

Job Application Pack
Head of Finance



Photo: Hydar Dewachi

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in our vacancy for a Head of Finance.

In the following pages you will find:

- An explanation of the application process.
- An overview of what we do here at Freelands Foundation, and why we do it.
- A job description that sets out what this role is responsible for and who it reports to.
- A person specification that sets out what we think the requirements are for someone to do this role, in terms of experience, knowledge, skills, qualifications and attributes.
- A summary of terms that sets out the salary, hours, working pattern, working location and the benefits we offer.

The application process

You will need to read through this job application pack, and we also encourage you to take a look at our website. If you would like to apply for this role then please follow the link on our careers page, and provide the following via the online application form:

1. An up-to-date CV.
2. Responses to the application questions outlined at the end of this pack.
3. Contact details of two referees.

AI tools, such as ChatGPT, can be useful for exploring thoughts but we ask that the words you share with us are your own. Responses that feel overly generic or artificially generated may not reflect the individuality we value and could affect how your application is perceived or result in it being rejected.

Accessibility

If using the online portal is not accessible to you, please let us know by emailing recruitment@freelandsfoundation.co.uk and we will do our best to accommodate your needs so that your application can still be considered.

Deadline

The deadline for applications is **12pm (noon) on 17 July 2026**. Anything we receive after that deadline will not be considered.

Next steps

We will consider all completed applications received by the deadline. Please read the full person specification; this is the framework we use for assessing candidates throughout the recruitment process. If you are not sure if you meet all the essential requirements, please don't automatically rule yourself out – let us do the scoring.

We will create a shortlist for first interviews and send a response out to all applicants that either invites you to an interview or lets you know that your application has been unsuccessful. Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we do not provide feedback on unsuccessful applications at this stage.

If you are invited to interview, your interview invitation will let you know where to go, when, and what to expect. We will also ask what adjustments we can make to ensure your interview is fully accessible to you.



We may provide some questions in advance, and we may also ask interviewees to prepare or take part in a practical exercise as part of their interview. If so, we will include full details of that in advance as well, and everyone invited to interview will get the same information. We may also ask to take up some references in advance, with your permission. This would not include your current employer, unless you permitted us.

There will be at least two rounds of interviews. The first round will be a 20–30-minute video or voice call with the Director of Finance and Operations, and the second will be an in-person interview with a panel, likely to last up to an hour. We will let all our interviewees know our decision as quickly as we can, and offer feedback based on their application and interview, if they would like it.

Interview dates

We are aiming to hold first-round interviews on **22 July 2026** and the second round on **28 July 2026**. If this changes, we will let everyone affected know as quickly as we can.

More information

This appointment is subject to a Standard DBS check.

Freelands Foundation is committed to anti-racism and to addressing inequality in the art sector. We warmly welcome applications from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse candidates, as individuals from these backgrounds are currently underrepresented at all levels of our organisation.

We have tried to make this application as comprehensive as possible. If you cannot find the information you need before deciding whether to apply, please email recruitment@freelandsfoundation.org.uk

We really appreciate you reading this far and thank you for your time and interest.

With best wishes,

Freelands Foundation



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About Freelands Foundation

Freelands Foundation champions art education. Freelands Foundation believes in the intrinsic value of art and that making is fundamental. Its vision is to increase the status of art education, enable equality of access and promote material literacy.

The Foundation supports this important work in formal education settings, in galleries and art organisations, and by learning through artistic practice. Its charitable programme provides vital funding through grants, awards, fellowships and residencies. It also commissions innovative action research to inform the Foundation's future support and to help make progress across the sector. At the Foundation's home in London, as well as online, there is a programme of lively discussions, workshops and events for teachers, artists, and gallery and art professionals, alongside a growing library of inspiring art education resources.

Our operating model is based around three main pillars – Programmes, Audiences and Finance & Operations. We work collaboratively to ensure that our programmes and operations serve our audiences in delivering our mission.

Freelands Foundation was set up in 2015 by Elisabeth Murdoch. It is a registered charity (number 1162648).



Photo: Matthew Blunderfield



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About the role

Freelands Foundation is looking for a Head of Finance to deliver and contribute to Freelands Foundation's financial strategy to enable the Foundation to achieve its ambitious strategic objectives. This role will play a pivotal part in supporting the scaling of the Foundation over the next few years, including a major capital project for our Errol Street building, a significant expansion of key programmes and reaching new audiences for our work.

This opportunity is perfect for a qualified chartered accountant with at least five years' experience at a senior level, who is excited and ready to bring their skills to a growing team with the aim of making a real impact in art education. We are looking for someone with significant experience working in the charity sector in a finance leadership position, with in-depth knowledge of both UK Charity SORP requirements and US Private Foundation regulations.

Please see the full job description and role requirements overleaf for more details.



Photo: Abiola Remi-Lawal



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Job description

Role purpose

Reporting to the Director of Finance and Operations, the Head of Finance will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Foundation's Finance function, leading on all reporting, payments and compliance. This role will also deliver and contribute to Freelands Foundation's financial strategy by managing financial planning and running accounting systems, ensuring that they meet Freelands Foundation's strategic objectives and align with our values. The Head of Finance will line manage the Finance Officer.

Role responsibilities

Financial strategy and planning

- Lead the annual budgeting and reforecasting process, working collaboratively with departmental budget holders to ensure expenditure is accurately monitored and any variances are clearly understood.
- Conduct scenario modelling and financial analysis to support new programmes, grant rounds and capital projects.
- Maintain accurate cashflow forecasts to allow appropriate drawdowns from the Foundation's investment portfolio.
- Manage relationships with the Foundation's banking partners and financial software providers, ensuring a high level of service and that all tools are fit for purpose.

Management and statutory reporting

- Produce monthly management accounts to provide the Foundation's leadership with accurate and timely information on the financial health of the organisation.
- Prepare high-quality financial reports and papers for the Executive Leadership and Board of Trustees.
- Manage the year-end audit process and produce statutory accounts compliant with Charity Commission and Companies House requirements, in addition to collating and submitting the Trustees' Annual Report.
- Lead on the preparation of the Foundation's US tax filings, including the FBAR, 9990PF and estimated tax payments.
- Prepare and submit UK Corporation Tax returns when necessary.
- Prepare and submit the Foundation's P11D reporting.

Payments

- Manage the Foundation's bi-weekly payments process, ensuring all suppliers and expenses are paid accurately and on a timely basis.
- Liaise with the Programmes team to ensure that all grant payments are made promptly and accurately, in line with our governance processes.
- Lead the monthly Payroll process for employees and temporary workers, including payments of salaries, benefits and employment taxes.

Compliance and risk management

- Ensure the Foundation adheres to all relevant accounting standards and regulatory requirements, including the Charity SORP and US Private Foundations 5% minimum distribution rule.



- Ensure all financial controls are complied with and continuously seek improvements to our internal processes to minimise risk.
- Put procedures in place to protect the organisation from financial fraud and conduct relevant training to ensure all team members are aware of the latest risks.

Team leadership and business partnering

- Provide inspiring and supportive line management to the Finance Officer, with clear objectives and effective ongoing performance management.
- Support the wider organisation in finance-related decision-making, including upskilling the wider organisation in financial awareness.
- Ensure the Foundation's financial processes enable the wider team to achieve their strategic objectives, actively seeking feedback on ways to improve the service Finance provides.

Freelands Foundation contribution

- Undertake such tasks that are needed to deliver this role's responsibilities.
- Work in cooperation with colleagues across the organisation, providing support and cover as needed within available time and resource.
- Undertake organisational training as required.
- Work within the organisation's agreed policies and processes, confirming such with a senior manager where clarity is needed.
- Uphold the organisation's values and mission in all internal and external interactions undertaken on behalf of Freelands Foundation.

The above job description is intended to be an outline of the duties and responsibilities of this role. This is not exhaustive, and it is likely to change over time.



Person specification

Essential

Experience

- At least five years' experience working in the charity sector in senior-level finance positions.
- Substantial senior-level experience working with external auditors on annual audits and tax filings.
- Direct experience of financial planning, including setting and monitoring budgets.
- Solid experience in line managing and developing direct reports.
- Experience working within a complex charity structure or a private foundation.
- Experience in reporting to Companies House, the Charity Commission and the US Internal Revenue Service.

Knowledge

- In-depth knowledge of the UK Charity SORP requirements.
- In-depth knowledge of US Private Foundation federal and state regulations.
- Good working knowledge of Xero software and Expensify.

Skills

- Ability to learn new processes and concepts quickly and to apply them in practice consistently and accurately.
- Ability to process financial information with a high level of detail and care, analyse accounts and define what constitutes sensitive data.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to ensure information and decision-making is clear and transparent.
- Ability to work well both independently, with initiative and confidence when performing tasks, and also to request support when required and appropriate.
- Pragmatic and proactive approach to completing various levels of finance work.
- Effective internal and external relationship management, with proven ability to inspire well-founded confidence in colleagues and stakeholders at all levels.

Qualifications

- Qualified chartered accountant: CIMA, or ACCA or ACA.

Attributes

- A proactive and collegiate approach to problem-solving.
- A positive response to deadline-driven project working.

Desirable

Experience

- Experience of working in the creative industry, arts or education sectors.
- Experience in project managing the launch of new processes and systems to a small- to medium-sized organisation.
- Managing budgets and accounting for complex capital projects.
- Track record of multi-year financial planning and scenario analysis.
- Experience in managing an investment portfolio in line with a perpetuity model.



Knowledge

- Best practice governance in relation to grant-making and reporting.
- Managing an outsourced chief investment office facility and investment reporting.

Skills

- The ability to translate complex financial information into terms understandable to all team members.
- Strong capabilities in producing and presenting financial information to executive leadership and boards of trustees.

Attributes

- Strong support for our mission to champion art education.
- A strong belief in the intrinsic value of art.



Summary of terms

Starting salary: £60,755 per annum FTE.

Hours of work: This role is envisaged as full-time (40 hours per week), however we are open to considering this as a 0.8 FTE part-time role.

Working pattern: Typical working hours will be Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm. On occasion, evening and weekend work may be necessary due to the nature of this role, for which TOIL is available.

Location: Freelands Foundation offices in Central London. Following a successful probation, the role holder can work from home/remotely for one day a week subject to the approval of their line manager and building-based demands.

Contract: Permanent. We are looking for this role to start in October or early November 2026.

Benefits include:

25 days annual leave, plus UK public holidays and discretionary office closure (currently one week in the summer, and between 25 December – 1 January inclusive, subject to project demands).

Employer pension contributions of 6%.

Critical illness insurance, group income protection and life assurance schemes, including an Employee Assistance Programme and mental health support service.

Annual training budget available for approved work-related training.

Cycle to work scheme, with on-site lockable bike rack and shower available.

Well-stocked staff kitchen with dedicated eating area.

Access to our art education library.

Visa sponsorship likely status: We would consider sponsorship for the successful candidate, based on the skilled worker visa (SOC code 1131 – Financial Managers and Directors).

DBS check: The appointment is subject to a Standard DBS check. Only candidates who pass the check will be offered employment.



Application questions

Below are the questions you'll find in our online application form that we'd like you to answer as part of your application. For question 1 we suggest a response of 400-500 words, and for the remaining questions we suggest a response of 200-300 words.

1. Please outline your main achievements in working in senior-level finance positions within the charity sector.
2. Outline a recent project you led which implemented a new finance process or tool. Please describe who the stakeholders were, what went well about the project and what you would do differently next time.
3. The Foundation has multiple reporting deadlines across both the UK and US, as well as several reforecasting phases throughout the year. How do you manage the workload of the Finance function across the year to ensure that all milestones are met?
4. As a Finance leader, describe how you build confidence and rapport between the Finance function and the wider organisation.



