



QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- SCHOLARSHIP
- EMERGING MAKER GRANT



UPDATED: NOV 2025

CONTENTS

About QEST	.... 2
Our grants	.... 3
Am I eligible?	.... 4
What do the grants fund?	.... 6
Which grant is right for me?	.... 8
Assessment criteria	.... 9
Making an application	.... 11
Other benefits of a QEST grant	.... 13
What do I have to do if I receive a grant?	.... 14
Guidance notes	.... 15
Supporting documents	.... 16
The application form	.... 17
Need help?	.... 18



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

QUEST 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 between £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 supplement the apprentice's wage over the course of the training.

This document provides guidance related to applying for the **Scholarship** or the **Emerging Maker Grant**. If you want information about the **Apprenticeship**, check our website here: www.quest.org.uk/questgrants



AM I ELIGIBLE?



To be eligible for one of our grants you **must** meet the following criteria. Any application that does not meet these criteria will not be considered for assessment.

Applicants for our grants must be:

- a professional craftsperson
- 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 sector

Applications must:

- be for training and/or education starting no earlier than:
 - July for Spring applications
 - January for Autumn applications
- ask for between
 - £3,000 and £18,000 for Scholarships
 - £3,000 and £10,000 for Emerging Maker Grant

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

AM I ELIGIBLE?



Craft

Our interpretation of craft is broad, we support contemporary and traditional crafts, 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.

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 practicing 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

You 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. If you have any questions about your visa type or eligibility, please contact info@qest.org.uk.

Intending to continue to practice

You must 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 DO THE GRANTS FUND?

QEST grants fund training and education for those who practice within the field of craft.

The activities requested must develop your hand making or enhance your technical skills. The table below summarises what we can and can't fund through our Scholarship and Emerging Maker 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

Activities

The type of activities we fund includes:

- College courses
- Short courses
- Further education (e.g. an MA or practice-led PhD)
- One-to-one training with a mentor, instructor or master craftsman
- A combination of the above

Training can take place in the UK or internationally.

Examples of activities we do not fund:

- Training that takes place or is paid for before the grant period
- Training not related to craft
- Design-only courses (e.g. architecture or theory-led PhDs)
- Undergraduate degree courses (unless highly specialised)
- Self-directed study
- Time dedicated to research
- Mentoring or coaching
- Business development courses

WHAT DO THE GRANTS FUND?

Our priority always lies in giving funds specifically to cover training fees, this should make up most of your request. However, as part of your proposal you can also ask for funding to cover the costs of attending your training.



You can apply for funding to cover:

- Travel - costs for getting to and from your training
- Accommodation - if you need to stay away from home during your studies
- Materials - that are essential for the training

These should form a smaller part of your overall application.

Your request for these other costs must be based on quotes and research.

As a guide, we recommend no more than 30% of the requested funds are for associated costs. However, each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

There may be situations where we cannot cover all requested associated costs.

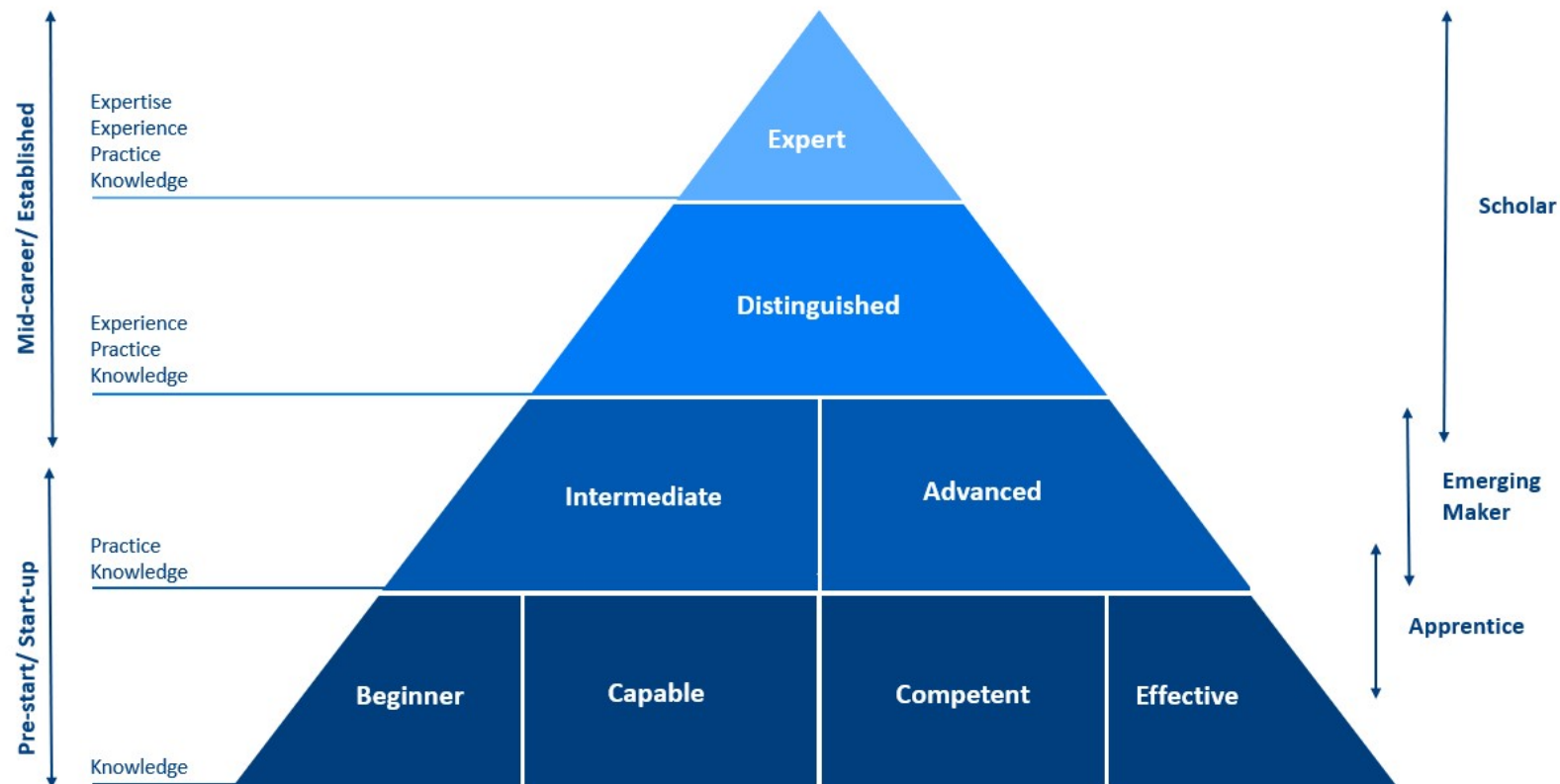


We don't fund:

- Applications that only request materials, travel, or accommodation
- Living expenses such as:
 - Rent or fees for long-term accommodation (e.g. university halls)
 - Daily travel (e.g. commuting for long-term courses)
 - Food or meals
 - Childcare costs
- Business overheads such as:
 - Studio setup or upgrade costs
 - Studio fees
 - Wages, per diems, costs associated with time away from practice, or compensation for loss of earnings
- Business investment costs such as:
 - tools and equipment
 - materials not related to the specified training
- High-cost materials such as precious metals or stones

WHICH GRANT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Both the Scholarship and Emerging Maker Grant are designed to support craftspeople (makers and conservators) through training, education and skills development. Choosing which grant is right for you depends on your **stage in practice** and the **level of mastery** you've achieved in your craft. The diagram below may help you decide which grant is right for you.



If you have questions about which grant is right for you, please get in touch by emailing info@gest.org.uk or call us on 020 7798 1535.

Please note: You can only apply for one grant per application round. Review the guidance above and choose the grant that best matches your stage in practice and level of mastery in your craft.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications for the Scholarship and the Emerging Maker Grant are assessed against the following criteria:

- Your existing craft skill
- Your commitment to and understanding of your craft
- The training plan you have proposed
- How the training and the grant will impact your future career

Strong applications come from those who:

Scholarship

Mid career to established

Existing craft skills

- Demonstrate excellence and a high level of technical skill.
- Shows a clear creative voice or specialism.
- Can execute creative ideas effectively (makers).
- Has a strong body of work displaying significant experience and knowledge in their field.

Emerging Maker Grant

Start up to early stage

Likely 4 years or less in practice

- Show potential for excellence with strong foundational skills.
- Can execute ideas effectively.
- Has an emerging creative voice or specialism.
- Can show a developing body of work, showing some experience and knowledge in their field.

Commitment to and understanding of your craft and sector

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of their sector.
- Shows long-term investment in their craft and continual skill development.
- Display active engagement with the industry and community.
- Advocate for the sector and has consistently invested in their own growth through training, self-teaching, and years of practice.

- Show a growing understanding of their sector, with a commitment to developing their craft.
- Actively working on skill development through training, self-learning, and engaging with the industry and community.
- Demonstrate commitment to long-term investment in their career and a willingness to advocate for the sector as they gain experience.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Strong applications for both the Scholarship and the Emerging Maker Grant come from those who:

Strength of training plan

- Clearly describe each training activity and knows what they will learn and the skills they will develop.
- Show researched choices. Excellent quality trainings which complement each other to effectively develop skills.
- Demonstrate how each activity will enhance their practice and will contribute to long-term growth, aligned with their career goals.
- Has considered the financial ask and this is justified and supported by a reasonable, well-planned budget.

Future potential

- Has set a clear direction for their practice, with specific long-term career goals and a strong commitment to their field.
- Outline a well-defined plan for ongoing development, and the planned training aligns with their ambitions and will build relevant skills.
- Demonstrate they have assessed their products or services in the market, showing a solid understanding of their future potential.



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
Award notification	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
- 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 or call us on 020 7798 1535.



OTHER BENEFITS OF A QEST GRANT

As well as receiving funding for the training and/or education you need, 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

Those who are awarded a Scholarship also receive a funded place on the Cockpit Professional Development Programme. This partnership between QEST and Cockpit Studios offers Scholar's access to a series of online workshops and coaching. This course will help you build the core business skills you need to develop your practice. [More information here.](#)

This is not currently offered to those who are awarded the Emerging Maker Grant.



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



In most cases, you'll get the grant amount you request. In some cases, we may adjust the final amount given. This will be explained to you in your grant offer letter.

Grant funds can only be used for the training described in your application. If your training plans or costs change at any point, you must let us know as this may affect your grant. Changes can normally be accommodated without affecting your overall funding; however, any change must be approved by QEST.

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 proof of enrolment for your training. This could be:
 - a letter from your college/ university confirming your place
 - an email from your specific trainer/ teacher 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
- provide images and a biography to help us promote your award and create your QEST website profile
- Scholars must attend the Cockpit Professional Development Programme (currently not offered to Emerging Makers)

Key questions to ask before applying

Do I meet all the criteria?



Are my craft skills developed?

Can I show:

- Strong craft skills (making/ conservation)
- An understanding of my craft
- A long-term commitment to my craft



Am I clear about my long-term plans?

Can I explain:

- What I want for the next 5-10 years
- What steps I will need to take to get there
- How the training I've selected will help support my future plan



Is my training plan well researched?

Can I show the activities are:

- Good quality and with a respected trainer
- Matched to my goals
- Suited to my learning style
- Fully costed

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 say what skills you want to develop and how your training will help achieve these goals.

Highlight expected outcomes: Describe how the training will enhance your craft and explain the impact on your business.

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 you plan to do, what you will learn and how this will impact you 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.

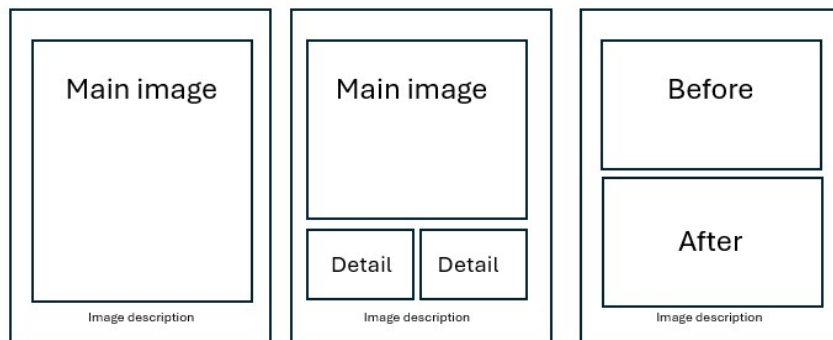
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

There are two types of documents you must attach to your application. **If you do not provide these your application will not be assessed.**

Images

You must submit one document with up to 12 **images** of your work to support your application.

The images you submit are used to review your craft skills and understand the level you are working at. Images play a crucial role in conveying the quality of your work. We suggest you format your document showing **one main image per page**. For Example:



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 your own work or clearly say which parts you created

Written references

You must provide a reference/s, including a supporting statement alongside your application.

- For Scholarship: Two written references are required
- For Emerging Maker Grant: One written reference is required

Your reference/s should be from a professional source and include the following information:

- Your referee's name, job title, company, contact details
- An explanation of how they know you
- A written supporting statement - this should be a couple of paragraphs which should vouch for your skills and experience and endorses your specific training plans.

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.

This section gives an outline of what you can expect to be asked about in the application form.

About you

Your personal details and contact information

Your practice

Details about your practice including:

- Craft area
- Website and social media

Questions to assess your:

- long term career goals
- how you meet the grant criteria
- the steps you've taken to reduce your environmental impact

Qualifications, training and awards

Outline details of any:

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

Career history

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

Your funding request

Outline how much funding you are asking for and why. Including questions to assess:

- the purpose of your application, why do you need the funding?
- how the skills you'll gain will positively contribute to the UK craft sector

Funded activities

Outline details of each activity you want funding for. If you're applying for multiple activities, you must list each separately. For each outline:

- title, trainer, location
- dates, costs
- what the training involves and what you'll learn
- how each activity will benefit your practice and help you meet your goals

Images and references

Upload:

- one document with up to 12 images of your work
- written reference/s
 - For Scholarship: Two written references are required
 - For Emerging Maker Grant: One written reference is required

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

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
- **Call:** 020 7798 1535
- **Web:** Fill out a form on our website - <https://www.qest.org.uk/contact-us/>

