

Emerging Leaders and Leadership Pulse 2026 Guide for Applicants

Clore Leadership Courses 2026 Application Timeline	1
Application Process.....	2
Making Your Application	2
How We Assess Your Application	3
Feedback	3
General Eligibility Criteria for Clore Leadership courses	3
Before You Start Your Application	4
AI.....	4
Safeguarding.....	5
Need Help?	5
Alternative Formats for Applications	5
General Advice for Applicants	5
Stage 1 - Overview	6
Stage 1 - Application Questions (all applicants).....	7
Fees & Bursaries.....	8
Equal Opportunities Monitoring information	9
Stage 2 - Overview (shortlisted applicants only)	9
Stage 2 - Your Nominator (for reference, shortlisted applicants only).....	9
Your Data.....	10

Clore Leadership Courses 2026 Application Timeline

- Stage 1 Applications Open Thursday 16th April
- Stage 1 Application Close Noon, Thursday 28th May
- Invitation to Stage 2 Application Week commencing 22nd June
- Stage 2 Application Open Tuesday 23rd June
- Stage 2 Application Close Noon, Tuesday 14 July
- Notification of Outcome Week commencing 3rd August

Application Process

The application process for Emerging Leaders and Leadership Pulse has two stages:

Stage 1 – Online Application

- You are asked to respond to some questions about you as a leader/change maker and your leadership potential and ideas.
- You will tell us which courses you are applying to and how you meet their criteria.
- You will also tell us which, if any, course bursaries you wish to be considered for, and how you meet their eligibility criteria.
- You will be invited to provide equal opportunities monitoring information, though this is optional.

Stage 2 – Online Application and Nomination

- You are asked to respond to some questions about you as a leader/change maker and your leadership potential and ideas.
- You will be asked to provide a nomination from someone who knows you professionally, who can speak to your leadership, and who can see what kind of impact the course might have for you.

Making Your Application

You make your Stage 1 application in the Clore Leadership applications portal on our website www.cloreleadership.org. The portal will go live once applications open and will close following the published application deadline.

You can submit your response to the application questions on the portal in an alternative format (E.g. audio or video recording) if you prefer.

You can save a draft of your application as you go. You can return to your draft application via your 'application dashboard' in the portal.

Once you submit your Stage 1 application it is not possible to make further changes. After you submit you will receive a confirmation email confirming we have received your Stage 1 application, as well as a copy of your application responses. **If you do not receive this confirmation, please email us courses@cloreleadership.org**

Following the deadline your Stage 1 application will be reviewed and assessed by two external assessors, as well as the Clore Leadership team. You may then be invited to submit a Stage 2 application. You will receive an email notifying you of the outcome of your application.

We are unable to accept incomplete applications or those received after the published deadline (this includes the Nominator submission at Stage 2).

We strongly recommend that you do not leave submitting your application or contacting us with any questions related to your application until the deadline day as we are likely to be dealing with high volumes of emails during this time.

How We Assess Your Application

The recruitment process is competitive and rigorous and we endeavour to make it as thorough, transparent and fair as possible.

Each application is assessed anonymously by two independent assessors using both scores and comments. Assessors are a diverse range of experienced professionals from the cultural sector as well as alumni of our programmes. Assessors will consider whether the applicant will be invited to the next stage of the application process.

Feedback

We regret that due to the large volume of applications we receive, it is not possible to offer feedback to applicants who are unsuccessful.

General Eligibility Criteria for Clore Leadership courses

To be eligible to apply you need to:

- Have been working as a **change maker or in a leadership role** in arts and culture. You do not need to be leading a team or line managing others. You could be an artist leading change through your practice or work, working within a team or be a founder of your own organisation or project. We are interested in your potential for change making, rather than the organisational structure or hierarchy that you may work within.
 - Those applying for Leadership Pulse require 5+ years' experience as a leader/ change maker in the cultural sector
 - Those applying for Emerging Leaders require 2-5 years' experience as a leader/ change maker in the cultural sector
- Demonstrate that you have the potential to make an impact through your work/practice.
- Demonstrate a commitment, passion, and understanding of the cultural sector and its broader context.
- Demonstrate an understanding of your own leadership potential
- Demonstrate curiosity, self-reflection and self-awareness and openness to learning about yourself and others.

Candidates from outside the cultural sector may be considered provided their role is working within arts and culture

Exclusions

- Those not working within an arts or culture role. By arts and culture, this means the performing arts, visual arts, literature and libraries, museums, heritage, film, arts festivals and digital arts.
- Those unable to commit to or attend all the residential dates.

Applicants that have previously undertaken a Clore Leadership residential course must allow 3 years before considering applying to another residential course or the Clore Leadership Fellowship. This is to allow sufficient time to embed the learning within your working practices.

Before You Start Your Application

- Ensure you have read this Guide as well as all information about the course on the Clore Leadership website www.cloreleadership.org
- Check your eligibility for the course you are applying to.
- Check your availability for all the course dates. **You need to be available to attend all the published dates on our website.**
- Ensure you have talked to your employer, if applicable, about taking the time away from your role to undertake your residential.
- For this round we are inviting applications to two upcoming Emerging Leaders courses and one Leadership Pulse course. *For Emerging Leaders you are given the option to apply and to be considered for one or both courses. Please note if you are offered a place for your chosen course dates **it will not be possible** to swap to an alternative course at a later date.*

AI

We recognise that many applicants may use AI tools for support in preparing their application. We know that AI can be a useful starting point, particularly for those who find writing difficult or who want help structuring their thoughts.

However, we have found that applications written largely by AI can sound very general and impersonal. This can make it harder to communicate your individual experiences, decisions and reflections.

We encourage you to ensure your application reflects your own voice and specific experiences. The strongest applications help us understand how you think, how you lead (or could lead), and what you have learned from particular situations.

So, if you do use AI, please take the time to review and personalise your responses so they clearly represent you and your leadership practice.

Safeguarding

Clore Leadership is committed to supporting the safeguarding of those delivering and attending our programmes. If while undertaking your assessment you disclose something that could be considered as safeguarding concern, we have a duty to record or report forward concerns as appropriate.

For further discussion please contact Kate Atkinson; Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer at Clore Leadership.

Need Help?

- You can register to attend one of our online Application Q&A sessions which provide applicants with details of how to make an application. A recording with BSL and captions will be available afterwards.
- For all application related queries, you can email us courses@cloreleadership.org
- Please help us to help you by contacting us with any queries you may have about making your application well in advance of the applications deadline.
- The team will be available to offer support during office hours 9.30-5.30 UK time. We will endeavour to respond to messages as quickly as we can. However, we are a small team so please allow 24 hours for a response to your message.
- We treat all applicants with courtesy and would ask that you do the same with members of our team.

Alternative Formats for Applications

British Sign Language (BSL) versions of this Guide and our website application information are available.

We welcome applications in alternative formats. You can upload a file with your answers in the application form on the portal.

General Advice for Applicants

The application form asks for some details about you and your professional experience as well as your leadership aspirations, so we can find out more about you and your leadership potential.

We are looking for applicants who demonstrate:

- An ambition to lead, with a sense of purpose and vision
- An understanding of their leadership potential
- Curiosity, reflection and self-awareness.

Your application, including the information provided by your Nominator, will be assessed on how well you demonstrate these attributes. You should read the application questions carefully and answer them as honestly and openly as you can. It might be helpful to think about the following:

Be brave and honest with yourself - We are not looking for perfectly formed leaders but those with appetite, curiosity and a willingness to develop and grow. This is not a job application; we are looking for potential, rather than just assessing your achievements to date. Be brave, be honest and take the time to really think about whether this is the right programme and the right time for you, and if so why.

Be open to learning - Participants on Clore Leadership Courses are regularly taken outside of their comfort zone, and we want you to demonstrate your curiosity and openness to learning so that we know you'll be able to make the most of this opportunity. Leadership isn't about having all of the answers, and your application should express how and where you'd like to expand and improve your skills and knowledge.

Answer the questions as yourself - We are looking for leaders who know and are true to themselves. Make sure that you are answering in your true voice and try to allow your personality to come across. Humility, honesty, and generosity are all vital qualities for leadership.

We are keen to nurture cultural sector leaders who want to make long lasting change within the cultural sector. Through the application we ask you to make a compelling case for yourself, to tell us about your leadership potential, aspirations and how you feel the programme will be of benefit to you and the cultural sector. We have designed the questions so that they provide an opportunity to learn about yourself as you put together your application.

Stage 1 - Overview

At Stage 1 you are asked for your response to some questions about you and your leadership potential and ideas. You will also tell us about which courses you are applying to, any bursaries you wish to apply for and complete some Equal Opportunities monitoring information.

We are particularly interested in hearing about specific situations, decisions and reflections rather than general statements about leadership.

We'd encourage you to read through all the questions before you start writing. It will help you think about what to put where, avoid repetition and make the most of the space each question gives you.

You may also want to start thinking about who to ask to be your Nominator in the event you are shortlisted for Stage 2.

Stage 1 - Application Questions (all applicants)

We are not looking for fully fledged leaders, but we do want to see evidence that you are reflective, curious and determined.

That may seem a lot to fit into a few short questions, so the key is to remember that this is not a job application: we want to hear about you, your strengths, and your weaknesses.

Consider the questions carefully and answer them as honestly and openly as you can. How are you going to grow? How are you going to develop? Why is this the right course for you?

Upload an anonymised CV including your roles, organisations or contexts, and dates for each position. Please remove any identifying information (name, contact details) to support fair assessment.

- Here we are looking to see that you have the relevant number of years' experience as a leader.
 - Leadership Pulse: 5+ years' experience in the cultural sector
 - Emerging Leaders: 2-5 years' experience in the cultural sector
- We understand that experience can be gathered through a range of roles, experiences, opportunities, and this can often also include voluntary or unpaid work.
- Your experience does not need to be consecutive (we understand that sometimes life means that you might need to take time off or away from work).
- Please ensure that your CV is anonymised with any personal identifiable details removed.
- We are interested in reading about your professional experience. The layout or format of your CV is not assessed.
- You should attach your CV as a word or PDF file.

Q1. Tell us about yourself and your leadership journey so far. Why is this course important for you right now. (250 words max or 2 min recording)

- Please share your leadership journey so far, your current role or area of practice, the communities or contexts you work in, and the specific experiences, decisions or moments that have shaped how you work today.
- We'd also like you to share what has brought you to apply for this course right now.

Q2. What aspect of your own personal leadership practice do you most want to strengthen, and where do you want it to take you (250 words/ approx. 2 mins recording)

- We are particularly interested in a specific example or recent situation where you noticed this development area in your leadership and what it told you about yourself.
- You might also reflect on the kinds of teams, communities or contexts you want to be working in or with, and the change you want to be making.

Q3. Describe a significant challenge in your current work or context that you have personally had to navigate. (250 words max or 2 mins recording)

- We are particularly interested in how this challenge had an impact on you and your response to it. What made it challenging for you? What actions did you take? What has changed as a result?
- Please focus on your own role and actions rather than the situation itself.

Q4. What change would you most like to see in the wider cultural sector, and how do you see your leadership contributing to that change? (250 words max/ approx. 2 mins recording)

- In your response, you might reflect on an issue or barriers you see in the sector, why it matters to you, and a practical shift you would like to see happen.
- Please point to a specific moment, experience, conversation or piece of work that has shaped this view, we are particularly interested in how your own experience has informed your thinking.

Fees & Bursaries

- Please tell us the size of your organisation or if you are a freelancer. This will have a bearing on which course fee band will apply.
- Please also tell us which, if any, bursary/ies you are applying for and how you evidence the eligibility criteria. This information will not affect the allocation of a course place. If you apply for a bursary, we will not award a course place without bursary financial support.
- Eligibility criteria for all bursaries are detailed on our website www.cloreleadership.org. If you do not meet all the applicable criteria, we will not be able to consider you for that bursary. Bursaries are highly competitive and in the case of bursaries targeted at practice, artform or geographic regions you will need to evidence a strong case for support.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring information

- This information is helpful to understand who applies for our programmes and to report to our funders and partners.
- It does not form part of the assessment process. You have the option to select 'Prefer not to Say.'

Stage 2 - Overview (shortlisted applicants only)

At this stage, we'd like to learn more about how you think about leadership in practice and your perspective on the wider cultural sector. We encourage you to draw on specific examples from your work and context.

We'd encourage you to read through all the questions before you start writing. It will help you think about what to put where, avoid repetition and make the most of the space each question gives you.

At Stage 2 you are asked to provide details of a Nominator, as well as respond to questions about you and your leadership.

Stage 2 - Your Nominator (for reference, shortlisted applicants only)

- If your application progresses and you are invited to Stage 2 of the application, you are asked to provide details of a Nominator.
- This should be someone who knows you and your work well and can best provide a detailed, honest, and considered perspective to your leadership potential, how an intensive course will benefit you and the wider sector.
- Your Nominator should be someone with whom you have worked professionally (E.g. a line manager or someone who has worked with you at a partner organisation).
- **Please ensure you seek permission from your Nominator in advance and ensure you give your Nominator enough time to complete their form before the application deadline.** Nominations received after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Your Nominator will be contacted via the email address that you supply in your Stage 2 application, so please check that you enter the details accurately.
- They will receive a link to a web form to submit their Nomination.
- They can provide the Nomination in an alternative format (e.g., audio, video) if they wish.
- The status of your application will change in the portal once your Nomination has been submitted.

Stage 2 - Application Questions (for reference, shortlisted applicants only)

Q1. Leadership often involves influencing others rather than having formal authority. Can you share an example of when you helped move an idea, project or change forward? (250 words max / 2 mins recording)

- We are interested in hearing about a specific situation where you played a role in moving something forward.
- We are particularly interested in your approach and role, rather than the overall success of the outcome.

Q2. The arts and cultural sectors are facing many challenges at present. Looking beyond your own field or practice, where do you see a need for the cultural sector to work differently, more collaboratively, or change practice? (250 words max/ 2 mins recording)

- You might reflect on a challenge or issue affecting the wider sector, why it matters, and where new approaches could lead to better outcomes.
- Please draw on a specific example, project or conversation that has informed your thinking, we are particularly interested in how you think about change beyond your own organisation or practice.

Q3. Describe a situation in your professional life where you feel you made a wrong decision. What did you learn and what would you now do differently? (250 words max/ 2 mins recording)

- We are not looking for fully developed leaders, we are looking for leaders who are willing and able to reflect honestly, to learn, adapt and change over time, and who have tenacity, curiosity, and self-awareness.
- You might reflect on the situation and decision you made, what informed your thinking at the time, and what you would do differently now.

Q4. What perspectives, experiences or ways of working would you bring to the cohort? (250 words max/ 2mins recording)

- Please reflect on what others in the programme might learn from working with you, we are interested in how you hope to contribute to a supportive and challenging learning environment.

Your Data

We will use your personal data, collected on the application form, to liaise with you about the outcome of the application process and, if you are selected, for the administration of the course and subsequent involvement with Clore Leadership. We may use some of your data for reporting and monitoring. This will be anonymised and / or aggregated and will not be shared outside Clore Leadership, except where you have given specific consent.

Retention timelines: In the case of successful applications we will retain your application information for 7 years, and in the case of unsuccessful applications this information will be held for 1 year following which this will be destroyed.

If you take part in one of our courses, you will automatically be added to the Clore Leadership Network's Newsletter including news and opportunities from the sector. You can unsubscribe from this to stop receiving updates at any time.

Clore Leadership takes protecting your data seriously. All our data is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any data provided by you will be used only for the purposes of your application and it will not be shared with anyone outside of Clore Leadership. You can always contact us with the request to remove your data. If you have any questions, please email info@cloreleadership.org.

Our full privacy policy can be found on the Clore Leadership website <https://www.cloreleadership.org/privacy-policy>