Toolkit for going freelance with a humanities PhD

Recommended rates for work

This is a rate card for what is recommended to be paid for freelance work from unions and organisations representing different types of freelance workers. London rates should be 5-10% more than the average and remember to factor in travel and other expenses, such as equipment and whether you get paid expenses. All these factors should be agreed in advance.

Type of service	**Description**	**Rate (day)**	**Rate (½ day)**	**Rate (per hr)**	**Rate long-term or salary equivalent**
Bespoke research services	For broadcast or heritage sectors – junior level rather than consultancy	£154 - £200			£770 - £900 a week
Broadcast and online media appearances	A talking head for TV / radio, documentary, podcasts or news	Usually n/a £172 – 210 per appearance		£40-60	

	Depends on number of minutes and what programme it is for Broadcast for day as per NUJ but features, like a documentary should be negotiated	Plus you may get a disturbance fee if early morning or late night			
Cataloguing / archiving consultancy / management	Manage resources, e.g. people, budgets, consultant using expertise. Amount depends on level of seniority and expertise	£250 for some managemen t. Yp to £400 for expertise or project managing using bespoke knowledge		£50 - £70	Equivalent to £39,000 - 49,000
Cataloguing / archiving support role	Supporting a project with meta data or terms, for example,	£200	£40		Equivalent to £25k

	some independent work				
Consultancy - heritage / GLAM / education / public engagement / media, broadcast	This is at a more senior level and using your research expertise and /or experience of previous projects.	£350 - £500	£200 - £250	£60	Equivalent to £45,000 - £60,000
Content development – print or exhibition	This is less straight forward than writing but more managing image, links (if online) etc as well as text.	£250 - £350		£25	
Content or data management	This would be doing the above but also managing the input of others, plus design etc.	£387 - £400		£48.40	
Curation – digital & in-person	The rate depends on amount of experience and creative input.	£284		£35	
Editing and / or sensitivity reading	If rewriting or more substantial editing	£240		£35.75	

	other than copyediting is required, add another £5.50 per hour or £50 a day.				
Event chair fee	Chairing an event, panel discussion, in conversation, or one-off			£200 45-90 minutes	
Event producing: organisation and management	This depends on how much responsibility you have over sign off, budget etc.	£250 - £300		£40	£28 - £35k
Grant writing – non-HE funding applications	Different to writing as not by word but time spent as involves meetings and budget setting etc.	£300 - £400		£48	
Indexing	The society of indexers recommends £3.65 per page or £9.90 per 1,000 words.			£32.70	
Lecture fee	Using expertise or bespoke content. The			£200	

	rate often depends on how rich or poor the institution is.			One off fee for 45 – 90 minutes (best practice) but likely to be lower for local museums or charities.	
Mentoring	This is usually per hour rather than a day rate and depends on the level of mentoring.			£35	
Museum / gallery / heritage site tours / walking talks.	This depends on amount of prep and scale of the organisation.			£200 one off fee for 45-90 minutes	
Online content development and writing	Writing content for social media, digital projects/services, exhibitions, apps, games.	£225 - £400		N/A Payment is usually for	Per 1,000 words with intensive research £400.

				words rather than hours	1,000 words on content already know £300.
Panellist fee	Sitting as part of a panel event for a public or invite audience. Same provisos as lecture fee 1 – 2 hours			£100 - £150 45-90 minutes	
Peer review - academic publishing – or Readers Report for a publisher.	This is often unpaid or paid in kind. Usually a one off fee than a day rate etc.			£200 average	
Project manage-ment	In publishing, heritage, GLAM	£250 - £350		£44.50	
Proof reading	Reading other content for grammar, spelling, style, not editing			£30.75	
Reading (public)	Reading of own work for 15 minutes			£50 then £12.50 per 5 minutes up to £100	

Report writing - cultural orgs, NGOs, civil service, government.	Writing and research as per the NUJ rates, which is by 1,000 words rather than day but includes research. This is the lower end. The NUJ recommends £800 per 1,000 words at a high budget / senior level.	£250-£350			
School or library visits	This depends if for promotional purposes (e.g. a book) and based on average rates.	£400-£500	£250-£300	£175	Or it could be a one off for 'live literature' at £200
Social media content	Writing and sourcing images.	£220 - £400			
Taught courses	Teaching a course or day workshop using expertise or bespoke content.	£350 - £300	£200 - £150	£55 - £35	
Teaching – small groups / individuals	Individual teaching and small groups as per Musician's Union.	£285 - £300		£44	

Translation	This depends on the complexity of the translation. The rate is the minimal given by the Society of Authors and by words.	Broadcast on air / off air: £480		£100 - £165 per 1,000 words (books). £125 – 195 newspapers	
User experience	Designer of UX (digital or in person). More senior consultancy / analysis	£200 £400			Equivalent job: £33-£35k
Workshop creation & delivery	Maximum 5 hour delivery	£300 online up to 90 minutes			
Writing for print media, e.g. magazine, newspapers.	This is usually per words rather than hour / time specific.			£250 to £350 per 1,000 words Glossy magazines £1,000	

Recommended rates for pay have come from the following organisations and in brackets are when those rates have been updated:

Archives and Records Association (2021 for freelance, 2025 for salary)

Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading – Suggested Minimal Rates (2025)

Society of Indexers – Indexing fees (2025)

Group for Education in Museums link to 'Calculating day rates for freelancers' (2022)

Prospects (a job advice service for graduates - 2024)

Society of Authors - Rates and Fees (2025)

Live literature Fee – Scottish Book Trust (2025)

Rate Cards from the Artists Union

This is worth reading as it gives a guide to how much you should be charging with 3+ years or 5+ years' experience

Writers Guild – different rates writing for theatre, animation etc (most from 2025)

National Union of Journalists / London freelancer (2025)

Musician's Union – Teaching Rates of pay (2025)