

Application and Selection Data Report, July 2020 to December 2021

Please click [here](#) to see the data report on Jerwood Arts' applicants and beneficiaries 2020/2021.

Introduction

Since the beginning of 2019, we have carefully gathered equal opportunities information to better understand who applies to Jerwood Arts' opportunities, and who does not.

We previously published our applicant data in July 2020, [here](#). At the time we acknowledged that applicant data told us only half the story of who was benefitting from our funding, as we are only able to collect data on individuals who apply to us directly. We are currently working on how to collect appropriate information about beneficiaries we reach through funding organisations in the [Development Programme Fund](#) and [Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries](#), and our exhibitions and events programme.

Our applicant and selection data across 2019/20 and 2020/21 data reports now includes almost 7,500 entries. This information helps us to refine our approach to making funds available for individuals, and informs the guidance, marketing and selection choices we make. From it, we can identify areas of under-representation and we can take actions in the future to address this and better support a wide range of individuals to access our work.

Between July 2020 and December 2021 Jerwood Arts ran seven opportunities for individuals. In total we received 4,405 applications for these and made 131 awards and grants with an overall success rate of 3%. You can read more about our reflections on this work and models of funding for individuals [here](#).

Presentation of the Data

For the purposes of transparency, our [2020/21 data](#) shows the intake for each opportunity (in the columns to the right) and the aggregate total across all of them (in the first column). We also show the aggregated monitoring information for the 131 awardees.

The decision not to disclose the monitoring information for those selected for each opportunity is to avoid the risk of individuals being re-identified. For example, the [Jerwood/FVU Awards](#) only had two beneficiaries, and their identities might have been revealed if we had published monitoring information at that level.

The monitoring information we are publishing today therefore collates data from seven distinct calls for entries. Therefore, as described below, the aggregate encompasses a variety of actions and activities we have undertaken over the last year. Above all it represents a huge amount of effort on the part of applicants to our opportunities, and amongst the selected artists, many months of work on the commissions and projects made possible by our funding.

When we released our Data Report 2019/20, we attempted to bench mark our information against other data sets from within the arts, and national demographics from the Office of National Statistics and Higher Education. We decided not to include benchmarking information in the 2020/21 report as we found it difficult to make direct comparisons with others' information, especially given our

remit to support early career artists which has a distinct and yet unquantified make-up. For this report, we have chosen to look at our progress in improving the equality, diversity and inclusion of work by looking at our own information over time.

Developing our Funding Practices

Each of the seven opportunities covered by the 2020/21 data report focused on different art forms and types of support, from grants and bursaries to fellowships and commissions. Six of them were openly advertised calls for entries; the seventh (the Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships) was a nomination process with invited applications.

We designed marketing and engagement approaches specific to the opportunities. For [Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open](#), Jerwood/FVU Awards and [Jerwood/Photoworks Awards](#), we had key partners in Aberdeen Art Gallery, Art Fund, Film and Video Umbrella (FVU) and Photoworks with extensive specialist art form networks to spread the word out to, which we supplemented with our own contacts. For the [Live Work Fund](#), [1:1 FUND](#) and [Writer in Residence](#), we advertised the opportunities broadly, and wrote directly to contacts connected with communities who are traditionally under-represented in the arts.

[Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships](#) used a nominations process to target the applicant pool. We approached over 200 established poets, artists, publishers, editors and other arts industry experts to nominate poets they thought were doing exceptional work but had not had the recognition or break through they deserve. We gave guidance to the nominators suggesting that we had not received as many applications or funded poets from particular regions or ethnic backgrounds.

The 1:1 FUND responded to the need for artists, curators and/producers to connect and collaborate during the pandemic, providing mutual support and learning. It also piloted a random selection process for the first time.

Throughout the year, we continuously reviewed and updated our application guidance and selection processes in response to applicants' feedback and our own evaluations. As a learning organisation, our aim is to be responsive to how we can improve how we serve artists across our work, in this case through trying to increase the clarity and accessibility of the opportunities and embedding greater care and fairness into the work.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In the previous 2019/20 data report, our opportunities had a relatively low response rate from artists, curators and producers working in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In the last year, we developed our artist and organisational networks in these countries and paid for targeted posts on social media. The effort did not result in a significant change, and we are committed to redoubling our efforts in this area in the future.

One area where we made improvements over the last year is in our equal opportunities monitoring forms. As our understanding of how people identify themselves developed through training and feedback, we added more options to the form. Our list of English regions increased over the year, as did the options to describe gender identity and socio-economic background. Some opportunities, especially earlier in the period, did not collect information in certain categories, leaving a gap in the

report. For example, we collected information on the Midlands for the Jerwood/FVU Awards 2022 and Jerwood Arts Fund Makers Open when the calls for entries were run in 2020, and then gave the option for East or West Midlands for the Live Work Fund, Jerwood/Photoworks Awards and Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowships.

We hope the next data report will have more consistent categories to compare across our opportunities, but also recognise that the way we collect information about people's identities will continue to evolve.

Another area which saw significant efforts over the last year was in making our application processes more accessible. We now include easy read and audio formats for our guidance. We offer paid access support to help applicants who need it to make their applications. For each opportunity, we offer one-to-one advice calls and FAQs.

Updating our access offer has seen a consistent number of applicants identifying as disabled (20% in 2019/20 and 19% in 2020/21, which is similar to the national benchmark), but a higher percentage being selected (26% in 2019/20 and 23% in 2020/21). This might be due to variances across the opportunities and the effect of positive action in the selection process. We will continue to improve our offer for disabled applicants going forward.

A clear example of the effect of positive action is around the ethnicity of our applicants and selected artists, curators and producers. In 2019/20, 70% of our applicants identified as White British, White Irish or Other White Background, and 55% of those selected were from those backgrounds. In 2020/21, 68% of all applicants identified as being White and 59% of selected individuals identified as such. It is a notable impact of changing our engagement practices and a sign of positive action within selection processes, and our commitment to address the underrepresentation of people from Black, Asian, LatinX, South Asian and East Asian backgrounds in the arts and across our funding. This is especially true in the six opportunities in the period that used selection panels to make decisions. However, the overall figures for the year were affected by the 1:1 FUND, which used a random selection process, and had a high number of applicants and selected individuals. The random selection maintained the diversity of the fund's applicant pool but did not significantly change the diversity within the group of selected individuals. As the 1:1 FUND supported the largest number of individuals (84 out of the 131 supported in 2020/21), the diversity of this group affects the overall total.

Another aspect of the information, which we will be reflecting on, is the socio-economic diversity of applicants to our opportunities. Through the [Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries](#), we have taken active leadership in addressing socio-economic exclusion in the arts. Whilst we have applied some of our learning from the programme to how we engage with marketing and support for applicants, the data shows that there is still work for us to do on this front. Those with graduate and post-graduate qualifications still made up 87% of applicants and 85% of selected individuals. 13% of applicants and selected artists went to private schools. The proportion of applicants from low socio-economic backgrounds was 17%, which was lower than the 26% we received in the previous 2019/20 data report. As reported elsewhere, the pandemic has disproportionately affected those from low-income backgrounds, with perhaps less means to fall back on when the arts was locked down. It might not be possible to say there's a certain causal link, but it is stark to see less socio-economic diversity reflected in the demographics of applicants during this period.

How Assessment and Decision Making has Affected the Data

When we offer our opportunities as calls for entries, applicants will be responding to the eligibility and assessment criteria. We then assess the applications against the information we publish. In the opportunities covered by the 2020/21 Data Report, each application was read at least twice, by a combination of Jerwood Arts staff, partner organisation staff and independent assessors. Our hope is that by having applications read by more than one person, we can cross-reference opinions and make better decisions. We recognise that unconscious bias, subjective interpretation and taste always influence how the applications are read and affect whether they are put forward in the selection process.

As we go through a selection, we will be gathering in all the information we have to hand. The content of the application, any supporting materials provided and the opinions of the assessors. At key moments, such as longlisting and shortlisting, we will reintroduce the demographic information (which isn't made available to assessors when reading individual applications), to help us understand what overall affect our selections have made on the representation in the group, and particularly where it has reduced the representation of those from marginalised backgrounds.

When we have a group of equally strong applications, which often occurs at the final selection meeting, positive action allows us to favour applications from those who have been underrepresented in the arts and in our funding. More and more we have seen people provide autobiographical information in their proposals, and it is natural for selectors to sometimes champion these applications according to their own experiences and interests. We are, however, careful to say that not all backgrounds, barriers and experiences are visible in an application or someone's work, and we seek to balance selections that represent both the applicant pool and increase diversity and representation in the arts.

Our challenge, which we imagine is shared by others, is to develop an ever-deeper understanding of supporting individuals in all their complexity with compassion and fairness.

In the period, the exception to the process described above was the 1:1 FUND, which used a random number generator to select applications which were then eligibility-checked by Jerwood Arts staff against the criteria. This new approach was in response to feedback to us and other funders on the amount of labour artists put in to making applications and the low success rates. Our reflections on the 1:1 FUND process can be found [here](#) and we have also [published](#) responses we have commissioned from artists and academics.

This report is part of our evaluation process for the year and gives a snapshot of some of the considerations and reflections we are engaging with. Please contact us if you have any questions or feedback.

Jon Opie, Deputy Director, December 2021