



QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- SCHOLARSHIP
- EMERGING MAKER GRANT



UPDATED: JUN 2026

CONTENTS

About QEST	 2
Our grants	 3
What we mean by craft	 4
Am I eligible?	 5
What we can fund	 7
What we can't fund	 8
Which grant is right for me?	 9
Assessment	 12
Making an application	 13
If you're awarded a grant	 14
Other benefits of a QEST grant	 15
Preparing your application answers	 16
Supporting documents	 17
Eligibility checklist	 18
Need help?	 19



ABOUT QEST

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) is a charity that supports talented craftspeople by funding skills-based training and education. Our aim is to:

- sustain vital craft skills (traditional and contemporary)
- support excellence in making and conservation
- strengthen the future of the UK craft sector

Through our grants, we provide opportunities to advance craftsmanship by funding essential training and education. We support individuals who:

- practice craft and have a strong connection to materials, technical skills and processes
- are professional and make a living from their craft or are actively working towards doing so.
- demonstrate excellence 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.

Since 1990 QEST has supported almost 900 makers and conservators across more than 130 different craft disciplines. We continue to support all our alumni by offering opportunities for exhibitions, collaborations and commissions through our extensive craft network.



OUR GRANTS

QEST offer three grants to fund skill-based training for those working professionally within craft. Our grants support makers and conservators at various career stages, who demonstrate excellence in their chosen field.

Scholarship

For mid-career to established craftspeople aiming to elevate their craft further

- For those refining, deepening or advancing their practice through targeted training
- For applicants with a strong body of work and a high level of skill
- Funding available: **£3,000 – £18,000**

Emerging Maker Grant

For early-stage craftspeople who show strong potential and commitment to progressing their craft

- Typically, **1-5 years** in professional practice
- For those building on core skills and techniques through specialist training
- For applicants who show a growing body of work or developing specialism
- Funding available: **£3,000 – £10,000**

Apprenticeship (not covered in this guide)

For early-stage craftspeople looking for formal training within an established business. This grant supports paid, hands-on training with a master craftsperson for up to three years.

If you want more information about the **Apprenticeship**, check our website here:

www.qest.org.uk/qestgrants



WHAT WE MEAN BY CRAFT

Our interpretation of craft is broad. We define craft as:

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

We support:

- traditional and contemporary crafts
- innovative uses of craft skills
- makers and conservators

To learn about the types of crafts and the level of excellence we've supported in the past, please visit our [website's directory](#). If your craft isn't listed, it may still be eligible. Please contact info@gest.org.uk if you have questions.



AM I ELIGIBLE?



You must meet all the following criteria. If you don't, your application cannot be assessed. More information about these criteria can be found on the next page.

You must:

- be 18 or over
- be a **professional craftsperson** (or working towards this)
- live in the UK, with the **right to live in the UK** permanently or long-term
- plan to continue working in craft in the UK

Your application must:

- be for training or education (not general practice or business costs)
- be for training starting after:
 - 1 July (Spring round)
 - 1 January (Autumn round)

- ask for between
 - £3,000 and £18,000 for Scholarships
 - £3,000 and £10,000 for Emerging Maker Grant
- include the relevant supporting documents
 - 12-page document with high-quality images of your work
 - written references
 - 2 references (Scholarship)
 - 1 reference (Emerging Maker Grant)

AM I ELIGIBLE?



Note: Professional practice

Our grants are not intended for people who practise their craft solely as a hobby. You should either be earning income from your craft or be actively working towards establishing it as a source of income.

Indicators that you are practising your craft professionally may include:

- Creating work with the intention of selling it and generating income
- Selling your work on a regular or ongoing basis
- Charging clients or customers for your time, skills, services, or work
- Taking commissions, contracts, or paid projects

Note: Right to live in the UK

You must have the right to live in the UK permanently or have an eligible visa in place when you apply.

We currently accept visas that allow residency for at least 5 years with a clear route to gaining Indefinite Leave to Remain. We do not accept Student or Graduate Visas.

WHAT WE CAN FUND?

QEST grants are designed to fund the cost of training and/ or education aimed at developing your hand making or technical skills. Your application should ask for the costs to attend your selected training.



Training activities.

- one-to-one training with a skilled practitioner
- group courses with a skilled practitioner
- college or specialist courses
- higher education (e.g. MA or practice-led PhD)
- combinations of the above

Training can be in the UK or internationally. Our priority lies in funding the cost of your training. This should make up most of your request.

Associated costs (smaller part of your request)

- travel to your training
- accommodation (if you need to stay away from home)
- essential materials for the training

As a guide we recommend no more than 30% of your request is for these costs.



WHAT WE CAN'T FUND?



The **types of practice** we do not fund include:

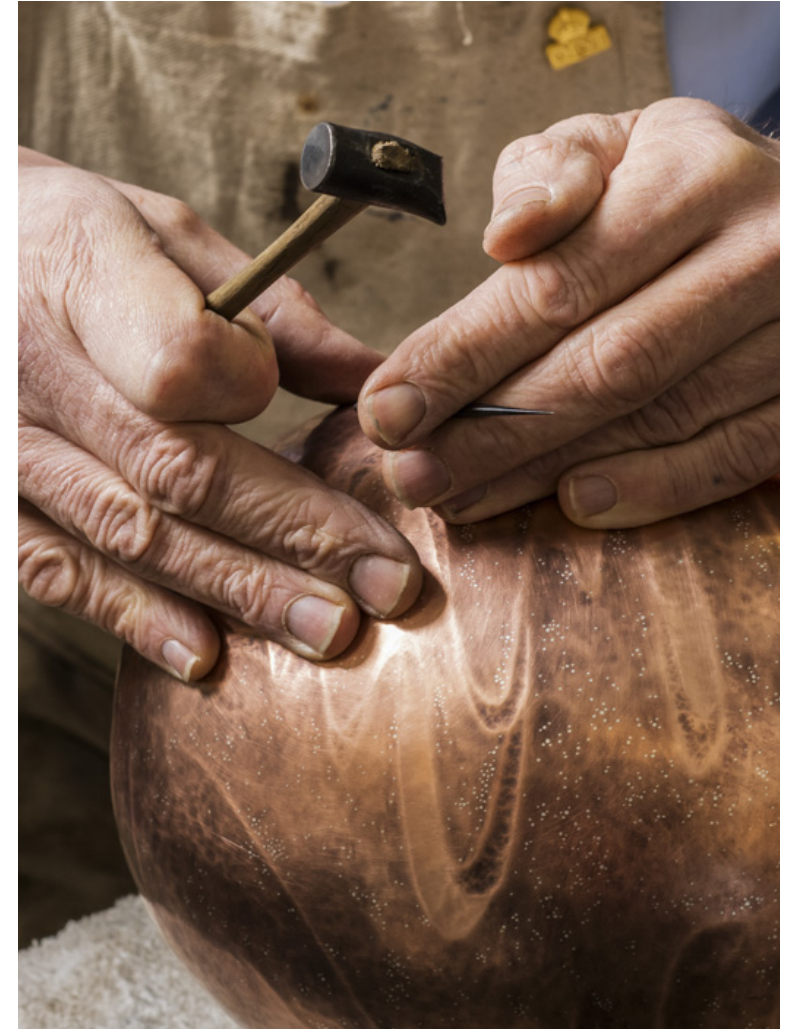
- performing, literary or audio arts
- body arts
- culinary arts
- trades (e.g. plumbing)
- art therapy

The **types of activities** we can't fund include:

- training that starts or is paid for before the grant period (1 July or 1 January)
- training not related to craft
- design only courses
- self-directed study or research time
- mentoring, coaching, or business development courses
- undergraduate degrees/ foundation/ diploma type courses (unless highly specialised)

There are certain **costs** we don't fund:

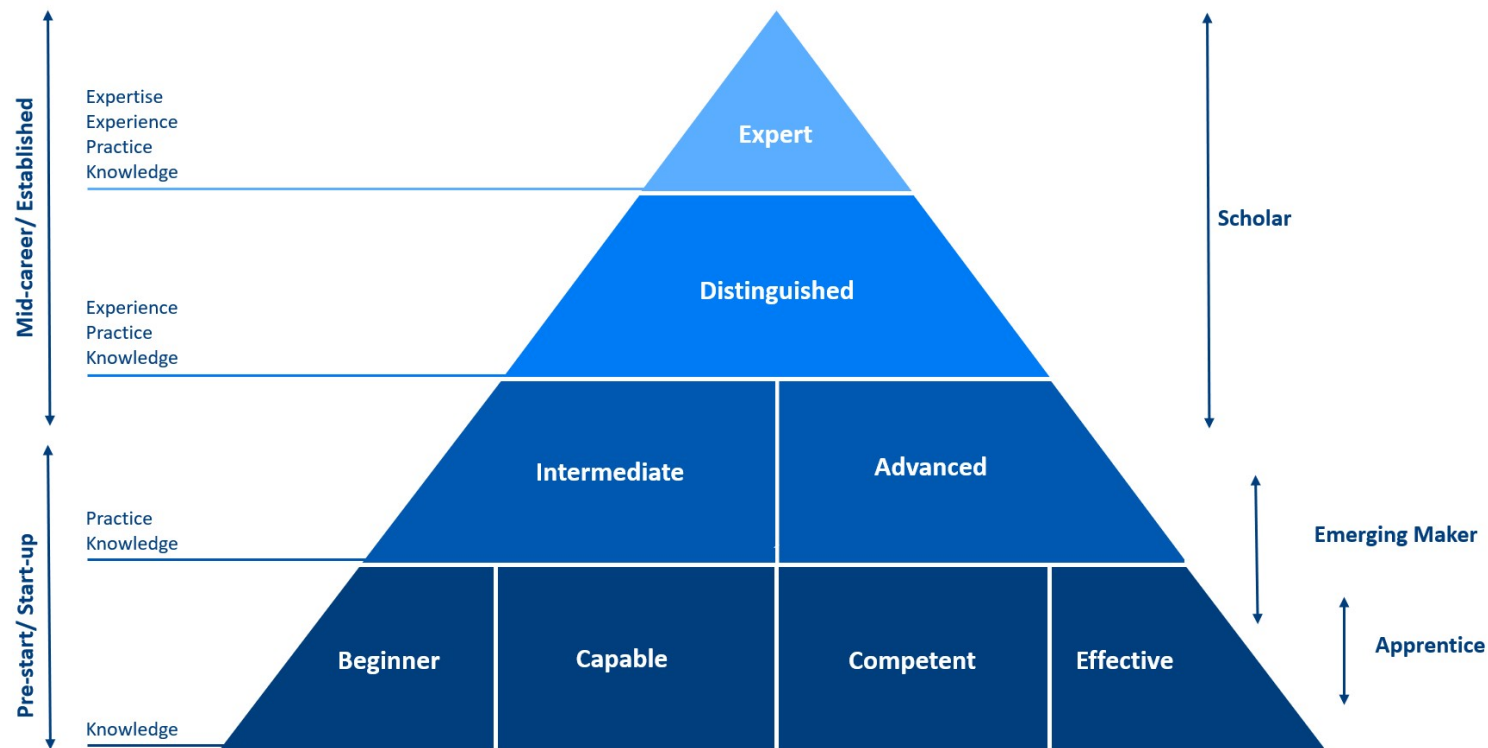
- living expenses (rent and long-term accommodation, commuting, food, childcare)
- studio set-up, studio fees or studio membership
- business investment costs such as tools or equipment
- wages or compensation for time away from work
- high-value materials such as precious metals or stones



WHICH GRANT IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Choosing which grant is right for you depends on your **stage in practice, your experience** and the **level of mastery** you've achieved in your craft. The diagram below may help you decide which grant to apply to.

Everyone's path into craft is different. The descriptions on the next few pages are guidance, not strict rules — but they are important to consider when choosing the right grant for you. You can only apply for **one grant per round**.



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.

EMERGING MAKER GRANT

The Emerging Maker Grant is for people who are at the beginning of their professional craft career, typically practicing for around 1 - 5 years.



The Emerging Maker Grant could be right for you if you have:

- completed your foundational training or education
- begun applying those skills independently

You can show:

- strong foundational skills and increasing technical confidence
- a developing body of work that shows an emerging creative voice or specialism
- growing sector experience and knowledge.
- clear commitment to continuing your craft as a profession

You have taken some professional steps related to your making or conservation practice, such as:

- selling work (even at a small scale)
- completing commissions, residencies, or projects
- assisting, collaborating with, or working with professionals outside of education
- paid or voluntary professional opportunities related to your craft



You're unlikely to be suitable for an Emerging Maker Grant if:

You:

- have very recently finished your foundational training and have not yet worked independently
- have little or no professional or real-world experience
- cannot yet demonstrate how your practice is moving towards professional activity

You may be over-qualified for Emerging Maker if you:

- have been practicing for more than 5 years
- have significant professional recognition or sector presence
- already operate confidently at a specialist or advanced level

If this sounds like you, the Scholarship is likely to be more appropriate.

We recognise that people enter craft at different stages of life, some practices develop more slowly or part-time and caring responsibilities, illness, or access issues can affect timelines. If you are uncertain please get in touch by emailing info@qest.org.uk or call us on 020 7798 1535.

SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

The Scholarship grant is for mid-career to established craftspeople who are looking to deepen, refine, or advance their craft through training or education.



The Scholarship grant could be right for you if you:

- have significant experience in your craft and show deep understanding of your sector
- can demonstrate excellence in your work and have a high level of technical skill
- have a strong, consistent body of work, showing a developed personal style or conservation specialism
- have a clear vision for the future of your practice, with defined career goals

You have evidence of professional activity such as:

- long-term engagement in your sector
- exhibitions, commissions, or professional recognition
- teaching, mentoring, or advanced collaboration (where relevant)



You are unlikely to be suitable for a Scholarship if:

- you are early in your professional pathway
- you are still developing foundational skills
- you are not yet demonstrating excellence in your work

In these cases, you should consider developing your practice further before considering applying in the future. Alternatively an Emerging Maker Grant could be more appropriate depending on how long you have been practicing.

ASSESSMENT

Applications are assessed by an experienced panel of Skill Assessors.

Made up of:

- QEST Trustees and Ambassadors (current and former)
- QEST Alumni
- craft specialists and sector experts

Applications are assessed against the following criteria:

- your existing craft skill
- your understanding of and commitment to your craft and sector
- your training proposal – the courses you have selected
- your future plans and prospects
- the likely impact of the training on your future work

Assessment is a four-stage process. At the end of each stage, we'll let you know if you've been successful or not.

- Pre assessment, your application will be checked against our eligibility criteria
- Stage 1 is an assessment of your written application
- Stage 2 a second assessment of your written application by different assessors
- Stage 3 is an interview, either at the QEST offices in London, or on Zoom



MAKING AN APPLICATION

When to apply

We run two application rounds each year.

Spring round

- Opens: January
- Closes: February
- Interviews: April / May
- Training must start after **1 July**

Autumn round

- Opens: July
- Closes: August
- Interviews: October / November
- Training must start after **1 January**

How to apply

Applications are **completed online**. You must complete a new application form each round.

When the application round opens:

- Register via our website
- You'll receive a link by email to access your application form
- You can save and return to the form at any time

We recommend you draft your answers using the Word version of the application form before completing your submission online. This is available at any time on our website here:

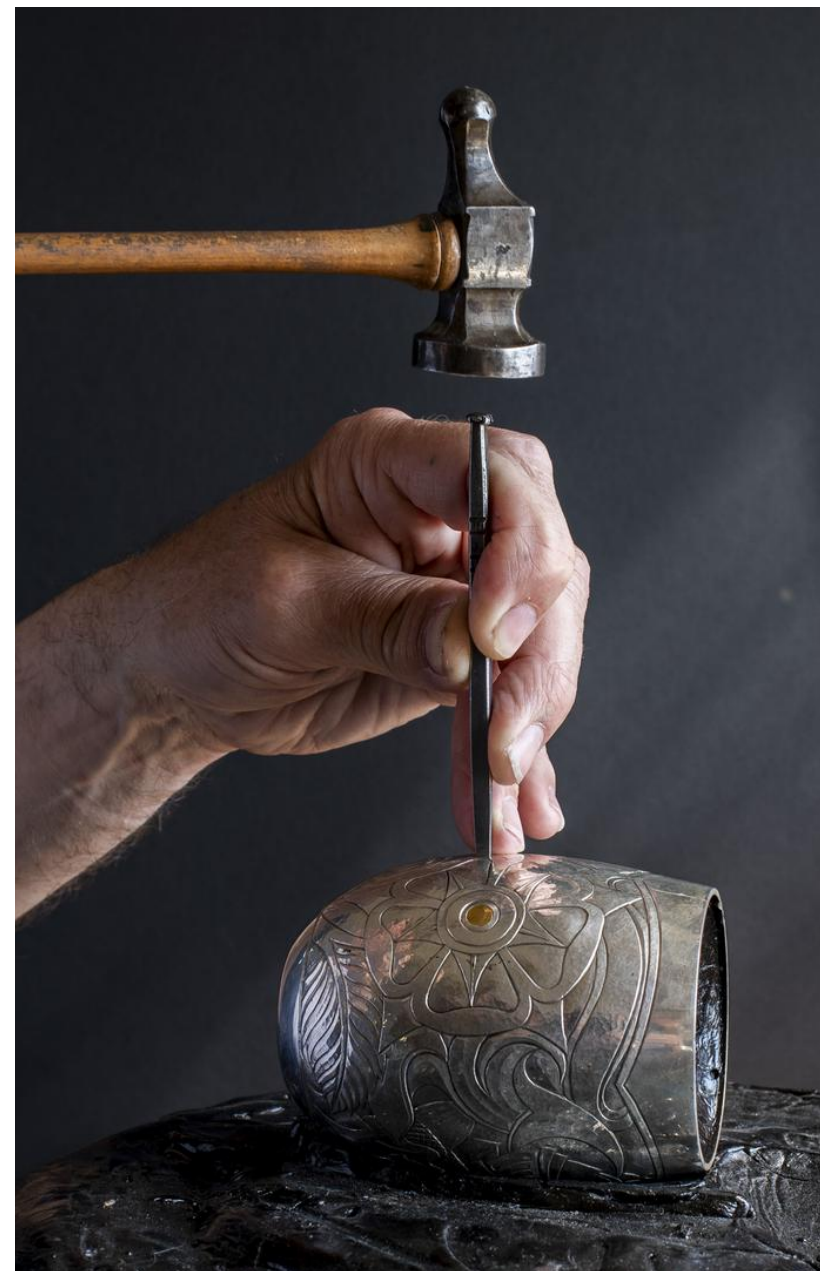
<https://www.qest.org.uk/apply/>

Can I reapply?

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

- If you don't reach interview, you can apply again next round
- If you attend interview, you must wait **one year** before reapplying

Only applicants who reach interview will receive feedback.



IF YOU'RE AWARDED A GRANT?



If your application is successful, you'll need to:

- accept our terms and conditions
- complete a finance plan to schedule your grant payments
- provide proof of enrolment
- submit progress reports every 6 months and on completion of your training
- provide images and a biography for promotion

In most cases, you'll get the grant amount you request. Any variance 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.

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 grant 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.



PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION ANSWERS

Our Skills Assessors will only know what you tell them. Clear, specific information helps them understand your practice and supports a stronger application. Here are some things to keep in mind when completing your application:

Describe your practice clearly. When writing about your practice:

- explain what you make or conserve
- name the materials, techniques, and processes you use
- describe how you work, not just what the outcome is

Show how your practice has developed over time, by detailing:

- your career history, including giving details of your current craft practice
- any formal training you've already completed as well as any self-directed development you've undertaken
- significant professional experience that could support your application

Your submitted images are a key part of how your skills are assessed. Use your written answers and your images together to:

- demonstrate your technical ability and expertise
- show your understanding of your craft and its context
- highlight what makes your work distinctive or specialist

Be clear about your goals. We want to understand:

- what you want your practice to look like in the future
- what you're aiming to achieve in the next 5–10 years
- what gaps or limitations you've identified in your skills or knowledge
- the link between your goals and the training you're proposing

Explain your proposed training. List each activity you're requesting funding for separately and explain:

- what the training involves – what new skills, knowledge, or confidence you'll gain
- why you chose this course, trainer, or institution
- how the training builds on your current level of skill and experience

Describe the impact of each training. Go beyond describing the activity itself and tell us about the difference the training will make:

- how it will strengthen or change your practice
- how it will affect your future work, opportunities, or sustainability
- how it will support your long-term development as a craft professional

Strong applications show that training choices are:

- well researched and good quality, delivered by appropriate and respected providers
- suitable for how you learn
- clearly matched to your career goals
- fully costed and realistic

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

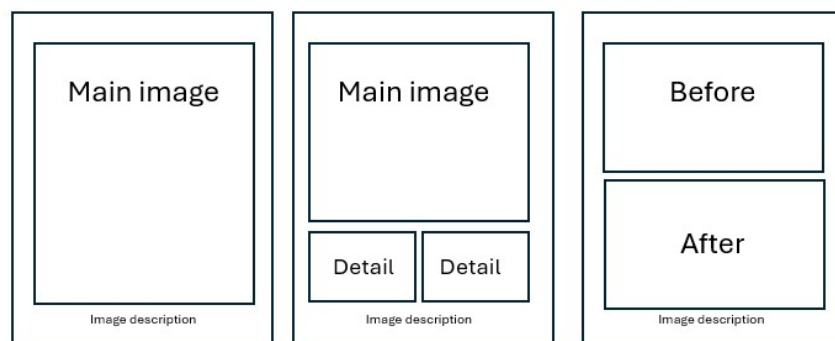
If you do not provide these your application **will not be assessed**.

Images

Images play a crucial role in conveying the quality of your work and demonstrate your craft skill. Please ensure:

- you submit your images in one 12-page document with a maximum file size of 15 MB.
- images are high quality
- you include a one-line description for each image
- images show your own work or clearly states which parts you created

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



Written references

Your reference/s should be from a professional/ credible source. This statement should support your specific application.

You must provide:

- Two written references for Scholarship:
- One written reference for Emerging Maker Grant:

Your reference/s should 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 vouch for your craft skills and experience and endorse your specific training plans.

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

Before You Apply

You're likely ready to apply if you can confidently say:

- ☐ I can explain my craft practice and future direction clearly
- ☐ I can show strong or developing craft skills, appropriate to my stage
- ☐ I have a well-researched training plan
- ☐ I can explain why this training is needed and why now is the right time
- ☐ I can show how the training supports my long-term career goals and explain the impact of my chosen training

Applicant Eligibility

- ☐ I am 18 years old or over
- ☐ I am a professional craftsperson making a living from my craft or actively working towards doing so
- ☐ I currently live in the UK
- ☐ I have the right to live in the UK on a permanent or long-term basis
- ☐ I plan to continue working in craft in the UK long-term
- ☐ I have not already received the grant I am applying for

Craft Eligibility

- ☐ My practice involves the skilled making, by hand, of tangible objects, or the conservation or restoration of such objects

Training Eligibility

- ☐ I am applying for training or education
- ☐ My training is directly related to developing my craft skill
- ☐ My training will start after:
 - 1 July (Spring round), or
 - 1 January (Autumn round)

Funding Request

- ☐ I am applying for the correct grant for my stage:
 - Scholarship (mid-career to established)
 - Emerging Maker Grant (early-stage, typically 2-6 years)
- ☐ My funding request is within the correct range:
 - £3,000–£18,000 (Scholarship)
 - £3,000–£10,000 (Emerging Maker Grant)
- ☐ The majority of my request is for training fees

Supporting Documents (Required)

- ☐ I can provide one 12-page document with high-quality images of my work
- ☐ I can provide the correct number of written references:
 - 2 references (Scholarship)
 - 1 reference (Emerging Maker Grant)

NEED HELP?

There is no single “right” way to apply. Strong applications are honest, well prepared, and clearly explain why this training matters at this point in your career.

Focus on quality over quantity. You do not need to write a lot to write well.

- clear, focused answers are better than long ones
- clarity is more important than perfect wording

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/>

