



VAUGHAN WILLIAMS FOUNDATION

Guidelines for applicants 2026-7

These guidelines are for general funding applications. Please read them carefully and visit <https://vaughanwilliamsfoundation.org/funding/> to begin your application.

(Applicants for the Vaughan Williams Scholarships for postgraduate composition studies should follow the separate guidelines at: <https://vaughanwilliamsfoundation.org/funding/postgraduate-funding/>)

Everybody's project and financial need is different, and it might be hard to know what size grant to ask for. Competition for grants is stiff. It's worth bearing in mind that the Foundation does not act as a sole funder and **will not contribute more than 50% of the total costs of any proposal**. We expect to see a clear plan for how any additional funding is to be raised.

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1 Areas of support

The Foundation offers support in two principal areas: **Supporting the Work of Professional Composers** and **The Work and Legacy of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams**

Applicants may apply under either heading, and a few projects may satisfy the criteria for both.

Supporting the work of professional composers

- 1 **The performance, commissioning, or recording of music by professional British or Irish composers**, active within the last 100 years, who have not yet gained broad national or international recognition, or who are at an early stage in their careers.

and/or

- 2 **Projects and organisations in the UK that create development opportunities for living composers**, or that promote wider awareness of British or Irish music of the last century.

Please note:

- **Composers are at the heart of our support.** We expect budgets to show they are fairly compensated for their work.
- Grants are typically awarded for original notated music written for live performers. (Works combining electronics with live performance will be considered.)
- Supported composers must be British or Irish nationals, or have been resident in the UK for at least five years*. However, funding can be given for performances by eligible composers taking place outside the UK/Ireland.
- We do not generally support performances by composers currently in higher education or by student ensembles.
- The Trustees cannot confirm grants for projects where the names of the composers are not specified.

(*Three years for those applying for the Vaughan Williams Scholarships.)

The work and legacy of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams

Projects that enhance knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Ralph Vaughan Williams and of Ursula Vaughan Williams. This includes:

- 1 **Performances** of works by Ralph Vaughan Williams that are:
 - a) rarely heard, **particularly large scale and stage works**;
 - b) presented in special contexts such as music societies or local festivals; or
 - c) performed in territories or communities where RVW's music is seldom heard (either within or outside the UK).
- 2 **The recording or filming of rarely performed RVW works.**
- 3 **The publication of previously unpublished RVW works or the creation of new editions by existing publishers.**

- 4 **Research** into the music of RVW.
- 5 The **acquisition by public institutions** of RVW research materials such as autograph manuscripts or correspondence.
- 6 Projects or resources that educate the public about **the life and work of RVW or UVW** and contribute to their **legacy**.

2 How much should I apply for?

These bands are given for guidance only – the Trustees will consider every application individually in context. The Trustees’ decision is final.

Supporting the work of professional composers

1 **Performances: £750-6000** (*Projected average grant in this category £2,500*)

Grants are generally made in proportion to the scope and reach of the planned performances. Here is a general indication of the size of grants that we give:

Live performances – chamber/small scale: £750-£3K

Live performances – large ensemble/orchestra: £1K-4K

Concert Series/Tours: £2K-£6K

Composer Development Schemes: £2K-£6K Preference given to schemes where composers' participation costs are covered and they (ideally) receive a fee or bursary to cover their time commitment.

2 **Festivals: £2K-10K** (*Projected average grant in this category £3,500*)

Festival Grants are given when a significant part of the repertoire is eligible and will depend on the size of the festival.

3 **Grants for commissions: £1K-6K** (*Projected average grant in this category £3,000*)

It is important to the Foundation that composers are properly recompensed for their work. Please take care when budgeting for composer costs which are often overlooked or ‘guestimated’. Commission fees should be provisionally agreed with the composer (and their publisher/agent where appropriate) in advance of an application being made.

Commission Fees are not dictated by the Musicians’ Union. Rates vary widely and will depend on what stage of their career the composer has reached. Generally, they should reflect the time that the composer will have to devote to the work. The usual method of calculation is on a per minute basis multiplied by a factor determined by the forces scored for (ie a 5’ orchestral work will cost more than a 5’ violin solo).

Other related commissioning costs that might need to be budgeted for are:

- The costs of preparing performing materials and/or the hire or purchase of performing materials.
- A composer’s time spent in research and development workshops.
- Composer’s travel and attendance fees for rehearsals/workshops
- Pre-concert talks
- Fees for a co-creative such as a librettist.

4 **Recordings (audio or video) £1K-6K** (*Projected average grant in this category £3,000*)

It is important to the VWF that recordings we fund are made publicly available. We do not fund recordings which are made for private or archival use only. Preference is given to recordings which are commercially distributed to generate income for the composer and performers and to 'portrait' recordings which solely reflect the work of one composer. We also prioritise recordings which make a significant impact for the composer(s) recorded – eg those which contain substantial, previously unrecorded, works.

Composer Debut Recordings (first full-length recording dedicated to an individual composer):

Chamber £2-4K

Orchestral £2-6K

Portrait (full-length recordings dedicated to a single composer including previously unrecorded repertoire)

Chamber £2K-4K

Orchestral £2K-6K

Mixed repertoire

Chamber £1K-£2K

Orchestral £1-£3K

Larger grants may occasionally be given for a series of recordings of eligible repertoire, commercially distributed.

The work and legacy of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams

1 **Performance: £500-£10K** (*Projected average grant in this category £2,500*)

Strong priority is given to rarely performed large-scale works – particularly opera or stage works. Well-known works such as *The Lark Ascending* or *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* are not supported. We may also support performances in special contexts such as music societies or local festivals; or in territories where RVW's music is seldom heard.

Amateur Orchestras: £650-£1,000 (*Projected average grant in this category £750*)

When performing large orchestral works of RVW, amateur ensembles can apply for assistance with music rental costs. Occasional additional support may also be given for soloists or instrumentalist fees where it is necessary to bring in additional performers.

2 **Projects which further the legacy of RVW and UVW: £1K-3K** (*Projected average grant in this category £2,500*)

This is a broad category which includes recording or filming of rarely performed RVW works; publication of previously unpublished RVW works or the creation of new editions by existing publishers; research into the music of RVW; the acquisition by public institutions of RVW research materials such as autograph manuscripts or correspondence; projects or resources that educate the public about the life and work of RVW or UVW and contribute to their legacy.

Larger grants may very occasionally be given for a substantial project of national or international reach.

3 Making your application

Good to know:

- Applications must be registered and submitted online to be considered. We do not accept applications via post or email. We strive to be a paper-free organisation.
- Please check the deadline for submission — the next 12 months' deadlines are listed on the main [funding page](#). Applications will open at least 10 weeks before each deadline.
- Trustees will review more than 100 applications at a meeting — concise, clearly-written applications are appreciated.
Trustees base their offer on the information in your application. You must inform us if your project or financial plans change significantly after submission (e.g. repertoire, venues, funding outcomes).
- We will not fund more than 50% of a project's total budget.
- We receive a very high number of applications and are currently only able to fund between 30-35% of the requests we receive.
- If you are unsuccessful, we advise you not to reapply for the same project unless there have been significant changes to the project or the funding plan.
- [Contact us](#) if you experience technical difficulties when applying.

Step 1: Get Ready

Before registering, ensure your project aligns with these guidelines and check the next [funding deadline](#). Your project must be delivered — performed, released, or made available — a minimum of three months after that deadline. You are encouraged to apply earlier if possible. Please also read our [funding conditions](#).

Step 2: Register Your Application

Online registration will be available on our site once applications are open. Please complete and submit with your contact details, charity number (if applicable), project title, key dates, total budget, and the amount requested. You must accept our [funding conditions](#).

Registration should take no more than 15 minutes. Once submitted, **you will receive an email confirming your unique application number and a link to upload your supporting information**. Check your junk folder if the email does not appear.

Step 3: Upload Your Supporting Information

Refer to the section below for details on required documents. Supporting files should be in PDF (or MS Office) format. You may upload one combined document or up to four separate files. Do not send scores or large media files.

Include your application number in all correspondence. All supporting materials must be received by 23:59 on the application deadline date.

4 What to include in support of your application

Once you have registered your application please upload supporting information as follows:

1 Summary Outline

Provide a summary of your project — **this must be no more than one side of A4** (and may well be shorter). Include, as relevant:

- A concise overview — who, what, where, and when.
- The key repertoire related to the application.
- The names of principal musicians or participants. (Grants are repertoire-led, and composers must be identified before a grant is confirmed.)
- Details of any partner organisations and their commitment.
- For new commissions, include the duration, instrumentation, and at least two confirmed performance dates (or one live performance and a publicly released recording).
- If applying for a series or festival, you may attach detailed programme information separately.
- The project timeline, including key performance or release dates.
- The project's significance or relevance.
- How the public will access the project (e.g. promoters, streaming, recording labels, distributors, or publishers).
- Research applicants should include the names of two referees.

2 Key Participants

Provide **concise** information about the applicant (individual or organisation) and key performers or partners. You may include links to relevant web pages. Also include brief information on composers and repertoire related to the project. **This should total no more than one side of A4.**

For projects featuring emerging composers, please include a playable online audio/video link to a performance/recording of a recent or relevant composition. Do not send large audio or video files.

If you have not received a grant from the Vaughan Williams Foundation within the last three years, please include evidence of your recent work such as a PDF programme, review, or website link.

3 Budget

Include a simple budget showing **costs** and any projected **income**. Any difference between these totals should be shown as a profit or shortfall.

Depending on your project, costs might include:

- Composers' fees and expenses
- Performers' and other creatives' fees and expenses
- Technical staff
- Any accessibility costs
- Music hire or production
- Instrument hire/porterage
- Rehearsal costs
- Venue costs and staff
- Copyright costs (including PRS)
- Concert production
- Recording/Videography
- Recording postproduction and distribution
- Marketing
- Administrative time

On the income side, please indicate:

- Your own contribution from personal or core resources.
- Expected earned income (e.g. ticket sales or advertising).

- Confirmed funding from other sources
- Any in-kind support
- Pending or planned funding applications.
- Any expected shortfall.

Trustees will want to see you have a workable funding plan. Please disclose the sources of any confirmed or pending funding (e.g. Arts Council, trusts, sponsors, donors, in-kind support, or crowdfunding). Organisations that have not received a grant from the Vaughan Williams Foundation within the last three years should also provide a link to their most recent signed end-of-year accounts (or a PDF copy).

If you are applying for one or two events within a **series or festival**, provide the budget for those specific events only.

If requesting support solely for **commissioning costs**, specify the total composer fee, any related costs, and other income sources. You must confirm at least two scheduled performances of the new work (or one and a publicly released recording), but a full event budget is not required.

No additional information is necessary to support your application.

However, if you believe an extra document is essential, you may include one brief supplementary file. Please do not send musical scores or large media files.

5 When will I hear from you

We aim to notify all applicants of the outcome within 12 weeks of the application deadline.

If your application is unsuccessful, **we do not advise** you to apply again with the same project to the Foundation, *UNLESS* there have been significant changes in the funding situation or programme.