



# QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- APPRENTICESHIP



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# ABOUT QEST

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust is a charity that transforms the careers of talented and aspiring craftspeople by funding their training and education. We aim to sustain vital skills in traditional and contemporary crafts, creating pathways to excellence and strengthening the future of the UK's craft sector. We embrace craft in all its many forms and are proud to contribute towards its evolving tradition.

QEST has awarded more than £6million to almost 800 individuals working across the UK in 130 different craft disciplines. 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.

Through our grants, we provide opportunities to advance craftsmanship by funding essential training and education. We support training that enhances the skilled making of tangible objects by hand, as well as the conservation and restoration of such items. We support individuals who:

- practice within the field of craft and whose work has a strong connection to materials, technical skills and processes
- are professional and make a living from their craft or aspire to do so
- demonstrate excellence and experience in their chosen field, in line with their stage in practice

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.



# OUR GRANTS

QEST offer three grants to support makers and conservators at various career stages. We provide these grants to support our aim of strengthening the pipeline of talented **craft professionals** in the UK.

## **Scholarship**

For mid-career to established craftspeople to refine their craft, deepen their specialism or innovate. Grants between £3,000 and £18,000 are available. These grants support talented individuals to sustain vital skills through targeted training. Applicants should have a high level of skill, a strong body of work and be aiming to elevate their craft further.

## **Emerging Maker Grant**

For early-stage craftspeople, typically practicing for **4 years or less**. The Emerging Maker Grant aims to support the next generation of craft professionals to develop core skills and techniques through essential training. Grants of £3,000 and £10,000 are available to applicants who show strong potential, a growing body of work and a commitment to progressing their craft.

## **Apprenticeship**

These grants help enable a hands-on collaboration between a skilled master and a talented apprentice looking to start a career in craft. Focused on the transfer of expertise through practical workplace learning, the apprenticeship offers funding of up to £12,000. The grant is designed to contribute to the apprentice's wage over the course of the training.

This document provides guidance related to applying for the **Apprenticeship**.

If you want more information about the **Scholarship** or the **Emerging Maker Grant**, check our website here: [www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants](http://www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants)



# ARE WE ELIGIBLE?

The Apprenticeship application should be a partnership between an established and skilled employer and an apprentice in the early stages of their career. Both must show commitment to the training, and intend to practice in the UK and contribute to the UK craft sector.

For the purposes of the grant, the apprentice is considered the primary applicant.

To be eligible for the grant you must meet the following criteria. Any application that does not meet these criteria will not be considered for assessment.

## **Apprentices must be:**

- practicing within the field of craft and able to demonstrate some skill and potential for excellence (not completely new to the field)
- aged 18 or above at the time of application
- living in the UK with the right to reside either permanently or on a long-term basis
- intending to continue to practice in the UK and contribute to the UK craft industry

## **Employers must be:**

- practicing within the field of craft
- a micro-business or sole trader based in the UK. Defined as having:
  - a turnover of less than £632,000
  - a balance sheet value of £316,000 or less
  - fewer than 10 employees

## **As a partnership you must:**

- have been working together in some capacity for a minimum of 6 months (preferably 1 year) before applying

More information about these criteria can be found on the next page.

If you have questions about these criteria, please get in touch by emailing [info@qest.org.uk](mailto:info@qest.org.uk) or call us on 020 7798 1535.

# AM I ELIGIBLE?



## **Craft**

Our interpretation of craft is broad, supporting both contemporary and traditional, as well as the exploration of innovative techniques. We define craft as: ***The skilled making, by hand, of tangible objects, or the conservation/restoration of such objects.***

To learn about the types of crafts and the level of excellence we've supported in the past, please visit [our website's directory](#). We're always eager to explore new crafts and expand this list. If your craft isn't listed, it doesn't mean it isn't eligible. Please contact us to discuss it further.

## **Professional craftsperson**

We consider a professional craftsperson to be those who earn an income and make a living from their craft **or** aspire to. Our grants are not suitable for those who make as a hobby or who are just starting to learn a craft. You'll need to outline how this applies to you in your application.

## **Right to live in the UK**

The apprentice must have the right to live in the UK permanently or 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.

## **Intending to continue to practice**

You must both show a clear intention to continue practicing your craft on a long-term basis. Your plans must show you intend to continue working in your craft and contribute to the craft sector in the UK.

# WHAT DOES THE GRANT FUND?

Our focus is on supporting apprentices who are committed to becoming skilled craftspeople and contributing to the UK craft sector.

The table below covers what we can fund through the Apprenticeship grant.

## Craft

We can fund people working in the field of craft.

We define craft as:

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

Examples of disciplines we do not fund include:

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

## What we can fund

We can support a contribution to the apprentice's salary, ensuring they receive at least the minimum wage.

We expect the employer to pay at least apprenticeship minimum wage in the first year, and the full minimum wage from year two and aim to provide living wage by year three.

We do not fund:

- Repeat applications from previously successful employers
- Training that takes place before the grant period
- Business development costs
- Loss of income incurred



# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

When we assess your application, we'll consider:

- The craft skill of both the apprentice and the employer
- The commitment to and understanding you both show of your craft
- The training plan you have proposed
- How the training will impact your future careers
- Company finances and ability to support the apprentice

Strong applications come from those who:

## **Existing craft skills**

- The apprentice demonstrates developing technical skills with potential and a willingness to learn.
  - The employer demonstrates high-level technical expertise and a commitment to mentoring and developing the apprentice.
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## **Commitment to and understanding of your craft and sector**

- The employer demonstrates a deep understanding of the sector, with long-term investment in their craft.
  - The apprentice shows a growing understanding of and a commitment to developing their craft, actively seeking skill development through training and self-learning.
  - Together, they create a partnership of knowledge-sharing.
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## **Strength of proposed training plan**

- The training plan is clearly outlined, with specific outcomes for each phase of training.
  - Skills development is tailored to the apprentice's professional goals.
  - The chosen training methods complement each other, ensuring steady and effective skill growth throughout the apprenticeship.
- 

## **Future potential and finances**

- The apprentice has a clear career direction and a strong commitment to their field.
- The employer demonstrates financial stability and the ability to sustain the apprentice's employment long-term.
- This partnership will support the apprentice's development and success, ensuring long-term growth in their chosen field.

# MAKING AN APPLICATION

## When?

QEST holds two application rounds per year:

	Spring	Autumn
Applications open	January	July
Applications Close	February	August
Assessments	February/ March	August/ September
Interviews	April/ May	October/ November
Grant awarded	May/ June	November
Grant period begins	1st July	1st January

## How?

Applications are completed via an online form. Each application round is open for five weeks and you can access the application form throughout this period.

When the application round opens:

- Register to apply on our website: [www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants](http://www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants)
- After you've registered, you'll be sent a unique link to your application form
- Use this link to access your application form and start writing your responses
- You can save and return to the application form at any time by following the instructions in the form.

You **MUST** register and complete a new application form for each application round. If you submit a form from an earlier round, it will not be assessed.



# MAKING AN APPLICATION

## Assessment

Applications are assessed by a group of experienced Skills Assessors who include:

- QEST Trustees
- QEST Alumni
- Experienced craft practitioners
- Industry specialists

The assessment is a four-stage process. Different skills assessors will review your application at each stage. At the end of each stage, we'll contact you by email to let you know if you've been successful or not.

- Pre assessment, to check you meet our eligibility criteria
- Stage 1 is an assessment of your written application
- Stage 2 a second assessment of your written application
- Stage 3 is an interview, either at the QEST offices in London, or on Zoom

## Can I reapply?

Our grants are competitive, around 10 – 15% of those who apply are awarded a grant. We encourage those who are not successful initially to apply again.

- If you don't reach the interview stage, you can reapply in the next round
- If you've attended an interview, you need to wait at least a year to reapply.
  - E.g. if you interviewed in the Spring 24 round, you'll need to wait until Spring 25 to reapply.

Those who reach the interview stage will be given feedback to support them to apply again. But due to the volume of applications we can't provide feedback for other applicants.

If you're unsure about when to reapply, please get in touch by emailing [info@qest.org.uk](mailto:info@qest.org.uk) or call us on 020 7798 1535.



# OTHER BENEFITS OF A QEST GRANT

As well as receiving funding, being awarded a QEST grant brings several other benefits to you and your practice, including:

## Promotion:

- you'll be featured on the [QEST website directory](#).
- we'll promote you as much as possible through our social media and website
- we'll contact you about opportunities to showcase, demonstrate and exhibit

## Regular communications from the QEST team:

- updates from QEST
- information about other funding

## As well as invites to:

- masterclasses and workshops
- networking events
- alumni socials

We see the apprentice as the primary beneficiary of the grant. They will be the main person featured in any promotion we do. But both employer and apprentice will take advantage of the opportunities above.



# WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO IF WE RECEIVE A GRANT?



If you're offered a QEST grant, you'll be required to:

- ✓ — • sign and return our Terms and Conditions to accept the grant offer
- ✓ — • complete a Finance Plan and outline the payment schedule of your grant
- ✓ — • provide a copy of the apprentice's employment contract clearly showing the apprentice's:
  - Salary
  - Start and end dates for the apprenticeship
  - Holiday entitlement, probationary period, sick pay, and other relevant aspects.
- submit a report every six months and a final report upon completion of the apprenticeship
- Provide images and a biography to help us promote your award and create your QEST website profile

QEST grant funds can only be used for the apprentice's salary as described in your application. If your training plans or costs change at any point, you must let us know as this may impact your grant.

**Key questions to ask before applying.** Do we meet all the criteria? Can we demonstrate a strong working relationship?



As the apprentice can I show:

- Strong foundational skills
- An understanding of my craft
- A long-term commitment to my craft
- Ambition and a clear future direction



As the employer can I show:

- Excellent craft skill
- Understanding of how an apprentice will impact my practice
- Ability to support the development of the apprentice
- Financial viability, demonstrating longevity over the training period



Is our training plan:

- Good quality and thoughtful
- Progressive – showing increased complexity/skill level over time
- Matched to the apprentices' goals and learning style

## Preparing your answers

Our Skills Assessors will only know what you tell them. When completing your application, make sure to provide clear, detailed information so the assessors can fully understand your practice and training plan. By being thorough and clear, you help the assessors understand your practice and plan, ensuring a stronger application. Here are some tips:

**Be specific:** For example, describe your craft in detail—what you make, the materials you work with, and your creative process.

**Outline your goals:** Clearly state what skills you want to develop and make sure these are reflected in your training plan.

**Highlight expected outcomes:** Describe how the training will enhance the craft skills of the apprentice and the impact on the practice.

**Provide context:** For example, explain why you chose your craft, what inspires you and any challenges you face.

**Detail your plan:** Break down each activity, what will be learnt, how this will impact the apprentice, the practice and your craft.

**Focus on quality over quantity:** It's more important to provide a clear, well-thought-out response than to write a lot.

# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

There are three documents you need to attach to your application, the apprenticeship training plan, your company accounts and document containing images form both of you. If you do not provide these your application will not be taken forward.

## The apprenticeship training plan

Download the [Apprenticeship Training Plan template here](#). For each 6-month period of the apprenticeship, outline:

- a training objective,
- three skills the apprentice will learn
- how these skills will be developed
- how success will be measured and assessed

Here are some tips for developing the training plan:



- Tailor the plan to the apprentice's existing skills and areas for improvement
- Focus on relevant technical, creative and business skills for growth
- Set specific, measurable objectives for each 6-month period



- Align the plan with the apprentice's goals to ensure they make progress against their long term aims
- Demonstrate a progressive learning journey throughout the apprenticeship period



- Explain how you will develop each skill, outline the teaching methods and resources you'll use
- Outline how you will track progress and measure success

## Company accounts

You must submit full company accounts or a profit and loss statement to support your application. Bank statements, tax returns, or annual tax summaries will not be accepted as substitute. We use this to assess financial stability of your practice/business and its capability to support the apprentice throughout the apprenticeship period.

# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

## Images

The images you submit are used to review of your craft skills and understand the level of your craftsmanship. Images play a crucial role in conveying the apprentice's potential and the quality of work they will be trained to achieve.

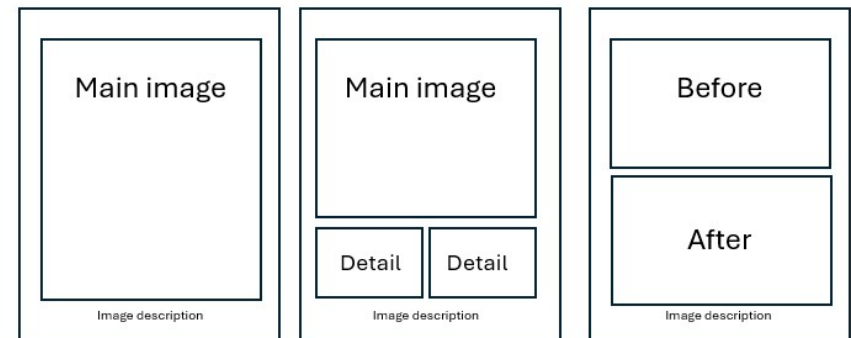
Please upload one document containing:

- up to 7 images of the apprentice's work
- up to 5 images of the employer's work
- no more than 12 images in total

Images must:

- be in one document, no larger than 15 MB
- be high resolution
- include close-ups of any detailed work
- include a one-line description for each image
- be of your own work or clearly state which parts you created
- clearly indicate who each image relates to or explain where you've collaborated

We suggest that you format your document showing **one main image per page**. For example:



# THE APPLICATION FORM

We recommend you draft your answers in word before completing the online form. You can access a word version of the application forms here: [www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants](http://www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants). This section gives an outline of what you can expect to be asked about in the application form.

## **About the apprentice**

Your personal details and contact information

## **About the employer**

Your details and contact information

## **About the practice/ business**

Details about your practice including:

- practice name, address and craft area
- website and social media for the practice/ business

the steps you've taken to reduce your environmental impact

## **Practice finances**

Details about how the practice is running. Including questions to assess:

- your eligibility for the grant (employees/ turnover/ balance sheet)
- your current training plans and policies
- why you need the QEST grant to support this apprenticeship
- **Upload** a copy of your company accounts.

## **Apprenticeship summary**

Outline how much funding you are asking for and how long the apprenticeship will last. This section includes questions to assess:

- the purpose of your apprenticeship
- how the apprenticeship will positively contribute to the UK craft sector
- **Upload** your completed Apprenticeship Training Plan

## **Questions for the apprentice**

Details about your personal practice and ambition. Including:

- how you started your craft
- your long-term goals
- how this apprenticeship will benefit you
- why is this employer best placed to help you meet your goals

## **Apprentice - Qualifications, training and awards**

Outline details of any:

- relevant training you've completed
- qualifications you hold
- awards you've received

## **Apprentice - Career history**

List any previous employment and experience (volunteering, commissions, or residencies), you consider relevant to your application or craft.

## **Questions for the employer**

Details about how the apprenticeship will contribute to your practice and your hopes for the apprentice.

## **Images**

**Upload** one document containing your images.

# NEED HELP?

You can find answers to common questions about our grants in the FAQs section on our website here: [www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants](http://www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants)

If you still have questions or if you need more help, please get in touch, and we'll be happy to help.

- **Email:** [info@qest.org.uk](mailto:info@qest.org.uk)
- **Call:** 020 7798 1535
- **Web:** Fill out a form on our website - [www.qest.org.uk/contact-us/](http://www.qest.org.uk/contact-us/)

