

Higher Diploma in Art Portfolio Brief 2025

Higher Diploma in Art	Higher Diploma in Art	Department of Continuing Education
NFQ	LEVEL 8	CODE AD082
CREDIT	90 ECTS	6.15 to 9 pm
Duration	2 Years	Autumn & Spring
Applications	Digitally	
Programme coordinators Felicity Clear BA MA and Beth O'Halloran BA MA Tutors Elaine Leader BA MA, Emma Mahony PhD, Henry Martin BA MA MRes, Mark Clare BA MA and Laura Fitzgerald BA MA		

The NCAD School of Continuing Education in Art and Design offers a part-time undergraduate Higher Diploma in Art. This intensive two-year course provides students with an opportunity to explore a range of materials, to develop skills in different subjects and establish a direction for their visual art practice.

Course Commitment

The Higher Diploma in Art commences mid-September. Students will attend on a part-time basis for approximately 30 weeks. Normally students will attend twice a week for a minimum of 6 hours per week, 6.15 to 9pm. Typically this could be Tuesday and Thursday evening for year 1 students and Monday and Wednesday evening for year 2 students. The course is blended and some of these sessions will be online. Students should have access to a computer and the internet and be familiar with Canvas software. Students may also require particular software from time to time. The programme includes evening attendance and the occasional Saturday morning. Currently in year 2 there is a 4-day block at Easter when students are asked to attend during the day. These dates will be in the timetable received at the beginning of the year. Year 2 students are required to submit work for the annual end of year CEAD exhibition and participate in the display of their final work.

Entry Requirements

Students who have successfully completed one of the CEAD University Certificates (Jewellery and Object Design AD097 starting September 2024 plus two mandatory VAP modules of 5 ECTS each, Drawing and Visual Investigation AD095, Visual Arts Practice AD094 or Photography and Digital Imaging AD096), and who carry forward 30 ECTS credits are eligible to apply for the Higher Diploma in Art. Students who have not completed a certificate with CEAD but have completed accredited programmes with equivalent learning outcomes are eligible to apply and will have to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes through Recognised Prior Learning (RPL).

How to Apply

Applicants submit a form, an artist statement and a portfolio. Prior to submitting your application, seek the advice of your module or programme tutor on the selection of images and other visual material for your portfolio. Please note it is essential to address the exercises set out in the **Portfolio Brief** below and also to show a range of appropriate skills and material exploration.

The Portfolio

Digital portfolio, saved as one PDF as follows

Start by putting your name, student ID number, course name and the year of application at the beginning so it is always clear who and what we are looking at.

eg Joey Bloggs 22123456 Higher Diploma in Art Application 2025

Next add your Statement of Interest then the 3 parts of your portfolio and save as one PDF. Name each section and the PDF file should also be titled as above.

Statement of Interest In no more than 200 words, let us know what your interests or topics were in the work you are presenting from your previous course.

10 slides of images of your work Provide your title, medium (and specific process or technique if relevant) and measurements; height then width then depth if appropriate, in metric.
Sound or film files can be sent separately or as links within the PDF

8 slides of your physical notebook pages of which 2 slides demonstrate your drawing skills and the other 6 slides show research into your themes or topics, research into relevant contemporary artists and research into materials and processes

3 slides 1 slide each for the three worksheets from the **Portfolio Brief** outlined below

The total number of slides for your portfolio is **21**

Your portfolio should contain work that contains the following

- Work indicating your range of visual interests including collecting of source material for projects
- Ideas or themes informing your work
- Shows inventive thinking in approach to work
- Shows how you sustain ideas and the depth and focus of your work
- Demonstrates how you record and describe ideas visually
- Indicates your level of knowledge of fine art disciplines
- Show skills in drawing including drawings made from observation or drawing demonstrating a critical approach

If you have difficulties making a PDF or Powerpoint slide presentation, your digital portfolio can be made in Goggle Slides.

The Portfolio Brief 2025

You are required to undertake and complete the **Portfolio Brief** for your application. It will involve completing

- 1 mind-map = 1 worksheet
- 1 observational study = 1 worksheet,
- 1 invention and problem-solving task = 1 worksheet

Therefore, students are required to submit 3 worksheets from the prompts below.

*A worksheet or ideas worksheet is a sheet of A2 size paper used for accumulating visual information, ideas and experiments related to a theme or topic. Any medium or device can be used such as drawing, collage, photographs, diagrams and whatever is appropriate for your work. The worksheets should be two-dimensional and therefore should contain photographs of any three-dimensional information or experiments or developments.

Exercise One Mind-Map

Take **one** of the following prompts as a starting point for your work

Temporal / Converge / Impulse / Ecosystem

Present your ideas from your chosen prompt in the form of **one** mind-map*. Keep in mind that this is a visual arts exercise so consider imagery, text, composition and colour. Identify as many unusual and interesting examples as possible. Your mind-map should be thorough and comprehensive and work as a **visual piece in its own right**. This is 1 worksheet.

Please label your work **Exercise 1 Mind-Map** and your chosen prompt word ie **Temporal**.

*A mind-map is a way to show in visual form, the relationships between different ideas.

Exercise Two Observational Drawing

Return to the mind map in exercise one. Select an item or object from your mind-map that exists in the real world and get an example of it. Carefully dismantle your selected item. First carefully record, through observational drawing, this dismantling process. Then visually record (through any medium of your choice), all of the pieces arranged in a new way such as stacked, pushed in a corner, hung, floating or according to a criteria such as material, colour, size or weight. At the end of this exercise you should have 1 worksheet.

Please label your work **Exercise 2 Observational Drawing**

Exercise Three Invention and Problem-Solving

This task presents you with Invention and problem-solving challenges. Your work can be carried out in 2D or 3D, or it can be a combination of both processes.

Invent or demonstrate or illustrate **one** task from the following 6 options

- Record two different overlaps
- Invent a new way of recording time
- Record four situations where you see things leaning at odd angles

- Show three ways to bridge a gap
- Visually document your favourite sound or smell
- Invent a way to redirect water

Work can be done in any form or combination of drawing, collage, models or various media. At the end of this exercise you will have 1 worksheet.

Please label your work **Exercise 3** and your chosen task Record **Two Different Overlaps**

You will now have made 3 worksheets in total responding to the **Portfolio Brief**

The criteria for assessment are

- Inventiveness and creativity in approach
- Analysis and critical observations
- Demonstration of a range of skills eg research, technical, observation, drawing, problem-solving
- Evidence of cultural and visual awareness
- Shows a willingness to experiment with concepts and materials
- Demonstration of a commitment to art and design disciplines over a period of time

Application Process

The portfolio is submitted **digitally** through the **online portal only**. Click on the below link which will bring you to the Higher Diploma in Art section on the NCAD website. Use the Click Here to apply. There is a short application form and then you will be asked to upload your material.

<https://www.ncad.ie/continuing-education/part-time-diploma-in-art-design/>

Email cead@staff.ncad.ie or call 01 636 4214 if you have any queries, we are here to help.