

# NOTES & QUERIES FRESH INK PRIZE

## Official Terms and Conditions

Version 1.0

Last Updated: JUNE 5, 2026

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## 1. Introduction

The Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize ("the Prize") is an annual award established to support emerging greeting card businesses within the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the Prize is to identify and support an early-stage greeting card business that demonstrates exceptional creativity, professional execution, commercial promise, and a clear vision for future growth.

By submitting an application, entrants agree to be bound by these Terms and Conditions.

The promoter of the Prize is:

**Notes & Queries Inc**  
7110 Golden Ring Road, Suite 108, Essex, Maryland, 21221, USA  
Vanessa@nandq.com  
("the Promoter")

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## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the N&Q Fresh Ink Prize, applicants must:

- a) Be a resident of the United Kingdom.
- b) Be an artist, illustrator, designer, or greeting card publisher operating a greeting card business.
- c) Have been actively operating their greeting card business for fewer than five (5) years as of the published application deadline.
- d) Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

e) Submit all required application materials before the closing date.

The following individuals are not eligible:

- Employees, directors, officers, or contractors of Notes & Queries Ltd.
- Members of the judging panel.
- Immediate family members of judges or employees involved in administering the Prize.
- Any individual or business that has materially assisted in the judging or administration of the Prize.

The Promoter reserves the right to request documentation verifying eligibility at any stage of the process.

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## 3. Entry Requirements

To enter The N&Q Fresh Ink Prize, applicants must submit:

### **Portfolio**

A portfolio containing a minimum of twenty-four (24) greeting card designs.

### **Physical Samples**

A minimum of twenty (20) physical samples of each range or collection being presented for review.

### **Business Plan**

A brief business plan outlining:

- Current stage of business development
- Years in operation
- Key challenges facing the business
- Growth opportunities identified
- Business goals for the next 12–24 months

### **Award Impact Statement**

A written statement explaining how the £5,000 award would be used and the anticipated impact on the business.

Applications that are incomplete, illegible, misleading, or submitted after the published deadline may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Promoter.

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## 4. Competition Timeline

Applications open and close on the dates published by the Promoter.

The Promoter reserves the right to amend application deadlines, judging timelines, finalist announcements, or award presentation dates where reasonably necessary.

Any changes will be communicated through official Fresh Ink Prize channels.

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## 5. Judging Process

The Fresh Ink Prize is a skill-based competition.

All eligible entries will be reviewed by an independent judging retailer panel selected by the Promoter.

Entries will be assessed using the published judging rubric:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Points</b>
Creative Excellence & Originality	25
Product Quality & Presentation	20
Range Development & Brand Cohesion	15
Market Appeal & Retail Readiness	15
Business Vision & Growth Potential	15
Impact of the Award	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Judges' decisions are final.

No correspondence regarding judging decisions, scores, rankings, or deliberations will be entered into.

The Promoter reserves the right not to award the Prize if no entry sufficiently meets the objectives and standards of the competition.

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## 6. Finalists

The Promoter may, at its discretion, select a shortlist of finalists.

Finalists may be asked to:

- Participate in interviews.
- Provide additional documentation.
- Submit further product samples.
- Participate in promotional activities relating to the Prize.

Failure to comply with reasonable requests may result in removal from consideration.

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## 7. Prize

The winner will receive:

**£5,000 GBP (Five Thousand Pounds Sterling)**

The award will be paid in the manner determined by the Promoter, typically by bank transfer.

The Prize is:

- Non-transferable
- Non-exchangeable
- Not assignable to another party

The Promoter reserves the right to substitute an equivalent prize if circumstances outside its reasonable control make this necessary.

The winner is solely responsible for any tax obligations that may arise from receipt of the award.

Applicants are encouraged to seek independent professional advice regarding taxation.

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## 8. Winner Notification

The winner will be notified using the contact information supplied in their application.

If the winner:

- Cannot be contacted;
- Fails to respond within fourteen (14) days;
- Refuses the Prize; or
- Is subsequently found to be ineligible;

the Promoter reserves the right to withdraw the award and select an alternative winner.

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## 9. Intellectual Property

Entrants retain full ownership of all intellectual property rights in their submitted artwork, designs, illustrations, branding, and related creative materials.

By entering the Fresh Ink Prize, entrants grant the Promoter a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide license to:

- Review submitted materials for judging purposes.
- Reproduce images for judging and administration.
- Use submitted images in marketing, publicity, educational, and promotional materials relating to the N&Q Fresh Ink Prize.
- Archive materials relating to the Prize.

This license shall continue for a period of five (5) years following submission.

***Ownership of submitted intellectual property shall remain with the entrant at all times.***

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## 10. Publicity

By entering the Prize, entrants agree that if selected as a finalist or winner, the Promoter may publish:

- Business name
- Creator name
- Biography
- Business description
- Photographs
- Product images
- Award-related interviews

***for purposes connected with the administration and promotion of the Fresh Ink Prize only.***

Reasonable efforts will be made to seek approval of biographical information prior to publication.

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## **11. Verification and Due Diligence**

The Promoter reserves the right to verify:

- Business age
- Identity
- Residency
- Ownership of submitted work
- Accuracy of information supplied

Applicants may be required to provide:

- Business registration records

Failure to provide requested information may result in disqualification.

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## **12. Disqualification**

The Promoter reserves the right to disqualify any entrant who:

- Provides false or misleading information.
- Plagiarizes or infringes the rights of another party.
- Attempts to improperly influence judges.
- Breaches these Terms and Conditions.
- Submits unlawful, defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate content.

Disqualification may occur at any stage of the competition.

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## **13. Data Protection**

Personal data supplied in connection with the Fresh Ink Prize will be processed in accordance with applicable UK data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal information will be used solely for:

- Administering the Prize
- Communicating with applicants
- Judging activities
- Publicity associated with finalists and winners
- Legal and regulatory compliance

Applicants should refer to the Notes & Queries Privacy Policy for further information.

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## **14. Limitation of Liability**

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Promoter shall not be liable for:

- Lost, delayed, damaged, or incomplete submissions.
- Technical failures or interruptions.
- Postal or courier delays.
- Events beyond its reasonable control.
- Indirect or consequential losses arising from participation in the Prize.

Nothing in these Terms excludes liability for death, personal injury, fraud, or any liability that cannot lawfully be excluded under English law.

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## **15. Changes, Suspension, or Cancellation**

The Promoter reserves the right to amend, suspend, postpone, or cancel the Fresh Ink Prize where circumstances beyond its reasonable control make such action necessary.

Any material changes will be communicated through official channels.

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## **16. Governing Law**

These Terms and Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

Any dispute arising from or relating to the Fresh Ink Prize shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

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## 17. Acceptance of Terms

Submission of an application constitutes acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

Applicants acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agreed to be bound by all provisions contained herein.

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### **Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize**

*Supporting the next generation of greeting card publishers, artists, illustrators, and creative entrepreneurs.*

# Appendix A

## NOTES & QUERIES PRIVACY POLICY

### Fresh Ink Prize and Related Activities

**Effective Date:** June 5, 2026

#### 1. Introduction

Notes & Queries Inc ("Notes & Queries," "we," "our," or "us") is committed to protecting your privacy and handling your personal information responsibly.

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, store, and protect personal information provided in connection with:

- The Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize
- Award applications
- Judging and administration of the Prize
- Communications relating to the Prize
- Related events, announcements, and promotional activities

We process personal information in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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#### 2. Who We Are

##### Data Controller

Notes & Queries Ltd

Address:

7110 Golden Ring Road, Suite 108, Essex, Maryland 21221, USA

Email:

[Vanessa@nandq.com](mailto:Vanessa@nandq.com)

Website:

[www.nandq.com](http://www.nandq.com)

If you have any questions about this Privacy Policy or how your information is handled, please contact us using the details above.

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### **3. Information We Collect**

We may collect the following information from applicants:

#### **Personal Information**

- Name
- Business name
- Job title
- Postal address
- Email address
- Telephone number

#### **Business Information**

- Business history
- Years in operation
- Business plans
- Growth strategies
- Financial and operational information voluntarily provided

#### **Submission Materials**

- Greeting card designs
- Product photographs
- Branding materials
- Portfolio submissions
- Written statements
- Award impact statements

#### **Winner Information**

Where necessary, we may collect:

- Bank account information
- Additional verification documentation

solely for the purpose of administering the award.

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## 4. How We Use Your Information

We use personal information to:

- Process applications.
- Verify eligibility.
- Administer and judge the N&Q Fresh Ink Prize.
- Communicate with applicants.
- Select finalists and winners.
- Award prize funds.
- Promote the Fresh Ink Prize.
- Maintain records relating to the Prize.
- Comply with legal and regulatory obligations.

We will only use your information where we have a lawful basis to do so.

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## 5. Lawful Basis for Processing

Under UK GDPR, we rely on the following lawful bases:

### **Contract**

To administer your application and participation in the Fresh Ink Prize.

### **Legitimate Interests**

To operate, evaluate, improve, and promote the Fresh Ink Prize and related activities.

### **Legal Obligations**

To comply with applicable legal, accounting, tax, and regulatory requirements.

### **Consent**

Where required, such as for certain marketing communications or promotional activities.

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## 6. Publicity and Promotional Use

If you are selected as a finalist or winner, we may publish:

- Your name
- Business name
- Biography
- Business description
- Product photographs
- Submitted images
- Interviews and quotations

on:

- The Notes & Queries website
- Social media channels
- Press releases
- Industry publications
- Marketing materials relating to the Fresh Ink Prize

This use is intended to celebrate participants and promote the Prize and the greeting card industry.

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## **7. Sharing Your Information**

We may share information with:

- Members of the judging panel
- Professional advisors
- Service providers assisting with administration
- Event partners involved in presenting the Prize
- Legal or regulatory authorities where required

We do not sell personal information to third parties.

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## **8. Data Retention**

We will retain personal information only for as long as reasonably necessary to:

- Administer the Fresh Ink Prize
- Maintain historical records
- Meet legal and accounting obligations
- Resolve disputes

Application materials may be retained for archival purposes relating to the history and promotion of the Fresh Ink Prize.

Where information is no longer required, it will be securely deleted or anonymised.

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## 9. Security

We take reasonable technical and organizational measures to protect personal information against:

- Unauthorized access
- Loss
- Misuse
- Alteration
- Disclosure

However, no method of electronic transmission or storage can be guaranteed to be completely secure.

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## 10. Your Rights

Under UK GDPR, you may have the right to:

- Access your personal information.
- Request correction of inaccurate information.
- Request deletion of information where appropriate.
- Restrict processing.
- Object to processing.
- Request transfer of your information.
- Withdraw consent where processing relies on consent.

Requests should be submitted to the contact details listed in this Policy.

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## 11. Complaints

If you believe we have not handled your information appropriately, please contact us first so that we may address your concerns.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with:

## **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**

[Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)

The ICO is the UK's independent authority responsible for upholding information rights.

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## **12. Changes to This Policy**

We may update this Privacy Policy from time to time.

Any material changes will be published on our website and, where appropriate, communicated directly to applicants.

The latest version will always be available from Notes & Queries.

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## **13. Contact Us**

Questions regarding this Privacy Policy should be directed to:

Notes & Queries, Inc.

Email: [Vanessa@nandq.com](mailto:Vanessa@nandq.com)

Address: 7110 Golden Ring Road, Suite 108, Essex, Maryland 21221, USA

Website: [www.nandq.com](http://www.nandq.com)

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### **Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize**

*Supporting emerging greeting card publishers, artists, illustrators, and creative entrepreneurs as they grow the next chapter of their business.*

# Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize

## Judging Rubric (100 Points)

### Purpose of the Prize

The Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize was created to support emerging greeting card businesses as they transition from one stage of growth to the next. While exceptional creativity is essential, this prize is not solely about identifying the most talented artist or designer. It is about recognizing a creative business that demonstrates strong design, professional execution, commercial promise, and a clear vision for growth.

The winning entrant should show that they have built a compelling foundation and that the £5,000 award will meaningfully help accelerate the next chapter of their business.

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize, applicants must:

- Be an artist, illustrator, designer, or greeting card publisher based in the United Kingdom.
- Have been operating their greeting card business for **less than five years** as of the submission deadline.
- Submit a portfolio consisting of at least 24 greeting card designs.
- Provide a minimum of 20 physical samples of each range or collection being presented.
- ***Submit a brief business plan and a statement describing how the prize funds would be used.***

The Fresh Ink Prize is specifically intended to support **early-stage creative businesses** that have established a strong foundation and are poised for growth with additional support and industry recognition.

***Only the applicants that meet all of these requirements will be forwarded to the N&Q Fresh Ink Review Panel Board for review***

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## 1. Creative Excellence & Originality (25 Points)

**Does the work stand out?**

Judges should consider:

- Originality of concept and voice
- Distinctive artistic style

- Strength of illustration, typography, and design
- Emotional impact, humor, sentiment, or storytelling
- Ability to create cards that feel fresh, memorable, and authentic
- Consistency of creative vision across the portfolio

**Score: 1–25**

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## **2. Product Quality & Presentation (20 Points)**

**Is the product professionally executed?**

Judges should consider:

- Print quality
- Color reproduction and consistency
- Paper stock and finishing choices
- Packaging and presentation
- Attention to detail
- Overall professionalism of the collection
- Quality and consistency across all submitted products

**Score: 1–20**

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## **3. Range Development & Brand Cohesion (15 Points)**

**Has the creator developed a thoughtful collection rather than a handful of good cards?**

Judges should consider:

- Breadth of product offering
- Strength of individual collections or ranges
- Consistency across products
- Clear brand identity and point of view
- Balance of occasion, everyday, seasonal, or specialty categories
- Potential to expand and scale the range over time

**Score: 1–15**

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## **4. Market Appeal & Retail Readiness (15 Points)**

## **Would retailers be excited—and able—to stock this line?**

Judges should consider:

- Customer appeal
- Market positioning
- Clarity of target audience
- Price-point awareness
- Shelf presence and visual impact
- Potential for retail success
- Packaging and merchandising considerations (?)
- Presence of required retail information, including:
  - Country of origin
  - Scannable barcode (UPC/EAN)
  - Product identification and labeling

### **Guiding Question:**

If I discovered this line today, would it be ready—or nearly ready—to place on my shop floor?

**Score: 1–15**

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## **5. Business Vision & Growth Potential (15 Points)**

### **Can this business successfully take the next step?**

Applicants must submit a brief business plan outlining:

- The current stage of their business
- Years in operation (must be fewer than five years)
- Key challenges they are facing
- Growth opportunities they have identified
- Goals for the next 12–24 months

Judges should consider:

- Clarity of vision
- Realistic growth strategy
- Understanding of the marketplace
- Ability to identify opportunities and challenges
- Potential for sustainable business development
- Evidence of entrepreneurial thinking

**Score: 1–15**

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## 6. Impact of the Award (10 Points)

### Will the £5,000 make a meaningful difference?

Applicants must provide a statement describing how they would use the award funds.

Judges should consider:

- Specificity of the proposal
- Practicality and realism
- Potential impact on business growth
- Likelihood that the investment will accelerate development
- Alignment between the applicant's goals and the proposed use of funds

Examples may include:

- New product development
- Trade show participation
- Inventory investment
- Website improvements
- Marketing initiatives
- Equipment purchases
- Packaging upgrades
- Expansion into new markets
- New Employee

**Score: 1–10**

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## Tie-Breaking Consideration

In the event of a tie, judges should ask:

Which business is most likely to experience meaningful and measurable growth as a direct result of receiving this award?

The purpose of the Fresh Ink Prize is not simply to reward achievement. It is to help an emerging creative business successfully move from one stage of growth to the next.

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# Judge's Guiding Principle

When reviewing submissions, judges should remember:

The Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize exists to celebrate exceptional creativity while investing in the future of the greeting card industry. The winning entrant should demonstrate outstanding design, professional execution, commercial promise, and a clear plan for how this support will help transform potential into progress.

The ideal winner is not necessarily the largest business, nor the most established. It is the business that combines creativity, professionalism, and growth potential—and for whom this investment can serve as a meaningful catalyst for the future.

**Importantly, this prize is reserved for businesses that have been operating for less than five years and are at a pivotal stage in their development, where financial support, industry recognition, and retailer feedback can help unlock their next phase of growth.**

# NOTES & QUERIES FRESH INK PRIZE

## 2026 APPLICATION FORM

### About the Fresh Ink Prize

The Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize was created to support emerging greeting card businesses as they transition from one stage of growth to the next.

The winner will receive a £5,000 cash award, industry recognition, and valuable exposure to retailers and industry professionals.

The Prize is intended for businesses that have been operating for fewer than five years and have demonstrated creativity, professionalism, commercial promise, and a clear vision for future growth.

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## SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

**Applicant Name**

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**Business Name**

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**Business Address**

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**Telephone Number**

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**Email Address**

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**Website**

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**Instagram**

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**Other Social Media Accounts**

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**Year Business Was Established**

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**Number of Years in Operation**

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**Number of Employees (including owner)**

Sole Proprietor

2–5 Employees

6–10 Employees

More than 10 Employees

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## **SECTION 2: BUSINESS OVERVIEW**

Please provide a brief introduction to your business.

Tell us:

- Who you are
- What inspired your business
- What makes your greeting card line unique
- What stage your business is currently in

(Maximum 500 words)

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## **SECTION 3: PRODUCT PORTFOLIO**

### **Portfolio Submission Checklist**

Please confirm that you have included:

- A portfolio containing a minimum of 24 greeting card designs
- Product photography (if applicable)
- Supporting brand materials

### **Number of Greeting Card Designs Submitted**

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### **Describe Your Product Range(s)**

Please describe the collections or ranges included in your submission.

(Maximum 500 words)

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## **SECTION 4: RETAIL & MARKET READINESS**

Please answer the following questions.

### **Where are your products currently sold?**

- Online Only

- Independent Retailers
- Multiple Retail Locations
- Trade Shows
- Market Events
- Other

Please specify:

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### **Approximately How Many Retail Accounts Do You Currently Have?**

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#### **Do Your Products Include:**

Country of Origin Marking?

- Yes  No

Scannable Barcode (UPC/EAN)?

- Yes  No

Product Identification/Labelling?

- Yes  No

Protective Packaging (where applicable)?

- Yes  No
- 

## **SECTION 5: BUSINESS PLAN**

Please provide a brief business plan outlining:

- Current stage of your business

- Key challenges you face
- Growth opportunities you have identified
- Goals for the next 12–24 months
- Steps you plan to take to achieve those goals

(Attach separately if preferred.)

(Recommended length: 1–2 pages)

Attached

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## **SECTION 6: GROWTH POTENTIAL**

**What is the single biggest opportunity for growth in your business today?**

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**What is the biggest challenge preventing you from reaching the next stage?**

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## **SECTION 7: IMPACT OF THE AWARD**

The winner of the Fresh Ink Prize will receive £5,000.

Please describe specifically how you would use the award funds.

Examples may include:

- Product development
- Inventory investment
- Trade show participation
- Marketing initiatives
- Packaging improvements
- Website development
- Equipment purchases
- Hiring staff

- Expansion into new markets

(500–750 words)

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**If awarded the prize, what impact would the £5,000 have on your business over the next 12–24 months?**

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## **SECTION 8: SUPPORTING MATERIALS CHECKLIST**

Please confirm that the following materials are included:

- Completed Application Form
- Portfolio (minimum 24 designs)
- Physical Samples
- Business Plan
- Award Impact Statement
- Signed Applicant Declaration

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## **SECTION 9: OPTIONAL INFORMATION**

How did you hear about the Fresh Ink Prize?

- Notes & Queries
- Social Media
- Industry Publication
- Retailer
- Trade Show
- Word of Mouth
- Other

Please specify:

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## **SECTION 10: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION**

I certify that the information provided within this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that submission of this application does not guarantee selection as a finalist or winner.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the Fresh Ink Prize Terms & Conditions and Privacy Policy.

Applicant Name:

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Signature:

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Date:

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# FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Application Number:

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Eligibility Review:

Pass

Fail

Prescreening Review:

Pass

Fail

Finalist Selection:

Yes

No

Notes:

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Reviewed By:

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Date:

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# NOTES & QUERIES THE FRESH INK PRIZE

## Applicant Declaration & Signature Page

### Applicant Information

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Applicant Declaration

By signing below, I hereby declare and confirm that:

#### Eligibility

- I am an artist, illustrator, designer, or greeting card publisher based in the United Kingdom.
- My greeting card business has been operating for fewer than five (5) years as of the application deadline.
- I am at least 18 years of age.
- All information provided within this application is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

#### Ownership of Work

- I am the creator of, or have the legal right to submit, all artwork, designs, products, images, and materials included in this application.
- My submission does not knowingly infringe upon the intellectual property rights, copyrights, trademarks, or other rights of any third party.

## Application Materials

- I have submitted all required materials, including portfolio samples, physical product samples, business plan, and award impact statement.
- I understand that incomplete applications may be deemed ineligible.

## Use of Submitted Materials

- I acknowledge that I retain ownership of my intellectual property.
- I grant Notes & Queries a non-exclusive licence to use submitted materials, images, and information for judging, publicity, marketing, promotional, educational, and archival purposes related to the Fresh Ink Prize, in accordance with the Official Terms & Conditions.

## Publicity

- If selected as a finalist or winner, I agree that Notes & Queries may publish my name, business name, photographs, business information, and submitted product imagery in connection with the promotion of the Fresh Ink Prize.

## Acceptance of Terms

- I have read and understood the Official Terms & Conditions of the Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize.
- I agree to be bound by those Terms & Conditions and accept the decisions of the judging panel as final.

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## Applicant Signature

I certify that the information contained within this application is accurate and complete and that I meet the eligibility requirements of the Notes & Queries Fresh Ink Prize.

Applicant Name (Printed):

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Signature:

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Date:

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**For Official Use Only**

Application Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility Verified:  Yes  No

Reviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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