

This resource was produced in partnership with Museum Freelance, to demonstrate the key principles involved in commissioning and working with freelancers in the museum and heritage sector.

The following five key principles underpin our guides on commissioning and working with freelancers, and ultimately lead to creating effective relationships and more satisfactory outcomes when working with freelancers and consultants.

We hope these principles provide a clear, consistent, and helpful ‘guiding star’ for you and your organisation to action when working with freelancers. Put together, we believe these principles exemplify what best practice looks like throughout a whole journey of working with a freelancer – from procurement through to final payment.

By committing to these principles and putting them at the heart of your work with freelancers, you will demonstrate excellence and professionalism in your working practices.

Principle	Examples of how you can demonstrate this principle
Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Act with integrity at all times, treat your freelancer fairly without discrimination, bullying or harassment ✓ Establish open and fair tendering processes, from briefing through to selection (see our guidelines on this) ✓ Provide timely and honest feedback to freelancers you choose not to contract ✓ Ensure your brief is a genuine freelance opportunity (rather than one that should be on your payroll) ✓ Set appropriate fees and achievable delivery timescales ✓ Pay your freelancer on time ✓ Recognise the impact of, and compensate for, ‘project creep’ or when the process does not go to plan as a result of delay through no fault of your freelancer.
Inclusion and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Design your tendering process so it is truly open to all in its approach, language and reach ✓ Be clear on your professional and legal duty with equality and diversity; take steps to remove barriers that freelancers may face due to adversity ✓ Provide a thorough ‘onboarding’ experience so your freelancer can get up to speed quickly ✓ Set appropriate budgets for work and therefore play a positive role in diversifying freelancers in the sector ✓ Proactively address how you can reduce unconscious bias when commissioning and working with freelancers ✓ Whilst your freelancer needs to maintain an independent status from your organisation, find ways to involve them so they get to know you, your team and your processes (therefore building trust).

Transparency and honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be clear about why you're bringing a freelancer on board and what you're asking them to do before you begin a commissioning process ✓ Be transparent in your procurement: where you advertise, what you're looking for, how you'll select, what your budget (or budget range) is and in your feedback to those you decide not to commission ✓ Keep communication open and transparent, and be honest if your requirements change or you don't feel the work is going to plan.
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uphold your professional work ethics in the same way you do with your in-house staff and/or volunteer team ✓ Build mutual trust between you and your freelancer by being inclusive and involving them ✓ Listen to your freelancer's advice; respect and value their expertise (after all, that's what you're paying them for!) ✓ Challenge recommendations by your freelancer, but be objective and open-minded ✓ Treat your freelancers as partners rather than commodities as this will mean you get the best out of your time together ✓ Put clear professional boundaries in place including when and how you communicate with your freelancer; respect their right to privacy and time off.
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allocate sufficient time to work with your freelancer, so you get the most out of the relationship ✓ Ensure you have a contract in place, agreed by both parties which establishes a clear work and payment plan ✓ Be knowledgeable about and adhere to appropriate legislation and requirements from funders or your organisation's governing body ✓ Equip yourself with knowledge on how to work effectively with freelancers (see our other guidelines on this) ✓ Be visible; ensure your freelancer knows who to contact and what to do if that person is unavailable ✓ Be mindful of any implications of the work (or delays) on the health and wellbeing of your freelancer.

