

Transcript

Freelands Awards 2026 Application Support Webinar #2

w/ Rachel Moilliet (Freelands Awards Programme Manager), Mark James-Matthews (Freelands Foundation Grants Manager) and Bhavisha Kukadia-Moran (Freelands Foundation Grants Manager)

Rachel Moilliet: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us today and for your interest in the Freelands Awards. If you'd like to, whilst we're just waiting for more people to join, you could just pop the organisation that you're from in the chat function, just to share that with us.

I will just run through some housekeeping before we get started. The webinar is being recorded and we have BSL interpretation. The screens that will be available on the recording will just be us speakers from Freelands and the interpreters. If you need captions, you can turn on that function, or a transcript will be available in the transcript bar.

Today we have Bhavisha, Mark and me, Rachel, from the Freelands Foundation and our interpreters are Claire and Joe. We will have the speaker available on the camera at all times, so just check that you can see my slides and also the speaker by adjusting your settings.

The session today is going to look a bit like this. I'm going to start by giving a bit of an introduction to Freelands and then some more information about the Awards. We will run through the eligibility criteria and then more about the application process. We are going to gather questions throughout the course of the webinar and address them at the end.

We'll be aiming to talk through the first four bullet points for the first 30 minutes, and then answer questions for the second half hour, so if you have a question, please put it in the Q&A function and we'll collate them and address them all together at the end. I'll hand over to Mark now.

Mark James-Matthews: Thanks, Rachel. I'd like to just quickly introduce Freelands Foundation. It's an organisation you may have come across before in your work. You might be new to Freelands Foundation. Freelands Foundation is a visual art education charity that exists to champion art education. The Freelands Awards really sits within this purpose. Our vision is to firstly increase the status of art education, which

the Awards definitely speak to, to enable equality of access to art education and to promote material literacy.

We do this in three areas that we work across: formal education, both primary, secondary, as well as further education, higher education; education provision by galleries and arts organisations, which is what we're all here today to discuss; as well as learning through artistic practice. All of this we underpin through a focus on making and material literacy. But at its core, Freelands Foundation offers a whole wide range of opportunities, whether they're grants, fellowships, commissions research, supports residencies or does programming from our base in London.

When it comes to the Foundation's work, though, the Freelands Awards stands out as a flagship programme to really support organisations' commitment to our education. Can we go to the next slide, please, Rachel?

So, a bit more about the Awards. I hope that you've already had a little bit of information and you can access a whole wide range more of information as well as these webinars on our website. But over the next five years, Freelands Foundation will be committing over £1.5 million to the Freelands Awards.

To quickly do the math, each year there'll be three organisations winning the Freelands Awards, each receiving an unrestricted grant of £100,000. Additional to the £100,000 award, you'll collaborate with Freelands Foundation on a video case study to share about your work. Typically, art education work might not receive the same level of profile as some of your potentially exhibition-making work. And we'll have a celebration event with the winners in November, which more information will be provided about later.

The main thing about the Awards, though: it's really to champion organisations' commitment to art education. If we head to the next slide, please, Rachel. Thank you. This is kind of the core purpose of the Awards. We've highlighted three terms in there, which I'll quickly run through to give you a bit more context.

In terms of Freelands Foundation's approach, we're looking for organisations that work within the visual arts. We don't have a specific definition or list of what that entails. It's really for you to self-describe and opt into your work working within the visual arts. Some examples of things we've have supported in the past have included different types of media,

whether that's painting, sculpture, drawing, but all the way through to performance and sonic art; but also all different types of practices, research and different approaches that all sit firmly within the visual arts.

When it comes to the ideas of art education, that's the – I'm jumping to the second part there – is all of our work we see at the Foundation is sitting at that intersection between sort of teaching and making as art, and that's kind of the way we view education. So, don't think as though this programme is specific to schools, primary or secondary. We look at any place that teaching or learning has occurred.

That could be within those formal institutions that we touched on, but it also could be outside of those. It could be working with community groups. It could be working with intergenerational projects. It could be working with all kinds of different people. Because for us, we're really looking to embrace the diversity of what art education can be. So, don't immediately think this is just about schools programmes. Have a think about what programme might best align with this idea of commitment to art education.

On that point, when we're talking about commitment, we're thinking about both your context and the impact that you've had. If you look at the Expression of Interest form, which we'll come to later, we're really looking to understand the context that you work within, who are the people that you're working with and how you're doing that work, and then what change, what impact has occurred.

The Freelands Awards is all about programmes that have happened or are currently happening. This is not about new programmes to exist in the future. And so, when we're thinking about commitment, we really look to those two areas of your context and the demonstrable impact of your work, when will we be reviewing and judging the Freelands Awards proposals. If we head to the next slide, and then I think it's over to Bhavisha.

Bhavisha Kukadia-Moran: Thank you, Mark. So yes, I'm going to continue, covering our eligibility criteria, and we're going to talk quite clearly about what is eligible and what isn't eligible. Starting off, the number one thing that we are looking for is that your organisation and your work is based in the UK. As long as your work takes place in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, then you'll be eligible to apply.

You also must have a charitable purpose. So, this is a statement of charitable benefit that you might find in your governing documents.

Organisations of different types may have a purpose for which they exist under a charitable purpose. And we just need to know that you have one.

We're not necessarily checking that this charitable purpose aligns with the Freelands Awards or any of the other criteria that we have set out. But in order for your organisation to be eligible to apply, then it must fall under one of the charitable types of organisations that we've listed there.

It might be a registered charity, exempt charities that might exist as part of a local authority or a wider, organisational structure or a university, or they may have a sort of special dispensation as some larger Arm's Length Government Organisations might have, but we're also able to work with community interest companies and any sort of smaller incorporated organisations, so long as you do have that charitable purpose.

There are obviously a range of additional, charitable, non-profit organisation types. If you are unsure about your organisation's registration, then you're able to check that with us. But essentially, we are looking for that charitable benefit, and then that sort of non-profit clauses within your memorandum or your articles, etc.

So, once we've established that you're a UK-based charity and that you have a charitable purpose, and then we kind of go back a little bit to check that you are an arts organisation, and also are you working in a way that kind of meets the rest of our eligibility. You can check that in the eligibility checker, which is on our website.

On this slide here, you can kind of see that sort of greyed-out box. Now we don't ask for any identifiable organisational information when you fill that out. So, you can kind of click through that as many times as you wish, just to double check things. It will give us the sort of standard yes/no, whether you can proceed. You can do that as many times as you wish to double check your eligibility.

Hopefully that will give you a good indication. But as we know, there are lots of different types of organisations working in different ways. It's absolutely fine to drop us a quick line to check your eligibility, because we wouldn't encourage you to go through your application and then it not meet our initial core eligibility, which every single application that would be considering does need to meet.

I'll take the next slide, please. So, exclusions. Now you might be wondering why we're starting with exclusions, but really it's because the

inclusions are really varied and really open, so it might make sense for us to just go through very clearly what we want to be considering.

I'll run through some of these and pause on a couple and expand on them, so we can get a little bit more context.

Freelands Awards are not open to organisations that do not offer consistent public presentation of visual arts at their own venue. We'll just break that down a little bit.

As Mark mentioned, your visual arts may take multiple strands. You may be coming from an organisation where visual arts is one of the things that you do. It might not be the only thing that you're doing, but as long as the visual arts element of your work is consistent, that it's not necessarily a brand-new thing that doesn't fall into the eligibility criteria for the time period that we're looking at for the Freelands Awards, then we wouldn't be looking at that.

But if you can evidence that visual arts is something that your organisation consistently does do, then that would be eligible because the public basically needs to be able to see or take part in your visual arts work, and that's what we'll be looking for. We know that it can take place in lots of different ways.

For the Freelands Awards, we are really looking for that public presentation. And then when we have stated 'at your own venue', we're not talking about sole ownership, lease arrangements, anything like that, but what we mean by your own venue is that your organisation has agency to programme that space, has some ownership over what happens in that space, and that you're able to use that, and it is used for your visual arts strand of your organisation.

That could be an outdoor space. It could be a sculpture trail. It could be a venue that you use with other organisations as a sort of joint venture. Or you may have an office within a wider, bigger arts organisation and you're able to programme a regular space within that, and we're able just to see that consistency. Basically, we need to be able to find you, and the public need to be able to find you, and that's what we mean by 'your own venue'. And there might be some further nuance within that, and of course, you can come back to us around that.

'For-profit organisations', of course, we've already eliminated that because you should have a charitable object. And 'Individuals', so: the award is not

able to be won by an individual, and the prize is not able to be received by an individual for the Freelands Awards.

That is actually a hard line for the way that these awards do work. And the same for Primary and Secondary schools. Although lots of education work takes place within primary and secondary schools, or with young people of primary or secondary school age, further education, etc., we aren't able to work with those organisations in and of themselves, the schools themselves.

So, if the work, the projects that you have run as an arts organisation, has been with a primary or secondary school, it would be the arts organisation who needs to fulfill the full eligibility and who would be the ones applying for the work that happened to take place at a primary school, for example, and that's absolutely fine. But the school themselves, even if they have a charitable registration, which some schools might, they are not eligible to apply in their own right for the Freelands Awards.

'Further Education Colleges', it's the same criteria there. Although they may have sort of different venues or a different structure, they themselves can't apply for the awards. So, university teaching faculties, we'd emphasise this in particular, as, although Freelands Foundation does fund art schools, universities, and through our other grant programmes, we have a Fellowship programme, in terms of the Freelands Awards, they are ineligible organisations for this particular opportunity.

So, an art school in and of itself, within a teaching faculty within a university wouldn't be eligible in the same way as a primary or secondary school wouldn't be – an art department within a secondary school also wouldn't be – eligible. However, we know that galleries are attached often to universities and may have a shared collection, but also often operate as a separate arts organisation, and those organisations are eligible.

Again, that might come down to the charitable structure that you have that we mentioned slightly earlier. You can check that with us. It's just the art school in and of itself within the university wouldn't be eligible even if your programme meets the rest of our eligibility, it would have to be the public-facing arts organisation, whether or not it's attached to a university.

We're also not funding sector or infrastructure organisations, for example, membership bodies or those who are working outside of our focus to be a public presentation or working with the public. We're also not funding fiscal sponsorship relationships. What we mean by those is if there is a large

organisation who is acting as a sort of bank account or a sponsor for smaller, unincorporated or very new grassroots organisations.

Unfortunately, in this instance, for the Freelands Awards, they are not eligible, for the prize monies, should there be one, because it's an unrestricted grant, it has to go to a qualifying organisation, and that organisation has in their bank account, it has to be the same one that is used for their charitable purpose.

So, we're not precluding work that's taking place in a partnership. We know that tonnes of fantastic projects don't exist on their own and aren't always generated or delivered in isolation. But what we are looking for is the applicant in particular needs to meet all of this eligibility, and should that be a joint venture, a joint project, if your plan is to share the prize, etc., that's absolutely fine to consider further down the line, but at this point in time, you need to meet this criteria.

I think that covers everything. Of course, the activity that you would be applying with this needs to happen within the UK.

Mark: A last eligibility point, which may only apply to some people on this call: Freelands Foundation, through our other funding programs, has supported a wide range of organisations across the United Kingdom for the last 11 years. A point to be clear on is organisations who have previously received funding from Freelands Foundation are eligible for the Freelands Awards. The caveat to this is Freelands Foundation will not consider programmes that it has already funded for the Awards.

This is as, firstly, we're not looking to double fund those projects. And secondly, we're really looking to ensure that the widest possible pool of applicants can have access to this opportunity. And we want to make sure that the existing organisations doing great work can apply, however, have clarity around which programmes to select when filling out that Expression of Interest form.

Rachel: Okay, thanks. I'm just going to go through the key dates. Applications are open at the moment, and the deadline is in just under two weeks now on the 24th of March, so, of course, if you've got any questions ahead of that, do get in touch with us.

The judging process will take place after that, and a shortlist of six organisations will be put together by the judges, and we'll be in touch with

organisations to let them know either way around then whether they've made the shortlist.

After that, I'll be in touch about organising the second stage of the judging process, which is when the panel goes to visit those shortlisted organisations. That shortlist won't be made public. It is just something that is part of the process, and it will only be the three winners that are announced publicly.

Following the visit, and then deliberation by the judges and the selection of the winners, organisations will find out the outcome in September. This will also kickstart the process of working with the winners to produce case study films about their programme, which is also part of the prize. Then, as we mentioned before, in November, there'll be an event that brings the winners together to celebrate the work that they've done.

In terms of the application process, we've got the guidance available on the website. It's a good place to start, as well as this webinar, to see if your organisation is eligible and to help decide which projects it might be that you apply with.

We have the eligibility checker to support with this process. Of course, you're on this webinar now, but the recording of this, and also the recording of the webinar that we did in February, will be online, along with the transcripts of both, if you want to make reference back to things that we've said today.

To apply, we have an Expression of Interest form, so you just need to go on the website and download the form. Within that form, there's a few quite simple questions where you can introduce your organisation, your context and the project that you're applying with. You send that to us by email by midday on the 24th March.

Alongside the Expression of Interest form, you can also complete an access form. This is to allow us to support any barriers that individuals or organisations might face in the application process, because we do our best to make reasonable adjustments to make it accessible to everybody.

Mark: A little bit more information about the Expression of Interest form itself. I'm sure you've all had the opportunity to have a look potentially at the form. If not, it's available online now. It consists of six questions, as Rachel mentioned, that really looks to explain the story of your work.

This might be a bit different from other grant applications you may have filled out. We're not asking for a budget. We're not asking for how you will use the money. We're really looking to understand what the work is you've been doing, how it has affected the people you've been working with and any kind of supporting material that comes along with that. We really consider it the story of your programme or project.

When we refer to a programme or project, there's a whole range of language that can be used, and that depends on how you see your work in your organisation. A project might be time-limited. It might be a one-off programme, might be a long-running piece of work, or it might be a series of smaller events or pieces of work.

The important piece here is any work that you're looking to propose for the Freelands Awards must be active between January 2025 and January 2026. This can include things that have come to an end. This can include things that have begun and not ended, or this can include things that are ongoing across a longer period of time.

We're not looking to projects that have occurred before January 2025, in the past. We're looking to the more contemporary pieces of work to showcase and spotlight.

Finally, we include an option to provide supporting material, whether it's text, images, audio or video. There's more information in the guidance on how to apply with those. Similarly, we are open to receiving audio or video applications, if that's something that would support your access needs. Please do contact us and we can support you with that.

The final thing I will say to loop back to the aims of the Awards is, as I mentioned, there are three of these Awards, and don't think as though this is like the BAFTAs or something. We're really looking to understand what that programme or project means in your context for your organisation. We would really encourage you to take a look at the Expression of Interest form and the questions to understand what piece of work would best suit the application for this opportunity.

Bhavisha: I'll just expand a little bit on our access support, as that's the sort of second, optional form that you may wish to submit to us. Our intention as a Foundation is to ensure that anyone who wishes to put in an application or an Expression of Interest form is able to do so and has an equal opportunity to be a part of the Freelands Awards process.

That might mean something different to different people, so the way that we've decided to approach this is by openly asking to understand your access requirements on an individual basis, rather than outlining a specific list of things that we might be able to do.

For example, you've probably seen that we're not listing things like video application, for example, because although we can do that, we would just like to really check the nuance of that with each individual who might need it.

So, we are open to all sorts of ways for you to be able to submit your Expression of Interest to us. It might be video, it might be audio, it might be a combination of things. If you're willing and able to fill in the access form and get that to us, you can also decide to call us, and we can talk you through that, and we can take as much information from a phone call or an email. You can expand on that form. There's three simple questions, but give us as much context as you can, and then what we will do is we will review it, and then we'll come back and speak to you, and get back in touch, just to make sure we can make the right reasonable adjustments in your context.

It might be that we agree a different way of submission. So, submitting your form, it might be that there is other things that we can employ or methods that you might have used before, which we're happy to hear about, just to ensure that there's equity in the process for you. So, we're not saying yes or no to anything in advance.

I know that other large funding bodies have processes in place where you could request an access support worker, etc. This isn't something that we are including, but if it is something that you do need, then we can discuss it. And given that the deadline is the 24th of March, now would be the time to get this access request to us. You don't have to obviously wait until the 24th to submit it alongside your EOI. Please do get in touch with us sooner rather than later, if you feel that you would like to discuss your access needs, so we can start to work on that.

Rachel: After you've filled in the Expression of Interest form and emailed it to us, you'll receive an automatic reply to acknowledge that it has been received. Then, after the closing date, we'll be contacting all of the applicants to confirm again that your application has reached us. Following that, we'll be reviewing all of the applications for eligibility, because that would be the first step into being considered for the Awards.

Then as part of the judging process, we'll be reviewing your project, the work of your organisation and its impacts in your context.

As I mentioned, six organisations will be selected to proceed to the next stage of the judging process, and we will visit those with the judges to find out more about the work that you do. At this point, organisations who have not moved to the second stage will also be contacted.

This is our judging panel. We'll be in touch around May to let you know if they are going to come and visit you, if you are on the shortlist, and we'll be arranging the visits for the summer. I'll be in touch in advance to help you understand what we're hoping to get out of the visit, what it is that the judges would like to know more about, who it might be interesting to meet and, because we recognise that these visits take resources and time from you, it is possible for the six organisations to apply for a £1,000 grant to support this visit to make it possible.

Then after the judges' visits have happened, just to reiterate, it's in September, the organisations will find out whether they're one of the winners or not. We'll start to work with the winners on the film and then the event when the films will be screened and a celebration of winning the Awards will be held in November.

We're able to take questions now. I can see there's one in the Q&A section. I'll just check the chat. I don't think there's any in there. I'll address that first question, but if anybody else has any that they'd like to pop in there in the meantime, please do so.

Our first question is from Phil. It says: 'Hi, we work in a large rural area, where our art education work takes place in several places in order to reach the various public and specific target groups for our work. Is this a problem?'

Bhavisha: I can take that in terms of eligibility. So, you work in several places, you are reaching the public. If you feel that your work is consistent, and it's able to be seen and enjoyed, and you've got specific time, I think that's absolutely fine. You're hitting that visual arts criteria.

Obviously, we need a little bit more information, in terms of your organisational structure. But, we're also thinking about the specific project, so if it's your project and it's taking place in lots of venues, but it's actually one project or one strand of work, that might not be a problem at all.

Rachel: Thanks, Bhavisha. The next question is: Previous Freelands Foundation grantees have included multi-million-pound organisations. What current level of annual income would you consider to be disproportionately too low to realistically warrant a £100,000 pound grant?

Mark: I think that's a good question. I can speak a bit more about that award process at the final stages. We don't have any income requirements around this award.

Yes, there are those governance requirements about charitable purpose, which Bhavisha went through, and previously Freelands Foundation has awarded very large, national-scale organisations as well as very, very small grassroots, local organisations. For us, we really look to understand your work and your context as the driving decision-maker behind the awards, rather than income thresholds.

When it comes to how that award can be granted, we recognise that for some large organisations who might have significant capital programmes, for example, that £100,000 pounds can disappear very quickly on all kinds of expenses. But, for smaller organisations, that might represent a challenge to their own finances.

We're looking to work with organisations to understand how that funding can be provided to you in a way that supports the work that you're looking to do, and how you wish to fund it in your context, given the scale.

We don't look to have kind of a large, medium and a small size organisation across the three awards. We're really looking to understand the diversity of contexts people operate within and award fantastic practices that demonstrate commitment to art education, regardless of that scale, level of resource. Realistically, when it comes to your question, we don't have a perspective on if there is a right amount of annual income.

Rachel: Okay, thank you. Next we have: Our projects are run in many different ways with different outcomes over the past nine years. Should we focus on the work we did last year, only from Jan '25 to Jan '26, or pull from the past eight years of activity?

Bhavisha: In terms of the criteria, the period that we're looking at is what's been delivered between Jan '25 and Jan '26. However, we know that programmes are often long-running. What we're interested in is you putting sort of your best foot forward, so you can absolutely give us the context of a long-running programme and then dive into why you feel like

the work that you delivered within that year was sort of indicative of the commitment.

Of course, that commitment for this particular project is potentially a time commitment. You've been thinking about and working on your work for a total of nine years, of which '25-'26 is one of the years, so you would be able to bring that context into it.

But, of course, you've got to ensure that the project we are seeing in this eligibility and that what you're putting forward has taken place within the year that we've defined, because the Freelands Awards will be taking place again for five years. So, we need to be really clear that what we're awarding and what we're looking at has happened within that period of January '25 to January '26 for the 2026 Freelands Awards.

Rachel: Okay, next question: Our charity works with young people, 13–18, state schools across the UK, both in partner venues, museums and schools and online to reach more people with our free art history courses and qualifications. As we don't have our own venue, would we not be eligible?

Bhavisha: Yes, we understand that organisations work in a multitude of different ways, and I suppose it kind of comes down to what your relationship with those partner venues are. Some organisations have a consistent – every single year they're working with a particular venue, because that is actually the space in which they have that agency we talked about: is that something that's your space to programme, even though you might not own that building or have your own venue.

But, particularly for the Freelands Awards, because what we're looking at is an organisation who's then able to do something with that prize money, and it does need to benefit that organisation.

You can choose what that benefit is. It might be do you need to keep the lights on. It might be that you need some capital work. It might be that you're going to reinvest that into your education programme. There's a whole breadth of ways that you may want to use an unrestricted grant. But, particularly for us, we do need to see where that work takes place and that the public needs to be able to consistently find your work in a space. So, although your work's taking place in partner venues, how consistent is that?

In terms of the work taking place online, unfortunately for the Freelands Awards that's not likely to be eligible. It really is only down to the criteria. That's not to say that as a Foundation, we aren't interested in and understand that work takes place in different ways and different reaches. But, if you're coming to us with a project that was solely online, then it's unlikely to be eligible. But, Mark, do come in, if there's anything there that I might've missed.

Rachel: Okay, shall we move on to the next one? Yeah? Could you please explain in more detail what you meant earlier about previously funded projects not being eligible? I am not sure I understood correctly. A project we would like to present was previously funded, but now funding is running out, and we would love to continue this.

Mark: Sure, I'm happy to speak more to this. So, programmes that have been funded by Freelands Foundation, either wholly or in part, unfortunately, aren't eligible for this opportunity. If there are other education programmes that you run that have received funding from other funders, we're happy to consider those. If those kind of earned income programmes, then we can consider those. It's just that if the programme that you're looking to put forward has been funded by Freelands Foundation historically, either in part or in full, within the period that we're looking at, is kind of the caveat there, we cannot fund it.

If it's the case that Freelands Foundation funded a first iteration of something in 2017, that's not something that would fall within the criteria for this opportunity anyway. But, if it's the case that Freelands Foundation has funded that programme in the past, and that's come to a conclusion, then that wouldn't be eligible for this opportunity.

Rachel: I'm just going to move to a couple of questions in the chat. The work we would like you to consider is dependent on funding. So, it isn't always running. It run for many years. Then it started again with different funding. And now that funding has ended and we are waiting to hopefully get funding to start again. Would this be eligible? We always have some form of visual art education going on, but all of it is subject to funding, so just checking whether that seems consistent to you.

Mark: So, the real perspective for us is: did that activity occur between January 2025 and 2026? And do you have that consistent public presentation? We're open to looking at programmes that have come to an end. We're open to looking at programmes that are ongoing or

programmes that have started across that period and will continue beyond January 2026.

But, it's a bit of a call for you to make over whether this particular programme fits within the eligibility criteria, but puts your best foot forward in terms of that education work.

We recognise that funding is challenging for lots of organisations, so one thing to also consider is this is not the only opportunity to apply for the Freelands Awards. There will be five iterations of these Awards up until 2030. So, for your organisation, if this particular year isn't necessarily the right timing in terms of capacity or work, there will be additional opportunities in the coming years to apply for the Freelands Awards.

Rachel: Okay, thank you. So, next question: the project that I have in mind is our three-stranded schools programme, which works to develop schools' creative curriculums on a national level through access to theatre design, opera and ballet resources, workshops and experiences. This programme intersects these three strands, but the theatre design strand is the one that has its own public exhibit attached that is displayed for a limited time in our building. Would you advise that I apply for only the art and design strand, or for the three strands as they intersect with each other as an overall arts education outreach offer?

Mark: A core part of the Freelands Awards is all of the work that we look to consider must fall firmly within the visual arts. We recognise that there are some organisations that that's entirely what they do, but then there's other organisations, potentially like yourself, multi-arts organisations that work across performing arts as well as visual arts, that will have broader work.

The only things that we will consider for the Freelands Awards are ones that exist within the visual arts, and that's an area that you can define within your context as the expert in your work.

Rachel: Okay, thanks. A question about spending the award: Are there restrictions on how the winner can spend the award funds?

Mark: We do have some restrictions on this, as much as we've made this as flexible as possible, so we would consider this an unrestricted fund. We're not asking you what you want to do with this funding. The restrictions that apply to it are listed in the guidance document, which I

encourage you to download. I won't run through all of them. There are some obvious ones, like don't give the money to terrorists.

There are some other ones, such as, this money can't be used for on-granting. Say you receive the award and you decide that you're going to run your own grants programme for your communities. That's not allowed. It's really to benefit your organisation.

The only significant caveat to mention is we're unfortunately unable to support organisations' reserves. We can support staffing costs, overhead costs, capital costs, a full range of different sort of costs associated with your operations and delivery. Unfortunately, by virtue of our own compliance and governance constraints, we cannot support reserves.

Should we get to the point of you being fantastically successful with the Freelands Awards, we'll be able to provide much more guidance around how that money can be used at that point.

Rachel: Thank you. Next question: Can you expand on the change impact criteria? Is there anything specific in this that would make an application stand out for you?

Bhavisha: Well, we haven't necessarily listed any criteria specifically under that sort of change in impact, because we would really like for that to come from the applicant.

Each organisation exists in its own context, and it's something that we have come back to a few times throughout this webinar today, mainly to reiterate that that is really what is key.

What would stand out to us isn't necessarily, 'We reached X amount of people', unless that was actually really important to your project. It could be something that met five people for a couple of years, and you're talking about what happened within that single-year time frame that was really impactful to those five people. That could be a massive thing for your organisation.

Or it could be that, you've expanded in a way that was really ambitious, and you feel that that really represents you well, etc. So, we're really interested in what your criteria are and what you set out to achieve. When we talk about that commitment to visual arts education, it is tied to what your own goals are in that area.

So, we're not setting any strict criteria. We would just obviously love to know, and you do need to demonstrate, what success looks like in a way to yourselves, and you are putting your best foot forward with this because it is an award. It's not a grant where we're thinking about what the potential of a programme is, because it's already happened. It's already taken place. So, you're able to share with us how impactful that actually was for your organisation or your audience, etc.

Rachel: Thanks. If the accounts of the charity or organisation applying are in deficit, would they still be eligible?

Mark: We have no restrictions around that particular point, similar to the income side of things. One thing we will flag, though, is we understand that organisations can go through different periods of sort of financial stress, and come out of it fantastically well.

This is a long-term process, though. This is funding as well that, as much as is unrestricted, will take a while to kind of reach organisations, but then also ultimately will come to an end. This is not intended as kind of consistent core support. This is an award for fantastic work that you've done.

There will be checks for due diligence around organisations' governance and finances later in the process to make sure that we're all kind of comfortable with the next stages of this. However, at this stage, we have no specific eligibility requirements around incomes or deficits.

Rachel: Thank you. Could you speak a little bit about your definition of visual arts? We're a mixed-arts venue centred around cinema, creative technology and immersive arts.

Mark: The short answer is we have no specific definition of visual arts. For us, we look to embrace kind of the full spectrum of what that can entail. There are definitely things such as moving image that falls distinctly within the visual arts. There are also kind of things that would sit beyond the boundaries of the visual arts themselves, which can be a bit tricky to navigate.

Some examples that I've used previously include: we wouldn't look to support programmes to do with sort of commercial fashion. However, we are more than happy to support works that work with textile as a sort of artistic medium. Similarly, I think cinema is a good point, is around the

idea of, 'Well, is this for artistic output as a sort of moving image, visual artwork, or is this intended as kind of that commercial film style of work?'

For us, it's really about you kind of identifying how your work and organisation fits in with the visual arts world, rather than us prescribing exactly what that needs.

Rachel: Thanks. Do we need to include in our application details about the future of the programme implemented between 2025 to 2026, or any other upcoming projects in the next three-year period that the grant will support?

Bhavisha: Just to dissect this a little bit: this is not a grant. It's an award. The award is to celebrate and sort of recognise the work that you have previously done. So, there's no criteria, there's no expectation that if you were to win the award, those prize monies – they're not a grant, they're prize monies – would need to be applied to more of the same work or for that project to continue, you might choose to apply it that way, but that's not the way that the Freelands Awards will work.

They are looking into the past, your work has taken place, because, also we are talking about commitment. If you're in year two of a five-year programme and year two is 2025 to 2026, then you can absolutely reference that there's more to come, because that is the length of your programme. You're applying to us with the work that took place in '25-'26, regardless of how the rest of your programme will be funded in the future, we're really thinking about what the achievement and the commitment that's been shown within the time period that we're judging. So, of course, do give us as much context as you would love to give us, but this isn't a grant for further support.

Rachel: Thanks. So next question is if an Expression of Interest form is not successful this year, is it possible to reapply in the following year for new or similar programmes?

Bhavisha: It is possible to reapply. There are no restrictions on a reapplication to the Freelands Awards. All work will need to meet the criteria outlined at that time and in the guidance which is published for that year's opportunity. Of course, if it's the same programme, but it's moved on a year, we would take that as a fresh application. It would be judged completely without the context of if you've applied previously, but it would obviously need to meet any eligibility criteria that is set out at the time.

Mark: There's just one thing to add on to that, Bhavisha, which is that each organisation will only be able to win one Freelands Award. So, it's not as though if you are successful this year for the Freelands Awards in 2026, you can come back with the same programme in 2029 and reapply with that.

Obviously, this is not something we can include in our criteria now because we haven't had any previous editions of it yet, but it's more the case just to let you know that if you are successful, we wouldn't be looking to re-award. Again, an aim of this award is to promote diversity and breadth of art education. So, we're really keen to make sure that as many people have the opportunity to have their work showcased as possible.

Rachel: Thanks, both. Right, next: if exhibition work is aimed at helping non-professional artists gain confidence and exhibition experience, would this type of work qualify as part of an eligible project?

Mark: Unfortunately, I'm going to have to give you a bit of a cop-out answer, and that is: it might. A good way to think about it is to think of, 'Does the work that you're doing involve the acts of teaching and the acts of learning?'

If yes, then that falls within what Freelands Foundation will consider education. It doesn't exclusively have to be with school-aged young people. It doesn't have to work directly with education institutions. As you note, it can be with non-professional artists. It can be with professional artists. The main thing for us is that both teaching and learning occur. So, I think that's a question for you to take away and consider when applying to your project.

Rachel: Thanks. Can the fund support projects working with early years children aged 0–5 in galleries?

Bhavisha: The short answer is yes, if they are the beneficiaries of that work. If it's what you would define as an art education project, if there's learning involved as Mark mentioned. What is it that group is sort of taking away from that activity?

That's entirely up to yourselves to define what that educative activity is within that age group, within that audience group, but we aren't defining specific audience groups. It's whomever you work with or whomever your project... is.

Rachel: Is this award open to the entire UK and if so, do you have any geographical priorities?

Mark: Yes. This award is open to the four nations of the United Kingdom: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. I'm not sure where your exact location is, but just to note, this opportunity isn't open to Channel Islands, Isle of Man or British Overseas Territories.

However, just given, I think, statistics, it's more than likely that your organisation will be located within those four nations. We don't have any particular geographical priorities that we're looking to specifically target with this award.

We're really looking to understand what breadth and diversity looks like across all of the different contexts of the United Kingdom. So, to your point, it's not as though we'll be enfranchising organisations in a particular part of the country over others. We really look to the type of work you're doing and how it's impacted the people who've been involved as the core guiding assessment principles.

Rachel: Thanks. Next is: we specialise in socially engaged photography with local communities. So, co-production, co-creation, co-curation: would this be considered education?

Bhavisha: Well, again, similar to Mark's previous answer: it depends how you approach it as an organisation. If that is your education, if it's your learning work, if you feel that within that project, you know a significant amount of learning has taken place, that there is a difference between what happened, you know, if something's moved along within that year, you feel that that's really embodied art education for you.

It doesn't have to be formal education by any stretch, formal teaching and telling. It can be absolutely through doing, through making, through trying, testing, exploring, etc.

So, if co-production, co-creation for you fall into an educative and learning-centric way of working, and you feel that there are outcomes there that are very much learning outcomes, then you can absolutely put that forward if you believe that is a case.

And it is really about making the case for art education in all sorts of ways and guises and different means, and we're really open to hearing about that from all sorts of different organisations and all sorts of different

projects, but you do need to be really clear yourselves: why do you think that is art education, rather than sort of posing the question to us within the application whether we think that's art education. My advice is to kind of know yourselves what your position is on that and then be able to tell us.

Rachel: Thanks. We've just got one more question that's been submitted, so if anyone else has something they'd like to add, please pop it in there now, because we'll finish up after this question if not.

The question is: is it correct to consider this award as a prize for things that have already happened, rather than a grant for social value projects that could happen in the future?

Bhavisha: That is correct. So, the Freelands Awards will be judged on the projects that you submit to us and activity that has taken place between January '25 and January '26.

The judges themselves, yes, would be visiting an organisation, would be coming to see your work to give more context, but essentially they are also still judging the project, which you've applied for, and that can be similar or separate.

If you were to win, then you could absolutely apply your prize money to future projects by all means. But the prize in and of itself is for that past work that you are putting to us in your application.

Rachel: Okay, thank you. We've covered all the questions we've had, but of course there's still opportunity to contact us, if you think of anything after this webinar.