

# Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards Bursaries 2021/22

**#VACMAScotland**

**Guidance for applicants**



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Awarding funds from  
 **THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**

---

## Background

Creative Scotland works in partnership to offer small grants to visual artists and craft makers for their creative development at all stages of their career. This guidance document is designed to support applicants and covers all the criteria and process but please use your local partner's application form to apply. For a full list of partners and schemes please visit [www.creativescotland.com/vacma](http://www.creativescotland.com/vacma)

These awards are supported by Creative Scotland through funding from the National Lottery in partnership with a range of local partners across Scotland. The schemes are managed locally by these partners.

---

## Funds available

In recognition of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on individual artists and makers, the scheme will continue to provide fixed bursaries this year. This acknowledges the limitations placed on individual practices and the opportunities that are currently available.

The VACMA scheme offers two levels of bursaries and you should apply for the one that best suits your situation.

- **Bursaries of £750**
- **Early-career bursaries of £500** (For applicants that have less than 5 years' experience outside of education/training, graduated in 2016 or later, or that have not studied art formally but have been practising as an artist for up to 5 years).

---

## Who can apply?

Visual Artists/Craft Makers who can demonstrate a commitment to developing their creative practice and who are living or working or maintaining a studio space within the Local Authority area to which they are applying. Please contact your local partner for clarification if you need to.

---

## Examples of things that have been funded

- Researching a new body of work
- Experimenting with new materials
- Skills development and courses
- Artistic mentoring
- Masterclasses
- Residencies that have a clear selection and support structure
- Additional support for making new work for exhibition.

Due to the current COVID-19 related restrictions, we are aware of the heightened risks of travel, courses and exhibition so to mitigate these risks we are supportive of online support and courses as well as equipment that may not be readily available. We would expect you to have a clear rationale for how the purchase of equipment would develop your practice.

---

## Exclusions

We cannot accept applications from:

- Students in full time education
- Projects/activities that have already started or are planned to start before the panel meeting date, please allow 8 weeks from the deadline
- Projects that include partnership funding from other VACMA or Creative Scotland programmes, please apply to only one VACMA region for support
- Community and/or educational projects
- Business development activities
- Film-making projects that fall out with the visual arts context
- Applications purely focussed on marketing and websites
- Previous VACMA recipients that have not submitted their end of project report before the application deadline.

---

## What we're looking for (criteria)

We want to hear about your work, your ideas and your experience.

VACMA will give priority to applications that clearly show:

- **Commitment to practice** - your application material demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the development of your visual arts or craft practice.
- **Creative Development** – your application clearly describes the opportunity for development and how the bursary will specifically enable you to experiment and develop the critical and technical aspects of your work.
- **Impact on the longer-term development of your practice** – your application describes the change that a period of development will bring to your practice and how it will benefit your work into the future.

---

## Commitment to Practice

The VACMA selection panel will consider your experience to date through the assessment of your overall application including your written responses, your CV and examples of work provided.

Your CV helps to show your experience and commitment to your practice. Put newest things first and take out any non-art related activities. This guide might help: [www.artquest.org.uk/how-to-articles/artist-cv/](http://www.artquest.org.uk/how-to-articles/artist-cv/)

Your supporting material/images should be carefully selected, in focus and of good quality in order to best show your work. Remember to include titles, dates, materials, dimensions and, where appropriate, the venue in which the work is shown.

Make sure that your work is well documented. The panel want to see your work clearly. Good and clear images show that you value your work and have a level of professionalism. If you are proposing to develop work in a new medium then you should consider how your choice of images support that.

Successful applicants will have demonstrated a level of commitment to their practice and will have achieved a body of work out with formal education. If you have been practicing for less than 5 years you may want to consider applying for the **early-career bursary**, regardless of whether you have gone through formal education/training or not.

These bursaries aim to support artists at all stages of their career but please note that it is a priority for all VACMA partners to support new and diverse voices to become established in their practice.

---

## Creative Development

Have a clear reason for applying, describe the stage that you are at within your creative practice and how a bursary at this point will support your creative development and experimentation. For example, to support your ideas, research, skills and ability to create new work. Your artist statement may also be included to support your application.

Clearly written text will help us understand your work and what you are wanting to do. Think about how your proposed activity relates to your previous work, learning or future long-term goals as this will help us to understand your application within a wider context.

You should make sure that there is a clear connection and relationship between your written application, your use of budget/bursary and images.

---

## Impact on the long-term development of your practice

Please describe how this bursary will impact on your longer-term ambitions for your creative practice and professional development as an artist/maker. Think about the change that it will support and how it will enable you to take a step forward in your practice. This may relate to other projects, opportunities or long-term goals.

---

## Budget

As we are offering fixed bursaries this year, we are just asking for a summary of the overall income of your project/activity including any additional funds and in-kind contributions. Partnership income is not a requirement of the fund. The number of days that you anticipate that you will be working on the project will help VACMA partners understand and monitor the wider impact of the awards.

For an exhibition or residency that you have been invited to do, the panel would expect to see the contribution from the gallery/organising venue involved.

For applications to put on your own exhibition, the panel would expect to see evidence that you have considered the full costs involved in the overall project/activity.

These Awards are funded by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland with a range of partners across Scotland. They are not allowed to be a contribution to any other Creative Scotland funding (i.e. if you are applying to the Open Fund and a VACMA award for the same project, this would be considered 'double funding').

---

## Risk

Due to COVID-19 we are all now used to thinking about risk. We want to know the risks you perceive in your proposal and how you will mitigate them. For example, it could be about courses that you hope to attend, travel, mentoring etc. You should consider how you would undertake your project within current or future Covid-19 restrictions. Please refer to [the Scottish Government website](#) for the latest advice.

---

## Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Creative Scotland's reports '[Understanding Diversity in the Arts](#)' and '[Equality Matters](#)' highlighted numerous and complex barriers to access, progression and representation in the arts, screen and creative industries.

These reports indicated that career progression is far from a level playing field. Challenges are more acutely felt by women, people with parental responsibilities, disabled people and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Lack of connections, social structures and networks also featured highly as a barrier, with many mentioning the importance of informal networks in securing work or getting noticed.

Equality is about removing barriers, and diversity is about supporting and reflecting different cultures in Scotland, enabling all artistic and creative voices to be heard. Inclusion is about creating opportunities for people to work in, engage with, participate in, and experience arts and creativity throughout the country.

The VACMA programme is designed to create opportunities that will help people to progress their practice despite the barriers they may face. We want to know how the principles of equalities, diversity and inclusion have impacted on you directly and / or how you intend to support these principles through your work. We do not expect projects to be designed to address these areas directly, but we do ask all applicants to give them genuine consideration.

Where applications are equally weighted, the Panel's decision will take account of the impact of funding in the context of these EDI principles and support will be prioritised to applications accordingly.

[www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/the-10-year-plan/connecting-themes/equalities-and-diversity](http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/the-10-year-plan/connecting-themes/equalities-and-diversity)

---

## Environmental Responsibility

Creative Scotland is committed to operating in an environmentally sustainable manner and will work to ensure that individuals and organisations that we support do the same. In 2012 we developed and published our [Environment Policy](#) to guide all of our work. On a relatively simple level, this involves reducing our impacts on the environment, including our carbon emissions (a legal requirement), resource use and waste streams. On a more complex level we believe that the arts, screen and creative industries have a strong influence on social discourse, attitudes and actions, and can play a pivotal role as we face an uncertain and troubling future.

While we do not expect projects to be designed to address these issues directly, we do ask all applicants to consider the environmental impacts of their practice and take appropriate measures to minimise them. To help you think about this you may find this resource helpful: <https://www.fcac.co.uk/artists/artists-environmental-resource/>

---

## Digital

There has been a shift in the use of digital platforms and presentations and we know that artists are thinking of new ways to present their practices. We are also aware that there is digital exclusion across areas of the population particularly for those who already face other barriers to participating in the arts. To help you think about these areas and safety for others you may find these resources useful:

[digitalculturecompass.org.uk](https://digitalculturecompass.org.uk)

[uxdesign.cc/designing-for-accessibility-is-not-that-hard-c04cc4779d94](https://uxdesign.cc/designing-for-accessibility-is-not-that-hard-c04cc4779d94)

[creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/guidance-and-toolkits/creating-safety](https://creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/guidance-and-toolkits/creating-safety)

---

## How to apply

Applicants should use the Application Form for their local area. Completed application forms must be signed by the applicant, at this time we ask that you include an electronic signature or send a scanned version of the signatory page. Please ensure that the format remains the same when completing your form.

Application forms can be typed or handwritten. If hand-written, it should be completed legibly in black ink. At this time, we are not able to receive postal submissions so hand-written applications will need to be scanned and emailed.

Examples of previous work must be submitted with the application. No more than six examples of recent work should be supplied and these should be itemised on the Artwork Submission Form. You should select examples of work based on their relevance to your written application. Unless you are applying specifically for the Early-Career Bursary these should be examples of work from outside of education or training.

Please read the relevant application form for submission details as they vary across Scotland. Examples of work from successful candidates may be copied and held for use in reports and publicity material.

---

## The Application Process

All applications go to a panel meeting that will make decisions on who is supported. The panel is usually made up of representatives of the local authority or partner organisation and arts professionals. We use panels to help us achieve a broader perspective on current practice and they may include a mix of artists, makers, curators, tutors or other arts professionals. Creative Scotland officers are regularly involved in the panels to bring a wider overview of developments at a national level. Panels change regularly to ensure a range of voices and knowledge.

In advance of the panel meeting, the panel will read and consider your written application. During the meeting, the visual and written material is reviewed and discussed against the criteria. The recommendations for awards are based on these discussions. The panel will only use the application material to make its decisions and members will not bring prior knowledge of you or your work into the decision-making process. We call this evidence-based decision making and it is designed to ensure that every applicant is treated equally. Please do not assume that a panel will know or have seen your work.

Alongside your application, you must complete an Equalities Monitoring Form. This provides us with essential statistical information so that we can understand who receives funding and any gaps. The Equalities Monitoring Form is anonymous and will be processed separately from your application. Data is managed confidentially, has no bearing on your application and is processed in accordance with Data Protection laws and GDPR. If you do not know some of the information or if you prefer not to provide it, you can fill in the 'Prefer not to answer' box.

Each scheme is responsible for their own privacy notice that forms part of these guidelines and relates to the information you provide in your application and how it is processed. You should read this notice before submitting your application.

Applicants will be notified within 8 weeks of the deadline on the outcome of their application. You will be contacted if there is any change to this timetable.

---

## What happens if I'm unsuccessful?

These funds are competitive which means that not all applications that meet the criteria will be funded. If you are unsuccessful, you may be successful in another round so please do not be put off from applying again. If you are not successful, please take time to reflect on the feedback given or ask for feedback if available. If you do not understand the feedback or need more clarity you can call or email the person whose contact details will be on your letter. For example, you may have just missed out on receiving funding due to poor images or lack of clarity. Being turned down is not necessarily a comment on the quality of your work but rather the strength of your proposal compared to others being considered.

We have had experience of a good number of people being turned down in one round and then successfully reapplying with a stronger and more focussed application having considered feedback from the panel.

---

## Deadlines

**Autumn deadline: 5pm, Tuesday 26 October 2021**

**Winter deadline: 5pm, Tuesday 1 February 2022**

Please check with your local scheme that they are running both deadlines or look at [www.creativescotland.com/vacma](http://www.creativescotland.com/vacma)