

Apply now for heritage skills course

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The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme has launched a call for applications for the fourth year of the programme.

Developed by The King's Foundation in partnership with Northern Ireland's Department for Communities and the Heritage Council, the programme will support seven aspiring craftspeople with an interest in heritage skills, who will have the opportunity to work on historic buildings and sites throughout the island of Ireland.

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons welcomed the launch of the programme and urged anyone interested in heritage skills to apply.

He said: "This programme has not only helped budding craftspeople hone their skills and build a career, it also supports the vital work of my department as it strives to preserve and restore our historic environment. Traditional skills such as blacksmithing, stone masonry and carpentry ensure we can bring our heritage assets back to life, sympathetically carrying out conservation work using time-honoured

techniques.

"I recognise there is a skills shortage in this area and programmes like this one, and the heritage apprentice programme recently introduced by my department, are essential to continue our conservation work and ensure our heritage assets retain their special character for future generations to visit and enjoy.

"At the department's Heritage Skills Centre in Moira, students will have the opportunity to gain practical experience in traditional building skills, conservation and repair, working with master craftspeople, as well as working towards a Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Heritage Skills (Construction)."

The course is due to begin in July 2025 and has been specifically developed to meet the rising demand for upskilling in heritage building skills in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, the course will be delivered in partnership with Construction Industry Training Board NI. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to spend 12 months engaging in collaborative learning experiences while developing their heritage

craft skills across a range of disciplines and gaining invaluable practical experience working on historic sites.

Kasia Howard, Senior Education Manager at The King's Foundation, said: "We are delighted to be part of this programme and to offer aspiring craftspeople a unique opportunity to learn heritage craft skills. Education and training are at the heart of The King's Foundation's work – preserving much needed skills which will feed in to the conservation and regeneration of buildings, public spaces and much treasured local landmarks.

"This programme makes a real difference to craftspeople and communities alike, and we are proud of all that our alumni have gone on to achieve."

The course will help preserve skills that are at risk of being lost such as traditional carpentry, lime work, thatching, blacksmithing and stonemasonry. Successful applicants will receive a full scholarship and will be provided with a monthly bursary to help cover the cost of travel and accommodation.

Applications for The All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme are open now until



5pm on Friday, April 11. To apply, or to find out more, visit All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme Application – The King's Foundation.



Blacksmith working at DfC Conservation Works Depot in Moira.