Rise, Freelancer

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Freelance Education Framework

A National Standard for Freelance Education, Accountability and Impact

Prepared by: Freelancer Club

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Introduction

Freelancing is a defining feature of the UK labour market. Across the creative industries, digital sectors, and emerging professions, project-based and independent work have become standard career pathways. Yet within education, freelancing remains inconsistently understood, insufficiently supported, and frequently overshadowed by traditional employment and entrepreneurship models.

The Freelance Education Framework provides a national, sector-ready structure for educational institutions to adopt, adapt, and embed. It establishes freelancing as a legitimate, recognised learner destination or graduate outcome, and outlines the infrastructure, training, systems, and cultural approach needed for students and graduates to thrive in independent careers.

This framework is built upon the collective insights of 11 educational institutions, national associations, and specialist institutions who participated in the Freelance Education Think Tank. Their experience spans careers services, enterprise education, curriculum design, creative practice, employability strategies, institution-wide strategies, and student support. Their contributions form the foundation for a unified sector approach.

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How This Framework Was Developed

The Think Tank was chaired and coordinated with input from an Advisory Board representing educational institutions, and enterprise and employability leadership. Together, we curated a participant group from 11 educational institutions intentionally selected for:

1. **Sector leadership**
   in enterprise, employability, creative industries, and innovation

2. **Practical experience**
   supporting freelancers, portfolio workers, and sole traders

3. **Geographical diversity***
   across England, Wales, and Scotland

4. **Institutional diversity**
   including art schools, specialist media institutions, large civic institutions, and widening participation institutions

5. **Balanced representation**
   including senior strategists (Vice Chancellors, Directors, Deans, Heads of School) and operational leads (Enterprise Managers, Careers Consultants, Course Leaders)

This ensured the framework reflects the needs of students, the realities faced by staff, and structural conditions that institutions must address.

*The Think Tank extended invitations to representatives from Northern Ireland, who kindly accepted; however, due to logistical constraints, they were unable to attend on this occasion.

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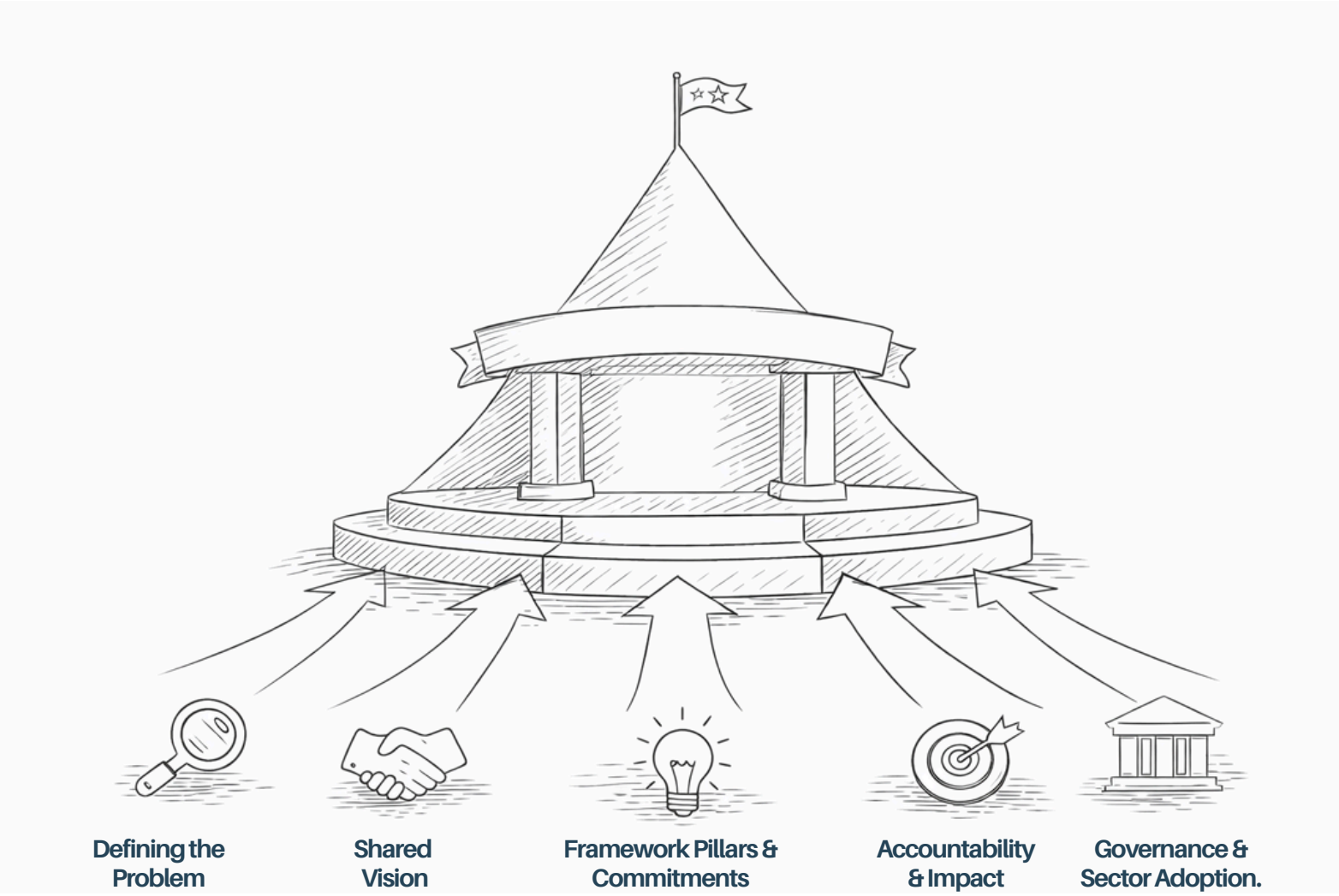
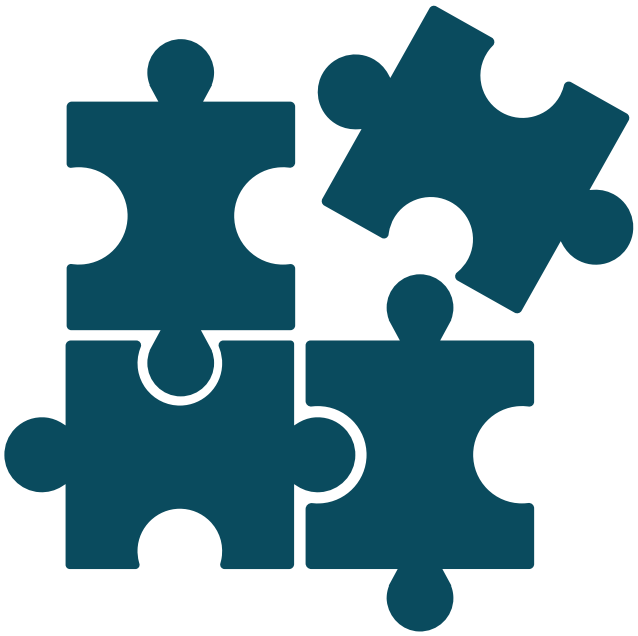
5 Core Pillars



The following document synthesises all group outputs, plenary notes, and final suggestions into a comprehensive national framework.

Section 1: Defining the Problem



Section 1 defines the core problem the Framework addresses: **freelancing is a central and growing part of the UK labour market, yet remains poorly understood, inconsistently supported, and undervalued within education.**

These systemic gaps in perception, policy, provision, and data limit students' confidence, access, and ability to pursue freelance careers equitably, highlighting the urgent need to align institutional culture, capability, and strategy with the realities of modern work.

1.1 Freelancing is widely misunderstood and undervalued

Freelancing is still seen as:

- A fallback option
- A temporary stop-gap
- An option that does not require support
- Something students "figure out later" or "on the job"
- Not a legitimate graduate career

This perception persists across staff, careers teams, and leadership.

1.2 Employability frameworks rarely include freelancing

Most institutions have strong employability structures, but:

- Freelancing is not explicitly included
- Careers advice tends to focus on PAYE roles
- Enterprise tends to focus support on start-ups, not sole traders
- Cultural attitudes privilege employment over independent work
- Lack of consistent funding or resource allocation for freelance support
- HEIs rarely commission paid work from their freelance students & alumni.

1.3 Students lack confidence, clarity, and accessible pathways

Barriers include:

- Lack of understanding of tax, contracts, pricing, business basics
- No centralised guidance on “how to start”
- Limited access to networks and mentors with real-world experience
- Little visibility of freelance alumni

1.4 Structural inequities limit access to freelance careers

Students from underrepresented backgrounds face:

- Fewer networks
- Lower financial security (safety net)
- Greater risk in pursuing freelance work
- Less access to equipment, space, and resources
- Limited visibility of relatable role models, reinforcing the need for a “you can be what you can see” approach

International students face visa restrictions preventing legal freelance activity, creating further complexity.

1.5 Fragmented institutional support

Support is often siloed:

- Business schools teach freelancing separately from art & design schools
- Careers and enterprise teams rarely collaborate on freelance guidance
- Curriculum integration is inconsistent across faculties

1.6 Misaligned national metrics

Graduate Outcomes primarily measures employment status rather than freelance sustainability or success. Knowledge Exchange metrics (HE-BCI) capture graduate start-ups supported by universities, but do not reflect the wider freelance workforce, most of whom operate independently without formal start-up programmes.

Freelancers are forced into categories that:

- Misrepresent their work
- Undervalue their contribution
- Fail to reflect the realities of creative & portfolio careers

Overall Insight from Section 1

There is strong consensus that **freelancing is central to the modern labour market**, yet institutional systems, staff confidence, and national data structures are not aligned to support it.

Section 2: Shared Vision

North Star Statement

"All students and staff confidently understand the freelance landscape and participate in a fully accessible, institution-wide ecosystem that nurtures skills, networks, confidence, and opportunity."

2.1 What success looks like

- Freelancing is fully recognised as a graduate career pathway.
- Freelance skills and mindset training are embedded across curriculum, careers and enterprise provision.
- Staff across all departments (academic, careers, procurement, HR) understand freelance realities and provide coherent, institution-wide support.
- Strong partnerships with alumni, external service providers and industry create a clear pathway from learning to paid opportunities, aligned across culture, curriculum, careers and community.
- Students develop core practical capabilities eg: legal requirements (registering a business, tax, insurance etc.); business essentials such as branding, marketing, sales, pricing, invoicing, contracts; mindset development such as resilience training and getting comfortable with uncertainty; soft skills such as negotiation, communication, adaptability and problem-solving.
- Students see diverse freelance role models across university communications.
- Inclusive support ensures international and widening-participation students can access freelance education equitably.
- Graduate Outcomes reflects freelance careers fairly.

2.2 Strategic Priorities Embedded in the Vision

- A culture and attitude shift across the institution
- Staff capability building as a foundational requirement
- National recognition of freelance careers
- Holistic integration across curriculum and support services

Overall Insight from Section 2

The sector wants a future where **freelancing is understood, valued, embedded, and celebrated** as part of the institution's core mission.

Section 3: Building the Framework

Access current provision

Identify areas for development

Embed freelance education

This section sets out the core pillars of the **Freelance Education Framework**, developed in direct response to the challenges, gaps, and opportunities faced by institutions.

The pillars articulate the foundational conditions required for effective, equitable, and sustainable freelance support. Together, they provide a structured yet adaptable model that institutions can use to assess current provision, identify areas for development, and embed freelance education coherently across strategy, culture, curriculum, and student experience.

PILLAR 1: Staff Development for Freelance Support

What the Think Tank Identified

- Staff lack confidence advising on freelance careers
- Academic staff often misunderstand freelance pathways
- Procurement and HR teams are unaware of freelancer realities
- Students receive inconsistent advice across departments

Recommendations

- Institution-wide CPD on freelance basics, set-up, pricing, contracts, client design etc.
- Creation of staff “Freelance Champions” in every faculty
- Build staff literacy in supporting diverse freelance identities (disabled, carers etc.)
- Regular industry updates to keep knowledge current

Synthesis Statement

An educational institution cannot support freelancers unless staff themselves understand the freelance landscape. This pillar focuses on **equipping all staff with the confidence, tools, and shared language to support and champion freelance pathways.**

PILLAR 2: Embedding Freelance Training and Support

What the Think Tank Identified

- Too much focus on curriculum-level support; not enough just-in-time guidance
- Students need practical business skills: applying for projects, pricing, getting paid, legal protection, and support that helps them take the next step on their journey
- Freelancing is not equally integrated across disciplines

Recommendations

- Offer core workshops that equip students with business, mindset, and resilience skills, preparing them for the emotional demands, uncertainty, and self-management of freelance work.
- Integrate live briefs, portfolio development, and client interaction across academic modules to provide real-world experience.
- Provide digital tools, templates, and practical guides to support independent and self-directed freelance work.
- Ensure ongoing support after graduation for a smooth transition into freelance or self-employment.

- Facilitate one-to-one coaching or mentoring to provide personalised guidance, accountability, and tailored support, thereby promoting inclusion for students from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of confidence or prior experience.

- Deliver a blended support model combining on-demand online resources with live sessions (online and in-person) to ensure accessibility for time-poor learners while enhancing engagement and participation across different student groups.

- Explicitly recognise mental health as a structural risk within freelance careers, and equip students with strategies, boundaries, and institutional support that mitigate the anxiety, isolation, and burnout associated with insecure and independent work.

- Actively commission paid work from student and alumni freelancers, using fair pay and clear processes to provide real experience, income, and a direct route into sustainable freelance careers.

Synthesis Statement

Freelance education must combine **practical training, mindset support, and opportunities to engage with real-world work** - both during study and after graduation.

PILLAR 3: Promoting Freelance as a Legitimate Career Path

What the Think Tank Identified

- Cultural resistance inside institutions
- Lack of freelance alumni visibility
- Outdated language in institutional and national systems

Recommendations

- Reference freelancing consistently across institutional communications, platforms, and physical materials to reinforce its legitimacy at every student touchpoint
- Update institutional language to recognise freelancing as a graduate career
- Include freelancers in career fairs, prospectuses, Open Days, curriculum mapping
- Celebrate freelance alumni through marketing campaigns
- Align internal strategies (careers, marketing, enterprise, communications)

Synthesis Statement

Freelancing must **appear visibly and consistently across institutional culture, communications, and student touch points.**

PILLAR 4: Viability and Access to Opportunities

What the Think Tank Identified

- Students struggle to access paid freelance work, frequently undercharge for their services and often accept unpaid projects
- Unpaid opportunities exploit student freelancers and undermine their career prospects
- Need for partnerships that create real briefs and income

Recommendations

- Create freelance-friendly job boards and opportunity portals
- Broker paid briefs with local councils, SMEs, cultural organisations
- Ban exploitative unpaid freelance opportunities in all institutional listings, including work issued by educational institutions.
- Provide students with the tools, space, and support to create self-initiated projects or peer collaboration, enabling them to develop skills and build portfolios without reliance on commercial entities.
- Support students in setting up legal and financial structures safely
- Provide students with the confidence and knowledge to price their services fairly
- Provide tailored guidance for international students unable to undertake paid work, including portfolio development, simulated briefs, networking, and preparation for future freelance practice.
- Educational institutions to actively commission paid work from its own freelance students and alumni

Synthesis Statement

Educational institutions must play an active role in **reducing barriers to paid work and ensuring ethical, fair access to freelance opportunities.**

PILLAR 5: Community, Equity and Belonging

What the Think Tank Identified

- Freelancing can be isolating
- Underrepresented students face additional hurdles
- Need for community, peer support, role models

Recommendations

- Establish peer networks, alumni mentors, and safe learning spaces
- Create a Freelance Hub (physical and digital)
- Provide targeted programmes for marginalised groups
- Encourage cross-faculty networking to break down silos
- Recognise that freelance precarity disproportionately impacts mental wellbeing for underrepresented groups, and ensure community-based support, visibility, and peer connection are designed as preventative infrastructure, not informal add-ons.

Synthesis Statement

Freelancers thrive where there is **community, confidence, and connection**. Equity-driven **ecosystems must be central** to institutional design.

Section 4: Long-term Accountability & Impact

4.1 Data & Metrics Reform

Groups emphasised the need to:

- Influence national metrics (eg: Graduate Outcomes, HESA coding and questions to include student freelancers in HEBCIS data)
- Ensure freelance roles are categorised as professional work
- Recognise GVA (economic value) generated by freelancers
- Track confidence, skills, readiness, income diversification

4.2 Alignment with Institutional KPIs

Educational institutions should:

- Integrate freelance output into employability KPIs
- Bake freelance outcomes into TEF, NSS and internal dashboards
- Recognise success beyond full-time employment

4.3 Recognition & Awards

Recommendations included:

- Times Higher award category for freelance support or an independent body to launch an event to recognise the sector
- National badges or distinctions for leading institutions

4.4 Sharing Best Practice

- Regular cross-institutional exchanges
- Resource libraries
- National data insights on freelance activity

Overall Conclusion from Section 4

Accountability requires **clear metrics, transparent reporting, national alignment, and external validation.**

Section 5: Governance & Sector-Wide Implementation

5.1 The Governing Structure

For the framework to deliver long-term sector impact, it must be overseen by a single independent body with the expertise and capacity to steward it nationally. This ensures credibility with policymakers and funders, guards against institutional self-interest, and provides continuity beyond leadership changes. Institutions should contribute insight, but governance must sit with an external organisation not tied to any single institution.

This independent body will be supported by:

- An advisory panel of educational representatives, sector associations, freelance practitioners, and students
- Clear terms ensuring impartiality, transparency, and consistency
- Strong links to careers services, enterprise teams, academic leadership, and creative/industry stakeholders
- A mission-led approach focused on supporting freelancers and elevating national standards

This model provides continuity and strategic direction, avoids institutional bias, and ensures it can be implemented fairly.

5.2 Secretariat Function

The independent body responsible for the framework will act as the permanent secretariat, ensuring ongoing stability, development, and support for institutions. Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining and updating the framework in line with labour market and sector shifts
- Managing accreditation, guidance, and institutional support
- Overseeing national data, reporting, and benchmarking
- Embedding equity and inclusion across all framework activity

This centralised role ensures that the framework functions as a coherent national standard, not a collection of isolated initiatives.

5.3 The Value of Accreditation

Accreditation is designed as a value exchange, not a compliance exercise. It provides institutions with a practical mechanism to align strategy, delivery, and accountability, while delivering tangible benefits for both institutions and students.

For institutions, accreditation provides:

- Credibility through alignment with a nationally recognised standard
- Consistency across departments, teams, and provision
- Reputational leadership in an increasingly competitive education landscape
- Clear evidence to support TEF, Access and Participation, employability, and civic impact objectives
- Peer insight and benchmarking through a network of leading institutions supporting freelancers and a means to share ideas, collaborate and develop connections
- Expert guidance and ready-made resources to design and deliver effective freelance support systems
- A seat at the table, contributing to a collective voice that informs policymakers at government level.

For students, accreditation ensures:

- Greater confidence in pursuing freelance and independent careers
- Protection from exploitative or informal freelance practices
- Supported pathways from education into paid freelance work
- Sustained, equitable support during and beyond graduation

Accreditation formalises good practice, strengthens institutional coherence, and positions freelancing as a legitimate, supported graduate outcome rather than an informal or unsupported pathway.

5.4 Accreditation Pathway

The progressive accreditation pathway enables institutions to evidence and strengthen their approach to freelance support over time. It provides a clear structure for demonstrating commitment, accountability, and impact, while supporting the delivery of consistent, high-quality provision for students, graduates, and staff.

Institutions may enter the pathway at a level that reflects their current practice, with each accreditation tier recognising meaningful activity and setting out a clear route for development. As provision matures, accreditation supports greater alignment across teams, improved learner experiences, and increased institutional confidence in freelance outcomes.

Accreditation offers senior leaders a practical mechanism to align strategy with delivery, connect activity across the institution, and evidence impact against priorities such as learner destinations, graduate outcomes, student satisfaction, and employability. It also strengthens institutional reputation, supports student recruitment and investment cases, and positions freelancing as a legitimate and strategically embedded graduate pathway.

Accreditation is awarded to institutions that can evidence delivery of the Action Framework in line with the Charter.

Acreditation Pathway

Foundation Level: for institutions who recognise freelance pathways and have begun embedding support into their provision.

- Acknowledge freelancing as a legitimate student & graduate pathway
- Have begun implementing practical actions aligned with the Framework
- Can evidence early steps across careers, enterprise, curriculum, or student support

Signals intent, direction, and institutional buy-in.

Development Level: For institutions with coordinated, cross-departmental freelance support.

- Deliver structured freelance activity across multiple teams or departments
- Provide staff development and student-facing support
- Can demonstrate joined-up practice rather than isolated initiatives

Reflects consistency, collaboration, and growing institutional confidence.

Advanced Level: For institutions where freelance support is embedded at a strategic level.

- Integrate freelancing into institutional strategy, culture, and reporting
- Track freelance outcomes and graduate destinations
- Provide sustained, equitable support before and after graduation

Represents a robust, future-facing infrastructure that supports freelance careers at scale.

5.5 Legal & Policy Considerations

Policy alignment issues should be reflected in both the Framework and its governance through:

- Consistent terminology across institutions
- Clear legal definitions related to contracts, intellectual property, tax status, and rights for freelancers
- Policy clarity for international students, recognising differences in legal permission to freelance
- Alignment with national bodies such as HESA, OfS, QAA, and government departments to ensure recognition in metrics and regulation

These considerations ensure that freelance support is grounded in legal accuracy, operational feasibility, and national coherence.

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Freelance Education in Practice: Pedagogy, Delivery and Language

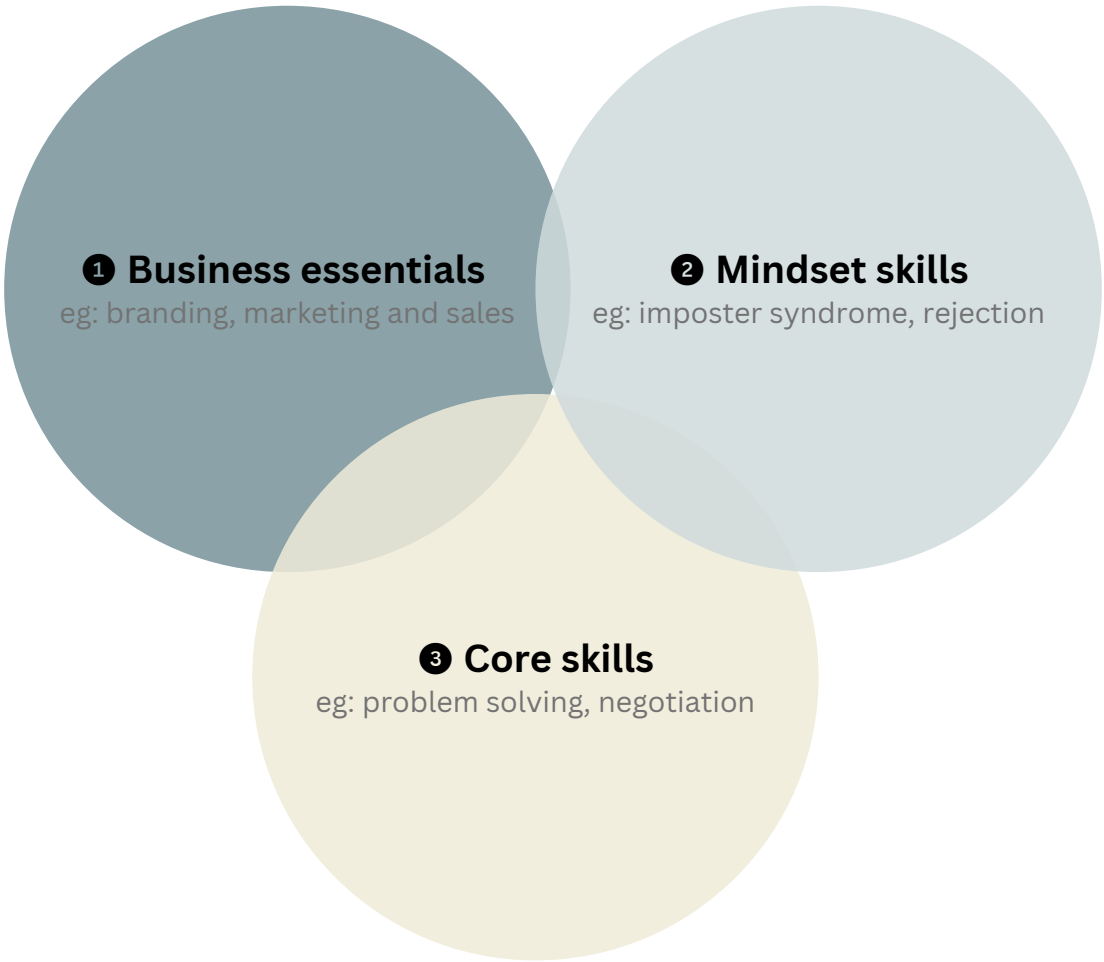
Bringing together pedagogy, learning design, and language to support effective implementation.

A practical guide for Enterprise Educators and delivery teams to create engaging, accessible, and real-world learning experiences that prepare students for freelance careers.

Embedding Freelance Pedagogy: from Awareness to Real-World Practice

Freelance careers require a combination of light touch foundational theory with experiential, practice-led, and reflective learning that mirrors real-world conditions.

Unlike linear career pathways, freelancing demands that students develop not only technical ability, but also confidence, commercial awareness, adaptability, and the ability to operate independently.



To embed freelance pathways effectively, institutions must move beyond one-off workshops and instead adopt a pedagogical approach that develops skills, mindset, and identity over time.

The Freelance Learning Journey

Freelance capability develops progressively. The Framework encourages institutions to facilitate learning journeys that move students through four key stages.

Awareness

- Students are introduced to freelancing as a viable and legitimate career.
- Outcome-focused, jargon-free language drives engagement.
- Guidance shows students how to turn existing skills or side hustles into commercial opportunities.
- This realisation signals the starting point of an entrepreneurial journey.

Exploration

- Students define goals and shape support across business, mindset, and core skills.
- Light structure and flexible roadmap encourage exploration without early commitment.
- Explore markets to find where their skills hold most value.
- Begin articulating their offer, describing skills, services, and clients.

Application

- Develop practical skills like marketing and client management.
- Create tangible outputs such as proposals, portfolios, and deliverables.
- Understand key legal requirements (registration, tax, IP).
- Engage in real or simulated client work.
- Receive structured feedback to refine their approach and build confidence.

Paid Practice

- Begin earning through freelance work (“Early Money”).
- Supported by institutional guidance, infrastructure, and opportunities.
- Build a track record of paid work and client relationships.
- Develop confidence and independence managing projects, clients, and income.

This staged approach ensures students build confidence and competence before entering higher-risk, real-world environments.

Core Pedagogical Approaches

While core concepts provide essential grounding, capability is developed through doing, peer exchange, and expert one-to-one or micro-group coaching.

Interactive Group Learning
Interactive sessions covering core freelance business and mindset through practical exercises.

On-Demand Learning
Flexible, self-paced content for those who are time-poor or prefer learning outside live sessions.

Experiential & Problem-Based Learning
Students learn by doing through live briefs, client projects, and real-world challenges.

Practice-Based Assessment
Assessment reflects freelance realities, including proposals, pricing, client communication, contracts, and portfolio outputs.

Reflective Practice
Students reflect on strengths, decisions, and emerging freelance identity to build confidence.

Peer Learning
Collaborative learning through critique, shared experience, and interdisciplinary teamwork (in person and online).

One-to-One or Micro-group Coaching
Practitioner guidance accelerates learning through feedback and industry insight, driving momentum and accountability.

Freelance Pedagogy In Practice

Freelance pedagogy can be embedded into existing provision without requiring wholesale redesign.

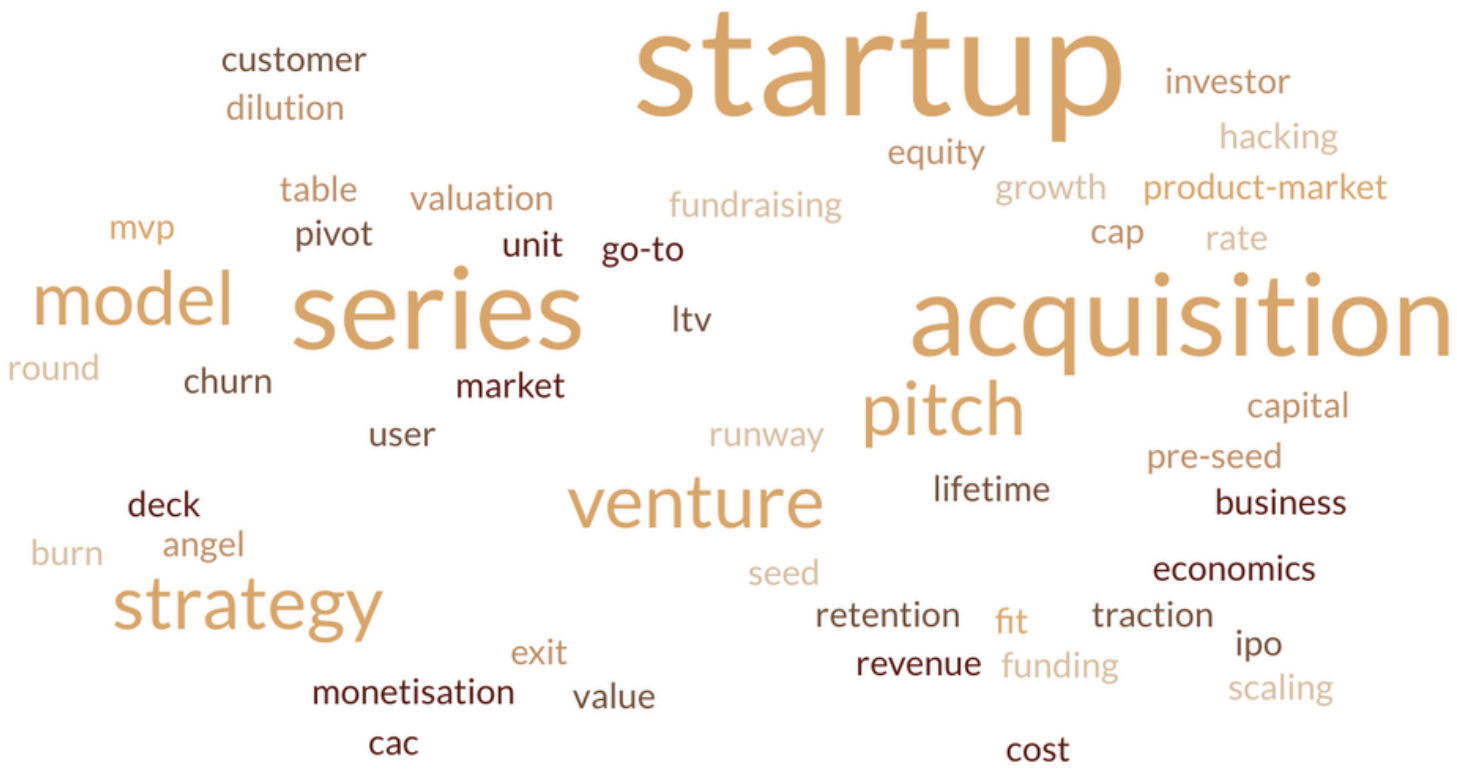
What this may look like in practice:

- Replacing assignments with live or simulated client briefs
- Assessing students on proposals, pricing, and delivery
- Integrating freelance-focused workshops within academic modules or extracurricular options
- Inviting industry practitioners to co-deliver teaching
- Forming interdisciplinary teams that mirror real freelance collaboration.
- Providing low-risk opportunities for students to undertake paid or semi-commercial work

The Language Challenge

Language shapes how students engage with career pathways, and startup and freelance terminology differ significantly.

Startup language often uses institutional, investment-led terms like “venture,” “funding,” and “scale,” which can feel abstract.



Word cloud illustrating the most common terms used by over 200 student startup founders across UK universities.

For freelancers, this gap often translates into feeling unheard. When sessions are heavily startup-centric, those with freelance ambitions can feel sidelined or out of place, as their goals aren’t reflected in the language, examples, or outcomes being discussed.

This disconnect reduces engagement and reinforces the perception that freelancing is a secondary or less valid pathway.

A Freelance Glossary

Freelance-centric language is more immediate and human: “clients,” “earning,” “skills,” “pricing,” and “flexibility.”

Word cloud illustrating the most common terms used by over 800 student freelancers across UK universities.

As learners progress, language should evolve with their capability. Simple terms can transition into formal concepts, such as “finding clients” to “client acquisition,” or “setting your rate” to “pricing strategy.”

For those new to business, clear, outcome-based language is essential. Framing learning around tangible outcomes like “finding your first client” or “turning skills into cash” improves accessibility, confidence, and engagement.

Actionable Steps for Individuals & Institutions

The Freelance Education Framework is designed to be practical, inclusive, and progressive.

Institutions are encouraged to use it as a roadmap to strengthen freelance support in ways that suit their context, resources, and strategic priorities.

Any improvement - however small - represents meaningful progress for students and graduates.

Simply, We're Asking Institutions To:

- Recognise freelancing as a legitimate graduate outcome
- Invest in staff capability
- Provide structured, equitable freelance support
- Measure and report freelance outcomes
- Commit to national alignment and accountability

Join the Freelance Education Charter by signing the **Declaration of Intent**

Use the **Action Framework** to strengthen freelance support in practice

Apply for Accreditation to be recognised as a sector leader

This section provides a structured list of recommended actions split into levels of commitment.

❶ Declaration of Intent (Non-binding)

To support sector-wide adoption of the **Freelance Education Framework**, individual staff members and institutions are invited to sign a non-binding **Declaration of Intent** to join the **Freelance Education Charter**.

This Declaration enables signatories to publicly affirm their commitment to improving freelance education and to championing the Framework within their institution.

By signing, individuals and institutions signal their intention to take practical action, contribute to sector learning, and progress toward formal accreditation over time.

CLICK TO SIGN

❷ Action Framework

The **Action Framework** outlines practical actions institutions can take to strengthen freelance education in line with the Charter.

Actions are grouped by level of commitment, providing a clear roadmap and evidence base for accreditation. Institutions can progress at a pace that reflects their context, resources, and priorities.

Designed for Enterprise Educators and those supporting freelancers and solopreneurs, it offers practical steps to embed freelance pathways into delivery and align activity across curriculum, services, and strategy.

It recognises that sustainable freelance pathways are built through embedded, theoretical and practice-led learning that develops capability, confidence, and real-world readiness.

Institutions are encouraged to take a progressive approach across three stages, commitment, practice, and leadership.

Flexible by design, the Framework can be added to existing structures or used as a plug-and-play model. It enables continuous development, ensuring all institutions - regardless of size or resource - can take meaningful action.

FOUNDATION --→

- Include freelance pathways and practitioners in careers fairs and events
- Introduce the concept of freelancing (side hustles) as early as Induction / Welcome / Freshers Week
- Run business, mindset and core skills workshops specifically on freelancing (making the distinction between startup support)
- Provide accessible online resources, guides, and templates
- Highlight freelance alumni and graduate stories in communications
- Introduce enterprise-led freelance awareness sessions within curriculum touchpoints (e.g. first year modules, induction, transition points)
- Equip Enterprise Educators and Careers Teams, or equivalent, with baseline frameworks to introduce freelancing as a viable pathway alongside employment and start-ups
- Embed reflective practice activities that help students identify transferable skills, strengths, and potential freelance applications of their discipline

DEVELOPMENT -->

- Develop faculty-based *Freelance Champions*
- Integrate live briefs into selected modules
- Broker paid freelance opportunities with external partners
- Ban unpaid freelance roles on job boards
- Deliver annual freelance CPD for key staff
- Support data reform by working with national bodies to improve capture of freelance outcomes (e.g. Graduate Outcomes).
- Embed freelance pedagogy into enterprise and employability modules, such as:
  - Practice-based learning (real or simulated client work)
  - Problem-based learning using industry-led briefs
  - Studio environments that mirror freelance ecosystems
- Design scaffolded learning journeys that move students from **awareness** → **exploration** → **application** → **paid practice**
- Use assessment methods aligned with freelance practice (proposals, pricing, client communication, contracts, portfolios)
- Create safe, structured opportunities to test freelance identity (simulated briefs, peer collaboration, low-risk environments)
- Embed interdisciplinary collaboration to mirror real-world freelance project teams

ADVANCED -->

- Recognise freelancing as a graduate outcome*
- Embed freelance support into KPIs and strategy
- Provide a central freelance hub (digital/physical)
- Offer 12–24 months post-graduation support
- Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities
- Track, report, and benchmark freelance outcomes
- Embed freelance learning across curriculum and pedagogy
- Invest in enterprise educator capability and resource
- Create pathways from learning to paid work
- Align with widening participation and inclusion goals
- Build partnerships to generate paid opportunities
- Contribute to sector leadership, research, and policy

*An institution “formally recognises freelancing as a graduate outcome” when it names it, measures it, reports on it, supports it, includes it in strategy and treats it with the same legitimacy as employment or postgraduate study.

Freelance Education Charter

The Freelance Education Charter establishes a shared, sector-wide commitment to improving support for freelancers. Institutions and individual staff members commit to upholding the principles of the Freelance Education Framework, taking practical action to strengthen freelance pathways, and contributing to a consistent, credible national approach.

The Charter provides the governance structure for the Framework, setting expectations, enabling transparency, and overseeing progression through accreditation. It ensures accountability, consistency, and long-term integrity across the sector.

❸ Apply for Accreditation

Formalise your commitment to freelance support, gain recognition for the work you're already doing, and play a leading role in shaping the future of freelancing in education.

Closing Remarks

The Freelance Education Framework provides a national, scalable, evidence-based structure to support student and graduate freelancers.

With coordinated action, shared standards, and sector-wide governance, institutions can ensure that independent work becomes a respected, viable, and empowered career pathway.

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