

Prosper

Supporting the business of culture

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1 Introduction to the Prosper programme

Prosper is an Arts Council England-funded business support programme for the arts, museums and libraries. It is delivered by Creative United.

1.1 Vital statistics

200	•The number of organisations and individuals we expect to register to begin an application
150	•The number of completed applications and diagnostic reports we expect to receive
70	•The number of organisations or individuals we can accept onto the programme
9	•The number of months during we which business support will be delivered
840	•The maximum number of hours of 1-to-1 business advice we expect to deliver
6	•The number of 1/2 day workshops we will deliver
6	•The number of 1 day masterclasses we will deliver
9	•The number of 1 hour webinars we will deliver

1.2 Aims

The aims for the programme are to:

- provide business development advice and investment readiness support to arts organisations, museums, libraries and creative and cultural enterprises in England;
- strengthen business development knowledge, commercial skills and to drive growth, income diversification and resilience;
- undertake research and evaluation of the current provision of business support and development needs of the sector in England and Scotland;
- gather information about business support opportunities and share learning

1.3 Partners

As well as funding from Arts Council England, additional funding for the programme has been provided by Creative Scotland (www.creativescotland.com) - so our research (see

section 7 on page 9) can be carried out in Scotland as well as England - and Access, the Foundation for Social Investment (www.access-socialinvestment.org.uk).

The delivery partners for the programme are:



The Centre for Business in Society (CBiS) are part of Coventry University. They will be carrying out research and evaluation looking at the current provision of business support for the arts, museums and libraries in England and Scotland, and following the business development journeys of organisations through the programme to better understand needs across the sector. Their findings will be shared with Arts Council England and Creative Scotland to inform future policy and practice, and shared with the sector at large. Find out more about CBiS - www.coventry.ac.uk/cbis.



The Arts Marketing Association (AMA) will be bringing together all the learning and case studies from the research and the business support activities, along with a range of useful resources such as templates, tool kits and insights, on their website www.CultureHive.co.uk.

2 Who it is for

Focusing now on the free business support offered through the Prosper programme, you are eligible to apply for this if you are an individual (entrepreneur) or organisation operating in one of these sectors:

- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design
- Digital media and the web
- Fashion and costume
- Festivals and events
- Film, television and radio
- Gaming and app development
- Heritage
- Libraries
- Museums
- Music
- Performing arts
- Publishing and Literature
- Visual arts and photography

We welcome all sizes and types of organisation, including:

- Charities
- Collectives

- Community Interest Companies
- Limited companies (by shares or by guarantee)
- Limited partnerships
- Social enterprises
- Sole traders

2.1 Information for Libraries

We welcome applications from local authority run library services, and those that now operate as social enterprises. We also welcome applications from individual libraries, as long as they're publicly funded.

3 How it will work

Here is an overview of the steps through the programme:



Once we have selected our cohort of organisations or individuals for the programme they will be matched with a business advisor from our network. You can find out more about who our advisors are here www.creativeindustryfinance.org.uk/about-us/advisors.

Each organisation or individual will then receive '12 credits' to spend on the various business support options.

1 credit	=	1 hour of 1-to-1 business advice or a 1 day masterclass
½ credit	=	a ½ day workshop
¼ credit	=	a 1 hour webinar

So, for example, to use up their full 12 credits over the 9-month period, an organisation might select:

8 hours of 1-to-1 business advice	=	8 credits
2 masterclasses	=	2 credits
2 workshops	=	1 credit
4 webinars	=	1 credit
<hr/> Total business support	=	<hr/> 12 credits

Alternatively, you might want to use all the 12 credits on 1-to-1 advice.

The 1-to-1 sessions with the business advisors will take place face-to-face, via telephone or Skype. The advisor may also wish to work with more than one person within an organisation.

The masterclasses, workshops and webinars will be devised by Creative United in partnership with our advisors, and will cover subjects such as:

- the business model canvas
- managing change, risk and growth
- identifying and monetising your assets
- knowing and growing your audience
- encouraging innovation
- using loan finance
- measuring social impact

IF YOU USE UP YOUR CREDITS YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL TIME WITH YOUR ADVISOR OR PLACE THEM IN MASTERCLASSES, WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

3.1 Meetups

We will organise meet ups around the country for members of the cohort and other creative and cultural leaders in the region to connect and share learning and experiences.

4 The difference it will make

Overall, for organisations and individuals that participate in and complete the Prosper business support programme, they can expect to be on their way to, or have achieved, a demonstrably increased level of growth or organisational resilience, or a sustainable business

Specific outcomes could be:

- a clear vision, mission and set of objectives, and a commitment to take these forward;
- improved understanding and confidence in approaches to business development and planning;
- improved understanding of and capability to make the most of any commercial potential or diverse income streams, with plans implemented;
- increased knowledge of routes to finance, including social investment and lending;
- investment readiness is better understood or achieved, and plans are implemented to apply for finance (social or other);
- improved business and commercial skills and thinking within the organisation.

5 Making an application

To be considered for a place on the Prosper programme you or your organisation must complete both the application form AND a diagnostic report.

5.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to apply to be on the programme, you or your organisation must:

- be based in England*;
- operate, or produce work, in the arts, creative industries or cultural sector;
- if you are a museum you must be fully accredited;
- if you are a library or library service you must be publicly funded.

* The research element of the Prosper programme is spanning England and Scotland, but the free business support activities are only available to organisations based in England. You can find out more about our research in section 7 on page 9.

5.2 The application form

5.2.1 Registration

To begin the application form you need to register for your own account with a unique login and password. In this way, all the data you enter will be secure.

To register and begin your application go to
www.creativeindustryfinance.org.uk/prosper/registration

You will find a short eligibility quiz to check if you or your organisation is eligible to apply to the programme. Once this is completed you will be able to register to get your unique login details.

If you have already registered with us for the Creative Industry Finance programme, simply click the Log In button and use your existing login details. If you can't remember your password, you can select to set up a new one. Once logged in you can then start your Prosper application form.

You can also find a link to register and apply to the Prosper programme page on the Creative United website here – www.creativeunited.org.uk/programme/prosper

5.2.2 Application

In the application itself, first you will be asked to enter some information about your organisation, such as where you're based, which creative or cultural sector best describes you, what Arts Council England funding you have received (if any), when you began trading, the scale of your organisation, and descriptions of your mission and output, as well as significant milestones or achievements so far.

You will also be given the option of uploading your latest business plan.

Next, we ask you to tell us about the needs of your organisation, such as which areas you feel would benefit most from the business support. For example, you might require support with creating or improving your business plan, seeking access to finance or monetising your assets to IP.

We also ask for you to describe your organisation's current challenges or opportunities, and what outcomes and impacts you would hope to see evidence of following business support.

There is an optional Equality and Diversity section. This section helps us understand more about the social and economic profile of business leaders across the creative and cultural industries, but it will not impact the outcome of your application.

You will be able to save the data you enter as you go along, and exit and log back in to complete the form, should you need to

Once all the required sections have been completed, you can submit the application. This will be sent to us digitally.

5.3 The diagnostic report

The diagnostic tool is a quick and straight forward way of finding out the strengths and weaknesses in your business, designed especially for organisations in the arts, museums and libraries. By filling in this diagnostic tool, you will be able to gain an insight into the current health of your business.

To register and begin your diagnostic to
www.cu-diagnostic.org.uk

The online tool will cover areas such as finances, capacity and skills. From the data you enter the tool will automatically produce a diagnostic report unique for your organisation.

We will not use the data you enter here for making our decisions for which organisations will be accepted onto the programme, but all that start the business support journey will need to have a diagnostic report.

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 31 MAY 2017.

5.4 Use of your data

Creative United recognises the confidential nature of the data or accompanying documentation you send to us when applying for the programme.

We promise that the data and accompanying documentation will not be used for any other purpose other than in relation to your application for Prosper, and for research and evaluation.

For further information on how your personal information and accompanying documentation may be used by Creative United, please see our Privacy Policy here - www.creativeindustryfinance.org.uk/prosper-privacy.

6 The selection process

The applications will initially be assessed by the business support team at Creative United, and then a shortlist will be discussed in our steering group made up of the programme partners.

When assessing application forms and their accompanying diagnostic reports, we will be focusing on three areas:

1. Strength or health of the business currently
 - What is the current liquidity or operating ratio?
 - Are there meaningful milestones or awards?
 - What is the quality of its creative or cultural output?
 - What are the current skills in the business
2. Business support need
 - Is there a realistic business support need or opportunity identified?
 - Is this backed up by the diagnostic report?
3. Impact of business support
 - What is understood to be the change or difference the business support would make to the organisation?
 - Will the business support affect business planning, investment readiness, growth or resilience?
 - Will the business support and its outcomes be embedded within the organisation?

Once we have selected the 70 organisations or individuals to accept on the programme, we will notify them by email. This notification will include an instruction to confirm to us their place on the programme. Once this confirmation has been received by Creative United we will be able to finalise their place on the programme, and match them with a business advisor.

If an organisation is not able to confirm their place on the programme we will then offer the place to another organisation.

6.1 Options should you not be selected onto the programme

If you are not selected to be on the Prosper programme, you are still able to benefit from expert advice and business support from Creative United.

We can design a bespoke support package for you to purchase for your organisation, which could include access to the masterclasses, workshops, webinars, 1-to-1 advice and introductions to our lending partners, should you be looking for loan finance.

If you'd like to discuss these options and find out our rates, please email sarah.thirtle@creativeunited.org.uk or genevieve.pace@creativeunited.org.uk.

7 The research

The Centre for Business in Society at Coventry University are carrying out research as part of the Prosper programme. They will be investigating and reporting on the current provision of business support for the arts, museums and libraries across England and Scotland, gathering evidence through literature reviews and desktop research. From this they will publish a compendium of business support which will be shared with Arts Council England, Creative Scotland and the sector at large.

They are also evaluating the programme and the pathways to business support that our Prosper applicants experience. Using interviews and workshops they'll produce a review and recommendations document to influence policy for Arts Council England and Creative Scotland.

8 The digital hub

The Arts Marketing Association's (AMA) CultureHive.co.uk will be our digital hub for the programme. In a dedicated Prosper section the AMA will pull together business support resources such as toolkits, templates and insights, alongside publishing learning from our research and stories from the case studies.

Original content will be created especially for the programme by our business advisors and partners, sharing their expertise and inviting conversation.

9 Join the conversation

If you have any questions, or would like to talk to us about the programme, please drop us a line - info@creativeunited.org.uk.

You can also follow Prosper news and stories, and share your thoughts, through:

- Twitter - www.twitter.com/CreativeUtdUK, #ProsperSupport
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/creativeuniteduk
- LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/creative-united-creative-sector-services-cic-

You can also stay up to date with all Prosper news and announcements by signing up to our mailing list from the Creative United website, www.creativeunited.org.uk.