



Archaeology Mentoring Partnership Grants

Guidance Notes

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HPCPcalls@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Applying for Archaeology Mentoring Partnership grants:

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1. What are the Archaeology Mentoring Partnership grants?

Historic England is piloting a small grants opportunity for Archaeological Mentoring Partnerships (AMP) which focus on skills development.

AMP grants will provide funding to enable experienced practitioners in archaeological post-excavation specialisms to provide emerging professionals with structured skills development for specific skills areas, using a Mentoring approach over a focused period of time.

Through these grants Historic England will provide the monitoring and organisational support for the Partnerships, with additional pastoral support available for Mentees, and peer support sessions organised for Mentors.

We have a total fund available of £70,000.

Grants awarded will be between £3,000 - £7,000. The maximum applicants can apply for is £7,000.

We expect Partnerships to last between 3 and 12 months, depending on need, intensity of mentoring required, and availability, and to be completed by December 2026.

2. Why are we funding these grants?

The heritage sector makes an important but highly complex contribution to national productivity¹. It creates over 450,000 jobs in the wider economy in industries such as tourism, construction, education, and the natural environment.² Despite its comparative strength, significant challenges are predicted to affect the sector in future. Its aging and unrepresentative workforce means existing skills shortages and gaps risk being exacerbated.^{3 4 5 6 7}. Pre-Covid, over 1% of all jobs in the heritage sector were classed as vacant due to skills shortages, and 67% of organisations recorded shortages in specialist skills or knowledge needed to perform roles⁵.

Through no fault of heritage professionals, and an unforeseen knock-on effect of competitive tendering processes through which development-controlled archaeology is funded, recruitment is reactive to fill existing gaps with high levels of expertise, and the idea of workforce development and succession planning is not fully embedded.

There is a mismatch between supply and demand in the heritage workforce. There are skill gaps and shortages in the heritage sector, but limited opportunities provided for career progression opportunities in the sector.

Previous interventions have shown that work-based and vocational training in the heritage sector leads into employment⁸; and Historic England itself had great success in funding placement programmes for over 15 years. Resource then was redirected into the development of new apprenticeships as a step to tackle ongoing skills issues, working within the official Education and Skills System. However, research commissioned by Historic England⁹ has identified a number of barriers to employers being able and willing to offer apprenticeship opportunities, both in terms of early career new hires, and as a tool for professional development. These barriers include:

1. Cost – employers noted that the cost of employing a new apprentice was prohibitive. Resources for new hire are limited and there are additional costs to consider in sup-

¹ Cebr (2019). Skills gap/needs in the Heritage Sector. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/skill-gaps-needs-in-the-heritage-sector-pdf/>

² Historic England (2019). Heritage Counts 2019: Heritage and the Economy. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-economy/>

³ Creative & Cultural Skills & English Heritage (2013). The Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage Skills Survey. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2013/historic-environment-cultural-heritage-skills-survey-pdf/>

⁴ ALGAO (2013). Professional Skills in Local Authority Archaeological Services 2013. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2013/algao-skills-provisions-local-authorities-pdf/>

⁵ IHBC (2013). Skills assessment of local authority conservation staff. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2013/ihbc-skills-assessment-local-authority-conservation-staff-pdf/>

⁶ CITB et al (2013). Skills Needs Analysis 2013: Repair, Maintenance and Energy Efficiency Retrofit of Traditional (pre-1919) Buildings in England and Scotland. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2013/skills-needs-analysis-2013-repair-maintenance-energy-efficiency-retrofit/>

⁷ Pye Tait Consulting (2019). Horticulture Sector Skills Survey. A report for the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group. Available at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/horticulture-skills-report/horticulture-sector-skills-survey-report.pdf>

⁸ Ecorys (n.d.). Evaluation of HLF Skills for the Future Programme. A report to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Available at https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/sbd_final_skills_for_the_future_forpublication.docxaccesseditfinal280717.pdf.

⁹ Nash (2023) Apprenticeships in the historic environment sector: Examining employer interest and barriers to implementation. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/43-2023>

porting an apprentice in that line managers and mentors would also be non-fee earning whilst spending time training an apprentice.

2. Length of time and delivery methods – there was major concern that the required length of time for training apprentices was impractical with “specialist” higher level apprenticeships requiring 3 years of training or more. This was combined with concerns around “releasing” apprentices to attend formal training, where for example, the requirement for apprentices to be in college one day a week was difficult to align with the need to be on site for fieldwork. Employers would rather recruit staff who can perform the role straightaway or through a short/medium term of training, rather than invest in multi-year training through apprenticeships which would see a much slower return on investment.
3. Content and alignment of apprenticeship standards – particularly pertinent to this project is the issue raised by a number of employers that they felt the existing apprenticeship standards do not adequately cover the specialist areas where skills gaps exist. This came out strongest in areas where the skills gaps and shortages were noted in very specialist areas of heritage, such as in archaeological finds and material research and analysis, where we have experienced and established specialists coming to the end of their careers which means we are in danger of losing this accumulated wealth of knowledge.
4. A lack of understanding of how apprenticeships work – the research identified some unawareness of the apprenticeship system, in particular the requirements of employers in supporting an apprentice. The apprenticeship system puts considerable onus on Line Managers to support their apprentice, and whilst this is to be commended, it brings with an additional level of bureaucracy that is off-putting to many employers.

The conclusions and recommendations made in the 2023 research are broad and most look at how to improve the position of apprenticeships within sector development. However, it needs to be acknowledged that in certain circumstances, apprenticeship will simply not be the appropriate method to use to tackle skills issues in certain areas, specifically in those that are very specialist.

The idea around a need for structured mentoring is commonly discussed within the heritage community, particularly within archaeology, where it has been raised as a potential solution to some of the challenges presented in the Early Careers session at the 2023 CIFA conference. The development of a careers mentoring programme has been strongly endorsed within the Historic Environment Skills Forum to help address issues with limited entry pathways into, and a lack of cohesive progression through, heritage roles.

In the 2024 Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England (HESCAPE); post-excavation archaeological specialists have been named as one of the top priority skills areas that need to be addressed, and it lists securing resources for early career opportunities as a priority action¹⁰.

¹⁰ Historic Environment Skills Forum (2024) Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England. Available at <https://khub.net/documents/755654335/1037250317/Historic+Environment+Skills+and+Careers+Action+Plan+for+England+2024.pdf/88b778d8-4ba4-8e83-aebd-f205a62198a2?t=1726231495050>

3. How will the AMP work?

The AMPs are partnerships which should be between:

- highly experienced and skilled archaeological specialists (the mentors) who are willing and able to act as mentors and to pass on their wealth of accumulated knowledge to the next generation, and
- early/mid-career emerging or developing specialists (the mentees) who will benefit from skills mentoring designed to fulfil their individual skills development needs.

Applicants are free to form their own partnerships, the archaeological specialist sector is small and many of those working in it already know those working in similar areas. Alternatively, both prospective mentors and mentees can contact Joseph Tong (joseph.tong@historicengland.org.uk) who will, with input from Historic England's own internal specialists, attempt to match up those offering and requesting mentoring in specific areas.

An outline Mentoring Programme should be provided with the grant application form. If successful in obtaining a grant, the Partnerships will be asked to provide a final copy of their agreed Programme as their first project milestone.

The Mentoring Programme should include a clear explanation of the skills and knowledge areas that are to be developed, and a methodology which demonstrates how this would be done. It should be designed individually around the needs of the mentee, but could include things such as:

- joint visits to examine reference collections or to labs
- mentor visits to trainee places of work to provide advice and training on specific material collections (which could be from commercially funded sites)
- on-line tuition/problem solving, networking, editorial advice on reports

When detailing the skills areas that will be addressed, proposals should include detail on how they will measure skills achievements. This may be through use of something like the Archaeology Skills Passport, demonstrating successful acceptance of a report by a client/journal, etc.

The Mentoring Partnership should last for a defined period of time i.e., between 3 and 12 months and the outline programme should include a proposed number and frequency of interactions. The programme should be designed to provide meaningful learning rather than one or two days of Partnership/contact (hence the specification of the lowest grant value (see below).

4. What outputs do I need to deliver?

If successful in obtaining a grant, the Partnerships will work with the Historic England appointed Project Assurance Officer to provide a final copy of their agreed Mentoring Programme and create a Joint Mentoring Record as the first project milestone.

We acknowledge that dates and events may change slightly over the course of the mentoring arrangement, the reasons for any significant changes should be identified and explained in the Joint Mentoring Record. This should record activity and look at what has been learnt and how the impact of the learning can be measured. This should be both a practical working document which is used to record learning and points of action/notes for the future, and something which can be used as a basis for discussion at project assurance meetings and to assess overall learning and the success of the Partnership at its conclusion.

These products should be provided to Historic England, but the grantee does not need to consider archiving them. Historic England will not make these records public but may use them to assess the pilot programme and refine elements of it for future funding rounds.

5. Who can apply?

- ✓ All organisations are eligible to apply. Historic England is open to applications from either a mentee's employer, or a mentor's employer, or from registered sole traders. It is our strong preference that in the case of sole traders we fund through the mentor rather than the mentee, but if this is not possible, we will consider funding through the mentee.
- ✓ Individuals can apply if they are registered as sole traders.
- ✓ The prospective partnership between the mentor and the mentee must be identified before making an application.
- ✓ The mentee does not have to be in employment.
- ✗ Current students are not eligible to apply as a mentee.

Please note:

Grants will be administered via standard Historic England grant funding agreements.

All applicants in this case (the mentor funded by Historic England) should be able to demonstrate that the correct tax is paid, and that National Insurance Contributions are attributed correctly.

Should your proposal be successful, it is Historic England's standard anti-fraud procedure to ask any new payee to provide us with confirmation of the bank details that funds are to be paid into on a document issued by the bank, such as a paying-in slip or a bank statement with any sensitive information redacted.

6. How much can I apply for?

- Historic England will grant aid up to £7,000 toward each mentoring project.
- The minimum project cost is £3,000.
- We do not require match funding, but partnership funding or in-kind/volunteer contributions are encouraged.
- If you wish to request a lower amount e.g., because the mentor is happy to provide time as an in-kind contribution you will need to show this as match funding

to take your overall project costs above the £3,000 minimum; match funding which takes a project over £7,000 can also be included.

- Projects at a lower cost will not automatically be looked at more favourably, the overall strength of the project is the key factor.

The organisation or individual in receipt of the grant will be responsible for reimbursing Mentee expenses.

- Eligible costs which should be outlined in a grant application:
- Contribution towards costs of Mentor's time spent mentoring at a flat rate of £150 per half day.
- Travel and subsistence expenses for both mentor and mentee of up to £750 each, with justification.
- Specific consumables required for one-to-one training (e.g., lab consumables).
- Justifiable reference materials which the Mentee will keep at the end of the partnership e.g., key textbooks or publications.
- Purchase of Archaeology Skills Passport for Mentee.
- Any other equipment which may be justified to support the partnership should be specified in applications although Historic England may wish to discuss these further.

Ineligible costs:

- No additional overheads can be claimed; if we are funding an individual through their employer organisation this organisation is expected to administer the grant in return for the training
- Mentees are not entitled to charge for their time as they are receiving the training and skills development, but expenses can be covered, as noted above.

The grant holder will be responsible for reimbursing Mentor pay and costs and Mentee expenses. Receipts for travel and consumables should be kept, and it is expected that Mentor payments reflect the Mentoring Record.

7. How will Historic England assess my proposal?

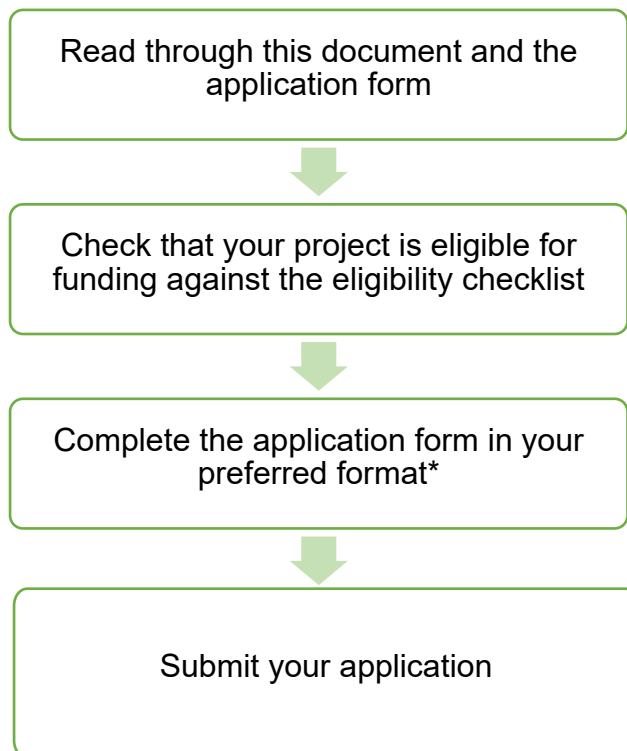
Applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel consisting of internal Historic England staff from Sector Skills and Resilience and National Specialist Services, and an external representative from the ClfA Early Careers or Finds special interest group.

Proposals will be measured against the following SMART criteria based on judgement of the answers given in the application form. Answers will be deemed to either fully meet, partially meet, or have not addressed the following:

- Is there a clearly expressed programme, articulating how the relevant skills/knowledge will be developed?
Is there clarity as to what skill/knowledge will be developed and do the methods proposed seem appropriate?
- Does the proposal have a clear timetable with measurable outcomes?
Does the timetable and task list set out seem reasonable and relevant to the proposed knowledge/skills development? Does it include measurable milestones?

- Does the mentor have the necessary expertise and aptitude to make this an appropriate and successful partnership?
Does the mentor have sufficient experience to meet the mentees needs and can they demonstrate skills in mentoring and developing others?
- How well will the proposal support the specific development needs of the mentee, as demonstrated through their current experience?
It is clear that the skills and knowledge the mentee wants to develop build on their existing experience and will take them towards the next steps in their career?
- Does the proposal explain how this programme responds to wider need within the sector?
Does this partnership address wider issues such as underrepresented areas of study, securing knowledge, increasing diversity etc?

8. How do I apply?



You can submit your application form (we will not be accepting any additional supporting documents) in the following formats:

By emailing the application form as an attachment to: HPCPcalls@historicengland.org.uk (our preferred option)

We are happy to make reasonable adjustments to make the application process as accessible as possible. If you would like to explore alternative ways to apply, please email HPCPcalls@historicengland.org.uk

9. What is the timetable for applying and delivering the project?

Projects can start as soon as the funding agreement has been signed and should aim to be complete by December 2026.

Please note, the project does not need to run for the full duration, you may want to start later and/or end sooner.

Proposals must be submitted by 1st June 2025.

Applicants will be informed of the decision in early July 2025.

Timeline

March 2025	Launch of Archaeology Mentoring Partnership grants
29 April 2025	Archaeology Mentoring Partnerships CIfA Conference Fringe Event
1 June 2025	Deadline for applications
July 2025	Applicants notified of grant outcome
From July 2025	Mentorship start date

10. Where should I go for further support with applying?

For questions about the project including the application process and deadlines please get in touch by emailing:

✉ HPCPcalls@historicengland.org.uk

11. How do I report on the progress of my project?

Grants will be administered by the Historic England Grants Team. Project Assurance and routine monitoring of standards, progress and expenditure will be undertaken by a Historic England Project Assurance Officer (PAO) who will also provide you with guidance throughout the project, but applicants should note the PAO will not manage the project. All proposals should include a named individual who will be ultimately responsible for the delivery of your project.

You will be expected to produce a Joint Mentoring Record which highlights, progress, achievements and risk throughout your project which will be agreed with the PAO as the first project milestone. How often you submit these reports will be decided depending on the length of your project. We will also expect you to keep accurate financial records of your spend against the budget and to submit a report at the end of the project which includes evaluation and lessons learnt.