

Primer Scotland

Part 1

by Artquest in partnership with Creative Scotland and
The Glasgow School of Art

Advice about your degree show and what happens after you have graduated



Introduction



This document is Part 1 of a 2 part guide.

It covers things you need to think about in your first couple of years after graduation as well as other important things about working in the visual arts.

Part 1 tells you about:

- degree shows and digital shows
- telling people about your work
- starting work as an artist
- freelancing & self-employment
- artist fees
- commission
- pricing and selling work
- invoices and budgets



Degree Shows



[The weeks before your degree show](#) are often very busy and stressful.

Hundreds of people can see your work and find out more about you as a professional artist.

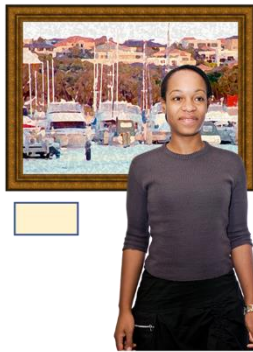
Your degree show can get your career off to a good start.

Your Degree Show



Once you have been given your space to show your work:

- think carefully about what work you want to show - you don't need to show everything



- make sure the whole space looks professional by labelling your work and keeping the space clean and tidy



- be available, polite and friendly to everyone you speak to at the opening of your show



- be there as much as possible to meet the people who come to see your work



- always have a business card or postcard with your contact information

Digital Shows



- make sure that the digital space you are given to do this is clearly presented and easy to use
- have a clear and simple statement about your work and what it is about
- use an image that best communicate your current body work as a whole
- give links to your website and ways to contact you by email or social media

Telling people about your work



This will help:

- your shows to get visitors
- build up your list of contacts
- build relationships with galleries

Business cards are an easy and cheap way to give people your contact details and should include:



- your name, phone number and email address (do not use a university email address)
- website and social media accounts
- an image of your work to help people to remember you

Website & social networks

[Make sure you have your own website](#)



and build it for your work before you graduate so you can add it to your digital degree show presentation and your business card.

You can use a website to:

- help people find out about your work
- sell your work



Your website should have:

- photos of exhibitions and projects
- a brief [artist's statement](#) – a short piece of writing about your work
- **artist CV** or short [biography](#)



An **artist CV** is a list of your skills and art experience including exhibitions, education and artistic jobs.

An artist **biography** is information about you and your work.



- information about past and future exhibitions and projects
- contact details or links to any gallery that shows your work
- scans or links to press articles or reviews





Social networking sites like

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook can help you reach people.

Keep your social networking sites up to date and do not mix personal and professional news.



Networks

Your **professional network** is the most important and valuable resource you have.

It is all the people you know in the art world.

Your network can help you:

- find a job
- tell people about your projects
- understand how the art world works
- get feedback on your work
- get help with applications
- get advice





Your Email Newsletter

Send information to your network by using an [email newsletter](#) or [Substack](#)

Never add people to your list without them agreeing.

Any email newsletter should have an easy and clear way for anyone to **unsubscribe** – so they stop getting it.

Always follow [GDPR rules](#) on keeping personal information.



Starting work as an artist



There are three main ways any creative professional can get money.

- **Ask** – apply for funding, ask for sponsorship or support [in-kind](#)

In-kind means paying in goods or services instead of money.



- **Earn** – sell work or skills, or have a job

- **Borrow** – ask for money and pay it back over time



[Artquest](#) have information to help you understand which of these ways are right for you.

Most artists have different ways to make money including:



- public and private funding
- working part-time or working for yourself
- commissions (see pages 9 and 10)
- sales and image **licensing** – giving someone permission to use an image if they pay you – for example for a photo

Freelancing & self-employment

Freelance work is very common in the visual art world.



Freelance work is also called self-employment – working for yourself.

Many artists sell artwork, get public funding, give workshops and do commissions.



Find out more in the Easy Read versions of Creative Scotland's Illustrated Freelancers Guide [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

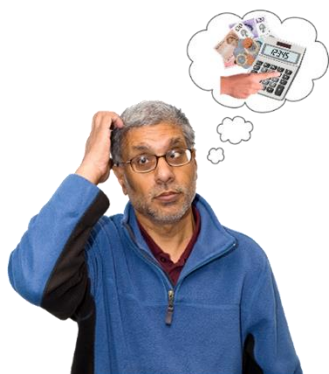
Always ask for payment for your time.



If an organisation asks you to work for free think about how it would affect your financial situation or any future opportunities.

Creative Scotland expects [Industry Standard rates of pay](#) to be paid by the organisations that it funds.

Artist Fees



Professional artists are paid when they sell their work but can also earn money when they are offered exhibitions, commissions, workshops or residencies.

You will need to work out your rate of pay.

[The Scottish Artist Union](#) has guidance and advice on artist rates of pay.

[a-n, The Artists Information Company](#) has information about [exhibition payments](#).



Commission



A [commission](#) is an agreement between you and another person to create a piece of work.



Before you start the work it is important to decide:

- what is expected
- when you will be paid
- who owns the finished work

This should be written in a [contract](#).



When the work is shown you have the [right](#) to be credited as the person who made it.

It must be shown in a way that does not make you look bad.

Pricing and selling work



Ways to sell your work includes:

- [working with commercial galleries](#)
- [approaching corporate art collections](#)
- selling online
- making [editions](#) or copies of your work – like a film or photograph – to be sold at lower prices



Keep your [prices](#) low when you are exhibiting for the first time.

You can increase your prices when more people want to buy your work.

You can keep increasing prices as your career progresses.



Photograph work before you sell it.

Make a note of who you sold it to, when, its size and a description.

You should also create a [bill of sale](#) which is like a receipt, so the buyer can prove that this your work.



If your work is being taken from one place to another, make sure it is well wrapped, protected, and labelled.

Invoices

To get paid, most of the time you will be asked to send an invoice.

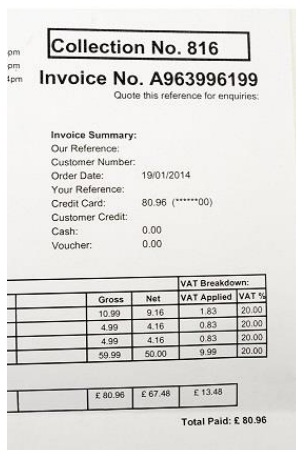


Make a template for your invoice and reuse it each time.

Most invoices will need some or all these things:

- a date when you are sending the invoice
- an invoice number

This is often used by the person paying you as a reference for the bank transfer so you will know when you have been paid



- a description of the work you have completed including the dates and hours worked



- your address, telephone and email
- when the invoice must be paid for example in 10 or 30 days
- company number or UTR (Unique Taxpayer Reference, also known as your self-employment reference number)

This is [provided by HMRC once you register as self-employed](#), plus your [National Insurance number](#)



- your [VAT](#) registration number if you have one
- your bank details:
 - account name and number
 - account number
 - sort code
 - bank name and branch address

If you are selling to clients abroad you will need to include your IBAN and BIC numbers from your bank.

The law allows you to get extra money if you are not paid on time.

[Late Commercial Payments](#) on Gov.uk has more information.



Budgets



Understand exactly how much you spend and earn by [making a budget](#).

Think about how much you have to spend before you start earning money like the costs for:

- materials
- printing
- framing
- studio rent
- stand hire for art or craft fairs

When you apply for funding or grants, you will be asked for a [project budget](#) that might include the cost:

- fees
- materials
- hiring a venue or equipment
- marketing – telling people about your work
- admin costs like telephone bills, paper, pens and envelopes

