



QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

EMERGING MAKERS APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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OVERVIEW

ABOUT QEST

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) supports the training and education of talented and aspiring craftspeople through traditional college courses, vocational training, apprenticeships and one-to-one training with a master craftsman; helping to support Britain's cultural heritage and sustain vital skills in traditional and contemporary crafts.

QEST has awarded over £5.5million to almost 800 individuals working across the UK in 130 different craft disciplines. From guitar making to printmaking, thatching to enamelling, we embrace craft in all its many forms and are proud to contribute towards its evolving traditions. QEST funding has provided an essential turning point for many of our alumni, and we continue to support them throughout their career, offering opportunities for exhibitions, collaborations and commissions through our extensive craft network.

QEST was founded by the Royal Warrant Holders Association in 1990 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Association and the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. In 2017 the former Prince of Wales became our Patron, with Vice Patrons the Earl of Snowdon and the Marquess of Salisbury.

ABOUT THE EMERGING MAKERS GRANT

The Emerging Makers Grant is a new funding opportunity to support talented early career makers who have a strong foundation and commitment to their craft but who are still in the process of developing their skills and expertise. We consider emerging makers to be individuals at an early stage of their career, who have typically been practising professionally for four years or less.

The grant provides funding of up to £10,000 for training and education programmes to help makers enhance and improve their craft skills and advance their practice. The training can take many forms, from traditional college courses to vocational one-on-one training with a master craftsman, or a bespoke programme of short courses. Our aim is to sustain vital skills in traditional and contemporary crafts and contribute to excellence in the British craft industry by strengthening the pipeline of talented craft professionals in the UK.



ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN APPLY?

We welcome applications from all craftspeople, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or nationality; and particularly encourage those with protected characteristics that are under-represented in the craft sector to apply.

Applicants must be:

- Aged 18 or above at the time of application
- early-career craft practitioners who typically will have been practising their chosen craft for 4 years or less
- Able to demonstrate a strong foundation and proficient technical ability as appropriate for someone in the early stages of their career
- living in the UK with the right to reside either permanently or on a long-term basis (with the option of visa renewal or citizenship)
- intending to continue to practice in the UK and contribute to the UK craft industry

Please note that this grant is not suited for individuals who are just starting out or pursuing making as a hobby.

The grant is open to all makers who identify their practice within the field of craft and have a strong foundation and clear commitment to their craft. Our interpretation of craft is broad and we are excited by both contemporary craftsmanship and innovative applications of traditional craft techniques. We define craft as:

The skilled making, by hand, of tangible objects, or the conservation/restoration of such objects.

Please note that we do not fund:

- Performing arts
- Audio arts
- Literary arts
- Body arts
- Art Psychotherapy
- Trades (e.g. plumbing)

To see the types of craft that we have supported in the past, please visit the **directory** on our website.

If you do not see your craft, or if you have any other questions about your eligibility, please get in touch by emailing info@qest.org.uk to discuss your potential application.

WHAT WE FUND

Eligible activities:

- Traditional college courses
- Further education (e.g. an MA or practice-led PhD)
- A series of short courses
- One-to-one training with a master craftsperson
- A bespoke programme of training

You can use the QEST funding to pay for:

- Fees to a mentor, instructor or master craftsperson
- Training courses or workshops fees
- Associated travel and accommodation costs - see below
- Materials to be used during training - see below

You can apply for some associated costs such as travel, accommodation or materials, however, these should be proportionate to the funds requested for training, forming a smaller part of your overall funding application. Your request for these additional costs must be realistic, well-thought-out, and based on quotes and research.

As a general suggestion, we recommend a 70/30 split, with 70% of the requested funds allocated to training fees and 30% to associated costs. However, please be aware that this is just a guideline, and each funding request is assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on an applicant's training plan. There may be situations where we cannot cover all requested associated costs. Our priority always lies in allocating funds specifically for covering training fees.

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Training can be overseas but the travel should be justified, for example, if the training is not available in the UK.

Please note that we want to support impactful training, that is, training that will make a substantial difference to someone's practice. **Therefore, we expect the minimum funding request for training to be around £3,000.**

WHAT WE DO NOT FUND

Ineligible activities:

- Anything not related to craft
- Design-only courses such as architecture or theory-led PhDs - there must be a practical or technical element to the training
- Setting up a studio
- Business development or investment costs
- Applications that solely request materials, travel or accommodation

You cannot use the grant to pay for:

- Home-based overheads such as rent or living expenses
- Personal expenses or sustenance costs
- The purchase of precious metals or stones (such as platinum or gold)
- Studio rental or upgrade costs
- Childcare costs

We cannot fund retrospectively. This means that we cannot fund any training that has taken place before an award has been made.

Please note that our funding is based on the training plan in your application. If your training plans and costs change at any point, please let us know as this may impact your funding.

WHEN CAN YOU APPLY?

QEST holds two application rounds per year:

Spring:

- Applications open: January
- Application close: February
- Assessments: March
- Interviews: April
- **Award notification: May**
- Grant period begins: June

Autumn:

- Applications open: July
- Application close: August
- Assessments: September
- Interviews: October
- **Award notification: November**
- Grant period begins: December

CAN I REAPPLY?

If your application is unsuccessful and you did not reach the interview stage, you may reapply in the next round.

If you reach the interview stage and are unsuccessful, we ask that you wait at least a year from the date of your application before you re-apply.

If your application is successful and you are awarded the Emerging Makers Grant, you will not be eligible to apply for the same grant in the future. However, you may apply for a QEST Scholarship 5 years after completing your programme of funded activities.

If you are unsure about when to apply, please get in touch by emailing info@qest.org.uk or call us on **020 7798 1535**.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are completed via an online form.

When the application round is open you can register via a form on our website. You will then be sent an automated email with a link to take you to the application form. Each application round is open for five weeks and you can access the application form throughout this period.

Please note that you MUST register and start a new application form for each application period. If you use a link from a previous application round, your application will not be assessed.

The application will ask you for:

- Details about your training and career history to date
- Information about the training you are applying for and how it will impact your future practice
- A breakdown of the funding request costs
- 5 - 8 images of your work in one PDF file
- One written reference. Your reference must be from a professional source and include your referees' name, job title, company and contact details

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

Our application process is competitive and we cannot fund every application we receive. When writing your application, you should be clear and concise.

Strong applications are those from makers who can demonstrate:

- Strong emerging technical skills and ability to execute ideas effectively
- Evidence of an emerging style or 'artistic voice'; or specialism (as appropriate for that craft)
- A professional approach to their craft and a strong potential for commercial success, with clear realistic goals
- Well-thought-out training plans with carefully considered and realistic funding requests
- Clear articulation of how the training will enhance their practice

With this in mind, you might want to consider the following questions when planning your application:



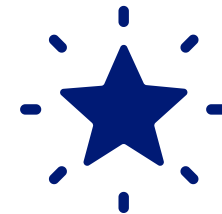
How will you demonstrate your level of skill?

What images will you include in your application and who will you ask to be your referee?



How much will your funded activity/ activities cost?

Be realistic and think carefully about VAT and exchange rates if travelling abroad for your training.



What do you want to achieve and how will the training support this?

Think about your current practice and your long-term career goals.



THE APPLICATION

FORM

THE APPLICATION FORM

The form includes questions related to the Emerging Makers assessment criteria.

Remember that our assessors will only know what you tell them. In answering the questions, be sure to provide all the information they need to understand and assess your practice and training plan.

The headings below will give you advice on how to answer key sections of the application form.

About you

This section will ask for your personal details, along with your website and social media accounts. Please only include social media accounts if they are dedicated to your craft or if you feel they are relevant.

Your practice

In this section, we ask for more information about your practice, including your discipline, area of specialization, and number of years of professional practice.

Please describe your status as a professional early career maker, including any relevant training, professional experience, and achievements. We consider Emerging Makers to be individuals at an early stage of their career, who have typically been practising professionally for four years or less. (Max 300 words)

This question helps us understand your status as an Emerging Maker by providing some context to your career and practice. Please describe your experience in your chosen craft, highlighting any relevant education or training you have completed, as well as any achievements or recognition you have received.

Training and experience

Here you will need to complete sections regarding your career history and experience.

The Grant

Please provide a summary of what you will use the funding for and why. (Max 150 words)

This is your first opportunity to let us know what you plan to do with your grant funding. In a few lines, you should clearly explain your plans, with details, and explain why you wish to do them.

Funded activities

In this section, we ask you to give details of how you would spend the requested funds if you were awarded a grant.

A funded activity is the course and/or training that you need funding for. For example, if you are applying for a grant to cover a course and some one-to-one training, this would count as 2 funded activities.

For each activity you will have to provide us with the following details:

- Type of Activity
- Activity title (e.g. one-to-one training with master cabinet maker)
- Has the place been confirmed?
- Expected start and end date of training
- Name, address, and website of the organisation or business where you will be studying, or the person who will be training you

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You will also need to answer the following two questions:

Please provide a detailed description of the training/education you plan to undertake with the grant funding. (Max 300 words)

This question asks you to provide us with a detailed description of the training or education that you plan to undertake with the grant funding. This should include information about who you will be training with, what you will learn and the duration of your training, as well as an explanation of any associated costs

Please describe the benefits of investing in this training. (Max 300 words)

Can you explain why you believe this training is the best fit for your needs and goals?

Here, you should consider the specific skills and knowledge you will gain through the training and how this will enable you to develop your craft practice. You should also consider how the training will help you to overcome any current challenges you are facing and how it will allow you to take on new opportunities in the future.

Remember:

- QEST cannot fund retrospectively. We can only fund activities that start after final decisions have been made.
- The primary purpose of your application must be training and education. While other associated costs, e.g. travel, accommodation, materials, etc., can be covered, we expect applications to predominantly be for costs related to training. We do not support applications that solely request materials, equipment, transport and/or accommodation.
- It is important for you to demonstrate that the proposed training is of high quality and relevant to your specific craft practice and that you have thoroughly researched and evaluated the training options available to you. You should also explain how the proposed training fits within your broader professional development plans and career goals.
- We want to support impactful training, that is, training that will make a substantial difference to someone's practice. **Therefore, we expect the minimum funding request for training to be around £3000.**

The Future

What are your long-term goals as a maker? Where do you envision yourself and your work in the future? (Max 300 words)

This question is your chance to share your long-term goals and aspirations as a maker. Think about what you would like to achieve in the next 5 – 10 years and explain how a QEST grant can help you achieve them. As an emerging maker, you may have plans to establish your own practice, expand your current business, or work for a specific collection or workshop.

Please describe how developing your skills will positively contribute to your area of craft in the UK. (Max 300 words)

This question is your chance to showcase your understanding of your craft practice and how it fits into the broader UK craft industry. Think about your achievements to date as well as gaps in the market or an area of your craft that is currently overlooked.

As an emerging maker, we don't expect you to have extensive knowledge of the industry, but you may want to consider the following questions:

- What sets your craft practice apart from others?
- Are there any current trends or challenges in your field of craft?
- How do you envision your work contributing to the broader craft community and industry?

This question is an opportunity for you to make a compelling case for why you're an excellent candidate for QEST funding. So, take the time to really think about how investing in your craft practice can contribute to the UK craft industry in the long term.

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QEST believes we must all play a role in building a sustainable future for us and the planet. We would like to know what steps you have taken, are taking, or intend to take to monitor, manage and reduce the impact of your craft practice/business on the environment. (Max 300 words)

We will not be following up to see if you have achieved your sustainability objectives or issuing consequences if you don't – but we do want to see that you are considering this important issue. Under one or more of the following headings, you might write 1-2 sentences on how you have, are or intend to:

- **Workspace** – reduce your consumption of electricity, gas and water in your studio/workspace
- **Travel** – reduce the frequency of travel or choose more energy-efficient methods on your commute/for deliveries
- **Waste** – rethink, reduce, reuse, and recycle your waste
- **Procurement** – choose suppliers who are open about their ethics, supply chain and carbon reduction; choose local suppliers to reduce miles travelled; choose low-impact, renewable or responsible materials/packaging
- **Social impact** – contribute to diversity and equity in your craft; employ locally; provide training or work experience for a less traditional route into work; reward and recognise employees; volunteer; donate to charity or community groups
- **Communicate** – advocate for sustainable practices; promote online or in studio/in-store; share your knowledge with new or existing audiences, have a written policy
- **Measure** – measure any of the above; set targets for improvement; keep track of increases/decreases in consumption
- **Other** – do something else to be sustainable

Supporting Documents

Please upload a PDF document containing 5 - 8 images of your work. Our skills assessors will use these images to assess your application.

Make sure that:

- The images are high resolution, well lit, and you include close-ups of any detailed work, such as stitching
- You include a one-line description for each image
- The images are all your own work or clearly state which parts you created
- The file size is max 15 MB

This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your level of skill and expertise in your craft. It will be used by assessors to gain a clear understanding of the quality of your work, artistic style and vision.

Please upload one written reference. This must be from a professional source and include your referees' name, job title, company, and contact details. We reserve the right to contact your referee directly.

When selecting a reference for the Emerging Makers Grant application, it's important to choose someone who can speak to your skills, experience, and potential for success. Here are some tips on getting the best references:

- Select someone who has worked with, or trained you, for a significant period of time and can speak to your skills, work ethic and overall abilities.
- If possible, select a referee who works in the same or similar field as you, as they will be better equipped to speak to your technical skills and potential for success in the industry.

Finally, make sure they include their name, company, and contact details along with the context of how they know you.

A person is using a hammer to break blue cubes on a wooden block. The hammer is held in the person's right hand, and the blue cube is being held in place by the person's left hand. The hammer is striking the cube, which is resting on a wooden block. The background is a workshop with shelves of materials.

WHAT HAPPENS
NEXT?

HOW WE ASSESS YOUR APPLICATION

Applications are reviewed by a group of experienced Skills Assessors who include a broad range of craft practitioners, industry specialists, QEST Trustees and QEST Alumni – those who have received grants in the past and who are now leading craft practitioners in their own right.

The assessment is a three-stage process, culminating with a shortlist for interview.

At the end of each stage, we will contact you via email to let you know whether you have been successful.

When we assess your application form, we will consider:

- Your existing skill and potential for excellence
- Passion, commitment, and understanding of your craft
- Potential for commercial success and future prospects
- Relevance and fit of the proposed training/education to your craft practice
- Feasibility and delivery of the proposed training plan

If you pass the first two stages, you will be invited to attend an interview, either in person at the QEST office in London, or via Zoom, depending on your preference.



WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO IF YOU RECEIVE A GRANT?

The grant can only be used for the training described in your application.

If you receive a grant, you will be required to:

- sign and return our Terms and Conditions
- complete a finance plan and payment schedule
- provide proof of enrolment. This could be:
 - a letter from your course confirming your place
 - an email from the master craftsperson confirming the agreed training
 - an invoice from a training institution
- submit a report every six months and a final report upon completion of your funded activities

You will be featured on our website directory and are encouraged to continue to share your news with QEST for the Stories section of the website and our social media platforms.

You will also receive news, updates and invitations from QEST to participate in events and projects, which may include: Alumni Socials; opportunities to showcase, demonstrate and exhibit; business skills workshops as well as networking events with QEST supporters and Royal Warrant-holding companies.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Eligibility Criteria

What visas are valid?

You must have an eligible visa in place at the time of application. We currently accept Settled Status, Pre-settled Status and Partner/Spouse Visas. **We do not accept Student Visas.** If you have any questions about your visa type or eligibility please contact info@qest.org.uk.

I am a mature student, can I apply?

Yes, there is no upper age limit for this grant. Providing you are over the age of 18 and an early career craft practitioner, you can apply.

What do you mean by professional practice?

Professional practice refers to the activities and skills involved in pursuing a successful career in your craft. It encompasses a range of activities, such as selling and exhibiting work commercially through craft fairs, galleries, or direct to clients; working in-house or in a workshop/studio; and in the case of conservators - working for a collection, cultural institution, or conservation business.

I have only recently started practising my craft, and do not have any professional experience, can I apply?

While we encourage early career makers to apply for our grant, please note that our criteria for selection includes considering your existing skill, understanding of your craft and the wider industry, potential for commercial success and future prospects, if you have only recently started practising your craft or do not have any professional experience, it may be difficult to meet these criteria. This grant is not suited for individuals who are just starting out or pursuing making as a hobby.

I'm an artist, can I apply?

QEST funding supports makers who identify their practice within the field of craft and whose practice has a strong connection to materials, technical skills and processes. Our interpretation of craft is broad and we are excited by contemporary craftsmanship and innovative applications of traditional craft techniques. While we do welcome applications from makers and artists who have a conceptual practice, they must have a strong craft element to the work they produce and the training that they are applying for.

Can I submit more than one application for in the same funding round?

No, you can only submit one funding application per round. You can find out more about our Scholarship funding by going to www.qest.org.uk/apply/scholarships/ and our Apprenticeship funding by going to www.qest.org.uk/apply/apprenticeships/

Training

Can QEST help to identify training?

QEST does not take a role in helping people find training, however, you could look at other makers in our [directory](#) for inspiration. At the point of applying you should have identified what your training will be and, in the case of bespoke training with a specialist, agreed in principle on the time frame, costs, and commitment.

I am due to start my MA before final decisions for the Emerging Makers Grants have been made. Can I still apply?

QEST cannot fund retrospectively, meaning that we cannot fund any training that has taken place before final awards have been made. However, you can apply for any terms or years that take place after the awards have been made if you are paying in instalments.

Is there a deadline for when the training must be completed by?

Your training must start within one year of the grant being awarded. We do not have a deadline for when all of the training must be completed by, however, it should be within a reasonable timeframe. We expect most makers to have completed their QEST-funded training within a year or two of receiving the grant.

Funding

How much can I apply for associated costs?

While you can apply for additional expenses like travel and accommodation, it's important to note that our primary focus is on supporting training fees. The costs related to travel and accommodation should be proportionate to the funds requested for training, forming a smaller part of your overall funding application. Your request for these additional costs must be realistic, well-thought-out, and based on quotes and research.

As a general suggestion, we recommend a 70/30 split, with 70% of the requested funds allocated to training fees and 30% to associated costs. However, please be aware that this is just a guideline, and each funding request is assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on an applicant's training plan. There may be situations where we cannot cover all requested associated costs. Our priority always lies in allocating funds specifically for covering training fees.

My training is free, can I apply for travel and accommodation costs only?

No. There must be a training fee of some kind.

Can I apply for tools and equipment?

Applications that include funding requests for tools and equipment are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Our primary focus is on supporting training fees, so *typically* we do not fund equipment costs as they are considered 'business investment costs'. However, we may consider funding equipment costs if it is necessary to accommodate a disability.

Supporting Documents

What should be included in the reference and who should write it?

The references should come from someone you have worked with or been trained by, such as an established craftsman or personal tutor (from a previous or ongoing course). They will vouch for you, commenting on your skills dedication, competence and work ethic. This can also include anyone who knows you in a professional capacity, such as a colleague or client, but they must be able to understand your work from a craft perspective.

NEED HELP?

If you have any questions regarding this or any of our other grants, or if you require additional assistance, please get in touch, and we will be happy to help.

Email: info@qest.org.uk

Web: Fill out a form on our website - <https://www.qest.org.uk/contact-us/>

Call: 020 7798 1535