



QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDANCE

EMAIL: INFO@QEST.ORG.UK
TEL: 020 7798 1535
WWW.QEST.ORG.UK



UPDATED: JANUARY 2024

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

CONTENTS

Overview

About QEST..... 4

About the Scholarship..... 5

Eligibility

Who can apply?..... 7

What we fund.....9

What we do not fund..... 11

When can you apply..... 12

How to apply..... 13

Questions to consider when planning your application..... 14

The application form

Application questions..... 16

What happens next?

How we assess your application..... 22

What you have to do if you receive a grant.....23

FAQs

Frequently asked questions 25



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 £ 5.5 million 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 careers, 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.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

QEST offers Scholarships of up to £18,000 for the training and education of talented craftspeople and makers from across the UK. We want to sustain vital skills in traditional and contemporary crafts, and contribute to excellence in the British craft industry. The training can take many forms, from traditional college courses to vocational one-on-one training with a master craftsperson, or a bespoke programme of short courses.

In addition to the Scholarship funding, QEST funds a place for all successful Scholars on a Professional Development Programme, created in partnership with Cockpit – London's leading studios for contemporary craft and the UK's only business incubator for makers and designers. The programme was created to help new QEST Scholars build the core skills needed to develop a strong and sustainable business. You can read more about the Professional Development Programme [here](#).





ELIGIBILITY

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

WHO CAN APPLY?

We welcome applications from all talented 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.

We support 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 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.

Applicants must be:

- aged 18 or above at the time of application
- able to demonstrate a high level of skill, a strong body of work and experience within their chosen field
- 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



QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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 crafts and the level of excellence 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, workshops or webinar fees
- Associated travel and accommodation costs - see below
- Associated materials costs 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.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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 a QEST Scholarship, you will not be eligible to apply for the same grant in the future. However, you may apply for a QEST Apprenticeship as a master/employer 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**.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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 at www.qest.org.uk/apply/scholarships/. 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 activity 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
- Two written references. Your references must be from professional sources and include your referees' names, job titles, company and contact details



QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

Our application process is competitive and we cannot fund every application we receive.

When writing your application, make sure to be clear and concise.

Strong applications are those from makers who can demonstrate:

- A high level of skill and a strong body of work and experience within their chosen field
- A clear direction for their practice
- 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 referees?



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 Scholarship 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 these if they are dedicated to your craft or you feel they are relevant.

Training and Qualifications

In this section you should include any training that is relevant to your craft, as well as any relevant awards you have received.

Career history

This section asks you to list previous employment and experience, and you should only include past experiences you consider relevant. You may also want to include volunteer work, commissions, or residencies.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

The Scholarship

Please briefly state the purpose of your Scholarship (max 100 words)

This is your first opportunity to let us know what you plan to do with your Scholarship 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 Scholarship.

A funded activity is the course and/or training that you need funding for. For example, if you are applying for a Scholarship 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

You will also need to answer the following two questions:

Please describe in more detail the activity you will be undertaking (max 300 words)

Here you should provide more information about the activity that you would like funding for and what skills you will learn.

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Please describe the benefits of investing in this activity (max 300 words)

Here you should talk about what impact the funded training will have on your practice and long-term career plans and goals. Think about why you want to complete this training and explain your reasoning. For example:

- Will the training provide you with the additional skills needed to create more impressive/complicated/ambitious work?
- Will the training help you to explore or expand your knowledge of a new medium or a new way of making?
- Will the skills you learn enable you to take your practice in a new direction or realise your creative ideas in a better way?
- Will the training allow you to learn from someone who is a master of their craft or material?

You then need to show the break-down of costs for each funding activity, showing how much of the requested funds will be going towards: training fees, accommodation, travel, or other costs.

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.
- Our funding is based on your training plan. If your training plans or costs change at any point, please let us know as this may impact your application.
- 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

How will the development of your skills positively contribute towards your area of craft in the UK? (max 300 words)

This section gives you a chance to showcase your career to date and display your knowledge of the field. Think about your achievements to date as well as any gaps in the market or an area of your craft that is currently overlooked.

What would you like to achieve within the next 5-10 years? (max 300 words)

Outline your long-term goals; which should be well-defined and realistic. You should explain why this Scholarship is an essential stepping stone and how your career will develop as a result of your training.

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

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- **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.

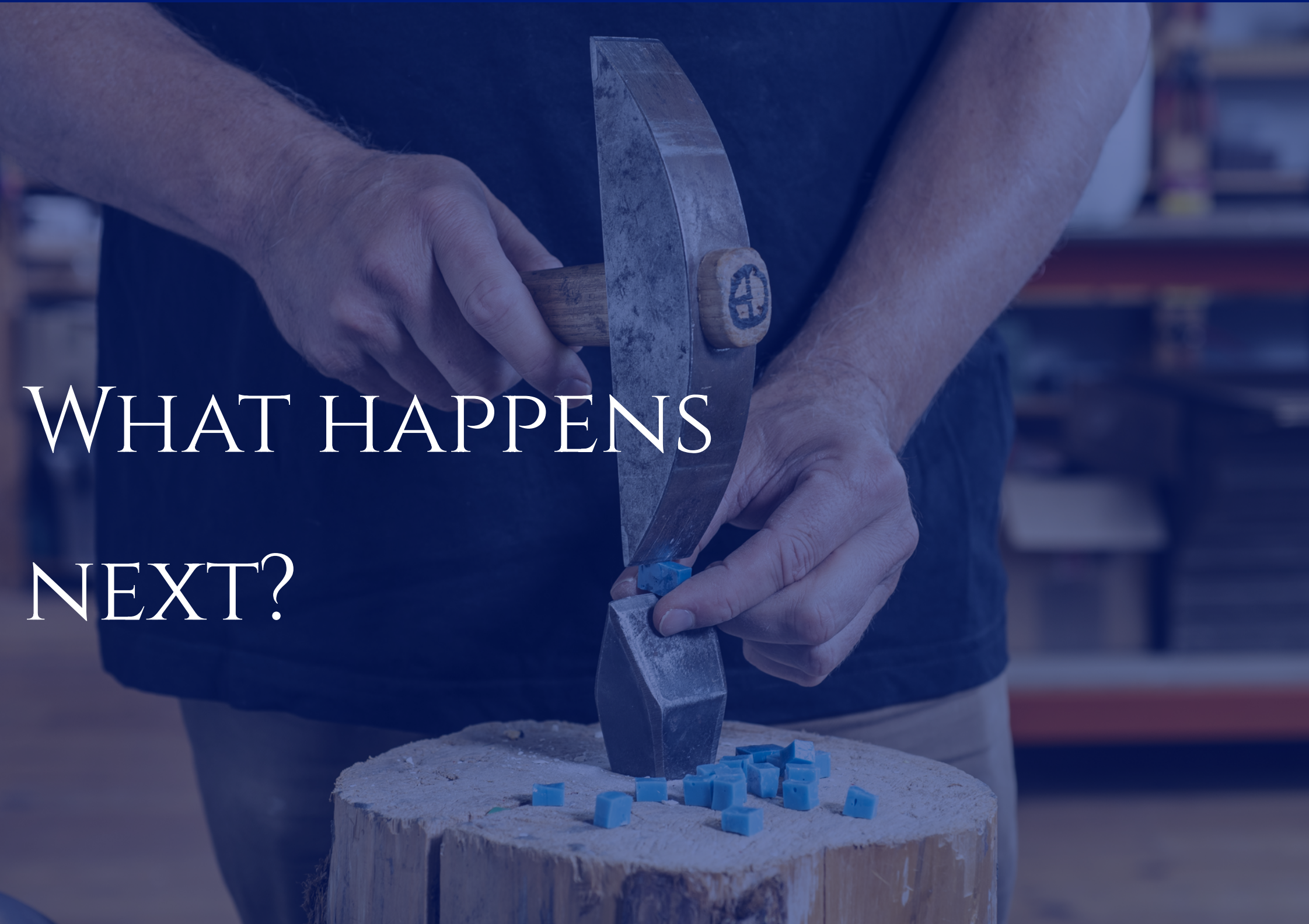
Make sure that:

- The images are high resolution 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

Please upload two written references. These must be from professional sources and include your referees' names, job titles, company, and contact details. We reserve the right to contact your referees directly.

Your referee could be a tutor, employer, client, or someone you have worked with in a professional capacity. They must be able to vouch for your skills and experience and endorse your training plans. They should also state how long they have known you, and in what context.

If you do not include two written references, your application will not be taken forward.



WHAT HAPPENS
NEXT?

QEST SCHOLARSHIPS: APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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
- Your commitment and understanding of your craft
- The training itself
- How the Scholarship will impact your career

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?

Scholarship funds 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
- attend the Cockpit Professional Development Programme

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: Scholar 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 our scholarships. Providing you are over the age of 18, you can apply.

I have only recently started practising my craft, can I apply?

QEST Scholarships support 'excellence' in craft. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a high level of skill and a strong body of work. If not already excellent, applicants must be able to demonstrate how the training we are funding will help them to achieve excellence. If you are just starting out in your craft, you may not be able to meet those criteria. To see the standard of excellence we are looking for, please review the [directory](#) on our website.

I'm an artist, can I apply?

Our scholarship funding is to support 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 strong conceptual practice, they must have a craft element to the work they produce and the training that they are applying for.

Can I submit multiple applications within the same funding round?

No, you can only submit one funding application per round. You can find out more about our other grants by going to <https://www.qest.org.uk/apply/>

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 applying for a course but will not know if I have been successful before QEST's application deadline. Can I still apply?

You can apply before your place is confirmed, however, you must keep us updated on your progress. If you are unsuccessful in receiving a place on your course, you should contact us to withdraw your application.

I am due to start my MA before final decisions for the Scholarships 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 scholarship 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. Most Scholars complete their QEST-funded training within a year or two of receiving the Scholarship.

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 references, and who should write them?

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 level.

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