

Frequently Asked Questions



Here are some Frequently Asked Questions on the admissions process at NCAD.

Need more information? Visit our [web-site](#) or drop us a line, at admissions@ncad.ie and we will be happy to help.

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Studying Art and Design



How do I know if Art and Design College is right for me?

Only you can really answer this question, but perhaps we could give you some things to think about. Students of Art and/or Design tend to be critical thinkers, with a desire to improve the world in some way. They are the people who will better our society for generations to come. Everything you interact with on a daily basis was thought up, designed, made or improved by an artist or designer, for example: your phone, your clothes, the digital display at the bus stop/train station, the chair you sit on, the cup you drink from. Art and Design has such a far-reaching scope across all sections of society. If you have the ideas, studying Art and Design will give you the skill to make the world a better place.

If Art and Design College is right for me, why should I choose NCAD?

NCAD is the only dedicated Art and Design Third Level Institution in Ireland. We offer the widest range of courses, from Fashion Design to Interaction Design, from Visual Culture to Painting, from Education to Print, with so many other exciting options. Our teaching staff are highly regarded practicing Artists, Designers, Curators and Educators, so you will be learning from active practitioners in your specialist field. We support our students to be the best they can be in what they want to do. We encourage creativity and promote social awareness. From the moment you step inside the blue Archway of NCAD on your first day, you are a part of our long and illustrious history and we will support and help you to become an innovator, creator and critical thinker of the future.

What about my career after college?

There is a growing need globally for the skills of graduates from Design and Fine Art backgrounds. Creative thinkers and problem solvers are in increasing demand across all sectors, prompted by challenges and opportunities confronting society, culture and contemporary business. Have a look at our [Alumni](#) and [Student Achievements](#) pages for an idea of what some of our graduates have achieved.

NCAD Course Information

What is a restricted course?

Restricted courses normally require additional assessment procedures, e.g. the submission of a portfolio. All NCAD studio courses (excluding AD 215 – Visual Culture) require the submission of a portfolio to gain entry onto the course. Restricted courses must be applied for through the CAO, by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted. NCAD does not operate the Leaving Cert/CAO points scheme for programmes requiring a portfolio submission. Offers are made based on portfolio score to applicants who meet minimum academic entry requirements. To see our NCAD Portfolio Submission Guidelines, please follow this link.

Are all of the courses offered at NCAD restricted courses?

No. AD 215 – Visual Culture is not a studio-based course and is not a restricted course. Places are allocated through the CAO on a competitive basis to students.

Do I have to have studied Art for the Leaving Cert in order to apply to NCAD?

No. Art as a Leaving Cert subject is not a requirement for applying to any course at NCAD. You must have 6 Leaving Cert subjects, 2 of which should be grade H5 or higher. These subjects should include English, Irish and either a third language or Art or Design Communications Graphics (DCG). You will, however, need to submit a portfolio of work to be considered for a course, except for AD 215 – Visual Culture, which is not a restricted course.

Who is the Awarding Body for Degrees from NCAD?

NCAD is a recognised college of UCD, a Constituent University of the National University of Ireland (NUI). All degrees being awarded to NCAD Graduates are awarded through the NUI.



Entry Requirements

What are the minimum entry requirements?

NCAD does not operate the Leaving Certificate/CAO points scheme for programmes requiring a portfolio submission. Offers are made based on a portfolio score to applicants who meet the minimum academic requirements.

For students presenting a Leaving Certificate, you must have at least 6 subjects, two of which must be at level H5 or higher. Subjects that must be included in this are: English, Irish and either a third language, or Art or Design Communications Graphics (DCG). Information on obtaining an Irish language exemption is set out on the [NUI website](#).

For students presenting QQI/FETAC awards, you must have 5 distinctions, as part of the Full Award.

For students presenting A-Level/GCSE results, you must have A-Level Grade C+ in 2 NUI recognised subjects*. (A/E or B/D is regarded as equivalent to 2 Grade Cs for this purpose). AND GCSE Grade C+ in 4 recognised subjects*. (GCSE Advanced Level grades A to D, E or O are accepted as GCSE O Level pass grades). Subjects must include English and another language or Art.

Applied A-Levels are not recognised by the NUI for matriculation.

Applicants for AD212 Product Design and AD222 Interaction Design must meet the entry requirement in Maths or an accepted alternative in a Science or Technology subject.

*Please see the [NUI website](#) for a full list of recognised subjects.

What is the Irish Language Requirement?

If you are a student who was born outside of the Republic of Ireland (26 counties) and want to apply to NCAD, you do not have an Irish language requirement. If you are a Leaving Cert Student, Irish must be one of your subjects, unless you qualify for an exemption. For all Irish Language exemptions (other than being born outside of the Republic of Ireland) you must apply directly to the NUI. Foundation Level Irish is not acceptable. Full details on minimum entry requirements (matriculation) and regulations concerning exemption from the subject Irish can be found at www.nui.ie



What is the Maths Requirement?

Maths as a subject is a requirement for AD 212 Product Design and AD 222 Interaction Design. However, the Maths requirement can also be met by one of the following subjects at Grade H7 on a Higher-Level Paper or O6 or higher on an Ordinary Level Paper: Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Physics with Chemistry, Engineering, Construction Studies, Agricultural Science, Technical Drawing or Biology.



Portfolio

Do all programmes at NCAD require a portfolio submission?

A portfolio submission is required for all studio-based degrees at NCAD.

A portfolio is NOT required for AD215 Visual Culture.

What will I put in my portfolio?

An entrance portfolio is a collection of visual work that shows your potential to study art and design at third level. The NCAD Portfolio Submission Guidelines are designed to help you put your portfolio together whether you are starting from scratch or using work you have developed in another context. We want to see your Research and Observation your Ideas Development and your Developed Creative Work. You should also include at least one Notebook, remember the best portfolios will show all your processes.

How closely do I have to follow the NCAD Portfolio Submission Guidelines?

The Guidelines are there as a guide to people who may wish to have an idea about how to start their portfolio and have a path to follow to complete it. We found that through having a Brief, it really helped people who liked to follow set rules, but for people who did not like to be so confined in their approach to creating their portfolio, it was seen as a hindrance. So now the Brief has become the Guide, to make it accessible to everybody.

How Should I submit my portfolio?

For 2022 all portfolio submissions will be online through our online Portfolio Submission Portal. We will not be in a position to accept or review any physical portfolios this year. Detailed instructions on how to submit your portfolio online will be made available through the NCAD web site.

Will online submission change what goes into my Portfolio?

An online submission process does not change what we are asking of you in terms of how you develop your work, the processes you use and how you document that process including the use of worksheets and notebooks.

However, you will need to record your work digitally through photography and other means so you should factor in time to do this. You should also factor in time to register with and upload your work into the portfolio submission platform to avoid any last-minute stress.

When should I submit my portfolio to NCAD?

The deadline for Portfolio submission for First Year entry September 2022 is Friday 11th February 2022. Please note it is your responsibility to submit your portfolio on time. We would advise that you do not leave your portfolio submission to the last day.

How will my portfolio be assessed?

Your portfolio will be assessed by a team of NCAD academic staff with professional and specialist expertise in art & design. The assessment panel are particularly interested in how applicants research and develop their ideas in a visual way, and in their imaginative and creative responses to ideas, to observations, to processes and to concepts. The main areas of assessment are: Creative Enquiry and Visual Research The level of your engagement in intelligent, structured visual enquiry and how well you communicate this. Idea Development and Material/ Technical Exploration Your ability to explore and develop ideas in an appropriate way, and your level of skill in the use of materials and techniques. Critical Judgement, Selection and Resolution How well you judge which ideas have the most potential and your ability to bring them to a level of completion appropriate to your intended outcome.



Can I get an extension on the deadline for Portfolio Submission?

It is not possible to get an extension on the submission deadline – all portfolios must be submitted by the published closing date.

When will I be told the outcome of my portfolio assessment?

We will write to you by the end of March with the result of your portfolio assessment.

Offers are made in August through the CAO. All applicants are placed on a ranked list based on portfolio score. Offers are made in descending order from this list to applicants who have met the minimum academic entry requirements.

Can I carry my Portfolio Score forward to the next year?

We recognise that our applicants put a lot of work into the preparation of their admissions portfolios. If you have passed the portfolio review stage but not received an official offer from the CAO, NCAD will allow you to carry forward your portfolio score to the application process the following year.

Once you have told us you wish to carry forward your portfolio score and you have given us your new CAO number you will be eligible for an offer based on your original portfolio score and subject to the normal entry requirements and any portfolio cut off points in the year that you are now applying into.

An example of where a Portfolio Carry Forward might apply is when an applicant fails to meet the minimum academic entry requirements in the first year of application.

To find out more about preparing your portfolio for NCAD, visit our [Portfolio site](#).



Fees

What is the NCAD Undergraduate Fee Schedule and Payment Policy 2021/22?

To view the NCAD Undergraduate Fee Schedule and Payment Policy 2021/22: please see the [Fees](#) page on our website.

What will happen with NCAD tuition fees for UK/NI students after Brexit?

The Irish and UK Government have signed a memo of understanding on the Common Travel area between Ireland and the UK (May 2019). The MoU acknowledges the importance of education noting that “the CTA affords Irish and British citizens the right of access to all levels of education and training, and associated student support in each other’s State on terms no less favourable than those for citizens of that State.” This means that notwithstanding Brexit, UK students will continue to be eligible for the same fee structures and grants as EU students in Ireland.

What do I have to pay?

There are two elements to the NCAD undergraduate fee:

- Tuition Fee
- Student Contribution Charge

The majority of first-time, undergraduate, non-repeat, EU-students only pay the Student Contribution Charge.

What is the Tuition Fee?

Under the Higher Education Free Fees Initiative, the Irish Government pays the Tuition Fee for all eligible full-time, non-repeat undergraduate, EU/EEA/Swiss students who meet the following criteria:

- Are first-time undergraduates
- Hold EU/EEA/Swiss nationality or official refugee status and
- Have been ordinarily resident in an EU/EEA member state for at least three of the last five years preceding entry to an approved course.

EU-students who do not qualify for the Free Fees Initiative, as outlined above, have to pay the full EU-rate undergraduate tuition fee (this fee is set by the Department of Education and Skills each year). Students who are classified as non-EU students have to pay the International Fees rate.

What is the Student Contribution Charge?

The Student Contribution Charge must be paid by you, even if you qualify for the Free Fees Initiative.

EU students who do not qualify for the Free Fees Initiative must pay the full programme fee which includes the Student Contribution Charge.

Currently the Student Contribution Charge is paid by the Exchequer for students who qualify under the Higher Education Grants Scheme.

Students have the option of paying the Student Contribution Charge in two instalments, September and January.

Tax relief on the student contribution charge for second and subsequent children in Higher Education, is available through the tax system www.revenue.ie.

What about additional Costs for Materials and Equipment?

The Materials Levy is set and used by individual Departments to cover specialist materials/consumables used in studio-based learning environments. This levy is specific to particular disciplines, set at the discretion of each Department and used in the Departments. Not all Departments operate this levy.

Are there any grants available?

All new Higher Education Student Grants are administered through a single agency called SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland). Applications are made online and students who wish to apply for a student grant are advised to start the process as early as possible. You can start the application process before you receive your CAO place offer and have confirmed your acceptance.

To find out more about the student grant and eligibility criteria you should visit the following web sites www.studentfinance.ie or www.susi.ie.

Are there grants for students from Northern Ireland?

Students from Northern Ireland may apply for a higher education grant to Student Universal Support Ireland or for a student loan to the NI Student Loan Company. Please check each individual site for eligibility criteria.

Are there grants for students from England, Scotland and Wales?

Students from the UK who register at NCAD may apply for a higher education grant to Student Universal Support Ireland. Please check www.susi.ie for eligibility criteria.

Are there grants for overseas students?

Students from outside Ireland or the UK should obtain information on scholarships from the Ministry of Education and Science of their own country (or other appropriate state agency). Students who have not established residence in Ireland are not eligible for maintenance grants from Irish grant authorities.

NCAD’s full-time programmes are included on the register of approved programmes for non-EU/EEA/Swiss students access to employment (the Internationalisation Register of the Department of Education and Skills).



International

What are the entry requirements for International Students?

Students from outside Ireland who wish to apply to degree courses at NCAD must have an equivalent second-level educational standard to that required from applicants who obtained their second-level education in Ireland. Please find Agreed entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA Applicants for 2022 Entry on the [CAO website here](#).

Applicants to Year 1 will be required to submit certified transcripts of their second-level examinations (with an official translation to English if necessary) if they are successful at the portfolio examination stage of the selection procedure.

Students from outside Ireland applying to Years 2, 3 or 4 of courses must also submit certified transcripts of their third-level college examinations, together with two letters of recommendation from their college: one from either the Director of their college or their Head of Department and one from their course tutor.

In the case of applicants to Years 2, 3 or 4 these documents should be enclosed with the completed application form.

What is the English Language Requirement?

Programmes are taught through English in the National College of Art and Design therefore all applicants are required to demonstrate a high level of competence in English language. Applicants who have not passed English as a subject in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination must provide evidence of equivalent competence in English language through their school leaving examination or matriculation examination or by achieving the minimum standard in a recognised English language test. Full details of acceptable tests and the standard required can be found on our [website](#).

When is the deadline for International Students to apply to NCAD?

For international (non-EU) applicants to First Year there is a rolling closing date throughout the academic year and they are not required to apply through the CAO by 1 February. There is however a priority deadline of 31st March. Applicants are strongly advised to apply no later than this date each year.

Part Time / Evening Courses

What night time or part time courses do you offer?

CEAD, the Centre for Continuing Education in Art & Design at NCAD, provides part-time courses in art and design for adults and school-leavers who wish to explore their creative potential and learn new skills.

CEAD at NCAD provides opportunities for learning during the autumn and summer to over six hundred students each year. CEAD offers certificate and non-certificate options for students who choose to study part-time in an era of lifelong learning. CEAD aims to provide a diverse programme of courses, offering flexible, quality learning opportunities that enable access, support progression and transfer for students who wish to further their visual arts education. To see a full list of the courses available through CEAD please visit NCAD [Continuing Education](#) our [website](#).



For more information on applying to NCAD, preparing your portfolio, NCAD Open Days and Events, our programme offering, etc, visit our **website** or **email** us.

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