

Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards Bursaries 2023/24

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#VACMAScotland

Frequently Asked Questions



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What is VACMA?

The [Visual Arts and Craft Maker Awards \(VACMA\)](#) are a programme of small grants schemes delivered in partnership with a range of local authorities and art agencies across Scotland. VACMA is designed to support Scotland-based visual artists and craft makers in their creative development.

What can VACMA fund?

The VACMA bursaries can support a wide range of activity, we are not being prescriptive about how the funding can be used provided it supports your creative development. For example, this could be:

- Researching a new body of work
- Experimenting with new materials
- Skills development and courses
- Artistic mentoring
- Masterclasses
- Residencies
- Making new work for an exhibition.

If you're applying for a skills development programme or course, please note that we are unable to support costs associated with full-time, long-term, or accredited education programmes. Instead, any courses should relate to your practice and support your creative development

Who can apply?

VACMA is open to Scotland-based visual artists and craft makers who can demonstrate a commitment to developing their creative practice. Applicants **must** be based in Scotland and either live, work or maintain a studio space within the Local Authority area they are applying to. Please check with your local scheme if you have any questions about eligibility.

Who cannot apply?

Students in full-time education are unable to apply for VACMA. If you are a part-time student, you can apply but you will need to prove your part-time status and clearly demonstrate that the activity you are applying for does not contribute to your academic studies.

We would usually expect this to be demonstrated through a letter from your supervisor, tutor or someone with a similar level of close understanding of your studies, especially if there is any thematic overlap between your studies and the project/activity you are applying for. You may also be able to demonstrate this by including a scan of your

matriculation letter if it clearly shows your subject area and your part-time status.

VACMA cannot support students with their living costs, tuition fees or costs related to full-time, long-term, formal or accredited programmes of education in the UK or abroad. For further information on student finance in Scotland, visit: [Student Information Scotland](#).

Please see page 3 of the [VACMA Guidelines](#) for further eligibility details.

How much can I apply for?

The VACMA scheme offers two levels of fixed bursaries (£750 and £500), you should apply for the one that best suits your situation.

The **£500 early-career bursary** is for applicants who have less than 5 years' experience outside of education/training, graduated in 2018 or later, or who have not studied art formally but have been practising as an artist for up to 5 years.

The **£750 bursary** is designed for those who have had a continually active practice for 5 years or more, regardless of whether they have gone through formal education.

When can I apply?

There are two deadlines in 2023/24:

Autumn: 5pm, Tuesday 24 October 2023

Winter: 5pm, Tuesday 6 February 2024

Please note that not all partners run both deadlines. Some will only have one deadline a year so make sure you check before applying. You can find details on the local schemes here:

[Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards | Creative Scotland](#)

How do I apply?

Applicants should apply to their local scheme using the application form provided. Please ensure you have carefully read all the information on your local scheme's website and that you send your application to the correct email address.

Alongside the application form, you'll be asked for an artist CV and up to six examples of your previous work.

What should I include in my CV?

Your artist CV should evidence your experience and commitment to your practice. We recommend putting the newest/most relevant things first

and taking out any non-art related activity.

For guidance on creating an artist CV, ArtQuest produce a helpful 'how to' guide: [Artist CV | ArtQuest](#)

Should the examples of work included with my application directly relate to future proposed work/activity (e.g. initial ideas and mock-ups) or should I only include images of previous work?

Your examples of work should help us understand your creative practice and what you are seeking funding for. We recommend that you carefully select good quality supporting materials/images that best demonstrate your work.

If your practice is changing direction or moving into different media the supporting material should reflect this. It can be helpful to include one or two early test pieces, mock-ups or sketches that show the experimentation and direction you are moving towards. The panel will also want to see recent, completed works that represent your current practice.

Do I need to include six examples of previous work?

Six is the maximum number of examples that you can include. You can include less but we strongly encourage you to include the maximum number as this helps the panel to understand your practice better. If you are submitting video or moving image work this should not exceed three minutes in length.

How detailed does my budget need to be?

As we are offering fixed bursaries, we will only ask 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. However, if the VACMA bursary is only covering a specific element of a larger project or activity, you will need to provide further information on how you plan to resource the rest of it.

I am applying for residency or exhibition do I need to provide a letter of confirmation from the gallery/host organisation?

If you are applying for an exhibition or residency that you have been invited to do, you should provide written confirmation from the host organisation. The panel will want to understand what the host venue/organisation is contributing to the project and the quality of the opportunity that is offered.

We are committed to artists being paid. If a gallery is asking you to present work for them, we would expect them to support you with

exhibition costs, particularly if they are publicly funded. Please see the [Paying Artists Exhibition Payment Guide](#) for further information.

How long will it take to hear back with a decision?

VACMA applicants will be notified on the outcome of their application within **8 weeks** of the deadline. Please note that we cannot support any activity that takes place before you receive a decision on your application. You must factor this into your project timeline.

What local scheme do I apply for?

The guidelines state that '**you need to live, work or maintain a studio space in the local authority you are applying to**' - some schemes will only accept applications from artists/makers that are residents in the local authority area, whilst others are more flexible. You should check with the scheme that you are applying to.

There is no local scheme in my area, can I apply to another scheme?

Most schemes will only accept applications from those who are based in their local authority area. However, some schemes are more flexible, particularly if there is not a scheme in an adjacent area. You should check with the scheme that you are applying to.

Do I need any formal qualifications to apply?

No, you do not need to have any formal qualifications to apply. However, we do need to see how your practice has been developed and will look for evidence of your commitment and experience, for example where you have shown your work or the type of projects you have delivered. Your CV and examples of work should help us to understand this.

I am applying to VACMA after a career break, what level of bursary should I apply for?

If you are returning from a substantial break in your practice, we suggest that you apply for the **early-career bursary (£500)**. However, if you are returning from a short break in your practice or if you have had to step back from your practice (for example due to ill health or caring responsibilities) and can demonstrate that you have had a continually active practice of 5 years or more prior to this, you should apply for the **£750 bursary**.

Can I apply to VACMA to develop a new facet of my practice?

Yes, the aim of the VACMA scheme is to support artists/makers in their creative development and this can include testing new ideas and approaches. You should however explain how your proposed activity

relates to your previous work. If you are applying for support to develop a new strand of your practice (e.g. if you are a painter wanting to move into sculpture) sharing some initial experimentation helps the panel to understand the direction your work is moving in.

If you are applying for support to shift your practice in a completely new direction (e.g. if you are a visual artist who is developing a craft practice or vice versa) sharing some initial experimentation helps the panel to understand that what you are proposing is viable. You may also want to consider applying for an early-career bursary, even if you have a well-established practice, to reflect the emerging nature of this new area of practice. Please note that the purpose of these bursaries is to support the development of existing practice rather than a career change.

Can I apply for a collaborative project with another artist?

Yes, you can apply to collaborate with another artist. If you are submitting a joint proposal someone will need to take the lead. On a practical level this means that they would receive and manage the funds.

If each of you are applying separately (to the same scheme or to different schemes) to fund your own costs, you should assess the risk around this approach and explain the impact it would have if one of the applications is unsuccessful.

Can I apply to VACMA for activity that sits within a larger project?

Yes, you can apply for support towards activity that sits within a larger project. However, you should be clear about the activity that is being supported through this fund and how it supports your creative development.

Does my project have to take place in Scotland?

While applicants must be based in Scotland, the project can take place anywhere. However, you should be mindful of the Scottish/UK Government advice and any guidance on the location you're planning to work in, to ensure appropriate risk management plans are in place.

Can I use the bursary to purchase equipment and materials?

VACMA bursaries can be used to purchase equipment and materials as long as you can clearly explain how it will support your creative development and experimentation. If the purchase of new equipment is to

make your practice more commercially viable or efficient it would not be a priority for support.

Previously, we have tended not to encourage equipment-only applications, but we understand that access to facilities and equipment has been impacted by COVID-19 and that not everyone is able to access specialist equipment.

If your equipment/materials cost more than the bursary level applied for, you will need to explain where the rest of the budget is coming from and assess the risk around this.

Can I apply for funds to exhibit work, such as framing and canvas costs?

VACMA is designed to support experimentation and creative development. An application that is focused solely on framing and presentation costs is unlikely to be a priority.

Can I apply to develop a website or for marketing activities?

VACMA is designed to support experimentation and creative development. An application that is solely focused on marketing and websites is unlikely to be a priority.

Can I apply to VACMA to support the start-up costs or development of my business?

Creative Scotland's funding programmes (including VACMA) are unable to support costs relating to business start-up and development. Individuals who are seeking support to start or develop their business should visit [Business Gateway](#).

Can I apply for a VACMA bursary to develop an application for the Open Fund for Individuals?

No, VACMA is focussed on supporting experimentation and creative development so we would not support an individual to develop a funding application to another Creative Scotland fund. However, VACMA can be used to develop work that you could then further develop with support from another Creative Scotland fund, such as the [Open Fund for Individuals](#).

Can I apply to VACMA for support to deliver a community project if I have a participatory practice?

We will consider community projects that are clearly part of a participatory practice and self-initiated. However, given the purpose of

this fund, we will want to know how the project/activity will impact and benefit your creative practice. If you are applying for funds on behalf of an organisation it would not be a priority for support.

Are the mentoring schemes running this year?

No, the mentoring schemes were paused due to COVID-19. However, we will continue to review this position and may reintroduce them in the future. If you feel you would benefit from mentoring, you can use the bursary to arrange this yourself.

Can illustrators and graphic designers apply to VACMA?

The focus of this fund is visual art and craft. If you can demonstrate that your practice and proposed activity falls within a visual art or craft context, then you would be eligible to apply.

If your practice is solely focused on illustration or graphic design within a commercial context it would not be a priority for support.

What does 'digital' mean?

We are aware that there has been a surge in the use of digital platforms because of COVID-19. We have provided some links in the VACMA guidance document to help you think about this. Digital can mean many things, including moving to working online to replace face-to-face meetings or developing digital work as part of your creative practice. We do not expect all applications to have this as a focus. If your project doesn't include a digital element, it will not count against you.

Do I still need to consider risks now that COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted?

While COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted in Scotland the virus has not gone away. We want applicants to think about all the risks associated with their project whether they are related to COVID-19 or not.

We also understand that not everyone is comfortable or able to return to face-to-face activity, for example, some people face additional barriers due to a health condition or caring responsibilities. To help address this we are supportive of alternative forms of delivery, such as online courses and mentoring or the purchase of equipment that is not readily available.

Do I need to provide feedback after my project is completed?

Yes, you will be asked to complete an End of Project Monitoring Report. This report helps VACMA partners understand the impact of the award and supports the development of the scheme.

Please note, that if you wish to reapply to VACMA in the future, you must have completed this report in order to be eligible. Your local scheme will be able to provide you with a template for the report.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?

For questions regarding your eligibility or support with the application process, guidance or application form, please contact your local scheme. A full list of participating partners and links to the individual schemes can be found at www.creativescotland.com/vacma

If you have any general enquiries about VACMA or any other Creative Scotland funding programmes, please contact our Enquiries Service.

You can do this by email, through our website or social media.

Email: enquiries@creativescotland.com

Web: Fill out a form [on our website](#)

Twitter: Send us a tweet [@creativescots](#)

If you are a D/deaf BSL user, you can access our services with the Contact Scotland-BSL programme. Go to:

www.contactsotland-bsl.org for more information.



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