review the applications, but artistic merit is the determining criterion for awards. Financial need is not a criterion.

► May I see an example of a past fellowship recipient's application?

As a general rule, we don't share previous winners' proposals because what wins fellowships is the work, not the application. Strong work and a clear sense of where you want to take it as you develop are more likely to make you competitive in this process than modeling your application on another artist's proposal. We recommend that you spend your time reading this FAQ, tip sheets, and [grant guidelines](#), making sure you are familiar with our online application system (GO Smart), and thinking about what work samples will best represent you.

► Will you read my answers to the narrative questions before I submit the application?

Program directors are willing to read over a draft of your narrative, if sent **at least** two weeks in advance of the deadline. If sent in less than two weeks before the deadline, we will do our best but cannot guarantee there will be time for us to review it. We have found that one of the best gauges of success with your narrative is to have a non-arts friend read it. If he or she doesn't understand it, that's probably a good sign you're not being clear.

► May I submit letters of recommendation, press clippings, biographical profiles, etc.?

No. Submit everything that's asked for, but only what is asked for. Unsolicited materials will not be reviewed.

► My artist résumé is pretty long. Should I submit the whole thing?

Please submit an abbreviated résumé – no more than 4 pages. The 30-page version of your résumé will not make the impression you imagine it will, either on the panelists reading it or on the program assistant who may have to print it out and copy it.

► How do I turn my Word document into a PDF so the online application system will accept it?

While in the document, under File, select *Save As*. Then under the *Save as type* drop down menu select PDF. You can also visit www.smallpdf.com for simple conversions within your web browser or check out [this PDF](#) for a visual.

► I still have questions. Whom should I contact for more information?

For craft, film/video, and visual arts applicants

Jeff Pettus

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(919) 807-6513

For choreography applicants

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For literature applicants (in 2018)

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For composing and songwriting arts applicants (in 2018)

Jeff Pettus

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For general and technical questions

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