
2026 Guidelines and FAQs

This document outlines essential reading for anyone considering applying to the programme the application questions for you to read through before beginning [your online application](#), frequently asked questions, and our privacy policy.



New
Entrants

In association with



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Essential Reading for Applying

Before you apply

- We recommend carefully **reading through the four questions below** and **drafting your answers offline** first, before beginning the online application, as you cannot save to return and finish the application at a later date.
- Ensure your **CV is up-to-date** and relevant to this training programme. Experience outside of film and TV, such as roles in hospitality which show employability and soft skills, are highly relevant and illustrate transferable skills. Your CV is important for us to see information that may not be captured on the application form.
- **Save the CV as a PDF file**, ready to upload. Include your full name when naming it, so we can easily match it to your application.
- Your CV should ideally be one page long, and **no more than two pages**.

- If you need help updating or refreshing your CV, there are plenty of online [resources](#) with [advice](#) and [guidance](#) on how to create a strong one.
- **Identify two referees, not a family member or a friend,** and have their up-to-date contact details (email addresses and telephone numbers), whom we can contact for references if you are selected for the programme. At least one referee will need to be a professional contact.
- **Read all** the information we provide applicants, making sure you meet the criteria and are eligible.
- **Check your application and CV, then check them again.** If you have invested your valuable time to apply, you do not want to be let down by poor grammar or spelling mistakes. Do not rely on spell check. Ask a friend/teacher/tutor/youth-worker/colleague to look over it for you too if you need added support.
- Think about the things you do in your spare time to help **demonstrate** the **skills and experiences** that will make you **stand out** from the crowd on your CV.
- Add the interview dates, Tuesday 31 March and Wednesday 1 April, to your diary in case you are invited to the next stage.

When you apply

Generative AI

- We actively discourage the use of AI in completing your application.

- Factual television and documentaries are about authentic and ethical storytelling. AI by its very nature can hallucinate, create generic responses, provide inauthentic answers and lack character, all which is antithetical to the sector you are seeking to enter.
- When we assess applications, we are looking at responses to the questions that are honest and where we can get a sense of an applicant's personality, AI often creates bland and identical answers.
- AI can amplify your knowledge and capabilities in a negative way, creating a gap between the reality and the AI generated version of your answer.
- However, if you need support on spelling and grammar, using a tool like Grammarly is reasonable.

Writing your answers

- **Read each question carefully.** We often receive applications where only part of the question has been answered. The character count is there as a guide for the **level of detail** we are looking for.
- Note that it is a **character count and not a word count** in the application. As a guide, 2,500 characters can vary from approximately 350 words to 625 with spaces included. It will not be possible to exceed the character count in the field.
- If you are at university, **please provide a non-university email address** for us to contact you on.
- Remember that you **cannot save the application and return** to finish it at a later date. We strongly recommend you save a copy of your application answers offline in case you wish to refer to it if invited to interview.

- If you are providing a video application, please note that the length cannot be more than 10 minutes to answer all four questions.

Submitting your application

- To apply to the 2026 Grierson DocLab: New Entrants programme, you will need to fill out the application form online. There are **four main questions** that form the application (which you can see below) and further **personal information** (such as name, email address) and **monitoring** questions (for example, what kind of school you went to, access needs, etc.).
- Once you have completed the online application, please ensure you have received your **confirmation email** (this may go to your junk folder).
- Email training@griersontrust.org if you have any queries.

Application Questions

We suggest you write your answers offline in full on a separate document, then copy and paste them in the boxes for each question when filling in the online application form.

1. Tell us about the documentaries and factual programmes you watch, including content that you like and dislike. (2,000-character limit)

We're looking for a thoughtful, critical analysis of your choices to show that you have a strong knowledge base and appreciate a **broad range** of programming, across multiple platforms and channels.

We will be looking for examples that include viewing from terrestrial channels (i.e. BBC iPlayer, Channel 4, Channel 5, etc.), as well as the well-known streamers but not to the exclusion of other places you may watch a variety of content.

Explain your choices, highlighting both their strengths and weaknesses.

To showcase your passion and knowledge, explore a variety of content and consider looking at [past](#) Grierson Award winners, shortlists, and nominees for inspiration.

2. Describe a specific time when you demonstrated creative problem-solving, successfully managed multiple priorities, or made important logistical decisions in a challenging situation. (1,000-character limit)

Working in the documentary and factual TV industry requires a wide range of skills. From developing creative solutions under pressure to managing complex logistics, adaptability, and quick outside-the-box thinking, are crucial for success.

Provide a clear, single scenario where you pinpoint two or more of these abilities. How did you overcome an unexpected challenge during a task or activity?

Explain the context, the actions you took, and the outcome. This could relate to a challenging personal situation, a work incident, an extracurricular activity, or a project. What can you share as your example that will make you stand out?

Focus on how your skills made a tangible impact and what you learned from the experience. What makes it a standout, unique example that will catch attention?

3. If selected for the scheme, you'll learn how to develop and pitch an idea for a factual programme.

a) What factual programme idea would you like to explore? (1,000-character limit)

In this section, please:

Present a **clear idea** for a television programme you could develop during the scheme.

Consider your audience: Who is going to watch this programme and where will they find it? Which broadcaster, streamer, or platform is it best suited to? What form will it take?

Pitching - presenting and selling your concept - is a key part of the training. Use this section to **showcase your creativity** and ability to **engage viewers** with compelling factual content.

b) Why have you chosen this idea? (1,500-character limit)

In this section, please:

Explain what draws you to this subject and why you are the right person to tell this story. Why do you think the potential audience will engage with the topic? What makes this idea compelling and why is the idea relevant now?

Do your research. Highlight what differentiates your idea compared to factual programmes covering the same subject area.

4. Grierson DocLab aims to increase diversity and widen participation for young people from under-represented groups in the screen industries.

This section is for you to describe how you meet these criteria and how you will benefit from being on the scheme. (2,500-character limit)

Use this section to explain how you identify with being from an under-represented group, and how your lived experiences contribute to the diversity of the industry.

Share why you believe you should be selected for the scheme.

Discuss how the scheme will benefit you personally and professionally.

Reflect on what being selected would mean to you.

Highlight any barriers you face in entering the industry, particularly those related to your background, and how this opportunity could help overcome them.

We aim to support the industry's efforts to reflect the full diversity of the UK population, and we'd love to hear your perspective on how you can contribute to this goal.

Accessibility

If you have any access needs, require any adjustments to the application process, or would like to submit your application in an alternative way (for instance with voice notes, a video answer, or if you need support or guidance), please contact us on training@griersontrust.org or call **+44 (0) 1462 630310** and we can assist you.

There is an opportunity to request adjustments to the interview process in the application form, and should you make it to the interview stage, you will be asked to share any access needs and adjustments you feel comfortable to again.

FAQs

Application form

- **Do I have to use up all the character count?**
 - You do not need to use the full allocation but ask yourself if you have given a fully formed response. Is your passion evident?
- **I am struggling to answer question two about a problem-solving scenario. Can I use an example from a university project?**
 - We recommend you draw from a different situation where possible.
- **Why do I have to complete the monitoring form?**

- The monitoring section of the application form helps us capture information about applicants that feeds into our reporting. Grierson DocLab training programmes aim to widen participation of people from under-represented groups within documentary and factual programme making in the UK, so monitoring helps us improve in targeting more diverse candidates.
- Though you can opt out of answering each question, we value the opportunity to find out more about who applies to our training programmes.
- You can read about why monitoring matters on the [ScreenSkills website](#). Once submitted, the information is removed from our application systems once we have made the final selection.
- **Can I get feedback if my application is unsuccessful?**
 - Due to the high volume of applications, we are unable to provide individual feedback.
 - If you are shortlisted for the next stage, you will receive an invitation to be interviewed by Thursday 19 March 2026.

Programme schedule

- **I can't commit to some of the dates. Can I still apply?**
 - You need to be available for **all parts** of the programme, as listed in the schedule. There will be no exceptions.

Placements

- **Can I request holiday when I undertake the placement? I have some other commitments in the diary. Will this be an issue?**
 - The placements are scheduled on a case-by-case basis in consultation with trainees and the production companies.
 - Variables include your availability, the company you are placed with having a suitable role for you at a time that suits both parties, and what opportunities they have that match your interests.
 - You will have until Easter 2027 to complete your placement.
 - As long as you flag any holidays in advance, it should not be an issue.
- **Where will I be based during my placement?**
 - There are a limited number of placements in the regions, with the majority being based in London.
 - We're particularly keen to hear receive applications from individuals based in the nations and regions. This programme is not just for London-based candidates.
- **What production companies offer placements?**
 - Each year, a selection of production companies based across the UK, sign up to support a Grierson DocLab trainee.
 - The 2025 companies were: 22 Summers, 72 Films, BBC Studios, Blast Films, Box to Box, Candour TV, Curious Films, Dorothy St Pictures, Dragonfly TV, The Garden, KEO Films, Lightbox, Mindhouse Productions, Minnow Films, Orchard Studios, Passion Pictures, Purple Productions, Raw TV, Rogan Productions, True North, Twenty Twenty and Wall to Wall (part of Warner Bros), Twofour, Ventureland and Wonderhood Studios.

- Most of the companies are based in London, but some placements have been based on location with a production.

Mentoring

- **Who are your mentors?**
 - Established professionals in the industry.

Training content

- **Do you cover sessions about how to make feature documentaries?**
 - The main purpose of the training programme is to help you get into factual television, though the skills and knowledge we are imparting to you are transferable to making feature documentaries, as well as other formats.
- **I am not interested in pitching or development, but I see that it is part of the training week programme. Can I skip it?**
 - All trainees are asked to develop an idea as it is a means to develop presentation skills, build confidence, practise receiving feedback and much more. So, it is not necessarily only preparing you to work in development.
- **Do you provide bursaries or retainers to support participation on the training week?**
 - No, for the online training week and residential we are unable to provide financial support to participate. All costs to attend the residential, Sheffield DocFest and the Grierson Awards will be covered.

Experience

- **I am currently at university, can I apply?**
 - Yes, but only if you are in your final year of studies, whether you are an undergraduate or someone studying a post-graduate qualification.
- **I am going to be applying to study for a masters in the next academic year (2026-2027), can I apply?**
 - The scheme is for applicants who are seeking to start working from the autumn onwards and is geared to help you with contacts and knowledge to get into the industry to work. Embarking on an academic course means the momentum and potential opportunities created by being on Grierson DocLab cannot be followed through.
 - If you are applying for further academic studies, we recommend you apply next year.
- **I did not study film or media, is this an issue?**
 - Not at all. It does not matter what you have studied, the most important thing is to convey and demonstrate your passion for why you want a job in television/factual programme-making.
 - We have had trainees on the Grierson DocLab: New Entrants programme from a variety of backgrounds who have studied many different subjects, from engineering and geology through to history and international relations.
 - Some trainees have not gone to university, and so we welcome applications from those individuals who want to go straight into training and/or work.
- **I have never been to university or college. Will this be a barrier?**

- No. We welcome applications from anyone who can demonstrate their passion for factual television and documentaries and who want to work in the sector.
- **Do I need to know what kind of job role I want in the industry?**
 - No. We understand that not everyone has a clear idea of what career or role they want yet, and one of the aims of the programme is to give you a chance to find out about the different jobs that are available.
 - Check out the different [unscripted TV roles](#) on the ScreenSkills website and details about the different [skills checklists](#) they have collated.
- **Can I apply if I have already had a paid placement elsewhere?**
 - As this is a new entrant scheme, it is aimed at applicants who have little or no experience of working in television.
 - Our target audience is anyone with less than three months of work experience or placements – whether paid or unpaid – in the documentary and factual TV industry.
 - If you are unsure, you can email us with your queries and a copy of your current CV to: training@griersontrust.org
- **I've been applying to other schemes as well. Would I be able to do yours and another one, if I was successful?**
 - You cannot be on a simultaneous training programme at the time you were offered a place.
- **I applied before but was unsuccessful, can I apply again?**
 - Yes.

Eligibility

- **Why are only UK residents eligible for the programme?**
 - This is a new entrant scheme to get trainees into jobs in the UK, so it is essential that we prioritise applicants who have the right to live and work in the UK.
- **I am going to turn 26 after the closing date, can I still apply?**
 - Yes, as long as you are 25 on the application closing date.

After the programme

- **What happens after the training ends?**
 - As long as you keep in touch with us, as we hope you will, we will continue to support you through the mentoring programme, have access to the training programme team, receive invitations to partner events and networking opportunities.

Diversity, inclusion and access

- **If I am selected for the training programme, as someone with accessibility needs, what support can I expect?**
 - We have a specific member of the team who has responsibility for establishing the access needs of all participants, who will work closely with you.
- **How do you make sure the assessment of applications is inclusive and fair?**
 - The Grierson Trust is committed to encouraging diversity and inclusion in all its work.

- We assess all applications in the first stage of the process with personal information removed in order to tackle any unconscious biases.
 - You can read our diversity and inclusion statement [on our website.](#)
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Privacy Policy

By submitting this application for Grierson DocLab: New Entrants 2026 ("Application") you ("Applicant") hereby acknowledge and agree that the Grierson Trust ("Company") shall collect, use and otherwise process certain personal data submitted by and relating to Applicant for purposes connected with the Application, including Company assessing and reviewing the Application and complying with legal and regulatory obligations.

Updating information

Company wishes to ensure that the information it holds remains as accurate as possible and may therefore request Applicant to update Applicant's personal data at any time solely to the extent required for the Application.

Third parties

Company may, from time to time, need to make some of Applicant's data available to third parties for assessment of the Application as well as to legal and regulatory authorities solely as required under any relevant law or statute. If such recipient third party is located, or has relevant operations located, in a jurisdiction where data protection and privacy regulations do not offer the same level of protection as within the European Union (such as the United States of America), Company shall

take reasonable steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of Applicant's data and to comply with any relevant data protection laws.

Personal data

Applicant also acknowledges that sensitive personal data (also known as special categories of personal data and personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences) is processed by Company for the purposes connected with the Application, including where permitted under employment legislation or to determine occupational suitability. Company hereby informs Applicant that Applicant has certain rights in respect of his/her personal data (such as access, rectification and portability) and that further information about these rights and Company's processing of personal data generally can be obtained upon request from Company.

UK data protection laws

Company confirms it is compliant with current UK Data Protection laws.

More information

Read the Grierson Trust's privacy policy: <https://griersontrust.org/about-us/privacy-policy>.