

How to Approach Applications

Ask yourself, does this seem like an opportunity that I should or want to apply for?

- If your answer is that you 'should' apply, ask yourself 'why?' If the reasons you come up with have more answers with 'should' in them, consider all aspects of the opportunity again and ask yourself if it really is for you...
 - Perhaps it's not the right time for you as you don't have the time or support you'd need to put together an application by the deadline. Perhaps it's not an opportunity that will further your career, or something about the opportunity clashes with your principles/ethics – trust your instinct and let yourself pass on opportunities if they aren't right for you.
- If your answer is that you 'want' to apply, you can start preparing to apply by thinking of all the ways you qualify / meet the criteria. If you feel unsure of your suitability, despite wanting to apply, it may be due to niggling thoughts or doubts caused by that common thing that ails female artists – imposter syndrome!
 - To overcome your hesitance, remind yourself of why you want to apply for the opportunity – why you felt it was right for you. You probably already have some (if not all) of the skills and/or experience necessary or it presents you with an opportunity to gain the skills / experience / contacts that you're after. Make a list of pros and cons for applying and you'll likely come up with more pros than cons. Use all those facts as your motivation to overcome the doubts.
- Once you've done that, read the guidance/job description carefully and highlight key words, particularly in the person spec or desired experience provided about the opportunity. Use the highlighted words to guide your thinking in what to write into the application. Sometimes you may not have exactly the skills/experience as they've been listed but perhaps you can think of relevant transferable skills from other work/experiences you've had. These experiences/skills that you include in your application don't have to be from just paid roles, think of all the voluntary work

you've done in the past – those 'favours' for colleagues/friends/family that really are valuable experiences that you can include in applications (where relevant)

- If you've ever made successful applications in the past, review them to see what you did right. Sometimes you may even be able to reuse some of the content in new applications, especially from sections with your bio or work history.
- Once you've written a draft of your application, put it away and don't re-read or edit it for at least one or two days. Coming back to it in a few days – or even weeks if there's time - really helps give you a fresh perspective, allowing you to spot mistakes and fix issues with the flow or tone of your application that you may not have noticed before.
- Use spell check regularly and double check your word/characters count (if there are any limits specified in the application guidance)
- Save a copy of your application as a PDF and review it in that format, sometimes that helps you spot layout or other issues. If the text is tiny or the font is hard to read, it can put people off reading all the hard work you've put into your application.
- If you have friends/family whose opinions you trust, ask them to review your application and give you feedback / tips to improve it. Remember to tell them to be honest with you as you need constructive feedback, not polite encouragement.
- Finally, do not let the niggling doubts that pop up all the way through the process (sometimes even just as you're about to submit!) get in your way. Go back to your list of pros and cons or re-read your application to remind yourself why you should apply. Also remember – if you don't apply you won't even get a chance at the opportunity, if you do, the worst that can happen is that you're in the same place as you were before applying but now with some useful application writing experience, so go for it!

Good luck! 😊