

Supported Application Scheme

Policy for 2026 entry

The Supported Application Scheme is part of the School's commitment to Access and Participation, and offers a free undergraduate application, workshops, advice and guidance invitations to performances and audition travel bursaries to eligible applicants, plus a Start-up Fund for those that enrol at the School. The aim of the Scheme is to encourage and support applications from individuals from groups underrepresented in higher education, who may be deterred by the cost of application and audition. The Scheme will increase familiarity with Guildhall School, help participants feel ready for the audition and interview process, and provide multiple opportunities to interact with students and staff, both on-site and online.

Places

1. A maximum of 350 places will be offered for entry in September 2026 for all undergraduate programmes.
2. Places on the Supported Application Scheme will be offered to applicants who meet the specified eligibility criteria, and applicants should apply directly to the Scheme before applying to their undergraduate programme.
3. We welcome applications and referrals from any UK location, providing the applicant meets the relevant criteria.
4. Places on the Supported Application Scheme will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis from the Scheme opening date. We will guarantee an agreed number of places for committed participants on the Open Door and Originate programmes, and for applicants to Production Arts programmes, who generally submit applications later in the application cycle.

Eligibility

5. The eligibility criteria for places on the Supported Application Scheme can be found overleaf:

Applicants **must meet all** of the following three criteria:

- have no previous experience of university¹
- be applying for an undergraduate programme.
- be UK-Domiciled and a resident of the UK, or have evidence that they have leave to remain as an asylum seeker or refugee.

Applicants **must also meet at least one** of the criteria, A-D, below:

- A. Their household income is £35,000 or below.

- B. Their household income is £35,001 - £43,000 and they meet *at least one* of the following:
 - They are applying for a **Music** undergraduate programme².
 - They have a Greater London home postcode.
 - They have a home postcode that is classified as Quintile 1 or 2 in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Government dataset ([visit the IMD website to find out](#), result is in a downloadable spreadsheet, found in column F).
 - They have recognised Young Carer Status.

- C. They are a Care Leaver or have experience of UK Local Authority Care.

- D. They have participated in Guildhall School Access & Participation activity in the last 2 years.
This includes:
 - Get Backstage
 - Glasshouse to Guildhall
 - GYA Access Bursary
 - Monologue Bootcamp
 - Open Door
 - Originate
 - Participation Bursary

Adhering to these eligibility criteria ensures that we are working with the underrepresented groups identified in our Access and Participation Plan 2025/26-2028/29, and working towards improved access to the School.

- 6. Only one free application can be given per applicant in an application cycle. In the

¹ if the applicant has started a university course, but has completed less than one year of this, please contact the Access and Participation Team to discuss. Level 4 foundation programmes are exempt from this criteria.

² Research shows that to reach the conservatoire standard of entry for Music programmes requires significant financial investment for families, due to decreasing 'free' access to music tuition UK-wide. The higher income threshold outlined for Music applicants' eligibility for the Supported Application Scheme is in recognition of the financial output of the applicant's family when supporting their music tuition, and the higher cost of application.

event that the applicant wishes to apply for two programmes in one year, they will be required to pay for one of the applications.

Promotion

7. The Supported Application Scheme will be advertised between July 2025 and January 2026 via:
 - a) The School's website
 - b) The School's social media accounts
 - c) Promotional material sent to identified schools, colleges and youth arts organisations

Applications and referrals

8. Applicants apply directly to the Scheme. Applications and referrals to the Scheme are made via an online form.
9. All information requested at application is required for processing, monitoring and evaluation purposes.
10. Applicants must provide relevant supporting evidence with their application submission or via email to access@gsmd.ac.uk to demonstrate that they meet the criteria. Guidance on accepted evidence will be detailed on the relevant webpages and guidance.
11. As the School auditions and/or interviews all undergraduate applicants, and as the processing of each free application requires time and resource, we ask that applicants to the Scheme:
 - a) have a specified interest in the school and **will make use of the free application** and additional support.
 - b) are at a point in their artistic development where they have the potential and motivation to benefit from a conservatoire education.
12. All applications will be processed by the Access and Participation Team, and queries regarding applications should be made to access@gsmd.ac.uk.

Confirmation

13. Eligible applicants offered a place on the scheme will be notified via email, at which point they should submit their undergraduate application via the unique link generated in the confirmation email. This link bypasses the payment page.
14. If an eligible applicant has already paid an application fee, or they forget to use their free application, **no refund or reimbursement** will be given but the applicant will be added to the Scheme and benefit from all activity and other support.

Participation

15. Participants on the Supported Application Scheme will be invited to activity, Q&As and events relevant to the course they have applied to, offered at least one free ticket to a

performance or concert at the School (or a link to watch a performance online) and receive advice and guidance from the Access and Participation Team throughout the audition and interview process. Additionally, participants who accept a place on an undergraduate course will receive support when applying for scholarships and in transitioning to the School.

16. Acting applicants will additionally be invited to skill development workshops to support audition preparation.
17. Music applicants will additionally receive one fully-funded consultation lesson with a Guildhall principal study teacher should an offer be made, to support decision making.
18. Production Arts applicants will additionally receive funding (up to £50) for one ticket to a theatre production local to their home, to support their portfolio and interview preparation. This ticket will be purchased by the Access and Participation team, and the team cannot reimburse participants who purchase their own ticket.
19. Applicants who are not located in Greater London will receive financial support towards the cost of their travel for audition and/or interview if it is due to take place on-site at the School, or in a regional audition location (for Acting programmes). If the audition occurs over two (or more) consecutive days, or commences at an hour that makes same-day travel impossible, accommodation support will also be offered. Travel tickets and accommodation will be booked and paid for by the Access and Participation team, and the team cannot reimburse participants who purchase their own. Further information is available in the Travel Support policy that is shared with relevant participants.
20. Workshops will be offered online and on-site (where possible). These sessions are not compulsory, but participants will benefit most from the Scheme by participating in activity. Once a participant has signed up to an event, they are expected to attend and should communicate if they cannot in advance.
21. For Acting activity, priority on events will be given to applicants who remain in the audition process, though invitations will be extended to unsuccessful applicants where space allows. At least one activity will be offered pre-audition for all Acting applicants.
22. Participants who become students at Guildhall School will be invited to contribute to the development of the Supported Application Scheme in future years.

Monitoring

23. Each year we will report on the number of Supported Application Scheme participants, their characteristics and background relevant to the Access and Participation targets, and the outcomes of their applications. This reporting will be anonymised.
24. Supported Application Scheme participant data will be entered into the Higher Education Access Tracker to allow us to see the future Higher Education destinations of participants. Further information can be found in the School's Privacy Notice.

Evaluation

25. Participants in the Supported Application Scheme may be asked to complete evaluations for activity they attend, and an end of application cycle survey. Robust evaluation is essential to the success of Access and Participation activity, and a key requirement of the Office for Students, the regulator for Higher Education Access and Participation activity.

Ashleigh Hope – Head of Access and Participation

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