

Music Capital Scheme 2026

Award 3 (Individual emerging professional performing musicians)

Guidelines

Managed by Music Network, funded by An Roinn Cultúir, Cumarsáide agus Spóirt / The Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 2pm, Tuesday 15th December 2026.

About these Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to help you apply to the Music Capital Scheme 2026 Award 3.

There are 6 parts to these guidelines:

- 1: An overview of the award (page 1)
- 2: An overview of funding (page 2)
- 3: Who can apply – and who can't (pages 2–3)
- 4: What you can apply for – and what you can't (pages 3–4)
- 5: How to apply (pages 4–7)
- 6: Assessment procedure (pages 7–9)

1. An overview of the award

The Music Network Music Capital Scheme is designed to provide support for the purchase of musical instruments and related items for use in live performance contexts.

Award 3 is for individual emerging professional performing musicians. The award aims to support these musicians to:

- ✓ buy high quality musical instruments
- ✓ maintain or repair high quality musical instruments
- ✓ buy selected items of equipment such as instrument cases, accessories and electronic performance equipment (more examples on pages 3–4).

What do we mean by 'emerging professional performing musicians'?

We mean musicians aged 18 and over and performing in any musical style, who are in the process of mastering their music performance practice and in the early years of establishing a professional performing career.

You have some experience but have not yet established a solid reputation as a professional performing musician, and you identify, and are recognised by your peers, as a professional performing musician.

Music Network is committed to equity and inclusion and encourages individuals from all backgrounds and communities to apply.

2. Overview of funding

Overall fund

The total funding available for the Music Capital Scheme 2026 Award 3 is €90,000.

How much to apply for

You may apply for up to 50% of the total cost of your proposed item(s).

You must fund the remaining 50%. You will have to indicate how you are going to do this in your application form.

Charges relating to delivery of items (such as delivery charges, bank fees, import fees) can not be funded by the award. This means you must pay for these charges.

3. Who can apply – and who can't

Who can apply?

- ✓ Individual emerging professional performing musicians who are:
 - aged 18 and over
 - and
 - resident in the Republic of Ireland.

Applicants to Award 3 may be in the early stages of establishing a professional career as high-level performers in:

- any musical style
- a solo capacity
- and/or
- as part of a small group or ensemble.

Please note: musicians working as permanent members of full time orchestras may apply but will not be prioritised.

What do we mean by 'resident' in the Republic of Ireland?

'Residency' is based on the Revenue Commissioners' definition:

You are resident in Ireland for tax purposes if you are present in Ireland for:

- *183 days or more in a tax year*
or
- *280 days or more in total, taking the current tax year plus the preceding tax year together. You will not be resident in Ireland if you are here for 30 days or less in a tax year.*

Residents will have a valid PPS number. Please visit www.revenue.ie for additional information.

There are certain exceptions where applications may be accepted from musicians based outside the Republic of Ireland. In such cases, you should clearly outline within your application how the outcomes of your proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

Who can't apply?

- × Individuals under the age of 18
- × Previous Music Capital Scheme awardees who have not complied with the conditions of their award
- × Previous Music Capital Scheme Award 2 awardees are not eligible to apply to Award 3.

4. What you can apply for - and what you can't

Items that you apply for must:

- be for use primarily in live performance by you
and
- relate to a primary instrument in which you can demonstrate a track record of performance and career potential.

Read examples of items the award can and cannot cover below. The examples given below do not cover every possibility. Please contact Music Network if you have a query about an item.

Items that are covered

- ✓ New or high-quality second-hand instruments
- ✓ Once-off instrument repair/maintenance costs
- ✓ Instrument accessories (for example: bows, strings, rosin, shoulder rests, drum heads, sticks, brushes, mutes, straps, reeds, mouthpieces)
- ✓ Instrument cases

- ✓ Instrument stands
- ✓ Electronic performance equipment (for example: effects pedals, leads, instrument amplifiers, PA systems and microphones, MDIs (musical digital interfaces), DJ performance equipment, or software used exclusively in live performance)
- ✓ Specialist stools (where necessary)

Items that are not covered

- × Computers or laptops
- × Metronomes
- × Tuners
- × Recording equipment or software
- × Items that are for the use of musicians other than the applicant (such as band members).

5: How to apply

Applicants must complete an online application form, and provide Support Materials.

Step 1: Set up your online profile

Please visit www.musicnetwork.ie and set up your profile on the online application portal. Previous applicants may already have a profile.

You can complete the application form in stages throughout the application period. Drafts do save automatically, but please check that your latest draft has saved before exiting the portal.

Step 2: Read the application form

The form asks for details about your career in terms of:

- your musical background
- your future career plans (for example: upcoming performances, plans for training or development).

It also asks you about the proposed item(s) you want to buy, in terms of:

- the individual and overall costs of the item(s)
- your funding contribution towards the cost (50% of the total price)
- why you need the item(s).

It also asks you to provide Support Materials.

Step 3: Gather the Support Materials requested in the form

The application form asks you to upload 4 types of Support Materials listed below. The assessment panel needs these materials to help it assess your application. If all Support Materials are not uploaded, your application can't be fully assessed.

Our online system accepts most file formats, including MS Word files, Excel files, JPEGs, PDFs and MP3s.

1. CV (Curriculum Vitae)

Your CV should not exceed two pages, and should include detail on the following:

- your education and training
- your performance experience
- names of groups and/or musicians you have collaborated with.

The information in your CV should be presented as a list or series of bullet points with headings, rather than in paragraph form.

2. Two contrasting recordings, at least one of which must be a video – and a short document

You must submit two musically contrasting recordings which demonstrate your performance skills. At least one of these recordings must be a video.

You must also upload a short document that lists the following details for each recording:

- where you want the assessment panel to start and stop listening (for example, if you submit a video or audio recording of a full concert, let us know which portion of the performance you want the panel to assess by indicating the start and stop times)
- where and when the recordings were made.

You can directly upload audio recordings in MP3 format to the online application form.

Links to video recordings, and to audio recordings in other formats, can be included in your short document.

Please note: If the assessment panel can't access your links, it won't be possible to fully assess your application. Please make sure your links and files are publicly accessible, or provide a password if required.

3. Two quotations for each item, from separate suppliers

For this award you must submit quotations for each proposed item from **two separate suppliers**. Quotations are essential for comparison purposes so that value for money can be demonstrated.

Each quotation you submit must clearly show the following 3 details:

- the supplier name

- instrument or item specifications
- cost.

You can upload the quotes for each item in the following formats:

- ✓ a screen capture from the supplier's website
or
- ✓ an email or letter from the supplier.

✗ Links to suppliers' websites are **not** accepted because they can change or become inactive.

In the case of bespoke instruments, the second quotation should be for the **nearest comparable instrument**. Please contact us if you have any questions.

4. Letters of recommendation

You must upload two letters of recommendation from peers or mentors. The letters should be recent and should specifically reference:

- the applicant
- their performance skills
- their career development.

Please note: To avoid conflicts of interest, letters of recommendation should not come from family members or anyone who would benefit if your application is successful, such as fellow band members.

Step 4: Submit your application

The completed application must be submitted using the online portal by **2pm, Tuesday 15th December 2026**.

If you submit your application by the deadline, you will receive an automated email confirming that it has been successfully submitted.

Please note: The automated email may appear in your spam folder. **If you do not receive this email, your application has not been successfully submitted.** In this case, it is your responsibility to contact Music Network, leaving yourself time to resubmit before the application deadline. You can access your draft or submitted application at any time, and see any correspondence regarding your application by logging in to your account on the application portal.

Your application will not be accepted if it:

- is received after the closing date and time: **2pm, Tuesday 15th December 2026**
- does not include all of the Support Materials (pages 4–5).
- does not comply with the conditions of the award (pages 8–9)
- relates to items already purchased or repairs already carried out before funding decisions are made.
- is not completed in full. Insert 'N/A' to any sections that do not apply to your application.

Tips to help you prepare your application

- Read the 2026 Award 3 Guidelines, Conditions and application form thoroughly.
- Access the range of [Applicant Supports provided by Music Network](#).
- Make sure your application is clear and concise; do not assume that assessors are familiar with your work, as they may not be.
- Keep the selection criteria in mind (page 8) when completing the form and selecting Support Materials. Support Materials should primarily be recent, should be the best representation of your work and should relate clearly to the proposed item(s).
- Establish your instrument or equipment needs and research the most suitable purchase options. There is no advantage to requesting either a smaller or larger amount, what matters most is that your request matches your needs, and that you can demonstrate this clearly in your application.
- Have a clear and realistic idea of the costs involved in your proposal and clearly outline how you will fund your own contribution (50% of total cost of item(s), plus shipping and associated costs).
- Ask a friend or colleague to look over your application before submission.
- Prepare and submit your application well before the deadline.

6: Assessment procedure

Independent advisors will assess all eligible applications based on the selection criteria below. Depending on the volume of applications, they may make a shortlist.

A panel will then consider and decide on how to allocate funding to successful applicants. The panel includes representatives of Music Network and relevant practitioners from a variety of musical backgrounds. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel may decide not to award the total award fund if insufficient high-quality applications are received. While the panel wants to support applicants who fit the criteria, funding is limited and the process is very competitive. This means that although you may meet the criteria, this does not guarantee you will receive funding.

Please note that lobbying - trying to influence the decision outside the official application process - is not permitted.

Selection criteria

Your application will be assessed based on the four equally weighted criteria listed below.

	Criteria	Weighting
1	Applicant's track record in music performance in relation to the proposed item(s).	25%
2	Demonstrated potential and career development plans of the applicant	25%
3	Demonstrated need for the item(s).	25%
4	Plans for use of the item(s), including in the Republic of Ireland.	25%

Results

All applicants will be informed of results by email in March 2027.

Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback from Music Network within 2 months of receiving results, and may re-apply in subsequent years.

Successful applications

If your application is successful, you will be asked to

- complete a drawdown form
- provide evidence of tax clearance if your award is in excess of €10,000.

The names of successful applicants will be published online and in the media.

Summary of the conditions of the award

Below is a summary of the main conditions of the award. [The full Conditions are available here on the Music Network website.](#)

Important:

You must read and:

- agree to comply with the [full conditions of the award](#) as part of the application process and complete drawdown documentation agreeing to the conditions if successful

- Up to 50% of the total cost of the item(s) may be awarded. The applicant must fund the remaining 50%, which cannot include a discount from a supplier.
- Awarded musicians will make regular (not necessarily exclusive) use of the item(s) in the Republic of Ireland for at least three years. In the case of pianos or other large non-

portable instruments, the instrument will be housed in the musician's normal place of practice.

- Awarded musicians must make adequate provision for housing, insurance, care, maintenance and repair of the instrument.
- Any proposed change made by an awarded musician to the item(s) for purchase must be approved by Music Network in advance of purchase.
- Awarded musicians must provide the receipt(s) for the purchase of the approved item(s) to Music Network within four months of award payment.
- Awarded musicians must provide annual reports to Music Network on the use of the item(s) for three years from the date received. A template for these reports will be provided by Music Network. See an example here [Award 3 Annual Report Form](#)
- Awarded musicians must acknowledge the support of Music Network, the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport and the Arts Council in all public facing material (for example: websites, printed programmes and posters, biographies) from the date of the award, for at least three years. Materials for the acknowledgement, such as logos and text, will be supplied by Music Network.