

Craft

SCOTLAND



COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme 2026

Application Pack & Guidance

*Prepared by Craft Scotland
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Introduction

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for contemporary craft.

We believe it is more important than ever to invest in makers, craft professionals and the contemporary craft ecosystem to ensure a thriving and resilient sector in Scotland.

Craft Scotland's learning and development programme, COMPASS was initially developed for makers in 2018 and has supported over 70 makers since its inception. The programme focuses on developing craft talent and equipping individuals with the necessary skills to create a sustainable craft career and business.

Following the '[Sustaining Curatorial Careers Research](#)' report by Dr Stacey Hunter for Craft Scotland, Craft Scotland developed a new strand of COMPASS, specifically for craft curators. Curators play a key role in sustaining and innovating Scotland's ecosystem for contemporary craft, however, there has been little infrastructure to support their professional development to date. The report highlighted a continuing ambiguity around definitions of curating within craft which reflects the multi-layered role of craft curators – as organisers or producers as well as curators.

The COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme aims to address this gap in infrastructure and provide a development programme to support emerging curators at the early stages of their creative practice.

Deadline for applications is 12 (noon), Monday 2 March 2026.

Programme overview

The COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme focuses on equipping individual curators with the skills they need to create a successful creative and business practice.

This opportunity is suitable for professional practising curators in the early stages of their craft career. It is ideal for someone who has been curating between one and five years, is based in Scotland and works independently of an organisation.

The programme takes a practical approach to nurturing curators through the early stages of their career as a cohort. The programme involves online and in-person networking and professional development sessions, travel as a cohort to [London Craft Week 2026](#) and connections with established curators and creative industry experts across Scotland.

We have up to four places available for a cohort of curators to work supportively together through the programme. Participants will benefit from working alongside the Curatorial Programme Lead, Katy West who will share their knowledge and industry expertise, as well as accompanying the group to London. Katy is an independent curator and ceramicist and is a lecturer at Glasgow School of Art.

Throughout the programme, participants will be supported by the Craft Scotland team who will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Places on the programme are subsidised by Craft Scotland allowing you to access affordable specialist training in Scotland.

Programme outline

Online and in-person workshop series

The COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme has been designed to provide emerging curators with the building blocks to develop their curatorial practice.

The series of workshops will cover areas such as creating a compelling proposal, critical curating theory, fundraising and budgets, marketing and PR, and embedding Sustainability and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion into craft curatorial projects.

Participants will explore a range of approaches to curating projects, including commissioning makers and researching archives. The programme will consider how to engage contemporary practitioners in dialogue about practice and develop mutually beneficial curatorial projects. The programme will also be looking at curating through the lens of archival practices – exploring diverse types of archives, how they relate to craft practice and considering the roles of archives in developing curatorial project.

The delivery of these sessions will combine online workshops and in-person site visits. Led by knowledgeable workshop leaders who understand the day to day of being a curator, participants will be guided through the fundamentals of developing a curatorial practice.

Research trip

Early in the programme the cohort will visit [London Craft Week](#) in May 2026 as a team building exercise and to immerse the group in a range of contemporary craft curated events and activities.

The cohort will attend a planned programme of meetings, networking event, talks and studio and exhibition visits over three days. The trip will be an opportunity to meet craft curators based in the UK and internationally and research a wide variety of contemporary craft activity. Travel dates to be confirmed, London Craft Week runs 11-17 May 2026.

Curatorial Programme Lead

The cohort will be supported throughout the programme by Craft Scotland Learning Manager, Ilaria Casini and Curatorial Programme Lead, Katy West who will attend all meetings and visits and provide support through group check-ins and one-to-one advice.

Sector meetings and shared learning

Throughout the programme there will be an opportunity to meet other key members of the craft and curatorial sector in Scotland who will be able to share thoughts and learning.

End of programme outcomes

To enable the cohort to bring together their learning and further extend the legacy of the programme, Craft Scotland will support participants to curate an end of project public exhibition.

This public outcome will take place in April 2027 and will enable the curators to realise further research on completion of the programme. All participants will work collaboratively on the exhibition and have access to a small budget to realise their idea. More details to follow.

Who should apply?

We are looking for independent professional, practicing curators who are living within Scotland and who have been establishing their careers for between one and five years.

You may be:

- A self-taught practitioner or one who has come to curating via informal educational routes (community education, online learning, evening classes etc.).
- A recent graduate (of any subject/discipline) newly entering the craft sector.
- A practitioner moving into curation later in life, as a second career or returning after a break.
- A curator who is now looking for ways to develop a new or relatively new career.
- A curator who is returning to curating after a break.
- A craft professional, producer or maker who has a curatorial element to their practice.

We are looking for creative practitioners who:

- Have experience of curating (or working on) displays, shows or exhibitions showcasing contemporary craft.
- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of craft, current themes and trends within craft, and an independent artistic vision.
- Are committed to embedding best practice in terms of Fair Pay, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Sustainability/Climate Action.

We are particularly interested in creative practitioners who would like to develop their curatorial practice and can demonstrate they have the potential, drive and ambition to do so.

Equal opportunities and access

Craft is culturally significant, essential to our economy and meaningful to our communities. Craft Scotland believes that everyone should have the opportunity to see, enjoy, learn about and participate in craft.

We are committed to equality and opposed to all forms of unfair discrimination.

We welcome applications from those who are under-represented in the craft sector; including those who may be:

- Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and/or a Person of Colour
- Have experience of displacement, such as refugees and asylum seekers
- Come from a disadvantaged socio-economic background
- Identify as d/Deaf or living with a disability
- Identify as neurodivergent
- Identify as LGBTQIA+
- Have grown up in the care system
- Are currently a carer. *A carer is defined as a person who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older*
- Are Gaelic or Scots speakers, or do not speak English as a primary language
- Live in geographic locations which may inhibit opportunities for engagement

Dedicated place for under-represented curators

We have one fully subsidised, dedicated place on COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme for curators with lived experience of the above categories.

This dedicated COMPASS place has been created because we know that specific groups are systematically under-supported in the craft sector. Through the COMPASS

programme we will support under-represented communities to achieve their creative and business ambitions, through providing access to networks, mentoring, training, and learning and development opportunities.

Support with your application

This application pack is available in large print and word formats, and we are happy to accept video submissions in lieu of written submissions. You can upload these in the application form.

We can also offer Scribing, which is when you talk through your answers with a member of the team, and they fill out the form on your behalf.

Please contact us before **Monday 23 February 2026** to allow us time to assist you in advance of the closing date.

Please do get in touch if you are interested in this opportunity but feel there are some barriers to participation. These may include:

- Caring responsibilities
- Financial
- Accessibility
- Travel
- Slow internet/devices

We would be happy to discuss what support could be available.

If you think you might be a good fit for the programme and would like to find out more, in advance of applying, then please do get in touch. You can contact Ilaria Casini, Learning Manager at Craft Scotland, via email at ilaria@craftscotland.org.

Craft Scotland will host an online **Open Information Session** to answer any questions about the application process on **Monday 2 February 2026 at 18.00**. Please book your [free ticket here](#) and you will receive the Zoom link to participate.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must be living and working in Scotland.*
- Applicants should be able to demonstrate evidence of curatorial work (paid or voluntary); you may be part of a partnership or collective. Please include relevant information on the CV and images provided in your application form.
- Applicants should be working with or have a demonstrable interest in contemporary craft, which should include the [disciplines Craft Scotland support](#).

*We may consider applications from people based elsewhere in the United Kingdom who have a demonstrable and specific interest in contemporary craft in Scotland. Please contact Craft Scotland Learning Manager, Ilaria Casini on ilaria@craftscotland.org to discuss this before submitting an application.

Selection process

Selection for COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme will be based upon the following criteria:

- Evidence of an aspiration to develop a sustainable curatorial practice.
- Demonstration of an interest in contemporary craft.
- Demonstration of ambition and commitment to the programme.
- Availability for the time commitment as detailed in the Key Dates section.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an informal online interview which will be conducted by members of the Craft Scotland team, and the Curatorial Programme Lead.

All applicants will be notified regarding the outcome of their application by the deadline of Monday 16 March 2026.

Key dates

The programme's online and in person workshops will take place on Thursdays and Fridays during the daytime. The table below gives indicative dates/months for each workshop which will be confirmed at the beginning of the programme.

Event/Deadline	Date
Open Information Session and Q&A	18.00, Monday 2 February 2026
Deadline for applications	12 (noon), Monday 2 March 2026
Curator interviews via Zoom	Thursday 12 March 2026 (TBC)
Applicants notified of the outcome of their application	By Monday 16 March 2026
Participation fee due for payment	By Thursday 30 April 2026 (or see below "Fees and Costs" for instalments due dates)
COMPASS Emerging Curator cohort Programme Introduction and Year Planner	Thursday 9 April 2026 – online, time tbc
Introduction Workshop – Site visits in Glasgow	Thursday 23 April 2026 – all day, in person
Research trip to London Craft Week	11 – 17 May 2026 (3 days, dates tbc)
Group check-in and 1:1 sessions: Reflections / Expectations / Aspirations	Thursday 18 June 2026 – online, time tbc
Creating Compelling Project Proposals Workshop and site visits in Edinburgh	July 2026 (TBC) – all day, in person
Anti-racism Training and 1:1 sessions	August 2026 (TBC) – online, time tbc
Marketing and PR Workshop - site visits in Dundee	Thursday 10 September 2026 – all day, in person
Different Fundraising Strategies training and 1:1 sessions	Thursday 8 October 2026 – online, time tbc

Writing for Exhibitions, Exhibition Design Workshop - site visits in Paisley	November 2026 (TBC) – all day, in person
Project Management Training and development of project proposals	Thursday 3 December 2026 – online, time tbc
Proposals presentation and peer reflections	January 2027 – online, time tbc
Budgeting Training and Project Planning Workshop	February 2027 – online, time tbc
Developing Curatorial Projects Workshop	March 2027 – online, time tbc
End of Programme Outcome Delivery featuring contributions from all participants	April 2027 - in person

Fees and costs

Participation Fees

Successful applicants will be expected to pay a £300 participation fee.

This is a contribution towards the cost of administering the programme, including staff costs, travel and accommodation for the research trip and speakers' fees. The total cost of the programme is subsidised by Craft Scotland.

You may also, pay the participation fee in three instalments:

- £100 by 30th April 2026
- £100 by 31st May 2026
- £100 by 30th June 2026

Programme participation costs / claimable expenses

1) Scotland-based programme

Craft Scotland will organise the in-person and online workshop sessions including catering.

Participants will cover any accommodation costs they incur attending the Scotland-based workshops.

The following expenses can be claimed back by participants if required:

- i) Travel expenses to workshops at a Scottish venue.
- ii) Childcare expenses.

Participants from outside Scotland will cover their own travel and accommodation and any other expenses.

2) London Craft Week trip

Craft Scotland will organise and pay for return travel to and accommodation in London.

Craft Scotland will organise the itinerary, pay event fees, group meals and local transport.

More information will be provided to participants nearer the time.

Participants are responsible for any further personal expenses.

Responsibilities

Emerging Curator responsibilities:

As a participating curator here are some of the key things that we expect:

- Be available to participate in all sessions, including the research trip to London Craft Week.
- Prepare for all workshops as directed.
- Agree to terms as set out in the Fees & Costs section.
- Maintain communication with the Craft Scotland team throughout the programme.
- Contribute to any marketing, PR and evaluation by Craft Scotland.

Craft Scotland responsibilities

Here are some of the key things you can expect from us:

- Provide support for potential applicants prior to the application deadline.
- Provide support and guidance for each participant throughout the programme.

How to apply

Applicants should apply through the Craft Scotland online application form:

[COMPASS Emerging Curator 2026 – Application Form](#)

Before starting your application, please be aware that you will need to submit:

- Your CV.
- Images of one or more displays, shows or exhibitions that you have been involved in curating.
- Answers to specific questions about your curatorial practice.
- Reasons why you are interested in this opportunity and how you think your practice will benefit.

The information provided will be to process your application and also for promotional and fundraising purposes if you are successful.

Deadline for applications is 12:00 (noon), Monday 2 March 2026.

Hints and tips for your application

We recommend you prepare your answers on a separate document before beginning your application form, to make sure you have a back-up of your responses.

Craft Scotland will host an online **Open Information Session** to answer any questions about the application process on Monday 2 February 2026 at 18.00. Please [book your free ticket here](#) and you will receive the Zoom link to participate.

Make the most of your application with these top tips:

Why are you interested in this opportunity?

It is important for us to understand why you would like to take part in this Craft Scotland opportunity. Please tell us what made you apply and what you hope to get out of the programme. We ask this to be sure that what you are looking for is in line with what the programme and Craft Scotland can potentially offer.

How do you think you/your curatorial practice will benefit from being part of the programme?

We would love to hear how you think you might benefit from this opportunity in both the short and long term. You should consider how this might impact you both personally and professionally.

CV

Ensure your CV is up to date with your latest projects, events, exhibitions, education and training. Please include both paid and voluntary experience. This helps us understand more about your curatorial practice and allows us to understand how this professional opportunity will fit in with your career aspirations.

Photography

To strengthen your application, we recommend high-quality photography of projects, events or exhibitions that you have curated.

Frequently asked questions

Is this programme just for young curators?

No. The COMPASS: Emerging Curator Programme is for anyone who is in the early stages of developing their curatorial career. We know that curating is an appealing career option for a wide range of ages and backgrounds, and this opportunity is open to all eligible applicants regardless of age.

Am I a professional curator?

As an emerging curator, it may not yet be your full-time employment, and you may only have worked on unpaid or voluntary projects. Curatorial projects could involve craft-focused exhibitions and events, selling events, displays, written text and publications, panel talks and reading groups, multimedia/digital projects for example.

In your application we would like to see evidence of the work you have curated and some explanation of your motivation and ideas. We hope that your application will demonstrate an engagement with contemporary craft and a strong enthusiasm and potential towards becoming a practicing professional curator of craft.

What if I can't make it to all the sessions?

The programme has been designed to provide a holistic learning experience through a range of methods. Every element of the programme is important, and all are linked. We appreciate that circumstances can change, and individuals may have to miss a workshop for unforeseen reasons. However, we are looking for participants who can benefit from and contribute to the whole process. If you don't feel you can commit to the full range of sessions and the research trip at the outset it may not be right for you at this time.

What expenses will be involved in the research trip to London Craft Week?

Craft Scotland will organise and pay for travel to and from, and accommodation in London. Craft Scotland will organise the itinerary, event fees, group meals and local transport. Any other visit or attendance to other events is at the discretion of each participant and costs will have to be covered independently.

I've never worked with Craft Scotland before. Will that be a problem?

No. We work with a wide range of craft professionals and are always looking to make new connections with people we haven't worked with before. We actively welcome applications from curators who have yet to work with us.

I curate within a non-craft and design related area, for example fine art, photography. Can I still apply?

Craft Scotland supports [contemporary craft](#) as defined within our charitable aims. Unfortunately, we cannot accept applications from curators working outside craft. If you are unsure about whether your practice is eligible, please contact Ilaria Casini, Craft Scotland Learning Manager at ilaria@craftscotland.org.

This information is also available in large print or as a simplified word document.

Craft

SCOTLAND

About

Supporting Makers, Promoting Craft

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft.

We put makers at the heart of all we do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft.

We help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being.

Through our exhibitions and events programmes, digital platforms and strategic partnerships, we provide leadership for the sector.

We create opportunities for makers to develop their creative and business practice, and to exhibit and sell work in Scotland and beyond.

We are a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland.

Contact

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*Image: Fionn Duffy, 'ev'ryday a little cataclysm' exhibited in 'If only we had the space' curated by COMPASS: Emerging Curator Cohort 2023/24
/ Photography by Ruth Esme Mitchell*

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