

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

EQ APPRENTICE 2026

Applicant Information

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in The Edinburgh Quartet's Apprentice Competition 2026.

Following on from the success of our previous editions, which have launched several exceptional young players into professional chamber music careers, we are once again opening applications to outstanding young string players from the **UK and Ireland's** top music colleges, universities, and conservatoires.

This is a unique opportunity to experience playing with one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles and to gain invaluable professional performance experience.

The Edinburgh Quartet is grateful to Dr JW Keeling for supporting this event.

Introduction

The EQ Apprentice is a distinctive scheme created by the Edinburgh Quartet for exceptionally talented young string players keen to develop a career in chamber music.

Finalists will have the rare opportunity to perform alongside members of the Quartet in the public final at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, on Saturday 28 February 2026.

At the conclusion of the event, one winner will be invited to become the Quartet's Apprentice for the 2026/27 season, joining the Edinburgh Quartet in rehearsal and performance as part of its professional concert series.

Timeline

Stage	Date
Application pack issued	Friday 7 November 2025
Deadline for applications	Friday 9 January 2026, 12 noon
Finalist shortlist announced	Friday 16 January 2026
Finalists to confirm selected repertoire	Friday 30 January 2026
Final event at St Cecilia's Hall	Saturday 28 February 2026
Winner announced	At the conclusion of the final event

Stage 1 – Application

Entrants are invited to submit:

- A CV detailing relevant performance and educational experience
- A covering letter explaining why you wish to enter the competition
- Details of two referees (one must be your current instrumental tutor)

Please email your application by **12 noon on Friday 9 January 2026** to:

 **admin@edinburghquartet.com**

 **+44 (0)7941 819 458**

All applicants will be notified by **Friday 16 January 2026** whether they have been shortlisted for the final.

Stage 2 – Final Performance

Shortlisted finalists will be invited to take part in the public final on Saturday 28 February 2026 at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh.

Each finalist will perform on stage with members of the Edinburgh Quartet, taking the place of one Quartet member within the ensemble, or alongside the entire Quartet (for double bass finalists).

Finalists should prepare two contrasting movements from the following repertoire list:

- One movement from **Haydn String Quartet Op. 76 No. 5** or **Mozart String Quartet K. 465 “Dissonance”**
- One movement from **Dvořák String Quartet Op. 96 “American”** or **Mendelssohn String Quartet Op. 13 in A minor**

Double bass applicants should prepare one movement from **Dvořák String Quintet in G major, Op. 77**, and one movement from **Dittersdorf Quintet in D major**, or an equivalent Classical-era quintet for string quartet and double bass.

Violinists must confirm whether they will perform violin I or violin II.
The event will be open to the public, and friends, family, and supporters are warmly invited.

The Edinburgh Quartet will perform a free lunchtime concert on the day of the competition, which finalists are encouraged to attend.

At the conclusion of the final, one participant will be invited to become the Edinburgh Quartet Apprentice for 2026/27, joining the Quartet for rehearsals and a series of professional concert performances during the season.

Rules

- The competition is open to violinists, violists, cellists, and double bassists aged 18–25, resident or studying in the UK or Ireland
- Applicants must be available to attend the final on Saturday 28 February 2026
- All reasonable expenses related to rehearsal and concert participation will be covered for the chosen Apprentice
- Travel and accommodation costs to attend the final are the responsibility of the entrants
- *Please note: Irish citizens do not require a visa to travel to the UK. International students studying in Ireland should check UK entry requirements and may need to apply for a **Standard Visitor visa** to attend the final in Edinburgh*

About the Edinburgh Quartet

The **Edinburgh Quartet**, founded in 1960, has long been celebrated as one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles. The group performs regularly at leading venues throughout the UK and internationally, with a rich history of broadcasting for the BBC and recording for labels such as Delphian, Linn, and Meridian.

The Quartet is deeply committed to nurturing young talent through mentoring, side-by-side projects, residencies, and educational outreach. Its members teach and coach at major conservatoires and universities across the UK and Europe, and the Quartet is the ensemble-in-residence at Variations Scotland in Ullapool.

In addition to its own concert series at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, the Quartet tours throughout Scotland and internationally, and regularly commissions and premieres new works.

Further Information

For all enquiries, please contact:



admin@edinburghquartet.com



www.edinburghquartet.com

EQ Apprentice 2026 is generously supported by Dr JW Keeling, a member of the Friends of the Edinburgh Quartet.