

Transcript

Freelands Awards 2026 Application Support Webinar #1

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

Rachel Moilliet: Hello, good morning everyone. Thanks for joining us and thank you for your interest in the Freelands Awards.

So just to introduce us, I'm Rachel. I'm the Programme Manager for the Freelands Awards, and we're joined today by Bhavisha and Mark, who are both Grants Managers at the Freelands Foundation.

So we'll be talking you through everything this morning. So just to look at what we're going to do, we've got an hour, we've got until 11:30.

So we'll probably spend about half that time just giving you an introduction and some background, tell you more about the awards, more about the eligibility criteria and more about the application process.

And then we want to leave a good chunk of time to answer your questions at the end. So we are going to address all the questions at the end. So if you think of them throughout the course of the webinar, just put them in the Q&A function and then we'll collate them. And we can always follow up with you afterwards if you feel we need to cover a little bit more relating to your question.

So I'll hand over to Mark.

Mark James-Matthews: Thanks, Rachel, I'd just like to welcome you all to this session and thank you for your interest in the Freelands Awards. It's something we're really excited to share with everyone. And this all comes up in the context of Freelands Foundation and our revitalised mission and aims.

So I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about those as well as the aims of the awards themselves to give you a good context of this

program to inform your decision on whether or not it's a good fit for your organisation.

And so, at Freelands Foundation, we really see our mission as championing art education.

And I'll talk a little bit about what we mean by art education soon.

But for us, our vision is that we would like to increase the status of art education.

And the award is a fantastic way to do that through kind of spotlighting fantastic work that's going across the United Kingdom.

We look to enable the quality of access to art education, and we look to promote material literacy or kind of ideas around making.

So, for us, we do this in a variety of different ways.

There is through programmes like the Freelands Awards.

Also we have a broader suite of sort of opportunities to support the sector, including grants to organisations, fellowships and residences for artists.

And we also have a base in London near Old Street Station, where we do active programming through our growing library of art education resources, working with communities directly, as well as through our online resource hub – our website – which I'm sure if you're not familiar already, you will become very familiar with soon.

I think the other context is for us, when we think about art education, is we really look at the full spectrum of what that means and the place to see it exists.

But really it's grounded in all of these three ideas that our vision outlines there.

So a little bit more about the awards and how this fits in.

So quite practically, there's some headlines on the slide about what the awards are.

Just to kind of emphasise that this will be a five-year programme that we're committing to over £1.5 million directly to organisations for the awards.

Then each year there'll be 3 winning organisations, each receiving an unrestricted grant of £100,000.

We will also, separately to that, produce a case study – a film that will showcase the fantastic work you do.

As well as that, they'll be a celebration announcement event of the winners in November at Freelands Foundation's London-based venue.

I think that's just the headlines...

There's much more information about the awards themselves in the guidance document which you can download from our website.

So here's where we start talking about what's really pertinent to your applications.

The aim of the Freelands Awards are to celebrate and showcase visual art organisation's commitment to art education.

I'm going to pick out three concepts here that are highlighted in bold orange to really give you a sense of what we mean when we use these terms.

So when Freelands Foundation is talking about visual art and visual art organisations, we take quite an expansive approach to what that means.

Our perspective is it's really up to your organisation to identify as a visual art organisation and what visual arts you do.

It's not as though we have a prescriptive list that's kind of drawing, sculpture, painting. It's more so, what are practices that exist within your organisation and how do they form part of what you do?

And to put a bit of colour to what we mean by that, of course, visual art organisation could be things like galleries and museums. It could be things like studio spaces. It could also extend to multi arts organisations that might do a bit of performing arts, they might do music, but also visual arts strand.

Importantly for us, when it comes to visual art, it's about how that's a core offering of your organisation, how that sort of fits in with the context you're working in and the application.

You'll have a better sense of how to articulate that to us when it comes to that organisation side of things.

There are, yes, some kind of eligibility requirements that come along with that, which Bhavisha will talk about a little bit later.

But primarily just upfront, this is an opportunity for organisations.

As I mentioned, we have other opportunities for artists, and unfortunately this opportunity is not able to be extended to individuals.

But should you be in the context of being an individual, it might be worth reaching out to some of those organisations that you've worked with, and you know are really committed to art education on that.

When we're talking about commitment, this is a concept we're really looking for you to describe what your commitment means.

It can be really challenging in today's contexts to centre art education, or to promote it or to work with communities when we recognize there's lots of practical, financial or circumstantial constraints on the work that your organisation may do.

And the Freelands Awards is an opportunity that really looks to understand, as well as showcase, that fantastic commitment.

So similarly to art education to visual arts, we take a broad approach to what commitment might mean, but really rooted in your context. And that's something that you'll see come up in the application form that we're really looking to understand what that commitment looks like to you.

When we're talking about art education that really leads on from that visual art kind of concept we're talking about, we're not kind of focused on particular practices.

What we're really looking at is kind of three areas of that we work across. So that's quite broadly the formal education sector, schools, higher education, further education in formal sectors.

So that might be gallery provision, education provision or similar, or the idea of learning through practice, of how people can learn through making through artistic and visual practices.

That covers a whole broad spectrum of things when it comes to the award.

We're really looking to embrace all of these different types of practices, and part of the reason why we're having three winners instead of a traditional one is that we want to showcase a breadth of those practices in different contexts, in different organisations, at different scales, in different scopes.

Really, with this commitment to art education at its core, that's a long way of saying this is an opportunity that's not just about schools.

Don't get me wrong, if you've got fantastic schools programmes that you're working on, we would love to hear about them.

But we really encourage you as well to think about what are sort of alternative education places that you might be working in that might not immediately jump to mind, that might be better suited to this award.

I think finally, when it comes to those, this is all rooted in your context and community, which I've really talked about just a little bit.

The purpose of the award is to bring to light a lot of the fantastic practice that goes on in art organisations.

And in that sense, you'll see a lot of work in the application form about what that community means. And that's something we're really looking to showcase and spotlight.

But I think the main takeaway about the awards is we're really looking to learn from you, to understand what you're doing and to help showcase that fantastic work.

So don't think of this as like quite a prescriptive, you know, the best schools programme wins.

We're really looking to open this out to the sector to understand what practices do you value that your organisation's really committed to? And how is this art education core to sort of the practices that your organisation stands for on that?

And Bhavisha is going to tell you a little bit more about some of the nitty gritty of who this opportunity is open to.

Bhavisha Kukadia-Moran: Thanks, Mark. Yes, so I'm going to cover some of the eligibility in terms of where we have stated quite clearly what is eligible and what isn't eligible.

So starting off, the number one thing in order for your organisation to be eligible to apply for the Freelands Awards is that it is UK based, and we're talking about all Four Nations of the UK.

So as long as your work takes place in, or you are based in, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, you'll be eligible to apply.

But you also need to have a charitable purpose.

So this is a statement or a 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 premise, and we just need to know that you have one.

We're not checking that this charitable purpose matches the Freelands Awards exactly because they could be really broad, it could be really specific. But what we need to see is that you have a charitable purpose and that you fall into one of the following organisation types, which can be a registered charity.

We are also open to exempt charities, and they might exist as part of a local authority or a university, or a wider group or community interest companies.

Now, if your organisation type falls outside of this but still has a charitable purpose, it's still UK based, you're more than welcome to get in touch with us and we can double check that top line eligibility for you in this instance.

Because of course, part of the prize from Freelands Foundation is an unrestricted grant. And what we require is for that organisation to meet certain criteria to be able to accept an unrestricted grant from us in this instance.

So, there is more about that in the application guidance. It gives a little bit more of a little bit more information around charitable benefit. You can always check those things with us.

But hopefully that's really clear and you do have to have met both of those criteria before then adding on those additional layers of eligibility.

So once you are a UK based charity of that description, then are you also an arts organisation?

Are you also working in a way that meets the rest of our eligibility?

And you can check that on the checker that's available online.

You don't need to put any details in there that would identify you. It's purely for your own benefit in terms of just being able to run through the eligibility in the sort of a logic order that it needs to follow.

And hopefully that will give you an indication. But again, even if that indication feels vague or you're not quite sure or there are multiple elements at play, you can get in touch with us about that.

Now you may be wondering why we're starting with exclusions.

And the reason is that actually the inclusions, as Mark alluded to, are really varied and really open.

And we are genuinely interested in hearing your take on how your program or how your organisation responds to the sort of criteria that we've set out there.

So it feels like that would be a much longer, much more nuanced conversation about inclusions. But what we can be really confident with are our exclusions.

So I'll run through this list and I was, I will just pause on a couple of these and expand a little bit on them so we can get a little bit more context.

So the Freelands Awards are not open to organisations that do not offer consistent public presentation and visual art at their own venue.

You know, that is quite a wordy sentence.

And to break that down, as Mark mentioned when he was talking about visual arts and organisations may have multiple strands of work, one of which for this opportunity does need to be visual arts and it needs to be evidence in a public context.

So, the public need to be able to see or take part in your visual arts work.

So, we know that visual arts work can take place in lots of different ways. And quite a few of our opportunities that we've listed previously have maybe focused on research, or the focus on different things. But the Freelands Awards, in particular, is about that public presentation, and that links to the reason that we have stated that you must have your own venue.

Now, what we're not talking about when we're saying your own venue is what license or rent agreement you've got, etcetera.

What we mean by your own venue is that you have agency. Your organisation has agency over the space in which you occupy. So, you can programme that space.

That might be an outdoor space, for example, a sculptor trail.

But if that is your space in which you present visual arts work to the public, then that classes as a venue.

So, there may be some further nuance within that. But in general, we are talking about a place in which the public can see that work.

And then that place does need to be tied to your organisation. It makes it in a venue with other organisations in there.

If it's a consistent place that you know, we can find you, that the public can find you, then we're certainly interested in hearing from you on that point.

So this absolutely isn't about owning a venue outright, but it is about occupying a space. And we can of course talk more about that nuance if you have any further questions.

Of course we are excluding for profit organisations. If you have charitable benefit you don't need to worry about that.

These two things don't necessarily coexist, but we can have a look if you would like us to just have a look at organisations limited by guarantee etcetera. But we absolutely exclude any profit-making organisations.

As Mark mentioned, we are also excluding individuals.

The award is not able to be won by an individual, and the prize is not able to be received by individuals. And that is a hard line.

So primary or secondary schools, we understand that quite a bit of education work takes place in or with primary or secondary schools themselves or children, young people of primary or secondary school age.

But primary or secondary schools in of themselves aren't eligible for the Freelands Awards.

If your organisation works closely with these kinds of organisations, then it would be the visual art organisation who works for the primary school who would be the applicant.

So even if you're working with a multi academy trust, or a school which technically has charitable status, because we're talking also about that public presentation of work and that work being able to be seen, that would be the arts organisation that can fulfil that, who would be the applicant.

Although your work again might take place with those groups or with those places.

And that's the same for further education colleges and university teaching faculty.

So I have highlighted this slightly because what the faculty in of itself within a university, so the art school isn't eligible under this particular opportunity.

Freelands Foundation does fund art schools and universities through our other grant programmes and our fellowship programme, but in terms of the Freelands Awarda, they are ineligible organisations for this particular award.

You may be a gallery that is attached to a university and is a separate building, although you may fall under your organisation's sort of wider charitable status that is eligible. And we can again talk about the nuance of that.

But for example, if you are a gallery that happens to be on a university campus, or your collections are shared or have come from a university for example, those are seen as a separate arts organisation, and those organisations are eligible.

Whereas the teaching faculty, whereby you would have undergraduate students enrolled, that wouldn't be classed as eligible.

So we're also not funding sector or infrastructure organisations, for example, those that may have membership bodies or who are working outside of their focus being a public presentation or working with the public. And we also are not funding fiscal sponsor relationships.

So what we mean by this is where there may be a large organisation who will act as a bank account or a sponsor for a smaller or

unincorporated organisation. And that in this instance is not relevant or it's not eligible.

But what we're not saying is, we're not precluding where that takes place in partnership.

So lots of organisations may have different partnership arrangements with other organisations. And it really is kind of down to you to decide whom best is eligible for this opportunity because the funding and the prize would obviously go to the listed organisation.

But we do know that lots of work takes place in partnership of all different sizes and shapes. And if there is something that you would like to check with us around partnerships, then first of all, go away and have a look at the eligibility. You could run through that checker with different hats on or different scenarios and then do come to us and you can kind of double check that.

But of course, the work that takes place or has taken place, which I suppose is the key thing with Freelands Foundation may have taken place with lots of partners involved. And really, it's about being able to explain that.

But in the sense of a fiscal sponsorship, that is not something that we're able to do because the bank account and all of the details need to match the applicant for the Freelands Award. And that is where any prize monies, should you be successful, would be going.

And that's just a final quick iteration around our work around in the United Kingdom.

So no activity that you would be applying to us for should have taken place outside of the United Kingdom.

There's one last eligibility requirement that might not apply to everyone, but we just like to open this out.

Freelands Foundation has worked with a wide range of art organisations across the United Kingdom over the last, I think it's 11 years now. And for this opportunity, organisations who've previously received funding from Freelands Foundation are eligible for the Freelands Awards. If you've been in receipt of a grant currently or in the past, you are open to

apply for this opportunity. The only caveat to this is you cannot apply with a project that has been funded by Freelands Foundation.

And so, if let's say for example, you're an arts organisation who Freelands Foundation has funded your work with schools, the school's work would not be eligible to be considered. But if you also had a stream of work that was working with a local refugee community, that would be eligible from funding through the Freelands Awards for example.

If you've got particular questions regarding your relationship with Freelands Foundation, feel free to reach out to us and we can provide more context on that.

Thanks, Mark.

Mark: So, I'm just going to go through the key information and dates about applying.

So of course, the applications are open now and we're having this webinar today. There is another one of these webinars on the 12th of March which people are able to sign up to.

The deadline for applications is midday on Tuesday the 24th of March.

And following this, the applications will be reviewed, and a shortlist of 6 organisations will be put together by the judges.

And at this stage we will be getting in touch with organisations that have not been successful to make it to this shortlist, and we will inform those organisations that are on the shortlist.

So the second part of the judging process is for the judging panel to visit those six shortlisted organisations which we'll be arranging over the summer months.

Then in September, the shortlisted organisations will be informed whether they've been successful at winning the award or not.

And the public announcement of the winners will take place in November alongside an event.

So the process for applying all this information is available on our website. There's a guidance document which covers all this in detail about eligibility.

And as Bhavisha mentioned, you can also use the eligibility checker to assess your own situation. And as I said, there's another one of these webinars. And of course, you can reach out to us anytime to ask questions as well.

So once you've reviewed the guidance and consider the eligibility criteria, the next step is to send an expression of interest form to us.

We'll go into a bit more detail in this at the moment, but this is your opportunity to introduce your organisation, your contacts, and the projects with which you're applying. And the deadline for this is the 24th of March.

Alongside this, you have the option to include an access form, which is where you can share any information with us about any barriers that you might face in the application process because we want to make it as accessible to everybody as we can and make reasonable adjustments.

Again, we'll go into that in a bit more detail in a moment.

So as Rachel mentioned, the first step is a submission of an expression of interest form.

And this hopefully will be a relatively light touch form compared to other sort of grant applications you've experienced. And we're really looking to understand the story of your organisation, your project, and how this relates to commitment to visual art education.

So there's a couple of dot points there to outline what we're looking for. I think importantly though, there is that, again, centering commitment, but also, we're looking for you to demonstrate the impact of that commitment.

Your project that you're proposing for the award will have already happened. This is not a grant for new work. You won't need to submit a project plan.

And this is really about work that you've previously done that has demonstrated a really fantastic commitment to furthering visual art education in your context.

And then we would like to understand how that has impacted the people that you've worked with. This could be the communities directly the beneficiaries, this could be your team, this could be other people within your organisation.

But what demonstrable impact has that educational practice had within your organisation?

The project must have been active between January 2025 and 2026.

And what we mean by this is it could be a long running project that's finished in let's say March 2025, or it could be continually ongoing beyond January 2026, or it could have started in February and run through to October of 2025.

And basically, we're not looking for work that hasn't happened yet, and we're also not looking for work that happened way back in the past.

What we're really looking to understand is what your commitment to art education looked like and how impacted those involved in sort of the contemporary time.

You'll also notice when it comes to the expression of interest form, there's an option to include supporting material that can be additional text, images. It could also be audio or video. There are additional information in the guidance about the submission of this for you. It's really to kind of bolster the story that you're telling through that expression of interest form rather than supplying the questions.

So think of it as ways that you can include additional richness to the answers that you're providing. And I think that we'll then move on to sort of some access bits and pieces.

Bhavisha: Hi, yes. So, in terms of access support, our first port of call 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 judging.

So that might mean something different to different people.

And the way that we've decided to approach this is by openly asking for to understand access requirements on an individual basis.

So it may be the case that we're able to have a discussion and that might be more comfortable to have over the phone.

We do have the access form. It asks 3 very simple questions. And you're also able to call us and we all can ask you those questions.

If you'd like to do that verbally or if you would like to sort of have help putting in that form or you just want to chuck it in an e-mail, that's absolutely fine.

What we will do with that is then review and speak with you, get back in touch with you to ensure that we can make the reasonable adjustments that you need in order to put in an expression of interest in the first instance. So that might be when we're able to agree on having an audio submission or a video submission, and as long as all of the same questions are addressed as they would have been on a written form, then we can ensure that there's some equity in the process for you.

One thing that we are also, I mean we're not saying yes or no to any form of access. We would like to address it on a person by person, case by case basis.

So some, you know, large funding bodies offer the opportunity to have an access support worker. That's not something that we are including, but also if that's something that you do need, then it's something that we can discuss.

So it's not a sort of blanket approach to access.

It might be that we're able to reissue our forms and guidance in a way or in a format or with software that works better for you.

And the way that you need to sort of take in this information, we're more than happy, you know, to redo it in a large print to look at ways in which it's just a lot easier for screen readers, etcetera.

So what I would say is if you feel happy and confident and comfortable to let us know what access requirements you do have, then we are absolutely able to do our best to make this is accessible and as bespoke as it needs to be for anyone who does have access requirements.

So in the first instance, it's about ensuring that you can put in that expression of interest to be judged along all the others.

And then if you are successful and there are a different set of access requirements, should you be taken to the second round and the judging etcetera, then we can look at those again if that, if that option becomes available.

Rachel: So just to run through briefly then what happens once your expression of interest has been sent to us?

So the initial review will be for eligibility and then there'll be a review of the projects in your contexts and the impacts that it's had. And this will be done by Freelands Foundation staff and by the panel of judges who I'll show you in a moment.

As I mentioned before, a shortlist of 6 organisations will be pulled together from all the applications and we will be in touch whether or not you are proceeding to this second stage.

So here are our judges. We'll be in touch around May to let you know whether you've been shortlisted or not and then looking to arrange a visit by the judging panel in May, June or July.

We'll let you know in advance what it is that the judges would be interested in finding more about when they come to visit you and what the aims might be that we want to get out of it.

And we are also aware of the resources and time that it would take for an organisation to host a visit such as this. So there is a £1000 support grant available to the shortlisted organisations, to all six of the shortlisted organisations, whether they then go on to be the three final winners or not.

So just to point out, then following the visits, organisations will find out whether they are one of the three winners in September. And then the announcement, there'll be no public announcement of that shortlist. The winners would be announced in November.

So we've covered the background, the content that we wanted to go through with you today.

There are a few questions in the Q&A, I can see a couple in the chat as well. If you have the Q&A available, please continue to pop your questions in there just so that we don't miss any that are in the chat. So, I'm just going to open these.

There's an initial question about sharing the recording and slides. Yes, these will both be available on our website afterwards, so you can use them as a reference when you're then filling out your EOI.

So first question, is there a requirement about how big the studio space could be? I have a purpose-built art studio next to my home and this is where I run my practice from and the community coming to attend the art workshops. So the question around eligibility of that, yeah.

Bhavisha: So I suppose in this case you would have to ensure that your organisation meets all of the criteria including the charitable objects and the organisation type etcetera. So as long as you can run through and hit all of the eligibility criteria and that there is a way to justify if what you are hosting is an arts organisation, if you are director of an arts organisation and this arts organisation, regardless of its physical footprint still needs to meet all of the eligibility criteria.

And if that is something that you'd just like to get back in touch with us on, you can do.

But yes, it and of course, in amongst that we have outlined that the prize can't be received by a single individual or a single artist. So you would have to think about that full eligibility.

Rachel: Yeah, a couple of questions around projects and programmes. So do you have to submit a specific project or can you submit a programme of connected activity?

Is there opportunity to discuss with someone the different options of case studies we would like to submit?

Mark: I think this is a really good question as there's different forms of language that are used in different organisations, whether it's project or program or strand of work.

For us, we're somewhat agnostic as to what particular label you use.

And for us, though it's really about, you know, what does that work entail? And it's sort of contains piece of work that can kind of describe how it's demonstrably impacted a community. And as well as how it demonstrates your organisation's commitment to art education.

To be clear, we're not looking for the full gambit of everything your organisation does and how it all feeds together to showcase commitment to art education.

We're really looking for that sort of exemplar of it.

And so that might mean if you're an organisation that only has one strand of art education programming, that's fine.

You'll naturally be applying with that if you might have three or five or ten different types of work or a mix of sort of one of programmes or long going projects. It's really what is the exemplar of your commitment and how has that best demonstrated?

One thing that unfortunately we can't offer is 1:1 consultation about those particular programmes.

And part of that is Bhavisha, Rachel and myself, we form the team that work on the admin of this also form part of that assessment process at different points. So we don't want to preclude your opportunity by offering a personal perspective without that full assessment occurring.

The other side of it is that really for us, it's about you to describe in your context, what is the best form of commitment to art education that's out there that you work with and what most closely aligns with the Freelands Awards.

And really you're the experts in your work.

We'd love to for you to share that with us. And the articulation of that is something that we're really passionate for you to kind of to authentically own and embrace.

So unfortunately, we won't be able to, to provide particular like direction when it comes to which programme to choose. But I would direct you back to the written guidance or reflect on kind of this webinar session that should provide you with a bit of a steer on what might more closely align with the Freelands Awards than others.

Rachel: And just to follow on from that, there's another question relating to the project terminology.

So just a question on what is defined as a project? Would a program which is varied activities within the same audience, i.e. schools, be classed as a project?

Mark: Short answer, yes, it could. Again, back to that what makes sense as kind of to communicate the story of that work.

I suppose we we've used the word project and programme throughout the guidance. So those can be interchangeable.

But it's really about, you know, what is the, the, the practice and the actual work that best exemplifies this commitment rather than the full spectrum of everything your organisation does.

Rachel: Yeah, great. Thank you.

So, in terms of the time frame with regards to a project that happened in the last year, does it matter how many projects there were or how many people were engaged?

Or would the evaluation be more focused on the impact and how it has helped various communities?

Bhavisha: Yes. So there's a couple of things to unpick from there.

I think one of them was around sort of the idea of data. I would say it's very clear from the application form the things that we're not asking for is how many people have you engaged with your projects, as long as there were people engaged.

What we're not focusing on is the biggest or the largest, or an arbitrary number, because as we say, in your context could mean something completely different for a large organisation.

It actually might be about scale, or it might actually be about depth rather than breadth. So those elements we're not necessarily asking for because those wouldn't be like sort of fair markers to compare any organisation to another.

So in terms of the number of projects you would be choosing, the one or program that you would you think best demonstrates your commitment. And that's absolutely down to you.

You know, you may run several and choose the one that feels like it's the best fit for the Freelands Awards or the one that you feel really demonstrates commitment. And you might mention the others because that you know, that is part of how your organisation works.

Your commitment might be in this in in context of your own work. You know, we used to have one program and now we have 7. You know, that's entirely down to the individual circumstances.

And I will also just pull in another sort of data-based question that somebody else has asked around whether there are areas in the UK that will be funded or received more for.

No, it absolutely comes down to who decides to apply for the Freelands Award and they are all taken in, you know, sort of equally.

Once we get those EOI's coming in, there's no desire to sort of prioritise some areas above others. We are really, really keen to get as many applications as we can from across the country.

So if you are in Wales, if you are in Northern Ireland, if you are in the, you know, remote parts of Cumbria or the West Country, please do apply. This absolutely isn't an opportunity that says, you know, major organisations or major cities, etcetera, urban environments, there is no

emphasis on that. But we're absolutely so keen to hear from all areas of the country.

And so as the last thing around data, I think somebody in the chat has asked whether we would be using a scoring matrix and whether that's available. A scoring matrix wouldn't be available as part of the details and the data that we're publishing ahead of the judging.

There might be, you know, decisions to be made about how we communicate the sort of data around the full and the full process after we've all announced the winners.

But at this point in time, we won't be giving any scoring matrixes.

Everything that you see in the guidance, and on the form is exactly what we will be using. So, all of that information is already available to you.

Rachel: Great. Thank you.

So this question is the guidelines mentioned 'demonstrating a commitment to progressive art education approaches'. Can you say a bit more about what you mean by 'progressive' in this context?

Mark: Yeah, sure. And I think I'm going to frustrate a few people with my response, unfortunately.

But when we're referring to things like progressive art education, we're really looking to understand what that means in your context.

I think it's safe to say that there are ways that you can be committed to art education, that don't necessarily sit at the forefront of what the sector's looking at when it comes to that "demonstrable impact.

So, I think the progressive really kind of ties into that 'impact piece' when it comes to your work.

And I think ... I'm going to pick a music example, so I don't pick on anyone's particular project.

But if for example, I was running a project where I was purchasing musical instruments for young people in schools, that could be either

really quite traditional or low impact, or it could be massively impactful depending on the context of the organisation. And if we transfer into a visual art context, that's the framework we're using.

It's really what is the context and that demonstrable impact that you're working with when we're thinking about those concepts of like, well, what do we mean by progressive? It's very much rooted in the communities you're working with and the context your organisation operates in.

Rachel: OK, thank you.

The next one is: are partnerships with universities eligible?

Mark: Yes, Yeah. Back to Bhavisha's point, this is really focused around sort of galleries within universities rather than teaching faculties themselves.

Rachel: Great, thank you.

And then do you anticipate the award happening in 2027 as well? Yes. Go ahead Mark.

Mark: Yeah, we anticipate it happening not only in 2027 but for the next 5 years inclusive of this year, which I believe takes us up to 2030.

So ultimately, by the end of the programme, there will be 15 award winners for the Freelands Awards programme.

Rachel: A question here about the venue.

We share a studio with other charitable organisations and community groups and we use it twice a week.

Bhavisha: OK. So in terms of however long you use that for, it sounds like that is still your venue.

I mean, it would absolutely depend on you sort of speaking to those other charitable organisations.

If your work takes place in the studio, if it's publicly accessible and it's where you show visual arts work and where the work that you come

towards the projects or the program that you describe takes place in that place, then yes, potentially that is that is eligible, and would class us as a venue that you use.

Rachel: Great, thank you.

If you have two eligible projects across different branches of your organisation, would you welcome 2 separate applications or would you recommend selecting 1 and focusing on that?

Mark: We would recommend selecting 1 and focusing on that particular, as I say, like exemplar of your organisation's work.

Rachel: Right, thanks.

My question was about the three areas of our education, formal informal learning through practice. Do the three awards make focus on one of the areas each or does the applicant need to be delivering all types of education?

Mark: The answer to that is it's kind of serendipity that we've got sort of those three areas we're working on and three awards.

There's no direct relationship between those areas and each of the awards. It's not as though there'll be one award for formal, one award for informal, one award for learning through practice.

Similarly, it's not going to be 3 awards for organisations who are doing all those three at once.

For us, it's really about there are kind of these three broad spaces, the Foundation practices across. And we're open to applications that might touch on any one of those three areas.

It might touch on a couple of those areas or all three of those areas, again depending on the context you work in.

So for us, it's really an opportunity for you to think about the breadth of educational practice that you offer and which of those sort of programming streams that best align with the Freelands Awards, rather than what kind of relationship between those areas of work and the awards themselves.

Rachel: So we've had another question along similar lines, but just to ensure it's been covered, do the successful organisations have to cover all three of the areas mentioned, formal sector, informal learning through practice? Or are you looking for a specific group or community that we are working with?

Mark: It's a good question. We will be looking at a the community that you're working with rather than you must be working one of those three buckets.

It's really up to you to define what that community looks like.

It might be quite contained, like particular group of people that have sort of shared relationship of somehow whether it's a community organisation, whether it's a school. But it also might be a group that is like more... it can grow, it can shrink, it might be working directly with sort of artists in practicing and learning.

So, for us, it's really about that kind of like you defining who is the community that you've impacted, rather than a direct relationship to those three areas, which you can kind of work across work everything one, it's all fine for us.

Rachel: An eligibility question about venue.

We're a visual arts organisation that has developed a festival model since 1999 with public exhibitions, events, public program in unconventional or mainly non-art spaces. In our 2025 festival we presented commissions by 8 artists, one with two schools for a street parade with over 550 visual artists in our fringe programme.

In the past we have run our own venue, but currently we work many partnership spaces, for example artists from project spaces, meanwhile spaces and more than that we are a place-based organisation.

Are we eligible?

Bhavisha: OK, so there's quite a quite a bit in there. I suppose it would matter in what you mean by place-based organisation.

So for example, if that is, you know, one specific area of the country, one specific area of a town, city in urban, rural environment, etcetera.

And then in addition to that where your work can be found. So if the you say festivals, you know potentially those festivals take place in the same place.

Is there is there a lasting elements that work, you know, can the public view that work overtime?

And we're thinking also very specifically about the work that you've come to us with. You know, like we've mentioned a few times this morning, you might have multiple projects and many of them touch on education.

But the one that you're really thinking about whether you would, you know, you would like to put forward as that epitome of what you consider to be commitment to art education, that particular project, you know, where is also where is that taking place?

You know, how would an organisation who don't have a specific venue that is a bricks and mortar venue. And we mentioned sculpture trails, we've mentioned outdoor practice, but we are still looking at that sort of tangible element to it, and that longer lasting element to where you generally show your visual arts work.

And we know that some of that visual arts work might be short lived. It might be if I'm ephemeral.

But I think in this case we'd have to really think about what your definition is around place based. What's your definition around the actual work that you're presenting to us and also what the structure of your organisation is? What kind of organisation are you? How do you describe that? What is your charitable benefit?

So it kind of needs to take all of the eligibility as a full picture, rather than the one specific element around the venue.

That might be something you might want to think about and go back through the eligibility checker, or speak to us about sort of on a 1:1.

Rachel: Great, thank you. We've had a few questions about if an organisation were to win and about the spending of the grant.

So what are the expectation, expectations in terms of the timeline to spend the grant money?

Mark: I think this is a really good question. And a bit of context about this opportunity is this is the first time Freelands Foundation will be offering an unrestricted style of grant to organisations.

So it's a little bit of a learning journey for us as well. And that's kind of in response to a lot of the pressures that we know that the sector is facing when it comes to funding.

And we're in the fortunate position to kind of work with you to understand what that timeline looks like.

As this is quite a broad opportunity that might cover everywhere from kind of the biggest national scale galleries all the way down through to the kind of local small art spaces.

We know that the way that money will be spent and how we spent will be different for each organisation.

So it's not as though I can provide you with a definitive answer right here, right now about what that looks like as we'll look to understand what that means kind of with those winners to ensure that we're providing the right resources at the right time that matches the expectations of the organisation.

And I think there's just one connected question, which is just about how we do we need to specify how the award would be spent and the answer is no.

This award is entirely sort of past focused about fantastic work you've done. We don't need to know about what that funding will be used for.

There are some exceptions to what the funding can be used for. And I'll direct you to the guidance about that, which outlines that more.

And we can discuss that with kind of shortlisted organisations so they have a clearer picture of that at that kind of phase of the process. But it's not as though you need to have a plan for that funding now.

Rachel: Great. Thank you.

A question about a project that started in 2025 but is ongoing. So the evaluation and its impact is still being gathered. Will the Freelands

Awards reopen in 2027 following roughly the same timeline when we can showcase the impact more fully?

So, the answer to that is yes, it's going to be running for the next 5 years, and it'll be working along this timeline.

Another one, our venue is opening this May. However, we have continued working off site with schools and communities while preparing for opening. Are we ineligible this year because we haven't had an operational venue from January 25 to 26?

Bhavisha: It might, yeah. It might be the case that you wish to wait until the 2027 awards because we would be looking at that sort of previous year.

And if within that year, yes, we can't hit the eligibility in terms of you having a venue or you know, the use of a venue because also, and it's kind of links to another question in terms of if you were to win the prize money, then that becomes an unrestricted grant that then is used much later than the original work that took place, if that makes sense. In terms of timeline, and there's no limit or you know, the money has to be spent within a certain time frame.

I mean, for those who are lucky enough to win the award, there will be much more bespoke conversation around that. And all of the sort of conditions or evaluation elements would be discussed with the winners.

But at this point in time, I would probably look at getting the strongest application in that you can. And if you feel that there's more strength in having already established at your venue and had that year of activity, even if it straddles the venue opening, if you feel that that's a stronger prospect, then I would encourage you to go in with sort of the strongest case that you have.

Rachel: Kind of along those lines is that if we apply this year and are unsuccessful, we'll be allowed to reapply in future rounds.

Mark: I think this is a really good question. At this point, we have no restrictions on reapplication for the Freelands Awards.

However, I will direct you towards future guidance, which is not yet available, just to make sure that for that opportunity that you would be eligible.

But at this stage, we have no, we have no restrictions on that.

Rachel: Great, thank you.

Similar to what you were talking about before, Mark, about spending of the grant, but just to make sure, in case there's anything you want to add... over what period should the award be spent and should it be used to deliver the exemplar strand that wins the award?

Mark: I think this is a good question, particularly because Freelands Foundation mostly is known for, sort of, the project funding. This is quite different from previous opportunities we've run as an unrestricted grant, and we are not looking to determine what the funding should be spent on.

And it doesn't have to be spent on that particular strand of programming you've discussed.

For example, the project you might have be submitting with might have already concluded. So there's no, there's no kind of way to fund that.

Additionally, for us, it's really about how can we empower organisations with financial resource in recognition of really fantastic work that's happened and to understand how you will choose to use that funding.

And it may be that it might go towards that particular form of programming in terms of kind of staffing or upskilling. But it also might be things like you have a lift that you need to fix or the toilets have been missing a toilet seat for the last 12 years and we really want to replace that. Don't get me wrong, I don't think you need to spend £100,000 on that.

But for us it's really about kind of turning it over to organisations to understand what they need from this particular sort of one off investment of funding that they can think of a whole bunch of different ways that they can use at their discretion.

Rachel: Great, thanks.

So next is, I'm a CIC founder and director with two unrelated directors. However, I'm the one who delivers the projects and facilitates work workshops. Is this acceptable under eligibility?

Bhavisha: OK. So we know that there's a range of organisation types and that those organisations are, you know, run in a number of ways because you you've already said that you are a CIC.

So my presumption is that you would then have a charitable object or a charitable purpose and that you may actually meet some of the other eligibility criteria regardless of who actually delivers your work.

You know, we may have an organisation here where the work's been delivered by freelancers or the work's been delivered by artists or in, you know, in partnership, etcetera.

So we're not necessarily in the eligibility asking who's actually delivered the projects and facilitated the workshops etcetera, because we know that organisations may work in a huge number of ways.

So that sits slightly separate to the eligibility. But obviously, it's important for you to include when you're talking about your project, who you've worked with, how you've worked, etcetera.

I'm not sure, in terms of the point with the unrelated directors, I mean, whatever your company structure is, as long as we can see that we can understand that and that's all transparent, then we would take the eligibility from there.

Rachel: OK, thanks.

And how about several academies collaborating on a joint project, Should we also consider partnering with a charitable organisation to strengthen the impact?

Bhavisha: OK, so in terms of the academies collaborate, so in the first instance it would need to be an arts organisation that needs to apply.

So we will just go back up to that and that was sort of the top line charitable organisation, arts organisation, you know, work taking place in the UK. Those are sort of non negotiable elements of the eligibility.

And the other thing to remember is this work has already taken place.

So if you did already partner with a charitable organisation to strengthen your impact, then perhaps they would be the lead the of the applicant who they would be presenting that meprogram happened in partnership with several academies, for example. But at this point in time, it wouldn't be useful to sort of change the lens by which she works because we're looking at work that's already taken place.

It might be the case that you, you know, you think that you might make changes because there are still 4 iterations of the feelings award to come. And it might strengthen the way that you that you work, and you may wish to apply in the future.

But in terms of this opportunity at this time, we are looking at work that's already taken place in the full context of that.

Rachel: Right next, how should the outputs the schools made possible with this funding be represented?

Should it be free to access or should the schools be expected to pay?

Mark: This is not something that we explicitly cover in the guidance.

It's not something that we have a defined perspective on because, really again, it's down to context and understanding what that means.

And it's not as though this opportunity is only open to free to access programs, but I think that's one thing to consider if you've got a number of programs that you're running when it comes, that could be a factor that that speaks to your commitment to art education and how it's impacted communities.

That is one, sort of, small facet that may factor into your decision making about different programming strands. But it's not as though we have a blanket rule that it must be free to access.

Rachel: Right. We've got a few minutes left and just a few more questions that have been submitted.

Are visual based STEAM projects acceptable?

Mark: They might be, this is unfortunately going to be another one of my cop out answers.

But for us, it's really about that sort of visual art education piece. Like what does how does the visual art sort of sit within this programme?

And yes, it can be multi sort of disciplinary or cross curricular in a school context, but it's really about that sort of commitment to art education that sits at the core of the Freelands Awards.

Rachel: How does it work if our presentation is by a touring?

Bhavisha: A touring organisation? I suppose it depends on your, your definition then of that work that took place and what would be the project?

Would it you would have to think about whether you were applying with an organisation that you talked to and were you the sort of the partner in the work and the commitment sits with the, you know, the pair of organisations or the venue itself.

Those, those are probably the kinds of conversations that probably need to happen offline when thinking about the eligibility because the touring organisation in and of itself potentially won't meet the eligibility criteria in terms of what we're talking about in other venue. And that there's also an element there around a consistent presentation.

I know somebody else might have mentioned this in the chat where we say, sort of, a consistent presentation of visual art.

And yes, that does mean sort of overtime, or in the same place overtime.

So you may be an organisation that does the same stretch of time in a venue every year and that's it. That's the exhibition that you put on between you know, May and September every year. But the rest of the year, potentially, you're sort of without, non venue based and working on different projects etcetera. But it is about that consistency.

The consistency also applies to visual arts.

So as Mark mentioned right up at the top, you may be an organisation that is multidisciplinary.

You have, you know, you cover lots of different art forms, but the visual arts must be consistent.

So you may have like 4 programme strands. If one of those programme strands is visual art and every single year you're putting out visual arts programming, that would be consistent.

If you're a multidisciplinary organisation and you spent the last couple of years doing all sorts of different work and then there's been a little bit of visual arts thrown in or it's kind of been added on to something else, then we wouldn't consider that to be a consistent presentation of visual arts, whether it's in a venue or outside a venue, etcetera.

Rachel: Great, thank you. From what I can see, we've just got one final question in the chat, which is will short films count within your broad definition of visual arts?

It's only one of our visual arts mediums, but I'd like to include it if relevant to you.

Mark: Yes. So moving image would fall within sort of the boundaries of visual art.

But I think, you know, there's a couple of these fuzzy grey areas where it's sort of moving art, performance art, Sonic art.

And for us, it's really, we'd like to turn it over to you to explain how this sort of practice and work sits within the visual arts context, rather than prescribing exactly what art forms we think visual arts entails.

Rachel: Great. Thank you everyone for your questions. Then we'll, we'll wrap up now. It'd be really helpful for us to get your thoughts on this webinar.