

Become 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

Freelance Fee: £300 (including VAT if applicable)

Applications Close: 12 noon BST, 22 September 2026

Programme duration: October 2026 – January 2027

Please note that the entire programme will be delivered online.

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Mentor Eligibility

The call is open to established artists, curators or arts professionals who have been working in the cultural and creative sector for at least five years. Selected mentors will be skilled communicators with good organisational and interpersonal skills.

To be eligible selected mentors must:

- Have five or more years of relevant experience in the cultural sector or a related field
- Be passionate, committed and motivated in supporting someone early in their career

Access support is available to individuals who feel they face barriers in making an application. If you want to talk about how we can help, please email:

apply@britishceramicsbiennial.com

Commitment Requirements

Interested candidates must be able to commit to:

- Supporting the professional development of an early-career artist through the course of the programme
- Four online mentoring sessions (1 hour each). The timings will depend on the availability of mentees and mentors.
- Preparation before or after each mentoring session
- Two check-ins via email with BCB project lead
- Completing an evaluation questionnaire/discussion

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 with us.

Through an open call for mentors, BCB will select a longlist of eligible candidates. We are seeking established artists, curators or arts professionals who are passionate about supporting early-career artists working in clay. The selected mentees will receive an email of 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, although we cannot guarantee this will be the case. Only mentors who are matched with a mentee will receive the freelance mentor fee. Some mentors may not be matched.

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 mentoring sessions of one hour duration, 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 via email or an alternative agreed method 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

How to Apply

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

Deadline for submission: **12 noon, 22 September 2026**

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

Mentor Application Form

The application consists of two questions, which you can respond to in written, audio or video form. Recordings should be no more than 3 minutes.

The application form includes:

- Your contact details
- Application statement (max 250 words or 3 minutes)
 1. Why would you like to be a mentor?
 2. What experience or perspective could you bring to an early-career artist?
- A CV (Please include relevant experience and training)

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 those 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 people who feel their identity and background are currently under-represented.

Audio or Video Applications

Audio or video submissions should be no more than 3 minutes and uploaded to an online sharing platform (Google Drive, Dropbox, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Your audio or video recording must include 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 mentor 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 16 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

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.

Please note that the advice we give is on the eligibility and suitability of your application, it will have no bearing on the mentor 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 the representation of diverse artists and practices 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

22 September 2026	Application deadline
Between 2 and 8 October	Mentor selection and pairing process (via email)
Mid-October 2026	Mentees and Mentors connect and agree session timeline
w/c 7 December 2026	Mentorship progress check-in (Ideally mentors will have had 2 sessions with mentees at this point)
w/c: 11 January 2027	Mentorship progress check-in (Ideally all mentorship sessions are completed at this point)
End of January 2027	End of programme and evaluation questionnaire sent to mentors