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Creative Research Outputs Submission

FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS

Division for Research
Development (DRD)

Submitting creative research outputs to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for subsidy.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced the **Policy on the Evaluation of Creative Outputs and Innovations** produced by South African Public Higher Education Institutions (2017) in 2018.

The purpose of this policy is to recognise and reward quality creative research outputs and performing arts produced by public higher education institutions.

This policy acknowledges that there are legitimate and worthwhile research practices which may not be covered by the below list or fall neatly within the parameters of "creative research". These often include practices falling within the realms of research undertaken by those in Journalism, for example, as well as activities such as translation and scholarly editing.

This policy allows for a three-year submission process, which means a researcher has up to three years from the time the work first appeared in the public domain to submit it for accreditation. Creative outputs are awarded a minimum of 0,5 units and a maximum of 2 units.

Researchers are required to submit their creative research outputs annually for subsidy purposes. Each researcher is responsible for capturing their own research outputs on Symplectic Elements. Once captured, the outputs must be nominated through the system.

The internal submission deadline is January each year.

Creative outputs submission timeline 2027:

Symplectic Elements opens for nomination (always nominate the output to the collection year prior to the year of submission. E.g. Submission year = 2027 therefore the collection year is DHET 2026)	June 2026 (prior to the year of submission)
Symplectic Elements closes for nomination	January 2027 (year of submission)
DRD follows up missing information	February 2027
Internal panel review and feedback session/s	February and March 2027
Researchers to rework submissions if required	March and April 2027
DRD submits on ROSS and peer review starts	May and June 2027
DHET deadline for completed peer reviews	30 September 2027

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Overview of the submission requirements:

Provide the following:

URL link of your output.	
500–700-word annotation	
Signed declaration letter	
Proof of SU affiliation letter from HR (staff), and supervisor (student)	
Proof of public profile of the output (posters, launch adverts, programmes etc)	
Press review/Public response	
Proof of Awards / Nominations (If applicable)	

Who can submit creative research outputs?

The DHET policy states that institutions should always ensure that creators for which contributions are claimed should have a formal affiliation to the claiming institution during the time the output was produced. The output should have been produced at the claiming institution. If the claiming contributor was affiliated to another Higher Education Institution in South Africa during the period the output was produced, they need to indicate that in their submission, as well as whether the subsidy should be split between the two institutions.

- Staff and Pensioners
- Extra-ordinary Appointments and research fellows
- Research Fellows-Special Appointments
- Postdoctoral Fellows

How do I submit my creative research output/s?

Every year (around June) the call for creative research outputs is circulated by the Division for Research Development (DRD). The call provides details on where/how the outputs should be submitted. The call is distributed through the DRD's mailing list and placed on the university's website. All outputs must be captured and nominated on [Symplectic Elements](#). The system remains open throughout the year to capture the outputs, but it only opens around June to nominate the output for subsidy. The output must be nominated to be reviewed and considered for subsidy. You need to log in to the system with your SU username and password.

[Click here to download the submission manual.](#)

I cannot log in to Symplectic Elements.

All permanent Stellenbosch University staff members have access to Symplectic Elements using their **SU credentials**.

To ensure the integrity of affiliation of contributors, no SU contributor can be added manually to the SE system. Instead, the system is pre-populated with data from the official sources of potential contributors such as Sun-e-HR, SunStudent, etc.

If you are not on any of the above data source lists, you won't be able to access the system.

Staff members who cannot access the system need to **contact Ms Jennifer de Beer** (jad@sun.ac.za) for enquiries.

- If you are a newly appointed **research fellow or extra-ordinary appointment** and you're not on the system, please make sure that your signed appointment letter was submitted to HR.

Please take note of the following important matters regarding users that appear on Symplectic Elements:

- **Only postgraduate students from master's level** are by default loaded to SE. In case of exceptional circumstances where an undergraduate or honors student has produced an output, they can be added to SE. In case of exceptional circumstances, the student/staff member needs to complete the **Ad hoc Student template** and send it to: whitney@sun.ac.za

[Click here to download the ad hoc template.](#)

I do not have SU credentials

A unique username is allocated to each person and gives you access to electronic resources, e-mail. See more [here](#):

All new staff members should contact their departmental secretary to complete the application for this service.

1. The role must be confirmed as the user should already have a US Number assigned to them. E-mail HR for role information.
2. If the user already has a role and US number please proceed to step 3 – if not, you will have already received the correct procedure from your communication with HR to have them created.
3. Follow this [LINK](#) to create a username for the new staff.
4. After the username has been created, please log a call for a profile setup on the PC/Laptop they will be using.

For assistance, please log a request on our [ICT Partner Portal](#).

If you are not able to obtain SU credentials, please contact whitney@sun.ac.za to assist with your application.

What qualifies for subsidy?

The DHET policy provides a detailed breakdown of the qualifying criteria: [click here](#).

DHET subsidises creative research outputs in the following subfields:

Fine Arts & Visual Arts

This category refers to the production of artwork featuring in a one -person exhibition or an installation; work exhibited in a two- or three- person show; a substantive single work/series included in a group exhibition.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Animation- Artists books- Collage- Drawing- Installation- Mixed media- Multimedia- Online art | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Painting- Performance- Robotic,- Sculpture- Software art,- Video art- Other |
|--|---|

Design and Architecture

Design is understood as the realisation of a concept or idea into a configuration, drawing, model mould, pattern plan or any specification (on which the actual or commercial production of an item is based) and which helps achieve the item's designated objectives.

Architectural Design: is both the process and the product of planning, designing, and constructing buildings and other physical structures.

Built Environment: encompasses the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings and parks or green space to neighbourhoods and cities that can often include their supporting infrastructure, such as water supply or energy networks.

Communication Design: is a mixed discipline between design and information-development which is concerned with how media intermission such as printed, crafted, electronic media or presentations communicate with people.

Jewellery Design: is the art or profession of planning, rendering, and/or fabricating, one of a kind, studio multiples, or production Jewellery.

Landscape Design: is the art of designing outdoor spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, college campuses, and lawns and gardens for private residences, as well as planning the restoration and conservation of natural areas like forests and wetlands.

Multimedia Design: is the art of integrating multiple forms of media. Designers in the field of multimedia use imagery, typography, video, sound and computer-based interactivity to communicate. The field includes basic digital animation, computer graphics, storyboarding and digital interfaces for web design and design for interactivity.

Graphic Design:: is the methodology of visual communication, and problem-solving through the use of type, space and image.

Industrial Design: is a process of design applied to products that are to be manufactured through techniques of mass production. It includes the designing of anything and everything that is mass-produced, from once-off furniture items to mass-produced goods such as gaming consoles, kitchen appliances and mobile phones.

Information Design: Information design is the practice of presenting information in a way that fosters efficient and effective understanding of it. The output of an information design is sometimes expressed in written instructions, plans, sketches, drawings, or formal specifications..

Fashion Design: Fashion design is the art of the application of design and aesthetics or natural beauty to clothing and accessories.

Interior Design:: is the art or process of designing the interior decoration of a room or building.

Textile Design:: is the art of creating designs for woven, knitted or printed fabrics. Textile designers are involved with the production of these designs, which are used, sometimes repetitively, in clothing and interior decor items.

Film and Television

The work should have been screened publicly, either through theatrical release in commercial cinemas, at festivals or on broadcast television, in order to gauge critical and audience response. It should also be available for rescreening on DVD. Works in any of the following genres may be submitted:

Fiction: full-length feature films, made for television feature films, episodes in series, situation comedy series (episodes or series); animated short or full-length features.

Documentary: full-length documentary, series or genre episodes, investigative journalism.

Each film or television output should be at least 30 min in duration.

Acting: lead and supporting actors as designated by writer, director and producer.

Cinematography: Only the first camera will be considered. It is also generally accepted that cinematographers regularly do their own lighting design. In this case the cinematographer may not also apply for the lighting design category but must indicate his or her involvement in the lighting aspect, so as to assist the assessors in their task.

Costume design: For costume design, relevant drawings and renderings and the like need to be included in the assessment portfolio. It is acknowledged that designing all the costumes is a very large task, and so only four set pieces need to be presented in documentation form, with the relevant film or television product to indicate the rest of the work. In the case of specialised makeup, additions such as wigs, and animated characters developed through motion - capture or animatronics, the application will fall under the rubric of costume design.
Script writing: the complete text in acceptable format must be presented.
Directing: only the main director will be assessed.
Editing: Editing will consider both the visual and the sound editing as one package.
Producing: in this case the producer will have to present the final film or television product, but will also have to present written evidence, which will include information on budgets, schedules, distribution, locations, contracts, and any other documentation that will contribute to the assessment process.
Set design: In this case relevant drawings, perspectives and the like need to be included. It is acknowledged that designing all the sets is a very large task, and so only one set piece needs to be presented in documentation form, with the relevant film or television product.
Investigative Journalism (television)

Literary Arts

Literary arts refer to any piece of writing that possesses literary merit, and language that foregrounds literariness, as opposed to ordinary language. Literature can be classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction and whether it is poetry or prose. It can further be distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short-story or drama. The work is often categorised according to historical periods or adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations (genre).

It excludes biographies, histories, critical works or any writings which would generally fall under the rubric of "conventional" research, and which would thus not require special consideration. It also excludes theatre or drama scripts (which fall within the ambit of the Theatre, Performance and Dance category) as well as film scripts (which fall within the ambit of the Film and Television category).

Creative Non-Fiction: The output, whether a non-fiction novel, memoir or collection of essays, for example, would normally be a book. A stand-alone component of a book (such as an individual essay or a short story with non-fiction elements) must be substantive or complex in terms of its form and content to qualify for accreditation.

Novels, Novellas and Short Stories: Only novels, short story collections, plays and volumes of poetry will be recognised, not individual short stories or poems.

Oral Performance and/or Literature: It is normally only the collection by a single author rather than the single output that is eligible. An exception is made, however, for a single output that is demonstrated to be substantive and/or complex in terms of its form and content. A single output that is not published must have been performed on a particular occasion and evidence of its performance provided.

Poetry: Only collections of poetry will be recognised, not individual poems.

Music

Creative outputs in the case of music may be divided into four basic types, which for the purposes of this policy may broadly be defined as set out below. This categorisation is made with due cognisance that:

- they encompass outputs in all musical languages, including traditional and indigenous music, Western classical music, popular music and jazz.
- submissions may include cross-category outputs, in which case applications for accreditation should be motivated accordingly.
- submissions may include cross-disciplinary outputs, such as music for theatre, dance or film, in which case applications for accreditation should be made in any one relevant disciplinary category.

Conducting / Directing: As in the case of solo performance, because the composer's musical score is but an incomplete guide to the musical work, for the truly outstanding conductor /director this is also the domain of recomposition, originality of thought, exceptional creative insights, and research - informed performance practice. Although it may be less demanding than solo performance in some respects, it requires the additional ability to co- ordinate and combine the technical and musical mastery of individual performing musicians towards a single musical interpretation. For the purposes of accreditation, the proposed quantitative rating distinguishes two categories of conducting/directing on the following basis:

- Musical direction of full -length, large -scale works such as symphonic, choral, operatic or other music theatrical works.
- Musical direction of ensembles, excerpts from large -scale works, or shorter works for large -scale groups.

Music Composition: The act of conceiving an original musical work, the primary musical domain for originality of thought and exceptional creative insights. It's research -informed or scholarly, discursive intent is predominantly evident in the extent to which it exhibits the sustained development of musical ideas and in its sensitivity to the intertextuality of its stylistic conventions.

Group Performance: As in the case of solo performance, because the composer's musical score is but an incomplete guide to the musical work, for the truly outstanding individual

musician within a group context, this is also the domain of recomposition, originality of thought, exceptional creative insights, and research -informed performance practice, although the degree of recomposition or improvisation exhibited should be aligned with accepted performance practice in the genre performed. Although it may be less demanding than solo performance in some respects, group performances require the additional ability to collaborate with co-performers towards a single interpretation of the musical work. This category includes a number of musical genres: chamber music, ensembles, bands, and orchestral music. However, because smaller groups usually place greater technical and musical demands on individual performers than do larger ones, the proposed quantitative rating distinguishes two categories of group performance on the following basis:

- Duos, trios, quartets and quintets.
- Significant contributions to performances in groups larger than a quintet, which may include lead roles in larger ensembles and bands, or principal positions in orchestra.

Solo Music Performance: This is the domain of the virtuoso who exhibits prodigious technical mastery, invention, and charisma. Because the composer's musical score is but an incomplete guide to the musical work, for the truly outstanding performer this is also the domain of re-composition, originality of thought, exceptional creative insights, and research -informed performance practice, although the degree of recomposition or improvisation exhibited should be aligned with accepted performance practice in the genre performed. Solo performance may be unaccompanied or accompanied (as would be the case in concertos, lead roles in an opera, non -keyboard sonatas, etc.).

Theatre, Performance and Dance

The performance entails live, intimate connection with the audience. It is a collaborative form of fine art that uses live performers to present the experience art of movement of the body, usually rhythmically and to the music, using prescribed or improvised steps and gestures. As an art-form it can be analysed purely by its choreography, its repertoire of movements, or it may be classified according to its time or place of origin.

Directing: Direction of an extant text/script resulting in a demonstrably original interpretation or staging of that text/script.

Performance: Performance of a role in a production that is deemed original either by virtue of having never been performed before.

Scenography/ design/ performance Technology: Original scenography/design for production whether of lighting, sound, costume, set, make-up, puppets or any other aspect OR a particular technological/material innovation for use in a production.

Theatre- Making/ Dramaturgy/ Choreography: Direction of a creative process resulting in the staging of an original performance work.

Writing: Literary production of an original written text/script intended for performance.

Oral Performance

I am not sure in which category my output falls.

Researchers are encouraged to ask the internal review panel members representing their prospective submission category for advice. Please make sure you submit your output in the correct category and sub-category as the DHET will not award subsidy if it is submitted in the wrong category/sub-category.

Fine Arts & Visual Arts	Prof Kathryn Smith	kathryns@sun.ac.za
Design	Ms Jo-Ann Chan	jcchan@sun.ac.za
Theatre, Performance & Dance	Dr Mareli Pretorius	mareli@sun.ac.za
Film & Television	Dr Mareli Pretorius	mareli@sun.ac.za
Literary Arts	Mr Marius Swart	mariusswart@sun.ac.za
Music	Prof Mario Nell Dr Esther Marié Pauw	mdn@sun.ac.za empauw@sun.ac.za

How do I submit a late output?

Unfortunately, the DHET policy does not allow for the submission of late creative research outputs. They only allow outputs which fall within the years (n-3).

For example, for the 2027 submission cycle we are submitting outputs produced in 2024, 2025 and 2026. No output produced prior to 2024 (e.g., 2023) will be accepted.

Supporting documents.

What supporting documents do I need to submit?

The following documents are DHET policy requirements:

Public profile of the output	Proof must be attached of (e.g., posters, launch adverts, programmes etc.). The dates on the posters etc. must correlate with the submission date.
Press review/Public response	Has there been a press review or has there been a response from the public and engagement of work from peers. Proof must be attached.
Proof of affiliation (for all internal contributors) Request confirmation of employment letter if you're permanently appointed or a certificate of service if you're on contract.	This letter can be requested from HR via sun-e-hr@sun.ac.za ■ Please note: this letter needs to confirm affiliation of the year in which the output was produced.

	For students, the letter needs to be from the Supervisor
Proof of Awards / Nominations (If applicable)	Upload proof of awards/nominations received.
Signed declaration letter	- A declaration of originality which indicates that the creation has not been published in a peer reviewed journal or a book and has not been submitted for subsidy before. - A declaration that the work generated has not been copied from elsewhere and that the ideas are those of the claiming creator/scholar. - A declaration of authorship/creatorship/co-authorship/co-creation and disclosure of other active participants in the production of the work. Failure to declare all co-contributors may lead to the submission being found to be fraudulent. Please use a SU letterhead, date and sign the letter.

Annotation (500 – 700-word motivation).

Each creative output submission must be accompanied by a written annotation by the applicant to contextualise or elucidate the work as a creative research output. The annotation will serve as a review guide, providing a coherent intellectual framework for peer reviewers to assess the submission.

The commentary must be **between 500 – 700 words** and set out the following:

1) Introduction and outline description

2) Research statement

a) Locate the research within the discipline and clearly state the research problem or question guiding the work. This must be stated as a research inquiry rather than a descriptive account.

3) Research approach and development process

b) Provide a methodological account of the creative process, demonstrating how the work constitutes a systematic investigation. This must include technical iterations, processes, and practices that substantiate the research approach.

4) Knowledge contribution within the creative field

c) Articulate the contribution to knowledge, specifying whether the work advances theory, practice, methodology, or interdisciplinary understanding. The statement must be evidence-based and not purely descriptive.

5) Academic recognition

6) Any additional information supporting the submission

N.B.: The word count is important as the DHET online submission system does not accept a submission of which the motivation is less than 500 or more than 700 words. Your reference list won't count as part of your word count.

Keywords and Language.

To support peer reviewer matching and system-based categorisation within ROSS, applicants must select a **minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 keywords** that accurately reflect the research domain, methodology, and the work's contribution.

Applicants must further specify the language of the Creative Research Output, where applicable, to support appropriate reviewer allocation, particularly in literary arts, music, film and television, theatre, performance and dance. If the output is not language based, provide the language of the annotation.

The following are examples of keywords / phrases that can be used in the application. You are welcome to provide additional values.

Design	Film	Fine Arts
3D Animation	Animation	2D
Augmented Reality (AR)	Character Actor	3D
Building Material	Creative Writing	Acrylic
CAD (Computer Aided Design)	Cultural	African Studies
Commercial Jewellery	Documentary	Art History
Construction	Educational	Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Contemporary Jewellery	Feature Film	Casting
Digital printing	Fiction	Ceramics
Digital Storytelling	Historical	Conceptual
Dyeing	Innovative	Curatorial
Education	Method Acting	Digital Installation
Embroidery	Non-Fiction	Education
Ethical Jewellery	Political	Environmental Art
Fabric manipulation	Satirical	Gallery
Garden design	Short Film	Gender Studies
Green	Stunt Performer/Stage Combat	Glass
Heritage	Voice Actor	Immersive Experience
Human Settlements	Television	Impressionism
Interactive Design	Animation	Interactive
Jewellery Manufacturing	Character Actor	Monochromatic
Landscape Architecture	Creative Writing	Oil Painting
Landscape design	Cultural	Photography
Landscape Planning	Documentary	Spatial
Motion Graphics	Educational	Stop Motion

Narrative Jewellery	Feature Film	Storytelling
Pattern design	Fiction	Transformative
Post-colonial	Historical	Watercolour
Social Impact	Innovative	
Sound Design	Method Acting	
Sustainable	Non-Fiction	
Textile printing	Political	
Urban Planning	Satirical	
Urbanism	Short Film	
User Experience (UX)	Stunt Performer/Stage Combat	
User Interface (UI)	Voice Actor	
Video Editing		
Virtual Reality (VR)		
Weaving		

Literary Arts	Music	Theatre, Performance and Dance
(Language) Literature	African music	African Studies
21st Century	Baroque	Applied Drama
Adult Language	Brass Instruments	Audience Interaction
African Languages	Cello	Ballet
Autobiographical	Chamber music	Choreography
Child Language	Choir	Critical Thinking
Creative Writing	Choral	Cultural
Critical Thinking	Classical	Dance psychology
Cultural Studies	Collaboration	Dancing
Education	Contemporary	Digital
Fiction	Cultural	Education
Gender Studies	Educational	Gender Studies
Greek	Electronic	Hip-hop
Lexicography	Historical	Interactive Technology
Multilingualism	Indigenous music	Kinesiology
Non-Fiction	Jazz	Lighting
Phonics	Modern	Modern Dancing
Political	Opera	Multisensory Scenography
Post-Colonial	Piano	Performance Techniques
Prose	Saxophone	Political Studies
Sociolinguistics	South African music	Postcolonial Performance
Translation	String Instruments	Ritualistic
World Literature	Viola	Scenic Design
Youth Literature	Violin	Script Writing
	Western music	Semiotics of Theatre
	Wind Instruments	Set Design
		Social Justice
		Somatic Practices
		Storytelling
		Sustainable Design

Technical
Theatrical History
Therapy

Creating a link for the output.

How do I create a link to my output?

The DHET review panels as well as the peer reviewers require evidence of the output via a URL link. The link needs to be accessible and available for at least two years.

- You can provide a link of the output from YouTube, Google Drive, iCloud, Vimeo etc.
- If your output is available on any music platform like iTunes, Spotify etc., you must still provide the .mp3 files via another accessible platform (i.e. the ones above) because you have to assume that the peer reviewers and DHET panel do not have accounts for these platforms making the output inaccessible.
- If any of these platforms are password protected, you must provide the password for the link.
- The open data repository FigShare (<https://figshare.com>) is also available as a platform to store your output and create a link to the output. See Addendum C on how to upload files to FigShare

Please note, only the internal review panel, the peer reviewers and the DHET sub-panel will be granted access to view the output.

NB: No hard copies of outputs are allowed by DHET.

Peer Review Process.

What does peer review of creative research outputs entail?

Please note the peer review process is administered by DHET who will allocate reviewers for your output.

What happens after the output is reviewed?

- If an output received two positive peer reviews, it is submitted to the DHET sub-panels.
- If an output received one negative and one positive review, a third reviewer will be requested by DHET to determine a conclusive outcome of the output.
- If an output received two negative reviews, it will not be submitted to the DHET sub-panels.

What does the sub-panel review entail?

The DHET sub-panels do the final review of the outputs and consider the peer review reports. They also decide whether an output should be awarded 0,5, 1, or 2 subsidy units.

Please see the guidelines from the DHET with regards to unit allocation for creative outputs. [Click here](#)

Outcome of my submission

The DHET operates on a biennial cycle in terms of the creative research outputs. Researchers can thus expect to receive the outcome of their submission, as well as any incentive funding (where applicable), two years after they have submitted the output. The outcome of outputs submitted in 2026 can be expected in 2028, and outputs submitted for the 2027 cycle can be expected in 2029.

Each Head of Department and researcher will be informed of the outcome of their output once the information is available.

May I appeal the DHET outcome?

Unfortunately, the DHET policy on creative research outputs does not allow the appeal of the DHET panel's final decision.

Incentive Funding.

The respective subcommittees of the Research Committee have disbanded, and the Special Support Scheme (SSS) fund no longer exists in its previous form. Consequently, the allocation of SSS funds based on the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) units introduced from the 2018 survey onwards no longer applies.

In the past subcommittee A (Faculty of Arts environment) paid out 10% of the DHET awarded subsidy to departments where outputs were awarded subsidy by DHET.

The Publication Incentive Funding awarded as a portion of the Research fund (RF) replaces the SSS fund scheme.

Each Faculty/School or Responsibility Centre earning a portion of the RF will determine the approach that they wish to follow in terms of providing publication incentive funding.

The faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has decided to continue with the incentive funding as in the past for 2026. Further communication will be issued pertaining to the incentive funding process for 2027.

Where applicable, incentive funding will be paid out to the cost centre of the researcher's department.

Contracted/Commissioned Work.

The department only subsidises creative research work that is generated from within the institution and not work that is generated from the outside and implemented in the institution.

Commissioned work or work that is contracted (in this regard) is not eligible for subsidy.

Contributors.

Each internal contributor must submit their own annotation/submission for an output where there is more than one internal contributor. Each contributor must motivate their own contribution from their perspective and work.

The subsidy will still be split amongst all contributors, but only the claiming contributor will receive subsidy for the submission.

Who do I contact for support?

For any further questions, please contact the [Division for Research Development](#):

General questions: Whitney Prins, whitney@sun.ac.za

Maryke Hunter-Hüsselmann, mh3@sun.ac.za

Help with Symplectic Elements: Jennifer de Beer, jad@sun.ac.za
