

Apply for a Mentor | British Ceramics Biennial Mentorship Programme 2026/27

The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) Mentorship programme supports early-career creatives working in clay who feel they face barriers progressing in their career and accessing a professional network in contemporary ceramics.

Application Guidance

Applications Close: 12 noon, 15 September 2026

Programme duration: October 2026 – February 2027

Cost: Free, but there is a [time commitment](#)

Please note that the entire programme will be delivered online.

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Mentee Eligibility

The open call is for early-career artists:

- Who are based in the UK
- Who are within five years of beginning their practice
- Who have been working with clay for at least one year
- Who feel they face barriers in accessing a professional network in the field of contemporary ceramics.

This may include financial circumstances, ethnicity, education, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, neurodiversity, long-term health conditions or other protected characteristics.

Selection Criteria

The BCB Mentorship Programme will select up to seven early-career artists working in clay in the UK as mentees. The selection of mentees will be based on the following criteria:

- The aspiration and drive of the applicant to develop their career and creative practice
- The difference the opportunity could have on the development of the applicant's practice, career and connection in the field of contemporary ceramics

Commitment Requirements

Interested candidates must be able to commit to:

- Four online mentoring sessions (around 1 hour each)
 - These are developmental discussions between the mentee and mentor
- Three mentee sharing sessions with the mentee cohort (2 hours each)
 - These discussions bring the mentees together during the programme
- Half day of filming/interviews in mentee studios/making space for the artist films
- Completing evaluation questionnaire/discussion

For duration and dates, please see the [programme timeline](#).

About the BCB Mentorship Programme

Using the selection criteria, the BCB team will select up to seven mentees to participate in the programme. Before the programme begins, mentors and mentees will agree a contract of engagement.

Through an open call for mentors, BCB will select a longlist of eligible candidates. We will be seeking established artists, curators or arts professionals who are committed to supporting early-career artists working in clay. Selected mentees will receive an email with the eligible mentors and choose their first three preferences.

BCB will pair the mentees with their mentors. We aim to match all mentees with one of their preferences and while we cannot guarantee this will be the case, all mentors will have valuable experience and knowledge to pass on.

Mentees and mentors connect online in October to determine the timeline for their mentoring sessions. The expectation of the programme is that there will be four hour-long mentoring sessions, but this can change depending on the needs and availability of the mentee and mentor. Mentees are expected to identify and communicate their aims and needs to their mentors before each mentoring session to enable a clear focus for the meeting. BCB will stay in touch and support both mentors and mentees throughout the programme.

Mentoring Process

The mentoring process involves the mentee asking for specific guidance around aspects of their work and professional practice. Mentorship can be an invaluable resource in the progression of artistic practice. Mentors can provide insight and perspective to the mentee in order to assist with challenges or find new opportunities.

A mentor may help a mentee with:

- Creative and professional development support
- Finding new pathways and new directions
- Developing and presenting project ideas
- Sharing experiences of successes and failures
- Challenging assumptions and offering alternative thinking

Mentee Artist Films & Communications Coverage

As part of the programme and communications campaign, BCB will provide the mentees with a bespoke artist film. The film is for the mentees to use to support their artistic practice and career progression. They will be featured on BCB's YouTube channel and the BCB Player, along with a version on social media. Each film introduces the mentees to our audience, shares their work and studios, and offers an insight into their artistic practice.

Mentees will also benefit from BCB's ongoing communications coverage, including PR, newsletters, social media and news stories on the BCB website.

How to Apply

- [Complete the mentee application form on the BCB website](#)
- [Complete the diversity and equality monitoring form online](#)

Deadline for submission: **12 noon BST, 15 September 2026**

Audio or video submissions are also accepted—see guidance below.

Mentee Application Form

The application consists of an artist statement and two questions, which you can respond to in written, audio or video form. Recordings should be no more than 5 minutes.

The application form includes:

- Your contact details

- Artist statement (max. 200 words or 2 minutes)
 - Tell us about you and your creative practice
 - How did you come into working with clay?
- Application questions
 1. Why are you applying for this opportunity? (max. 200 words or 2 minutes)
 - a. Please include which barriers you feel you face in gaining access to a professional network and progressing in your career and practice.
 2. What do you hope to gain from this opportunity? (max. 100 words or 1 minute)

Diversity and Equality Monitoring Form

Applicants must also [complete the online Diversity and Equality Monitoring Form](#).

The information collected through this form will be used to provide a demographic profile of artists applying to and working with BCB, allowing us to understand and address under-representation and remove barriers in accessing opportunities. We aim to increase applications from artists who feel their identity and background are currently under-represented.

Audio or Video Submissions

Audio or video submissions should be no more than 5 minutes and uploaded to an online sharing platform (Google Drive, Dropbox, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Your audio or video recording must include your artist statement and both application questions. Ensure your audio recording is clear and not heavily produced. There will be no assessment of the production quality of audio or video recordings.

There will be a section of the application form to share a link to your audio or video file.

Further Assistance

If necessary, a BCB team member can assist you with the mentee application. We will prompt you with each of the application requirements and record your responses on Teams or Zoom.

Please email apply@britishceramicsbiennial.com if this method is of interest. The BCB team will only ask questions as they are written in the application form, we will not be offering further advice or asking for clarification from you. Using this method for your application will have no bearing on its assessment during the selection process. We can only schedule meetings of this nature up to 9 September 2026.

You still need to fill out the application form via our website so that we have your contact details. You will also need to complete the diversity and equality monitoring form.

Access Support

Access support is specifically available to individuals who feel they face barriers in making an application. If you feel that you face barriers and need support a BCB team member is available to help with your application or for an advice session in advance of your application. Please email apply@britishceramicsbiennial.com or call 01782 294 634 to discuss how we can help you.

Please note that the advice we give is on the eligibility and suitability of your application, it will have no bearing on the mentee selection process.

Diversity and Inclusion

We recognise that there is a lack of diversity in the ceramics sector. As an organisation, we share responsibility in addressing systemic inequalities by increasing representation of diverse artists and practice in our Biennial, exhibitions and events programmes.

We are working to address under-representation and remove barriers by adapting our systems, improving our communications and expanding our networks. We aim for our actions to increase applications from artists who feel their identity and background is currently under-represented. We welcome conversations with anyone with ideas and networks that can help progress this work.

Programme Timeline

15 September 2026	Application deadline
25 September 2026	Mentees selected
1 October 2026	Mentee sharing session 1 Introductions, expectations and intentions (2 hours)
Between 2 and 8 October	Mentor selection and pairing process (via email)
Mid-October 2026	Mentees and mentors connect and agree session timeline
10 December 2026	Mentee sharing session 2 Ideally mentees will have had 2 sessions with mentors at this point (2 hours)
14 January 2027	Mentee sharing session 3 Round up - mentees should have completed all their sessions at this point (2 hours)
Beginning of February 2027	Evaluation questionnaire sent to mentees and studio visits for artist films
End of February 2027	Evaluation forms filled and returned to BCB, editing of artist films begins
March / April 2027	Final edits of artist films to be sent to mentees