

BLACKSHADE

Creative & Digital Marketing Studio

FREELANCER STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Version 1.0 · Tamil Nadu, India · 2025

This SOP governs the relationship between BlackShade Studio and every freelancer in its network. Every freelancer must read this document before accepting their first project. Following this SOP is non-negotiable — it protects your income, your reputation, and your relationship with BlackShade.

DOCUMENT INFO	DETAILS
Studio	BlackShade Creative & Digital Marketing Studio
Tagline	Absolute Shades of Design
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Applies To	All freelancers in the BlackShade network
Contact	hello@blackshade.com WhatsApp: [Founder number]

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SOP 01 — FREELANCER ONBOARDING PROCESS

Overview

Every freelancer must complete the full onboarding process before being assigned any client work. This ensures BlackShade can guarantee quality, meet deadlines, and protect its clients. There are no shortcuts to onboarding.

Step-by-Step Onboarding

01

Application

Fill the BlackShade Freelancer Application Form (link sent by founder). Include: name, discipline, portfolio link, availability (hours/week), rate per project, tools used.

02

Portfolio Review

Founder reviews portfolio within 48 hours. Standards: minimum 3 relevant projects, professional finish, deadline reliability (assessed from past client references or interview).

03

Trial Project

Every accepted freelancer completes one paid trial project at a reduced rate (50% of standard rate). Complexity: medium. Deadline: as assigned. This is evaluated on quality AND communication.

04

SOP Reading & Sign-Off

Freelancer reads this entire SOP document and signs the Freelancer Agreement (SOP 10). No project assignment until signed.

05

Tool Access Setup

Freelancer is added to: BlackShade WhatsApp group, shared Google Drive folder (personal), and given brand asset access. Tools confirmed: Canva Pro / Adobe / Figma / relevant tools.

06

Profile Card Created

Founder creates a freelancer profile card in Notion (or shared sheet): Name, Discipline, Rate, Availability, Trial Score, Contact. This is the assignment database.

Disciplines We Onboard

Discipline	Tools Required	Trial Deliverable
Brand Designer	Illustrator / Figma / Canva Pro	Logo + 2 brand variants
UI/UX Designer	Figma	3-screen mobile UI concept
Web Developer	WordPress / React / Framer / Lovable	Landing page (VibeCoding)

Social Media Designer	Canva Pro / Photoshop	5 Instagram posts (brand-matched)
Video Editor	Premiere Pro / CapCut / DaVinci	30-second Reel edit
Graphic Designer	Canva Pro / Illustrator	Brochure + poster (same brand)
Copywriter	Google Docs	Brand story + 5 captions
Motion Graphics	After Effects / CapCut	15-second animated logo reveal

SOP 02 — PROJECT ASSIGNMENT PROTOCOL

How Projects Are Assigned

When BlackShade receives a client project, the founder assigns it to one or more freelancers based on discipline match, availability, and performance grade. Freelancers do NOT source their own clients — all client relationships are managed exclusively by the founder.

CRITICAL RULE

Freelancers must NEVER contact BlackShade clients directly unless explicitly authorised by the founder. All client communication goes through the founder only. Violating this results in immediate removal from the network.

Assignment Flow

01

Client Brief Received

Founder receives client project. Reviews scope, deadline, and budget. Identifies required disciplines (designer, developer, editor, etc.).

02

Freelancer Match

Founder checks the Freelancer Profile Sheet. Selects best match: discipline → availability → performance grade → rate fit.

03

Assignment Message

Founder sends assignment via WhatsApp with the Project Brief (see SOP 03). Freelancer has 2 hours to accept or decline.

04

Acceptance Confirmation

Freelancer replies: 'Accepted — I confirm I understand the brief, deadline [DATE], and will deliver to [SPECIFIC FOLDER] by [TIME].' No vague replies.

05

Work Phase

Freelancer works on the project. Must send a WIP (work-in-progress) update at the 50% mark without being asked. See SOP 08 for communication rules.

06

Delivery

Freelancer uploads finished files to the assigned Google Drive folder. Sends delivery message with checklist confirmation. See SOP 04 and SOP 05.

07

Founder QC

Founder reviews within 4 hours of delivery. Either approves (moves to client) or sends revision notes (see SOP 06). No delivery goes to client without founder approval.

Assignment Rules

- First refusal on projects goes to highest-graded freelancers in that discipline
- A freelancer may decline a maximum of 2 consecutive projects before their assignment priority is reduced
- Taking on a project and then missing the deadline without prior notice = immediate grade drop
- Freelancers may not work on competing agency projects during an active BlackShade assignment
- If a freelancer cannot complete a project mid-way, they must notify the founder within 12 hours — not at the deadline

SOP 03 — THE PROJECT BRIEF — FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS

Standard Project Brief Template

Every assignment sent to a freelancer must include a completed Project Brief. Freelancers must not start work without a complete brief. If any section is missing, ask before starting.

FIELD	WHAT TO INCLUDE	EXAMPLE
Project ID	Unique code for tracking	BS-2025-014
Client Name	Business name (not contact name)	NovaSpark Technologies
Project Type	Service category	Branding + Instagram Setup
Deliverables	Exact list of files required	Logo (AI+PNG), 12 Instagram posts (PNG 1080x1080)
Brand Assets	Link to Drive folder with brand files	drive.google.com/[link]
Reference/Inspiration	3-5 links or images	Attached in brief folder
Tone/Style	How it should feel	Premium, dark, minimal, gold accents
Deadline — Internal	When freelancer must deliver to founder	15 May 2025, 6:00 PM IST
Deadline — Client	When client receives final	17 May 2025 (2-day buffer always)
Revision Rounds	How many included	2 rounds
Payment	What freelancer earns for this project	₹4,500 on approval
Notes	Any specific client preferences	Client prefers dark backgrounds, no gradients

BUFFER RULE

The deadline given to a freelancer is ALWAYS 2 days before the client-facing deadline. This buffer exists to handle revisions, unexpected issues, and founder QC time. Never tell a freelancer what the client deadline is — only tell them the internal deadline.

Brief Folder Structure

For every project, the founder creates a Google Drive folder with this exact structure:

FOLDER NAME	CONTENTS
01-Brief	Project brief PDF + any client reference files
02-Brand-Assets	Logo files, colour codes, fonts, existing brand materials
03-References	Inspiration images, competitor examples, style direction
04-WIP	Freelancer uploads work-in-progress files here
05-Final-Delivery	ONLY final, approved files go here

06-Client-Delivery	Files formatted for client handover (renamed, zipped)
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SOP 04 — DELIVERY STANDARDS BY SERVICE TYPE

File Naming Convention

All delivered files must follow this naming format exactly:

NAMING FORMAT

[ProjectID]_[ServiceType]_[Description]_[Version].[ext] EXAMPLES: BS-2025-014_Logo_Primary_v1.ai
BS-2025-014_Instagram_Post01_Final.png BS-2025-014_Website_Homepage_v2.fig

Required File Formats by Service

SERVICE	REQUIRED FORMATS	RESOLUTION / SIZE
Logo Design	AI (editable), PNG (transparent), PDF	PNG: min 3000px wide, 300 DPI
Brand Style Guide	PDF (final), Figma link (editable)	A4 format, min 8 pages
Social Media Posts	PNG (each post individually), Canva link	1080x1080px (Feed), 1080x1920px (Story/Reel cover)
Instagram Reels	MP4 (H.264), no watermark	1080x1920px, max 90 seconds, 30fps min
Brochure / Flyer	PDF (print-ready), PNG preview, source file	300 DPI, CMYK for print
Website Design (Figma)	Figma file link + PDF preview of all screens	Desktop 1440px + Mobile 390px
WordPress Website	Live URL + admin login credentials	All pages live, tested on mobile
VibeCoding Site	Live URL + Lovable project link	All sections functional, mobile responsive
Video Edit (Reel)	MP4 final + project file (.prproj / .drp)	1080x1920px, 30fps, max 90MB
Video Edit (Brand Film)	MP4 final (1080p min) + project file	16:9, max 500MB, H.264
Pitch Deck	PDF + PPTX + source file (Figma / Canva)	16:9 aspect ratio, 10-20 slides
AI Agent	Working deployment link + documentation	Tested with 20+ queries

Delivery Checklist Before Uploading

Every freelancer must confirm these before uploading to the 05-Final-Delivery folder:

- ☐ All files are in the correct format listed above
- ☐ File naming follows the BS naming convention exactly

- No watermarks, no placeholder text, no lorem ipsum
- All fonts are embedded / outlined in the final export
- Brand colours are consistent with the brief (verify hex codes)
- Files are tested and open correctly (not corrupted)
- Spelling and grammar checked (if text is involved)
- Mobile version checked (for web and social deliverables)
- All layers are named and organised in source files
- Delivery message sent to founder on WhatsApp

SOP 05 — QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST

Founder QC Process

The founder reviews every deliverable before it reaches the client. This QC process takes 2–4 hours. A project can either be Approved, Sent for Revision, or Rejected.

Universal QC Standards (All Services)

QC CRITERION	WHAT IS CHECKED	FAIL TRIGGER
Brand Accuracy	Colours, fonts, and tone match the brief and brand guidelines	Wrong hex code used anywhere visible
Completeness	Every deliverable listed in the brief is present	Any item on the brief list is missing
File Quality	Resolution, format, and file size are correct	Logo delivered below 1000px or in JPEG only
Naming	All files follow the BS naming convention	Any file named 'Final_FINAL2_use this.png'
Polish Level	No rough edges, inconsistencies, or lazy shortcuts	Visible pixelation, misaligned elements, placeholder text
Brief Adherence	The work answers what the brief asked for	Design ignores the style/tone/references given
Technical Function	Links work, website loads, video plays without errors	Any dead link or broken page element

QC Outcome — Three Possible Results

APPROVED ✓

Work meets all standards. Founder forwards to client. Freelancer payment triggered within 48 hours of client approval.

REVISION REQUESTED

Work is 80%+ correct but needs specific changes. Founder sends numbered revision notes. Freelancer has 24 hours to deliver revised files. Counts as Revision Round 1.

REJECTED ✗

Work does not meet minimum standards or brief was substantially ignored. Freelancer must redo from scratch within the original deadline or it is reassigned. Rejection = grade penalty. Repeated rejections = removal.

Service-Specific QC — Branding

- Logo works in both black and white (no colour dependency)

- Logo is provided in all required variants: primary, icon-only, horizontal, dark bg version
- Typography pairs correctly and is not stretched or distorted
- Colour palette has correct hex codes, CMYK, and Pantone equivalents where applicable
- Brand guidelines PDF has all sections: logo usage, don'ts, typography, colours, applications

Service-Specific QC — Social Media Design

- All posts are consistent in font, spacing, and visual weight (they look like a set, not individual files)
- Text is readable at mobile size (minimum 24px equivalent in the final export)
- No important text is within 50px of any edge (safe zone compliance)
- Reel covers look good as a grid thumbnail

Service-Specific QC — Web Design

- All pages are tested on iPhone 13 viewport (390px wide) — text readable, no overflow
- All buttons and links are functional
- Images load correctly — no broken image icons
- Page load time is acceptable (Lighthouse score 70+ performance)
- Contact form submits and sends an email notification

SOP 06 — REVISION & FEEDBACK PROTOCOL

Revision Rounds Policy

SCENARIO	REVISION ENTITLEMENT
Standard project (stated in brief)	2 rounds of revisions included
Student / trial project	1 round of revisions
Rush project (< 24hr deadline)	1 round of revisions
Revision caused by unclear brief (founder error)	Does not count against freelancer — extra round given
Revision caused by client changing their mind	Does not count against freelancer
Revision caused by freelancer ignoring brief	Counts as Round 1, grade penalty applied

How Feedback Is Given

The founder sends revision notes as a numbered WhatsApp message or Google Doc comment. Freelancers must respond to each numbered point specifically.

REVISION MESSAGE FORMAT (Founder → Freelancer)

Project: BS-2025-014 Revision Round: 1 1. The logo font is too thin at small sizes — switch to the Bold weight 2. Background colour is #1A1A1A but brief specified #0D0D0D — please fix 3. Icon variant is missing from the delivery folder 4. In the brand guide, Page 4 says 'Helvetica' but the brief specified Satoshi — update Please deliver revised files to 04-WIP folder by [DATE, TIME].

Freelancer Response to Revisions

1. Read every revision note fully before starting any changes
2. Reply to confirm you've read and understood each point: 'Understood — working on 4 points, will deliver by [TIME]'
3. Make ALL changes in one go — do not deliver partial revisions
4. In delivery message, list each revision point and confirm it was addressed
5. If you disagree with a revision note, ask — do not silently ignore it

NEVER DO THIS

Do not send a message saying 'Done' with no detail after a revision. The founder needs to know which specific changes were made to QC efficiently. A revision delivery message must reference the numbered points.

SOP 07 — PAYMENT & MILESTONE SYSTEM

Payment Timeline

BlackShade pays freelancers after the client approves the work and confirms receipt. Standard payment timeline is 48 hours after client approval.

PAYMENT EVENT	TIMING	AMOUNT
Project assigned	No advance paid	₹0
Trial project completion	Within 24 hrs of trial approval	50% of agreed rate
Standard project — client approves	Within 48 hours	100% of agreed rate
Rush project (< 24hr deadline)	Within 24 hours of client approval	100% + 20% rush bonus
Rejected and reassigned project	Not paid	₹0
Revision caused by freelancer error	After corrected delivery approved	Original rate (no deduction for 1 revision)
Late delivery penalty (without notice)	Deducted from payment	-20% of project rate per day late

Payment Method

- Primary: UPI (Google Pay / PhonePe) — instant transfer
- Secondary: Bank transfer (NEFT) for amounts above ₹10,000
- All payments made in INR (Indian Rupees)
- Payment confirmation sent via WhatsApp (screenshot of transfer)
- Freelancer must acknowledge receipt — a simple 'Received, thanks' is sufficient

Rate Guidelines (BlackShade Standard)

SERVICE TYPE	BEGINNER RATE	EXPERIENCED RATE
Logo Design (full brand)	₹2,000–₹3,500	₹4,000–₹8,000
Social Media Set (12 posts)	₹1,500–₹2,500	₹3,000–₹5,000
Instagram Reel Edit (30-60 sec)	₹500–₹1,000	₹1,500–₹3,000
Brand Style Guide	₹2,000–₹3,500	₹4,000–₹7,000
WordPress Website	₹4,000–₹6,000	₹7,000–₹12,000
VibeCoding Website	₹2,500–₹4,000	₹5,000–₹9,000
UI/UX Design (3-5 screens)	₹2,000–₹3,500	₹4,500–₹8,000
Pitch Deck (10-15 slides)	₹1,500–₹2,500	₹3,000–₹5,000
Brochure / Flyer	₹600–₹1,200	₹1,500–₹3,000
AI Agent Build	₹3,000–₹5,000	₹6,000–₹12,000

RATE NEGOTIATION RULE

Freelancer rates are agreed upon during onboarding and updated at 6-month intervals. Rates are not renegotiated per project. If a project is significantly larger than average scope, the founder will notify you and offer a higher rate before assignment.

SOP 08 — COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

Communication Platforms

PLATFORM	PURPOSE
WhatsApp (primary)	All project communication — assignments, WIPs, deliveries, questions, updates
Google Drive	All file sharing — briefs, assets, WIPs, final files. No files sent via WhatsApp.
Google Meet / Zoom	Monthly freelancer check-in call (optional but encouraged)
Email	Formal documents only — signed agreements, payment receipts

WhatsApp Communication Rules

- Respond to any assignment or question within 2 hours during working hours (9 AM – 8 PM IST)
- If you cannot respond, send a quick: 'Busy until [TIME] — will reply then'
- Do NOT go silent for more than 4 hours on an active project day
- Use voice notes only for complex explanations — not as a substitute for clear written updates
- No memes, off-topic content, or casual chat in the project thread — keep it professional

Mandatory Status Updates

For every active project, you must send these WhatsApp updates without being asked:

UPDATE TYPE	WHEN TO SEND	MESSAGE FORMAT
Assignment Accepted	Within 2 hours of assignment	'Accepted — [Project ID]. Deadline confirmed: [DATE TIME]. Will send WIP by [DATE].'
Work-in-Progress (WIP)	At 50% completion — mandatory	'WIP for [Project ID] — [DRIVE LINK]. Feedback welcome before I finalize.'
Delivery	When files are uploaded	'[Project ID] delivered to Final folder — [DRIVE LINK]. All checklist items confirmed. Ready for QC.'
Delay Warning	As soon as you know you'll be late	'Heads up on [Project ID] — I need [X hours] more due to [reason]. Can deliver by [NEW TIME].'
Clarification Needed	When something in the brief is unclear	'Question on [Project ID]: [specific question]. Brief says [X] but reference shows [Y] — which is correct?'

GOLDEN RULE OF COMMUNICATION

Over-communicate. Under-communicate is the top reason freelancers get removed from the BlackShade network. A brief message every few hours on an active project day costs you 10 seconds and saves the founder hours of anxiety. Silence = problem.

What Happens if You Go Silent

- 4+ hours of silence on an active project day → WhatsApp message from founder
- No response after 2 follow-ups → project reassigned, grade drops to C
- Pattern of silence across multiple projects → removal from network

SOP 09 — PERFORMANCE GRADING SYSTEM

How Freelancers Are Graded

Every freelancer in the BlackShade network has a performance grade: S, A, B, C, or D. Grade determines project priority, rate increases, and continuation in the network. Grades are updated after every project.

GRADE	CRITERIA	BENEFIT / CONSEQUENCE
S — Star	Delivers before deadline. Zero QC revisions needed. Brief followed precisely. Proactive communication.	First priority on all new projects. Rate increase at 6 months. Featured in BlackShade portfolio.
A — Excellent	Delivers on time. Minor QC notes (1-2 small fixes). Good communication.	High priority assignment. Stable rate. Eligible for repeat client projects.
B — Good	Mostly on time. 1 revision round usually needed. Adequate communication.	Standard assignment. Rate stays the same. Expected to improve on next project.
C — Needs Improvement	Late delivery or communication gaps on 1+ projects. 2 revision rounds regularly needed.	Lower assignment priority. Verbal feedback session with founder. 2-project improvement period.
D — At Risk	Missed deadline without notice. Rejected work. Silent on active project.	Final warning. One more D-grade project = removal from network.

Grading Scorecard — Per Project

CRITERION	WEIGHT
Deadline met (delivered before internal deadline)	35%
QC result (Approved first attempt = 100%, 1 revision = 70%, 2 revisions = 40%, Rejected = 0%)	35%
Communication (proactive updates, responsiveness)	20%
Brief adherence (followed without assumptions)	10%

Grade Calculation

After each project: Score 90-100% = S or A. Score 75-89% = A or B. Score 60-74% = B or C. Score below 60% = C or D. Grade is the rolling average of last 3 projects.

Grade Review Schedule

- Grades reviewed after every project and updated in the Freelancer Profile Sheet
- Formal grade discussion with freelancer at the end of Month 3 and every 6 months after
- A freelancer who improves from C to A over 3 projects gets a rate increase
- S-grade freelancers are offered the first right of refusal on premium/enterprise projects

SOP 10 — FREELANCER AGREEMENT & TERMS

BlackShade Freelancer Agreement

By signing this agreement, the freelancer acknowledges they have read, understood, and agree to all terms in this SOP document. This is a binding agreement between the freelancer and BlackShade Studio.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The freelancer agrees not to share any client information, project briefs, unpublished designs, or business details of BlackShade or its clients with any third party. This obligation continues for 2 years after the freelancer's last project with BlackShade.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All work created for BlackShade client projects is owned by the client upon full payment. The freelancer retains no rights to the delivered work after payment. The freelancer may include delivered work in their personal portfolio only after the client's work is publicly launched.

NON-SOLICITATION

The freelancer agrees not to approach or accept direct work from any BlackShade client for a period of 12 months from the last project they worked on together through BlackShade. This protects the client relationship and the network's integrity.

TERMINATION

BlackShade reserves the right to remove any freelancer from the network with immediate effect in cases of: non-communication, work quality falling below minimum standards, direct client contact, breach of confidentiality, or misrepresentation of skills.

Agreement Signature

FREELANCER DETAILS	
Full Name	
Discipline	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Date of Agreement	
Signature / Acknowledgment	I have read and agree to BlackShade's Freelancer SOP v1.0

FOR BLACKSHADE STUDIO	
Founder Name	
Date	

Studio	BlackShade Creative & Digital Marketing Studio
Email	hello@blackshade.com