



BLAST Residency Initiative - Arts & Creativity in Education

Bringing Live Arts to Students & Teachers (BLAST) in Primary, Special and Post-Primary Schools and YouthReach Centres.

The Department of Education announced the launch of the 2024 arts and creativity in education BLAST Residency programme, which will bring arts and creativity in education to up to 425 new Residencies in the school year 2024/25.

This initiative aims to support the objectives of the Creative Ireland Creative Youth Plan (2023-2027) which builds on the principles and skills outlined in the *Arts in Education Charter* (2013) and the achievements of Creative Youth (2017-2022).

BLAST aims to provide pupils in schools all over the country, time and the space to work with a professional artist/creative practitioner on imaginative and joyful projects. BLAST is a key Department of Education initiative of the Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027 which aims to foster creativity in schools focus and to provide young people with opportunities to learn and develop the key skills and competencies of collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation.

Innovative BLAST residencies are designed and developed between the artist/creative practitioner, teacher, students and the school community under the coordination of the 21 full-time Education Support Centres Ireland (ESCI) network.

How will the BLAST Residency initiative work?

Education Support Centre:

Schools and YouthReach centres apply for a BLAST Residency via a centralised online application link (*see below*) which will be processed by their local full-time ESC. The programme is nationally coordinated by the National Arts in Education office, Tralee Education Support Centre.

Every local ESC has a *BLAST Register of Artists & Creative Practitioners* who are trained to deliver BLAST Residencies. The *BLAST Register* is arranged by artist / creative practitioner and discipline. It includes required training, examples of previous work and relevant experience in an educational and community context. Schools and YouthReach centres may apply for one of these creative practitioners to work with them in their school. In excess of 300 artists are currently trained and registered on the *Register of Artists & Creative Practitioners* managed by the ESCI network nationally. Local ESCs administer the payment for creative practitioners which removes the administrative burden on teachers and schools.

Garda Vetting:

Garda vetting for creative practitioners for BLAST Residencies is organised by the local ESC. Some schools may separately request that creative practitioners apply for Garda vetting specifically to work in their school.

Creative Practitioners will have completed Tusla Children First Training and submitted their certificate to the local ESC. Schools must follow and make creative practitioners aware of their school's / centre's Child Protection Procedures, Safeguarding Statement and *Designated Liaison Person*.

Artists & Creative Practitioners:

Creative practitioners on the *BLAST Register of Artists & Creative Practitioners* have been trained and have engaged in school residencies under the Teacher-Artist Partnership+ (TAP+) professional development initiative which is approved and led by the Department of Education.

Artists and creative practitioners from any creative discipline who have been trained in partnership working with schools will be registered with the 21 full-time ESCI. Artistic and creative disciplines include visual arts, crafts, music, dance, drama, literature, heritage and film. Creative disciplines will be expanded as the residency programme develops over the next number of years.

Schools & YouthReach Centres:

Schools and YouthReach Centres that apply for BLAST:

- Must be in the catchment of a local full-time Education Support Centre.
- Fee Charging Schools are not eligible to apply for BLAST Residencies.
- Schools that are not in the free-education scheme cannot apply for BLAST.
- Schools in receipt of capitation grants from the Department of Education or Education and Training Boards scheme can apply for BLAST.
- Each School may submit only one application.
- Schools/Centres make their own selection of creative practitioners on the BLAST Register of Artists & Creative Practitioners.
- Please note that schools may not always be partnered with their choice of artist or creative practice - this is due to practitioner availability and demand.

Once a school / centre is approved for a BLAST Residency, the school has a commitment to the creative practitioner, who will have earmarked time for the project and could potentially turn down other work in favour of the Residency.

BLAST Arts & Creativity in Education Residency Funding:

The artist's fee is €1,100 per residency. This is funded by the Department of Education via the ESCI network. Local ESCs pay the creative practitioner in accordance with agreed

guidelines after the artist and teacher/school project completion processes have been submitted. In certain instances, this may include the payment of two instalments of €550 with the prior agreement of the ESC and creative practitioner.

The artist / creative practitioner will be funded for 20 contact hours, including 6 hours for planning/development/evaluation. Participating schools must pay for materials associated with the project and also for any fees relating to documentation of the project (photographs, film, recording etc) and any other costs involved including insurance costs. Funded residencies can be delivered throughout the academic year commencing in September in the year the residency was approved.

Schools must acknowledge the Department of Education, Creative Ireland, their local ESC and National Arts in Education office in publicity relating to the project.

Successful applications:

Successful schools will be required to sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with their local ESC accepting the terms of the BLAST Residency prior to the commencement. Successful residencies can begin once written notification from the ESC has been received, Garda vetting is in place and this has been communicated to the school.

It is a specific condition of BLAST residencies that a teacher, creative practitioner and students work closely and collaborate to plan, develop and evaluate the residency.

Teachers must be present at all times with the creative practitioner while working with students in the school and to enhance further collaborative partnership.

BLAST Evaluation:

BLAST is an initiative of the [Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027](#) and is supported by the Creative Youth Evaluation Guidelines and the associated Pre & Post Project Questionnaires (links issued by the ESCI network). BLAST Residency Guidelines will be issued to all successful applicants in September 2024. These guidelines will contain all the required information to support schools and creative practitioners to carry out their BLAST Residencies.

In instances where an ESC and creative practitioner have agreed to split the residency fee, the second instalment will be paid following the submission of required documentation outlined in the BLAST Residency Guidelines.

Images submitted by schools on completing the project may be used to promote the scheme through print and other media including social media. It is therefore essential that schools have permission for the use of such images, noting in the consent forms that they will be used for this purpose, and only send images to the ESC once parental consent is in place.

BLAST Assessment and Selection:

BLAST applications will be assessed by the local ESC. Applications will be assessed and scored against the following criteria.

1. PREVIOUS ESCI CREATIVE YOUTH APPLICATION SUCCESS

Supporting schools to participate in ESCI Creative Youth initiatives (BLAST, TAP+, Creative Clusters, I am Creative)

2. BENEFITS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

This includes how participation in BLAST will support improvements in teaching and learning by embedding creativity in curriculum or developing key competencies.

3. CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT

This includes the extent to which the school and school leadership commit to fully supporting the BLAST Residency, to celebrate and share its learning and outcomes.

4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

This includes the extent to which the application demonstrates a clear plan for ensuring children and young people play a central role in planning, implementing and evaluating their BLAST Residency.

5. SUPPORTING ACCESS TO CREATIVITY

This includes the extent to which the application demonstrates an aim to enhance equity of access to creativity, culture and the arts or supports specific cohorts of children and young people.

BLAST Application Link

BLAST 2024/25 Application Form apply here:

<https://forms.gle/GPUNz4EP51URhKn9>

Please note only **online** applications will be accepted.

BLAST Application - Questions Outline:

Outline of the online BLAST 2024/25 Application Form

- General information
- Local Education Support Centre
- School Name
- School Roll Number: use this link to find participating schools' Roll Number & Eircode: <https://www.gov.ie/en/directory/category/495b8a-schools/>
- School Address & Eircode
- School Email Address
- School Contact Number
- School Type
- School Principal's Name
- Lead Teacher Name
- Lead Teacher's Email
- Lead Teacher's Contact Number
- Proposed number of pupils / students involved in the BLAST Residency
- Proposed Timeframe of Project
- Please indicate your involvement in previous Department of Education led ESCI Creative Youth initiatives (BLAST, TAP+, Creative Clusters, I am Creative)
- If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list:
 - a. Name the Creative Youth Initiative
 - b. Year of participation
 - c. If a Residency took place, please advise which Creative Practitioner you / your school was paired with.
- **Rationale for Application:**

Please tell us your rationale for applying for a BLAST Residency. How might your BLAST Residency align with the aims of the initiative, do you have an emerging theme, area for development, SSE focus or learning challenge you would like to address.
- **Benefits to Teaching and Learning:**

Please tell us how you envisage that participation in the BLAST Residency will support improvements in teaching and learning, by embedding creativity in curriculum and/or key competencies?
- **Capacity and Commitment:**

Tell us about the capacity and commitment for the school and school leadership to fully support the BLAST Residency, to celebrate and share its learning and outcomes.
- **Children and Young People in Decision Making:**

Please outline how children and young people will play a central role in decision making from planning, through delivering and to evaluation during the BLAST Residency. See Hub na nÓg | Young Voices in Decision-making (hubnanog.ie) for support.
- **Creative Youth, Supporting Access to Creativity:**

Creative Youth aims to provide young people with enhanced opportunities to engage with creativity in a way that supports greater equity of access. It prioritises children and young people who may experience low levels of participation in creativity, culture and the arts. Will your BLAST project aim to support specific cohorts of children and young people? If so, please give details.

BLAST Scoring Criteria

Criterion 1 scoring, 10 = met strong, 15 = met outstandingly, 20 = met exceptionally

Criterion 2-5 scoring, 0 = Not Met, 1 = Potential to Meet, 2 = Met - Satisfactory, 3 = Met - Strong, 4 = Met -Outstanding, 5 = Met – Exceptional, Total Score (Max = 20)

- Criterion 1: Previous ESCI Creative Youth application success
- Criterion 2: Benefits to teaching and learning (T&L)
- Criterion 3: Capacity and commitment
- Criterion 4: Children and young peoples' participation in decision making
- Criterion 5: Supporting access to creativity

BLAST Timeline

Opening date for applications	19th March 2024
Closing date for applications	10 th May 2024
Announcement of successful BLAST Residencies	Late May 2024
Residencies can begin	September 2024
Initiative completion and review	Mid May 2025

Applications will open on 19th March 2024. The closing date is 10th May 2024

Appendix 1 – List of full-time education centres and associated contact details

Education Support Centre	Address	Phone	email	Website
Athlone	Moydrum Road, Athlone, Co Westmeath	090 6420400	info@athloneeducationcentre.co.m	www.athloneeducationcentre.com
Blackrock	Kill Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin	01 2365000	bec@blackrockec.ie	www.blackrockec.ie
Carrick-on-Shannon	Marymount, Old Dublin Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim	071 9620383	office@carrickedcentre.ie	www.carrickedcentre.ie
Clare	Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare	065 6845500	reception@clareed.ie	www.clareed.ie
Cork	The Rectory, Western Road, Cork	021 4255600	office@cesc.ie	www.cesc.ie
Donegal	2/3 Floor, Pier One, Quay Street, Donegal Town, Co Donegal	074 9723487	admin@donegaledcentre.ie	www.donegaledcentre.ie
Drumcondra	Drumcondra, Dublin 9	01 8576400	info@ecdumcondra.ie	www.ecdumcondra.ie
Dublin West	Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24	01 4528000	reception@dwec.ie	www.dwec.ie
Galway	Cluain Mhuire, Wellpark, Galway, Co Galway	091 745600	info@galwayec.ie	www.galwayec.ie
Kildare	Friary Road, Kildare Town, Co Kildare	045 530200	office@eckildare.ie	www.eckildare.ie
Kilkenny	Seville Lodge, Callan Road, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny	056 7760200	kecsec@eckilkenny.ie	www.eckilkenny.ie
Laois	Block Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois	057 8672400	info@laoisedcentre.ie	www.laoisedcentre.ie
Limerick	1st Floor Marshall House, Dooradoyle Road, Limerick, Co Limerick	061 585060	info@lec.ie	www.lec.ie
Mayo	Westport Road, Castlebar, Co Mayo	094 9020700	eolas@mayoeducationcentre.ie	www.mayoeducationcentre.ie
Monaghan	Knockaconny, Armagh Road, Monaghan, Co Monaghan	047 74000	info@metc.ie	www.metc.ie
Navan	Athlumney, Navan, Co Meath	046 9067040	info@ecnavan.ie	www.ecnavan.ie
Sligo	Ballinode, Sligo, Co Sligo	071 9138700	info@ecsligo.ie	www.ecsligo.ie
Tralee	North Campus, Dromtacker, Tralee, Co Kerry	066 7195000	artsineducation@traleeesc.ie	www.edcentretralee.ie
Waterford	Newtown Road, Waterford, Co Waterford	051 311000	info@wtc.ie	www.wtc.ie
West Cork	The Square Shopping Centre, The Square, Dunmanway, Co Cork	023 8856756	info@westcorkeducationcentre.ie	www.westcorkeducationcentre.ie
Co. Wexford	Milehouse Rd, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford	053 9239100	info@ecwexford.ie	www.ecwexford.ie

