

VACMA Bursary Scheme FAQ (2021/22)

Does the VACMA bursary scheme have the same application process and timelines as Creative Scotland's Open Fund?

The application processes are different with different forms for each fund. VACMA applicants will be notified within 8 weeks of the deadline on the outcome of their application. The Open Fund has an 8-12 week turn-around. VACMA has fixed deadlines and Creative Scotland's Open Fund has no deadlines.

Should the examples of work included with my application directly relate to future proposed work/activity, for example images of initial ideas or mock-ups? Or should I only include images of previous work?

Your images should back up what you want to do - so if you are looking to move into a different media the images should reflect this. Sometimes it is helpful to include one or two mock-ups or sketches to show the experimentation and direction you are moving in, but it is also helpful for the panel to see recent, completed works to understand your current practice.

Can I apply for a collaborative project with another artist?

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. The bursary amount is fixed.

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

The VACMA programme is focussed on supporting your creative development so it would not be a priority to support somebody to develop a funding application to Creative Scotland - but it can help you develop work that you could then develop further with Creative Scotland support.

Can I apply for funding for a project that sits within a larger project?

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

Do you fund artist's time to experiment? Or is it just for physical things like materials and exhibition costs?

We are not being prescriptive about how the money can be used provided it supports your creative development. For example, this could be a period of research or reflection, experimentation, skills development, or mentorship. You can also purchase equipment as long as you are clear how it will support your creative development and experimentation.

Can I use the bursary to purchase equipment such as a kiln, a camera, a rolling mill? Are there any limitations on the funding going towards equipment or materials?

If you can clearly explain how it will support your creative development and experimentation then you can use the bursary to purchase equipment and materials. If the intention is to make your practice more commercially viable or efficient it would not be a priority. In the past we have tended not to encourage equipment-only applications, but we understand that access to production facilities and specialist equipment has been impacted by COVID-19. If the piece of equipment costs more than the bursary level applied for, you will need to explain where the rest of the budget is coming from and risk assess this.

How detailed does my budget need to be?

We are only asking for a summary of the overall income of your project/activity including any additional funds and in-kind contributions where relevant. Partnership income is not a requirement.

Would I be required to give feedback after the project?

We ask for an End of Project Report. This helps the VACMA partners to understand the impact of the award and the scheme as a whole.

Guidelines state that a contribution from the gallery will be needed if applying for an exhibition - what kind of contribution is appropriate?

We are committed to seeing artists properly paid for their time so if a gallery is asking you to present work for them, we would expect to see costs around this supported. Please see this [guide from Paying Artists](#) for further information.

Can I apply for funding to support a community project where I would be the lead artist/maker?

For community projects it should be clearly part of your participative practice and self-initiated. This fund is not for organisations to get you to find your own funding to deliver their ambitions. The purpose of the fund is to support visual artists and craft makers in their own creative development, so you should

focus on how the project/activity will impact your practice rather than the 'communities'.

I am hoping to apply for funding for a project taking place in Dundee but I don't live there. Am I eligible to apply to the Dundee scheme?

You should apply to your local scheme. 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 resident in the local authority area, whilst others are more flexible. You should contact the scheme that you are applying to for their position.

Does doing a project in the local authority area count as working there?

Not generally. You should apply to the scheme in the area where you are based as the activity does not have to take place there.

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

Most schemes only accept applications from artists and makers that are based in their local authority area. However, some schemes are more flexible, particularly if there is not a scheme in an adjacent area, so you could contact the local partner directly for their position.

If I were to apply for VACMA to fund education or training to develop a facet of my practice, would I need to provide a finished outcome to show how the funding has been used?

The fund is about developing and experimentation. We want to know what has happened with the funds through the End of Project Report. This does not need to be a completed outcome; we are interested in the journey.

The COVID-19 situation has encouraged me to consider accelerating my development opportunities in order to maintain my sustainability. However, the fixed deadlines mean that I will need to wait to make an application. Should I consider the Open Fund for Individuals?

If the Open Fund suits your timelines better then you should consider that route. But please note that the Open Fund does have a different application form and process. As mentioned, it has a rolling deadline.

Would I be able to apply for funds for exhibiting work, such as framing and canvas costs?

We are more interested in the development of your work rather than putting it on a wall - the funds are more for

experimentation, so an application focused on framing and presentation is generally not a priority.

Can I use the funding to cover a specific course online?

For example, I want to learn about natural dyes and shift my practice into textiles.

Yes, you can – but you would need to tell us why that course and how it fits with your current practice. The bursaries are there to support the development of existing practice rather than a career change.

I'm a jeweller and I want to develop online teaching classes that people can buy or subscribe to. I would need to purchase some equipment, but also cover the costs for web and video hosting to enable me to sell digital products via a website. Is this something that would be covered by the fund?

We would regard this as business development so it would not be something that the fund would support.

What type of courses does this fund would support?

As long as the courses aren't in formal education and relate to your practice it is for you to make the argument as to how it would develop your practice. This can include artistic mentoring.

Are the mentoring schemes running this year?

We are not running the mentoring schemes this year due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 but we will review this again next year. If you feel you would benefit from mentoring, you can use the bursary to arrange this yourself. You should ensure that you follow the government's health and safety guidelines – for example if face to face contact isn't possible can you use digital platforms instead?

What kinds of activity can I apply for if courses and travel are not possible due to COVID?

Some courses and travel are still possible, but we ask you to assess the risks around these. Some people will instead use the fund for materials or equipment or research. We are not being prescriptive; it is for you to identify what would be beneficial to your practice and make the case for how it would support your creative development.

What if I need to adapt my original proposal due to COVID-19 and my alternative plans are less 'exciting', for example if the project originally included travel and hands on research and development and the alternative is to carry it out remotely. Will this count against me?

We understand that there is a chance that some activity may be delayed or reconfigured due to COVID which is why we are asking all applicants to considered risk and to plan appropriately. It will strengthen your application to show that you understand and have plans in place to mitigate these risks. We want to be flexible with applicants and understand that some things might change; provided your alternate plans are realistic and support your original aims then this should fine.

I am an emerging artist with no art qualifications, can I apply?

Yes. You do need to have formal qualifications to apply. We do, however, 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 images should help us to understand this.

I am a student, can I apply to VACMA?

If you are a full-time student, you cannot apply to this fund. 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 for their studies, living costs, tuition fees or for any funding related to any full-time, long-term, formal or accredited programmes of education in the UK or abroad. The Scottish Government produces a guide to funding for learning and training which gives [an overview of the funding support available for this.](#)

I am an illustration/graphic designer, can I 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/craft context then you would be eligible to apply. If your practice is sole focused on illustration/graphic design, it is unlikely to be a priority.

If I apply to undertake research, does that research have to take place in Scotland?

No. You need to be based in Scotland to apply, but the activity can be anywhere. However, you should be mindful of the restrictions and risk associated with Covid-19 and plan accordingly.

I graduated over 5 year ago but have only just recently started practising in the last year. What Bursary would I apply to?

As you have been practising for less than 5 years, you should apply for the early-career bursary of £500.

I finished my undergraduate course over 5 years ago but have more recently finished my Masters. Which bursary is best for me?

If you can demonstrate a continually active practice, you should apply for the main bursary (£750). If you are returning from a substantial break in your practice, you should apply for the early-career bursary (£500).

What do you mean by Digital and how do I factor this into my proposal to meet your requirements?

Digital is a Creative Scotland cross cutting theme alongside Environment and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion. We are aware that many artists are pivoting onto digital platforms as a result of COVID-19 and have provided some links in the guidelines 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 as part of your creative practice. We ask applicants to consider these areas, but it is not a requirement that you develop a project to include them, and we do not expect you to shape a project specifically to address these. If your project doesn't include a digital element, it will not count against you.