

Application brief

Introduction

The UK has a unique creative industry with strengths in art, culture, entertainment and technology, sparking trends and influencing practice around the world. CreativeXR unlocks the opportunity for this industry to experiment with creating immersive content that will inspire future audiences.

Digital Catapult and Arts Council England launched CreativeXR in September 2017, driven by the common mission of enabling new formats of content innovation and future-proofing the UK creative industries market.

The programme has been designed to allow creative teams to quickly experiment, iterate and bring immersive project ideas to reality. Teams are given tools such as prototype funding, workshops, peer-to-peer learning and access to facilities. Each year as a final phase of the programme, project teams also compete for further production funding with the aim of becoming market-ready and pushing the boundaries of what immersive technologies can offer.

In 2020 CreativeXR will focus on helping teams creatively innovate with the format, develop project impact and build new business models through bespoke mentorship and support from leading experts in the industry. Teams will also showcase and pitch their projects to industry stakeholders at the third annual CreativeXR Showcase and Market in October 2020.

To increase confidence in undertaking boundary-pushing R&D, CreativeXR will also engage with technical experts to help develop experimental prototype builds and support the teams throughout their three-month build journey.

This year CreativeXR welcomes two new supporters to the programme: Epic Games and StoryFutures Academy.

CreativeXR has received an Epic MegaGrant, which will be used to finance prototype development of five Unreal Engine projects. Additionally, select projects will benefit from direct support from Epic Games as part of the programme. StoryFutures Academy will bring narrative storytelling expertise, and mentor up to four companies in the areas of story development, design and continuing narrative.

Digital Catapult and Arts Council England invite content creators to apply with ground-breaking project ideas to this third unique round of CreativeXR.

Please carefully read the full **application brief, FAQs & T&Cs** before applying.

Programme

What is CreativeXR?

CreativeXR, developed by Digital Catapult and Arts Council England, is an acceleration programme designed for teams from the creative and technology sector with strong, well-developed, ground-breaking creative ideas in need of early-stage financing.

Up to 20 teams will be selected to receive £20,000 in prototype funding, alongside bespoke mentorship, workshops and introductions to the top financiers and commissioners in the global creative and immersive market at the annual Showcase and Market event.

This year, CreativeXR also welcomes two new exciting supporters: Epic Games and StoryFutures Academy.

Aligned goal of growing the XR industry, Epic Games has generously awarded CreativeXR with an Epic MegaGrant, which will be used to support up to five Unreal Engine projects.

As Storytelling Development Partner and with the aim of promoting innovation in storytelling in next generation technologies, StoryFutures Academy will provide bespoke mentorship to up to four companies in the cohort. All projects within the cohort will also get the option to take part in StoryFutures Academy Writers Room workshop, that

explores storytelling in immersive environments.

The programme runs in two phases:

Prototype phase (June 2020 - October 2020)

Teams will create immersive prototypes over this three-month period. They will also take part in bespoke workshops and mentorship (see below for dates). The end of this Phase will culminate with the Showcase and Market, where teams will pitch and showcase their prototypes and have one-to-one meetings with commissioners.

Production phase (November 2020 - TBC)

Teams accepted onto the programme will be eligible to compete for further funding at the end of the prototyping phase. This funding will be limited and subject to a separate judging process and match funding conditions - full details will be provided at a later stage.

Why get involved?

Focused on the creative industries, CreativeXR works with the best creative teams to help develop concepts and prototypes of immersive content by offering access to:

- **Prototype funding** - Up to £20k to develop an immersive proof-of-concept prototype and supporting material
- **Facilities** - For the duration of the programme, the opportunity to make use of Digital Catapult Immersive Labs in Belfast, Brighton, London, MediaCityUK, and North East Tees Valley (subject to availability and site terms)
- **Peer to peer learning** - Be part of a cohort of up to 20 teams made up of talented creators from across the creative and technology sector
- **Business expertise** - Support network of industry experts, high calibre peers and commissioning bodies to help develop impactful experiences and build new business models
- **Pitch and writing workshops** - Focused workshops to help develop the prototype concept and pitch
- **Mentorship from Epic Games** - Up to five teams will receive direct support from Epic Games on building prototypes in Unreal Engine
- **Mentorship from StoryFutures Academy** - Up to four teams with narrative-led

projects will receive bespoke mentorship on developing script and narrative

- **Technical monitoring** - Engineering expertise to increase confidence in the prototype build and push the boundaries of the technology - this monitoring also includes inputs from AI and 5G technologists
- **Showcase and Market event** - Opportunity to participate, pitch and host private demos and meetings with commissioners at the event
- **Development funding** - Teams accepted onto the programme will be eligible to compete for further funding at the end of the prototype period. This funding will be limited and subject to a separate judging process and match funding conditions - full details will be provided at a later stage

What projects will CreativeXR support?

CreativeXR supports multi-skilled teams in the development of **creative, consumer-facing content experiences** enabled by immersive technologies, which may include:

- Artistic pieces
- Cultural experiences (including those inspired by museum, gallery, library or heritage experiences)
- New forms of storytelling (fiction or nonfiction)
- New forms of interactive entertainment

Projects must be well-developed and ready to progress into some iteration of a prototype, both technically and creatively. We expect this to be demonstrated through a description of the technical build, treatment, user experience design, segment of a script, storyboards or creative concept materials.

Additionally, this year CreativeXR and its partners are looking to support projects from the following **strands**:

1. Unreal Engine experiences

To support growth and innovation in the XR industry, Epic Games has provided CreativeXR with an Epic MegaGrant, which will be used to fund five prototypes built in Unreal Engine.

2. Storytelling development experiences

With the aim of promoting innovation in storytelling in next generation technologies, StoryFutures Academy will provide mentoring and support to up to four narrative-led projects in developing scripts and narratives. Projects that wish to be considered for this support must provide a treatment or script sample, and are expected to have appropriate writing talent with a strong track record attached.

The two themes that fit within this strand are:

2.1 Narrative led experiences - CreativeXR and StoryFutures Academy would like to support projects that display a potential for narrative strength and quality.

2.2 Repeatable experiences - CreativeXR and StoryFutures Academy would like to support projects that have the potential to be a 'returnable' experience or format, for example, experiences that have the potential to repeat or expand, rather than being a one-off experience. We would welcome applications that would ask audiences to return to a story on a regular basis.

3. Immersive experiences with an element of artificial intelligence

Digital Catapult and Arts Council England will support up to two projects that integrate artificial intelligence (AI) technologies with immersive. These projects will be eligible to receive bespoke technical mentorship from Digital Catapult.

4. Immersive experiences with 5G

Digital Catapult and Arts Council England will support up to five projects that demonstrate the value of 5G to enhance immersive experiences. These projects will be eligible to gain access to 5G facilities and bespoke technical mentorship from Digital Catapult.

To apply to one of these strands please tick the appropriate box in the application form.

What is meant by ‘immersive technology’?

Although ‘immersive’ is a broad term that can encompass many fields within arts, culture and technology, in the context of CreativeXR, this refers to **experiences enabled specifically by:**

- **Virtual reality (VR)**
- **Augmented reality (AR)**
- **Mixed reality (MR)**
- **Experiences using real-time technologies**
- **Immersive audio technology**
- **Haptic technologies or other sensory system**

Please see our FAQs list for full descriptions of immersive technologies.

This programme focuses on the potential these enabling technologies can have on the UK creative industries as well as the audiences that will be inspired by this content. A good definition of immersive technologies can be found [here](#).

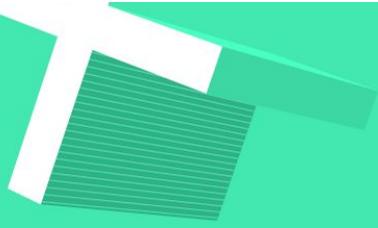
This may involve delivery of experiences via head mounted displays (HMDs), mobile AR experiences, other immersive displays such as projection walls or domes that don’t require an HMD. Applicants will be expected to have access to this equipment and explain how this could be delivered practically for users.

Immersive audio technology includes the use of spatial sound (for example, binaural or ambisonic rendering) or other augmented audio techniques. Audio-only projects are eligible - please see FAQ on audio-only projects).

What is meant by ‘immersive experience’?

CreativeXR supports multi-skilled teams in the development of **creative, consumer-facing content experiences** enabled by immersive technologies as described above.

The content and user experience must be designed specifically for the chosen medium, and be enabled and enhanced by one of these emerging technologies. Content may be purely digital or, in the case of location-based projects, it may incorporate an element of



live performance or physical set if desired.

The selected content experiences may be intended for different **distribution methods**, including:

- In-home (for example, content is distributed online, to users' own devices, and is expected to be consumed in a home setting)
- On-the-go (for example, content is distributed online, to users' own mobile devices, and may be consumed in any location)
- Location-based (for example, content is part of a fixed installation or exhibit in a specified location, with no device ownership required by users)

Whatever the distribution method, applicants will be expected to explain who the intended audience is, why it will appeal to them, and how they would access it.

Application

Who can apply?

Here are the main requirements to take part in CreativeXR:

- The lead company* has to be **registered with Companies House** in the UK (or equivalent establishment in the UK and the majority of work must be carried out in the UK. In the case of international co-productions, the work carried out outside the UK must be proportionate to the amount of funding brought in by the international company)
- The lead company* must have a **business bank account**
- The team has to have **two or more team members** with a range of previous immersive content expertise (including production, technical, creative, artistic skills and/or track record)
- The team must be able to **attend all the activities** (workshops and final Showcase and Market event hosted in London for the duration of the programme) **Please note dates are subject to change.**
 - Workshops: 3, 10 or 11 or 12, 18-19, 30 June and 1 July 2020
 - Showcase and market: 12 - 16 October (Preparation: 12, Showcase days: 13 and 14, Packing down: 16)
- If you have applied to CreativeXR before or have previously been accepted onto the programme, you are eligible to apply again. Re-submissions of applications previously not accepted on to the programme are also eligible

*Lead company

- You may enter as a collaborative team, but there must be a lead company that will contract with us and get paid
- All other collaborators involved must be named in the application process. It is the responsibility of the lead company to arrange any collaboration agreements or subcontracts as necessary and to comply with the CreativeXR terms and conditions
- Your collaborators may be with international companies. Co-productions are welcomed although the work carried out outside the UK must be proportionate to the amount of funding brought in by the international company
- You can be named as a collaborator on more than one application, but can only be a 'lead' company once

- We may carry out due diligence on the lead and any collaboration companies so they must be willing to submit documentation upon request (including but not limited to bank account statements for the business and personal references)

How can I apply?

1. Complete the short registration of interest form on CreativeXR website
2. An email will be sent to the address indicated in the short registration of interest form with the link to the full application form
3. If you would like to apply to a specific strand please ensure you tick the appropriate box in the full application form

Do teams get additional support if selected as a prototype within a strand?

Yes, the additional support you will receive is listed above.

What are the judging criteria?

The criteria will be presented as statements. **Each of the criteria has the same weight.** The judges will respond by indicating how strongly they accept these statements.

1. **Appropriate team experience** - The team is equipped to deliver the proposed prototype and has appropriate creative, immersive production, technology and business skills and know-how
2. **Strength of the idea**- The idea is adventurous, well-developed, demonstrates strong vision and application
3. **Originality of the idea** - The idea is out of the box and likely to push boundaries for immersive content
4. **Functionality** - The idea will be very well represented through the end prototype
5. **Suitability/relevance** - The idea described uses suitable immersive technology and promises a good benchmark. The idea is also likely to be suitable for further funding opportunities
6. **Value for money** - The idea's combination of cost, quality and sustainability is well balanced. The scale of the prototype is reasonable with respect to the effort proposed
7. **Feasibility of prototype delivery** - The technical delivery of the proposal is clear and achievable in the time frame and budget. This includes the design and build of the prototype, as well as the hardware specifications for distribution
8. **Potential to reach a chosen target audience** - The proposal shows a good understanding of a clearly identified target audience and their unique characteristics
9. **Route-to-market ambition** - The proposal has a viable distribution plan and key partnerships plan. The proposal presents an opportunity for business model discovery
10. **Growth potential** - The idea has the potential to succeed beyond the CreativeXR programme and receive further funding opportunities and keep on growing as a project

The final selection decision will also consider applicants' projects variety and welcome applicants from underrepresented groups to ensure a well-balanced and differentiated portfolio of projects.

The decision is taken by Digital catapult and its relevant partners on the information submitted, any additional information gleaned from its due diligence, and their knowledge. This decision is final.

Deliverables

Successful applicants will be expected to supply the following key deliverables over a 12-week period (**3 June 2020 to 8 September 2020**):

Prototype

The working proof-of-concept should provide an immersive example of the core ideas to help inspire commissioners creatively, as well as to give them the confidence that it will be technically deliverable. It should therefore:

- Provide an audiovisual and interactive benchmark of the experience, illustrating what users will be expected to see, do, hear, and feel when they are within the experience
- Prove the feasibility of any key technological or logistical elements, particularly if they could be considered risky. For example, if the experience relies on a very specific piece of prototype or developer edition hardware - this element needs to be tried and tested during this phase (however please note purchase of equipment cannot be covered within the funding)

Please note: Teams must be willing to work with Digital Catapult technical team to validate the technical build plans prior to and during the build.

Supporting material

A complete set of pitch material, in written and verbal presentation form, in preparation for the final Showcase and Market event, to include:

- Creative concept material for example, a treatment or script, concept art, storyboard (including user experience design)
- Technical specification for example, description of technology requirements and technical approach for production and distribution. This must be validated by the Digital Catapult technical team.
- Distribution plan for example, via online or location-based (installation) distribution
- Audience considerations (who will this appeal to and why)
- Business plan (including cost breakdown for full production, business model)

and partnerships plan). This must be validated by your business plan mentor.

- 20 second linear video teaser/showreel (or audio-only alternative) that can be used to demonstrate your experience in a 'non immersive' setting

Participation in key events

Team representatives will be expected to attend*:

- Workshops: 3, 10 or 11 or 12, 18-19, 30 June and 1 July 2020
- CreativeXR Showcase and Market event: 12 - 16 October 2020

*Timelines are approximate and can be subject to change

Case study and contribution to research

Digital Catapult and Arts Council England will carry out research related to this project, to help gain shareable insights around content making, and to assess the impact of content experiences and CreativeXR programme itself. This may include (but is not limited to) producing published case studies or testimonies for which teams would be expected to contribute by providing appropriate feedback as required.

Programme communication support

Digital Catapult, Arts Council England, Epic Games and StoryFutures Academy will raise awareness of the programme, its aims and successes, via multi-channel marketing and media outreach. Teams will be expected to participate in this activity.