Peer review procedures as part of the decision-making of the Council of Arts and Culture

Decision of the Council of Arts and Culture, 23 September 2026 KUVI/2026/00843

1. General

The Council of Arts and Culture (hereinafter the Council) is a body within the Finnish Arts and Culture Agency (hereinafter the Agency) responsible for deciding on grants under the Artist Grant Act, other grants awarded to artists and working groups, and art prizes on the basis of peer reviews. The Council also delivers opinions regarding the awarding of supplementary artist pensions and proposes candidates for the honorary title of Art Academic.

Peer reviews refer to an assessment of the artistic work of the artist under review as conducted by distinguished practitioners or experts in the relevant field of the arts. By means of this document, the Council decides on the acquisition of the expertise required to support decision-making, the implementation of peer reviews, and the associated procedures.

To conduct peer reviews, the Agency utilises a Pool of Experts to form Grant Assessment Panels for each call for applications that then provide expert opinions on grant applications to support the decision-making process within the Council. The same procedure is also used when deciding on art prizes and delivering opinions regarding supplementary artist pensions.

The Council is a public body that exercises official authority, whereas the Pool of Experts and the Grant Assessment Panels they form do not constitute public bodies. The composition of the Pool of Experts and the Grant Assessment Panels is public information.

This decision does not apply to the boards operating in connection with the Agency that make grant decisions on the basis of separate acts, namely, the Board for Grants and Subsidies to Writers and Translators and the Board for Grants to Visual Artists.

The Agency reports to the Council on the conduct of peer reviews in accordance with these procedural guidelines.

These procedural guidelines are valid until 30 September 2027.

2. Pool of Experts

2.1. Size of the Pool of Experts

The aim is to appoint a maximum of 300 members to the Pool of Experts. Deviations from this are permitted for justified reasons.

2.2. Term of the Pool of Experts

The term of the Pool of Experts is three years. An individual may serve as a member of the Pool of Experts for two consecutive terms, provided that at least half of the membership changes between terms. The term of the Pool of Experts coincides with that of the Council. The outgoing Council decides which members will continue serving in the Pool of Experts, representing no more than half of the composition of the new Pool of Experts.

2.3. Expertise of members of the Pool of Experts

Arts professionals and experts are appointed to the Pool of Experts.

Members of the Pool of Experts must possess expertise in various fields of the arts and their sub-genres, as well as in regional operating environments.

Other areas of expertise may be categorised as follows: inclusion, accessibility, special groups and artists requiring special support, cultural diversity, various minority groups, international cooperation, cultural exchanges, arts research and artistic research, new technologies and publication channels, as well as competence in arts-related entrepreneurship, administration, finance and production.

2.4. Gathering nominations for members of the Pool of Experts

Nominations for members of the Pool of Experts are gathered through requests for nominations sent to key parties in the arts and culture sector, as well as through registration as a nominee, which is open to everyone.

Key parties in the arts and culture sector are defined as follows:
- National artist associations
- Key regional arts and artist communities
- Other arts communities representing professionals
- Parties representing higher education and research in the arts and culture
- Museums with regional responsibility and regional recipients of central government transfers
- Arts information centres and specialised arts museums
- Parties representing production and distribution channels
- Arts and culture parties representing linguistic and cultural minorities
- Parties promoting cultural inclusion and accessibility
- Regional councils (with statutory task to promote culture)

2.5. Principles for preparing the appointment of the Pool of Experts

The Council decides on the composition of the Pool of Experts based on a presentation by a presenting officer. The principles of diversity, equality and regional representation are taken into account when preparing the composition.

At least half of the members of the Pool of Experts must come from outside the capital region, and the Pool of Experts must adequately represent linguistic and cultural minorities, as well as artists under the age of 35.

An individual appointed to the Pool of Experts must meet the professional and expertise requirements set out in Section 2.3. During the preparation of the Pool of Experts, linguistic and cultural minorities along with young experts shall be clearly defined so that the target groups know to apply for the position.

2.6. Supplementing the Pool of Experts during the term

A member of the Pool of Experts may request to resign from the Pool for a valid reason. The Council may supplement the Pool of Experts as required during the term, primarily using candidates from the request for nominations. Supplementing the Pool may also be considered if specific expertise is lacking.

2.7. Orientation for members of the Pool of Experts

Members of the Pool of Experts shall receive orientation on peer review procedures at the beginning of their term. Members also have access to a resource bank that enables them to familiarise themselves with their tasks independently.

2.8. Members of the Pool of Experts as applicants

While serving their term, a member of the Pool of Experts may apply for a grant from the Agency or be active in a community applying for a grant from the Agency. However, a member may not serve on a Grant Assessment Panel that is reviewing an application submitted by them or by a community they represent.

2.9. Confidentiality and data protection when performing tasks

When performing their assessment tasks, members of the Pool of Experts process information contained in application documents that is classified as confidential under the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, as well as personal data as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). By signing a separate undertaking, members commit to act in accordance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, specifically to maintain the confidentiality of confidential and other sensitive information, to process personal data in accordance with the law, and to comply with specific guidelines issued by the Agency. Furthermore, members agree to use information obtained while performing their confidential tasks solely for the purpose associated with that task or for a purpose specifically agreed upon, and only to the extent required for that purpose. Information subject to the non-disclosure obligation must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons even after the performance of duties on behalf of the public authority has ended. Confidential information must not be used for personal gain or to the benefit or detriment of another. In

addition, members must comply with the Agency's guidelines regarding the aforementioned matters.

Members of the Pool of Experts have the right to receive any information needed for perform their peer review tasks, as well as orientation and support for their assessment tasks.

3. Grant Assessment Panels

3.1. Number, size and designation of Panels

The assessment tasks performed within Grant Assessment Panels by arts professionals and experts represent a key stage in the peer review process for preparing grant decisions. The Panels are assembled for specific calls for applications based on the field of the arts in question, the form of support, regional representation and diversity.

The number of Panels varies by field of the arts, form of support and region depending on the number of applications. The minimum size of each Panel is three members. Each application is assessed by at least two individuals. Panels are designated according to the field of the arts and form of support.

3.2. Rotation of Panels

As a general rule, Panels are appointed once a year. The general principle regarding the rotation of Panels is that no more than half of the members may be appointed for two consecutive years to assess the same form of support.

3.3. Appointment of Panels

The Council notes that the power of appointment regarding Grant Assessment Panels rests with the Agency. Prior to the appointment of the Panels, a consultation takes place with the Council, during which the Council provides its views on the composition of the Panels. The composition of the Panels is published on the Agency's website.

3.4. Disqualification of members of Panels

The grounds for disqualification set out in Section 28 of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) apply to members of Grant Assessment Panels providing expert assessments to support decision-making. Before commencing the assessment task, experts sign an undertaking regarding disqualification and undertake to notify the presenting officer without delay of any potential grounds for disqualification. In cases involving potential disqualification, the presenting officer determines whether the expert may serve on the Panel.

3.5. Supplementing Panels

If a member appointed to a Panel is unable to participate in the Panel's assessment tasks for a valid reason, or if the Panel's expertise needs to be supplemented for other reasons, the Agency shall appoint a new member to the Panel from the Pool of Experts.

3.6. Expert opinions of Panels

Based on their peer reviews, the Panels deliver expert opinions on the applications assigned to them in accordance with the request for an opinion submitted by the presenting officer.

Where necessary, a Panel determines its opinion based on the majority view; in the event of a tie, the view of the chair of the Panel shall prevail. A Panel member may enter a dissenting opinion regarding the Panel's opinion.

3.7. Compensation for assessment tasks

Members who participate in the assessment tasks of their Panels shall be paid an assessment fee per application and meeting fees in accordance with the Agency's decision on fees.

4. Decision-making within Council of Arts and Culture regarding peer review matters

Matters relating to the preparation and presentation of tasks to be handled by the Council shall be determined according the Agency's rules of procedure, insofar as they are not provided for in the Act on the Finnish Arts and Culture Agency (511/2025) or the Decree on the Council of Arts and Culture (1297/2025).