# Open Call for Mentors

British Ceramics Biennial Talent Development programme is delivering a mentorship opportunity during 2024. The mentoring programme seeks to support early career creatives working in clay who feel that they face barriers progressing in their career and accessing a professional network in the field of contemporary ceramics.

We are looking for established artists, curators or arts professionals who are passionate about supporting early-career artists working in clay as part of the BCB Talent Development Mentorship programme. We want to hear from people willing to share their knowledge, skills and expertise.

This will take place in a series of online meetings between mentees and mentors. Mentor selection and pairing will take place between 3 and 14 October 2024. Mentors and mentees will then connect and agree on their session timeline. The mentoring relationship intends to run from October 2024 to January 2025.

Freelance Fee: £250 (Not including tax payment)
Applications Close: 12 noon BST, 23September 2024
Programme duration: October 2024 – January 2025

If you have any questions, please email: apply@britishceramicsbiennial.com

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# What is the commitment for mentors?

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). The timings will depend on the availability of mentees and mentors.
* Preparation before or after each mentoring session
* Two check-ins via email.
* Completing an evaluation questionnaire.

# Who can apply?

The call is open to established artists, curators or arts professionals with five or more years’ experience working in the cultural and creative sector or a related field. Selected mentors are expected to be excellent communicators with good organisational and interpersonal skills.

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.

# What is the selection criteria?

To be eligible the selected mentors must:

* Have five or more years’ relevant experience in the cultural sector or a related field
* Be passionate, committed and motivated in supporting someone early in their career
* Be able to commit to taking part in the programme
* Be interested in the opportunities that being a mentor presents.

# How does the BCB mentoring programme work?

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.

BCB will call out for mentors to participate in the programme and select a longlist of eligible candidates. We will be seeking established artists, curators or arts professionals who are passionate about supporting early career artists working in clay. The selected mentees will then 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 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.

# What is mentoring and how can it be helpful?

The mentoring process involves the mentee asking for specific guidance around their work and professional practice. Through the programme, we aim to strengthen connections and create supportive, career-enhancing opportunities for a group of early-career artists.

Mentorship opportunities can add real value to the progression in practice, they can provide insight and share experience which can help artists early in their career consider opportunities or challenges with a clear perspective.

A mentor tends to be someone further along in their professional and creative journey than the mentee, they are usually people who are passionate about supporting the development of others. Mentors will likely gain just as much from mentoring as the mentee.

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

[The application form is available on the BCB website](https://www.britishceramicsbiennial.com/about/opportunities/talent-development-programme-call-for-mentors/mentor-application-form/).

Two questions form your application statement, which you can respond to in audio, video or written form. Recordings should be no longer than 3 minutes. For more information on audio or video recordings see the guidance below.

The application form includes:

* Your contact details
* Application statement: 250 words (or 3 minutes recorded) responding to the following questions:
	+ Why would you like to be a mentor?
	+ What experience or perspective could you bring to an early career artist?
* A CV (Please include relevant experience and training)

Applicants must also [complete the online Diversity and Equality Monitoring Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdJa1zSLk9Zf12Np4KpeL7NJfHAXCltV4T4ZVSdLTHjHlQRMg/viewform?usp=sf_link).

# 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 mentor selection process.

#  Audio or video proposal submissions

Audio or video submissions should be no longer than 3 minutes and uploaded to an online sharing platform (Google Drive, Dropbox, Youtube, Vimeo etc.). There will be no assessment of the production quality of audio or video recordings.

You can verbally ask the questions in the recording to yourself, someone else can ask you the questions in the recording or a BCB team member can ask you the questions and record your response on Zoom for your application.

If the indicated time frame is a barrier for you, please get in touch.

There will be a prompt in the application form to share a link to your audio or video file (this can be shared as a link from: Dropbox, Google Drive, Vimeo or Youtube for example.

We need applicant details and the diversity and equality monitoring form in writing, if it’s helpful we can transcribe this for you as part of access support.

# 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 undertaking our responsibility to address under-representation and remove barriers in accessing opportunities through adapting our systems, improving our communications and expanding our networks. We aim for our actions to lead to an increase in applications from artists who feel their identity and background are currently under-represented. We welcome conversations with anyone with ideas and networks that can help progress this work more quickly.

# Programme timeline

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| Timeline | Mentor |
| 23 September | Application deadline |
| Between 3 and 14 October | Mentor selection and pairing process (via email) |
| Mid-October | Mentees and mentors connect and agree session timeline |
| 10 December  | Mentorship progress check in(Ideally mentees will have had 2 sessions with mentors at this point) |
| 21 January 2025 | Mentorship progress check in(Ideally all mentorship sessions are completed at this point) |
| Beginning of February 2025 | Evaluation questionnaire sent to mentors |
| End of February 2025 | Evaluation forms filled and returned to BCB |