NORTHERN MUSIC EXPORT OFFICE

Application Guidance

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Proudly based in the North of England

International Professional Programme 2026

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH THE 'PRE-APPLICATION GENERAL FAQs' ON THE HOMEPAGE INFORMATION FIRST, AS THIS COVERS GUIDANCE AND ELIGIBILITY RELEVANT TO ALL PROGRAMMES.

International Professional Grant – Application Guidance

Before you begin: Please ensure that you are only applying for the level of funding required. The maximum level of funding for the International Professional Grant is £5k. However, the average grant awarded will be less than this maximum amount. Also note that you may not receive the entirety of your request depending on the decision of the panel.

Section 1: Applicant Details

This section collects foundational data required about who you are. If you are a manager or representative, pay close attention to the authorisation permissions required.

Applicant Name / Address (including postcode) / Email / Phone / Pronouns

- **What to put:** The primary contact details of the professional physically filling out this form.

If you are a professional applying on behalf of your own activity please provide yours and your company's name. Please provide the name of the main music creator or professional.

- **What to put:** State your full legal/professional name alongside your registered company name (or trading name if a sole trader). If you are applying on behalf of a client or represented artist, state their full name or group name clearly.

Section 2: Artist/Business Details

Tell us about your business. Are you a manager, promoter, publisher, etc?

- Give clarity as to the nature of your business – Assume no prior knowledge on the part of the assessor.

Which music genre(s) does your business, organisation or represented artist(s) primarily work within?

- **What to put:** Select or list the key genres that encompass your core business operations, roster, or client base (e.g., Electronic, Indie/Alternative, Folk, Hip-Hop). This helps us match your application with relevant panel assessors.

Which music genre(s) best describe the artists, repertoire or projects this application relates to?

- **What to put:** Specify the exact genre(s) associated with the specific project, release, trade mission, or roster for which you are seeking grant support.

Which of the following are you based in: Tees Valley, North East or West Yorkshire?

- **What to put:** Select the primary region where your business or professional practice is physically based. Funding eligibility relies on active operation in one of these target Northern regions.

If applicable - which of the following is your artist based in: Tees Valley, North East or West Yorkshire?

- **What to put:** If applying as a manager or representative, state the primary region where your client/artist is based. If not applicable to your business model, write “N/A.“

If your artist is signed to a record label and/or publisher please provide the company names here. Please also specify if the company is an Indie, Major or Major Label Subsidiary.

- **What to put:** State any label or publishing partners linked to the artist/project. Note that eligibility for NMEO support is open to

professionals working with independent, major-affiliated, or fully self-released artists.

Short bio: This should describe you to a decision panel but may also be used for case studies / NMEO promotional work. Up to 150 words

- **What to put:** Write a concise, 3rd-person summary of your professional background, your company's core mission, and key milestones in your career. Focus on factual achievements that convey authority and momentum.

Tell us about your professional track record.

- **What to put:** Provide details of your recent business activity, including international projects, partnerships, showcases, conferences, trade missions, export activity, artist development, releases, or other relevant achievements. Be sure to include locations, dates, key outcomes, and any notable clients, collaborators, or organisations where relevant. Provide some context and details about what you do and your place within the local and northern ecology.

Links: Website / Social Media Pages (Separate lines for Facebook, Linkedin, TikTok, Instagram, etc.) / Image Link.

- **What to put:** Direct, working URLs. Double-check that your permissions are set to public.

Video Link:

- **What to put:** A link to a recent work, performance (e.g., live session, festival footage, or high-quality promotional video) showcasing your business.

(If mgmt) Music Examples:

- **What to put:** Direct streaming links to your artists' music (e.g., SoundCloud, Spotify, private WAV links, social media links etc).

Section 3: Data

Please state your business' earnings from music in the last 12 months.

- **What to put:** The amount entered should reflect income generated through music business activities such as management commissions, publishing, label income, live income, distribution, licensing, consultancy, export services, or other music-related commercial activity. Please do not include income from non-music-related activities.

Please state what percentage of the above annual income is from overseas services (please estimate)?

- **What to put:** An estimated percentage e.g., 15%. If you currently have zero international income, write "0%".

If mgmt, promoter, agent: Please provide details of average venue capacity for your shows both in the UK and overseas at the time of writing.

- **What to put:** Provide an example of each (venue name and location).

If mgmt: Please provide your artists' current streaming numbers (monthly listeners) in the USA, UK, Japan, Canada, Europe and Other (rest of world). This can be broken down by platform if preferable

- **What to put:** Extract regional monthly listener counts or streaming figures from Spotify for Artists, Apple Music for Artists, or distributor analytics. Present clearly by region (e.g., UK: 10,000 / USA: 3,500 / Europe: 5,000 / Rest of World: 2,000).

Section 4: Activity Details

This section establishes the definitive timeline and physical locations of your international project.

Please provide the name of the activity to be supported in the format of 'Conference Name' & Year. For example, 'SxSW Austin 2027'

- **What to put:** State the event name, location, and year precisely using the required format (e.g., Reeperbahn Festival Hamburg 2026 or Eurosonic Groningen 2027).

Please provide the official showcase invite (upload).

- **What to put:** Upload your formal PDF invitation, performance contract, or official email confirmation from the organisers.

Section 5: Making the Case

This is the narrative heart of your application. Use this section to prove your "Export Readiness" to the independent assessors.

What are highlights of your professional career in music so far?

- **What to put:** Give details of your profile in the UK including relevant projects, partnerships, clients, campaigns, showcases etc.

Please provide a recent link or reference that demonstrates recognition, profile or credibility within the music industry. This may include media coverage, interviews, case studies, a reference from a music industry professional etc.

- **What to put:** Insert a working URL to a press feature, industry interview, award nomination, panel speaking appearance, or attach a formal testimonial/reference letter from an established industry peer.

Please provide details of any international successes, projects, partnerships, showcases, or business activity you have been involved in during the last 24 months.

- **What to put:** Highlight international deals closed, overseas trade missions attended, sync placements outside the UK, foreign roster expansion, or cross-border collaborations completed over the past two years.

Please use this section to explain why you or your business are 'export ready' and if applying for a specific market, the reasons why you are targeting it.

- **What to put:** Articulate why now is the critical inflection point for your international growth. Cite existing commercial interest in the target territory (e.g., meeting requests from local labels/agents, streaming clusters, targeted B2B opportunities) and explain how attending will convert this into long-term commercial revenue.

(If mgmt) Tell us about the demand for your artists' music and/or services outside of the UK. If you have a roster of artists, you should provide an overview and relevant highlights. Please give details of international activity

and/or media coverage so far. Also include details of international industry interest and existing relationships.

- **What to put:** Summarise international traction across your client base. Detail foreign press coverage, playlist performance, organic social analytics by country, and inbound inquiries from overseas labels, promoters, or booking agents.

(If mgmt) What is your artists' current expected fee for a gig? Or provide the current expected commercial value of your activity. If you have a roster of artists, you should provide an overview and relevant highlights.

- **What to put:** State standard live performance guarantees or estimate the total potential financial outcome (e.g., deal size, publishing advance, fee generation) resulting directly from this international trip/activity.

(If mgmt) What is your current average current audience size? (There is no right answer here, just make an honest estimate).

- **What to put:** Provide a realistic average headline ticket sales or event audience figure across your managed roster (e.g., 200–500 venue capacity).

What is your current average audience, customer, client, or industry reach? (There is no right answer here, just make an honest estimate) This may include live audiences, streaming audiences, social media following, mailing lists, industry networks, clients, customers etc.

- **What to put:** Aggregate your total direct professional reach. Break down key metrics across platforms (e.g., 5,000 newsletter subscribers, 20,000 total social followers, 50 active industry B2B contacts, or combined client stream counts).

What are your 5 key goals from the trip/activity? (eg. US agent / Festival bookings / International work for clients)

- **What to put:** Provide 5 highly specific, realistic, and measurable professional outcomes (e.g., 1. Secure a European booking agent; 2. Confirm 3 festival slots for next summer; 3. Meet face-to-face with X label representative).

Section 6: Budget

Your budget must prove financial feasibility.

Please state the requested amount in pounds only.

- **What to put:** Input the exact amount requested from the NMEO grant as a whole integer up to £5,000 (e.g., 2,500).

Please state your total project budget expenditure. (Please answer only in figures, e.g. 5000).

- **What to put:** The absolute total cost of the trip. Remember that although NMEO can technically support the total value of your activity, the greater the additional percentage you can demonstrate from other sources, the stronger and more robust your argument will be. Ensure you check prices and don't be tempted to just round figures up.

Please state how you will fund the remainder of the budget.

- **What to put:** Detail all co-funding or match-funding sources covering remaining expenses. Examples include company cash flow, client contributions, sponsor support, or personal investment. Showing multiple funding streams strengthens financial feasibility.

Section 7: Visas

Immigration compliance is critical. Errors here can cause application rejection or formal funding clawbacks if your trip falls through. Take the time to look at visa guidance and give yourself ample time to get your visas processed or risk jeopardising your entire trip.

Do you understand the visa requirements for attending this showcase/writing camp and have you obtained or are you planning on applying for a visa for this trip?

- **What to put:** Select Yes. You must show you have proactively researched your destination requirements using resources like the Musicians' Union (MU) or ISM guides.

Please specify which visa you have applied for. If you haven't yet applied, please tell us what you are planning to apply for.

- **What to put:** State your precise immigration route based on your destination.

For example to play at SXSW or the Folk Alliance you might require an O-1B, P-1B, O-2, or P-1S. Doing your research is absolutely essential. Some artists will try and enter the USA and play on an ESTA. This carries an extreme risk of being turned away at the airport. Again, do your research.

If you are planning on travelling to Europe - for example to play ESNS or Reeperbahn - research what the legal requirements are and detail on your application. There is no blanket EU-wide exemption for short-term cultural or creative work and rules are set individually by each of the EU Member States. They can be drastically different, so don't get caught out - While many countries offer permit-free routes for artists, musicians, and crew for short stays (often 5 to 90 days), others strictly require permits even for single-day engagements. Also ensure you are aware of rules regarding relevant permits (like ATA carnets) for your instruments and gear.

Relevant Resources:
• Independent Society of Musicians (ISM): https://www.ism.org/visa-guide-europe/
• Musicians' Union (MU): https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu
• UK Music: https://www.ukmusic.org/policy-campaigns/touring-and-working-in-the-eu/