

Supported Application Scheme

Policy for 2025 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. 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 due to low income. 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 2025 for all undergraduate programmes.
2. Places on the Supported Application Scheme will be offered to applicants who meet the specified eligibility criteria, and applicants are able to apply directly, or be referred by their school, college or youth organisation.
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, Originate and NYT Playing Up programmes, and for applicants to Production Arts programmes.

Eligibility

5. The eligibility criteria for places on the Supported Application Scheme are as follows:

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

- have no previous experience of university*
- be applying for an eligible 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.

- Be living in a household with a gross annual income of below £35,000 **OR** in a household that receives means tested state benefits **OR** in receipt of Free School Meals or a 16-19 bursary **OR** in receipt of a means tested bursary in a Guildhall Young Artists' Centre.

**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.*

Applicants **must also meet at least one** of the following criteria:

- Have a home postcode classified as Quintile 1 or Quintile 2 in the POLAR4 data ([visit the Office for Students website to find out](#), result is in the first column of the table).
- Have a home postcode classified as Decile 1-4 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).
- Be Black, Asian or ethnically diverse.
- Be in care, a recent care leaver or estranged from their family.
- Have a declared disability.
- Have attended a state school or college for the entirety of their education, have a full bursary to attend a private school, or be home-schooled

Adhering to these eligibility criteria will ensure that we are working with the underrepresented groups as identified in our Access and Participation Plan 2020/21-2024/25 and working towards improved access to the School.

6. Only one free application can be given per applicant in an application cycle. In the 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 2024 and January 2025 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 may apply directly to the Scheme or be referred by their school, college or youth organisation. Applications and referrals to the Scheme will be made via an online form.
9. Where a school or organisation is referring a small number of applicants, we ask that they do so via the application and referral form. If a school or organisation has agreed in advance

that 10+ referrals can be made, a template spreadsheet will be provided. All information requested at application or referral is required for processing, monitoring and evaluation purposes.

10. If an applicant is applying directly to the Scheme, they must provide 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. If an applicant is referred to the Scheme, we will trust the word of the referee, though we may, on occasion, request further information or evidence.
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 referrals will be processed by the Access and Participation Team, and queries regarding referrals 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 a 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.
19. Applicants who are not located in Greater London will receive financial support towards the cost of their travel for audition and/or interview when on-site at the School. If the audition occurs over two (or more) consecutive days, accommodation support will also be offered. This will be allocated and processed as per the Travel Support policy.
20. Workshops will be offered online and on-site (where possible). They 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 the 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.

Evaluation

24. Participants in the Supported Application Scheme will be asked to complete evaluations for activity they attend, and the end of application cycle survey, which will also collect destination data. Robust evaluation is essential to the success of Access and Participation activity, and a key requirement of the Office for Students.

Ashleigh Hope – Head of Access and Participation
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